

Lives of the Gospel-Writers

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Introduction

Before starting a study of the life of the Gospel writers, including the occasion for their writing their Gospels, it is worthwhile to go over what modern scholarship considers to be the case. Orthodox tradition presents a much different case for the drafting of the Gospels than modern scholars present. Modern scholastic opinion centers on the teachings of the 19th century Protestant higher critics, whose basis is “Sola Scriptura”. Orthodox tradition does not accept “Sola Scriptura” and centers on the teachings of the Church Fathers and on the lives of the saints as role models.

Matthew

Most scholars believe¹ the Gospel of Matthew was composed between AD 80 and 90, with a range of possibility between AD 70 to 110; a pre-70 date remains a minority view. These scholars say that Matthew was written by an anonymous author and who was probably a male Jew, and familiar with technical legal aspects of Scripture being debated in his time. Writing in a polished Semitic "synagogue Greek", he drew on three main sources: The Gospel of Mark, the hypothetical collection of sayings known as the Q source, and material unique to his own community, called the M source or "Special Matthew".

The majority of modern scholars believe that Mark was the first gospel to be composed and that Matthew (who includes some 600 of Mark's 661 verses) and Luke both drew upon it as a major source for their works. The author of Matthew did not, however, simply copy Mark, but used it as a base, emphasizing Jesus' place in the Jewish tradition and including other details not covered in Mark. An additional 220 (approximately) verses, shared by Matthew and Luke but not found in Mark, from a second source, a hypothetical collection of sayings to which scholars give the name Quelle², or the Q source. This view, known as the “Two-source hypothesis” (Mark and Q), allows for a further body of tradition known as "Special Matthew", or the M source, meaning material unique to Matthew.

The two-source hypothesis emerged³ in the 19th century. B. H. Streeter definitively stated the case in 1924, adding that two other sources, referred to as M and L, lie behind the material in Matthew and Luke respectively. The strengths of the hypothesis are its explanatory power regarding the shared and non-shared material in the three gospels. Its weaknesses lie in the exceptions to those patterns, and in the hypothetical nature of its proposed collection of Jesus-sayings. Later scholars have advanced numerous elaborations and variations on the basic hypothesis, and even completely alternative hypotheses. Nevertheless, “the two-source hypothesis” commands the support of most biblical critics from all continents and denominations.

The two-source hypothesis was first articulated in 1838 by Christian Hermann Weisse, but it did not gain wide acceptance among German critics until Heinrich Julius Holtzmann endorsed it in 1863. Prior to Holtzmann, most Catholic scholars held to the Augustinian

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Matthew

² “Quelle” means “source” in the German language.

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Two-gospel_hypothesis.

hypothesis (Matthew → Mark → Luke) and Protestant biblical critics favored the Griesbach hypothesis (Matthew → Luke → Mark). The Two-Source Hypothesis crossed the channel into England in the 1880s primarily due to the efforts of William Sanday, culminating in B. H. Streeter's definitive statement of the case in 1924. Streeter further argued that additional sources, referred to as M and L, lie behind the material in Matthew and Luke respectively.

There are dissenters from the Two-Source Hypothesis. One modern writer states⁴ the following that Matthew was originally written in Hebrew, and not long after the Crucifixion.

“Early Christian witnesses indicate that Matthew was the first gospel written, and that it was originally written in Hebrew. Papias (ca. 70-155 A.D.), bishop of Hierapolis, wrote that “Matthew collected the oracles in the Hebrew language, and each interpreted them as best he could.” This witness by Papias has been treated quite roughly, as modern writers first have assumed, he meant Aramaic when he said Hebrew, and then rejected his comment anyway. There are multiple reasons for this, but one primary reason is that a Hebrew Matthew is inconsistent with the modern two-source theory, the predominant theory of the origin of Matthew. The two-source theory stipulates that Matthew and Luke drew from the gospel of Mark and a second source of Jesus sayings, usually designated as “Q”. Nevertheless, other church fathers repeated and expanded on the comments of Papias. Irenaeus wrote: “Matthew also issued a written gospel among the Hebrews in their own language.” Origen, quoted by Eusebius wrote: “Matthew...composed as it was in the Hebrew language.” Finally, Jerome wrote: “Matthew, who wrote in the Hebrew language...” (Epist 20.5). Jerome was a formidable scholar who translated the Old Testament from Hebrew into Latin, and he certainly knew the difference between Hebrew and Aramaic.”

There exists today what is called the Gospel of Matthew in Hebrew, called the “Shem Tov Gospel of Matthew”. This was used in the 14th century by Jews to refute the Christians. However, it is unlikely related to Matthew’s original Hebrew text since there are many revisions. For example, Jesus is never called “Christ” in the Shem Tov Matthew document, and it may be just a translation from the Greek text or from the Latin Vulgate.

Mark

Most scholars agree⁵ that Mark was the first of the gospels to be composed⁶, and that the authors of Matthew and Luke used it plus a second document called the Q source when composing their own gospels.

The Gospel of Mark is anonymous, meaning that the author never mentions his name. Early tradition commencing with Papias of Hierapolis links it to John Mark⁷, a companion and interpreter of the Apostle Peter, and hence its author is often called Mark. But most scholars are

⁴ <http://datingthenewtestament.com/Matthew.htm>

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Mark.

⁶ This means that most scholars agree that the governing principle is the Two-Source Hypothesis.

⁷ As we will see later, there were three Apostles of the Seventy (Luke 10:1-20) named Mark: the Evangelist Mark, John Mark and Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. Many people confuse them and think that they were all the same person.

content to identify the author of Mark's gospel as an unknown first-century Christian. It was probably written c. AD 66–70, during Nero's persecution of the Christians in Rome or the Jewish revolt.

Mark was written in Greek, for a gentile audience. That they were gentiles is shown by the author's need to explain Jewish traditions and translate Aramaic terms of Greek-speaking Christians. Rome⁸, Galilee, Antioch⁹, and southern Syria have all been offered as alternative places of authorship. The author may have been influenced by Greco-Roman biographies and rhetorical forms, popular novels and romances, and the Homeric epics. Nevertheless, he mentions almost no public figures, makes no allusions to Greek or Roman literature, and takes all his references from the Jewish scriptures, mostly in their Greek versions from the Septuagint. His book is not history in the modern sense, or even in the sense of classical Greek and Roman historians. Instead it is history in an eschatological or apocalyptic sense, depicting Jesus caught up in events at the end of time.

The 19th century recognition of Mark as the earliest gospel¹⁰ led to the belief that it must therefore be the most reliable. This conclusion was shaken by two works published in the early decades of the 20th century. In 1901 William Wrede argued strongly that the "Messianic secret" motif in Mark was a creation of the early church rather than a reflection of the historical Jesus. In 1919 Karl Ludwig Schmidt showed how the links between the episodes are the invention of the writer, thus undermining the claim that the gospel is a reliable guide to the chronology of Jesus' mission. The modern consensus is that Mark's purpose was to present a theological message rather than to write history, but this gospel is nevertheless still seen as the most reliable of the four in terms of its overall description of Jesus's life and ministry.

The gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke bear¹¹ a striking resemblance to each other, so much so that their contents can easily be set side by side in parallel columns. The fact that they share so much material verbatim and yet also exhibit important differences has led to a number of hypotheses explaining their interdependence, a phenomenon termed the Synoptic Problem. Traditionally, Mark was thought to be a summary of Matthew. For example, Augustine of Hippo believed they were written in order, "first Matthew, then Mark, thirdly Luke, lastly John" and that Mark followed Matthew as "his attendant and epitomizer". Today, the most widely accepted hypothesis is that Mark was the first gospel and was used as a source by both Matthew and Luke, together with considerable additional material. The strongest argument for this is the fact that Matthew and Luke agree with each other in their sequence of stories and events only when they also agree with Mark.

Luke

Luke is¹² the longest of the four gospels and the longest book in the New Testament; together with Acts of the Apostles it makes up a two-volume work from the same author, called Luke–Acts. The cornerstone of Luke–Acts' theology is "salvation history", the author's understanding that God's purpose is seen in the way he has acted, and will continue to act, in

⁸ Mark uses a number of Latin terms.

⁹ Third-largest city in the Roman Empire, located in northern Syria.

¹⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Mark.

¹¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Mark.

¹² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Luke.

history. The gospel's sources are the Gospel of Mark (for the narrative of Christ's earthly life), the sayings collection called the Q source (for his teachings), and a collection of material called the L source, which is found only in this gospel.

Luke–Acts does not name its author. According to Church tradition this was Luke the Evangelist, the companion of Paul, but while this view is still occasionally put forward the scholarly consensus emphasizes the many contradictions between Acts and the authentic Pauline letters. The most probable date for its composition is around 80–110 AD, and there is evidence that it was still being revised well into the 2nd century.

Luke–Acts is a religious-political history¹³ of the Founder of the church and his successors, in both deeds and words. The author describes his book as a "narrative" (*diegesis*), rather than as a gospel, and implicitly criticizes his predecessors for not giving their readers the speeches of Jesus and the Apostles. Such speeches were the mark of a "full" report, the vehicle through which ancient historians conveyed the meaning of their narratives. He seems to have taken as his model the works of two respected Classical authors, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who wrote a history of Rome, and the Jewish historian Josephus, author of a history of the Jews. All three authors anchor the histories of their respective peoples by dating the births of the founders (Romulus, Moses and Jesus) and narrate the stories of the founders' births from God, so that they are sons of God. Each founder taught authoritatively, appeared to witnesses after death, and ascended to heaven. Crucial aspects of the teaching of all three concerned the relationship between rich and poor and the question of whether "foreigners" were to be received into the people.

The author seems to have used as his sources the Gospel of Mark, the sayings collection called the Q source, and a collection of material called the L source. Mark, written around 70 AD, provided the narrative outline, but Mark contains comparatively little of Jesus' teachings. For these Luke turned to Q, which consisted mostly, although not exclusively, of "sayings". Most scholars are reasonably sure that Q existed and that it can be reconstructed. Mark and Q account for about 64% of Luke. The remaining material, known as the L source, is of unknown origin and date. Most Q and L-source material is grouped in two clusters, Luke 6:17–8:3 and 9:51–18:14, and L-source material forms the first two sections of the gospel (the preface and infancy¹⁴ and childhood narratives).

John

The authorship¹⁵ of the Johannine works, the Gospel of John, Epistles of John, and the Book of Revelation, has been debated by scholars since at least the 2nd century AD. The main debate centers on who authored the writings, and which of the writings, if any, can be ascribed to a common author.

There may have been a single author for the gospel and the three epistles. Tradition attributes all the books to John the Apostle. Most scholars agree that all three letters are written by the same author, although there is debate on who that author is. Although some scholars

¹³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Luke.

¹⁴ The Evangelist Luke knew the Virgin Mary quite well, and he visited her often. He painted (wrote) a number of icons of the Virgin Mary holding her young Son, where icons similar to these are prominently displayed on the iconostasis of all Orthodox Churches today. Thus, Orthodox tradition can account for the information found in the "L-Source".

¹⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_John.

conclude the author of the epistles was different from that of the gospel, all four works probably originated from the same community, traditionally and plausibly attributed to Ephesus, *c.* 90-110.

In the case of Revelation, many modern scholars agree that it was written by a separate author, John of Patmos, *c.* 95 with some parts possibly dating to Nero's reign in the early 60s.

The Gospel of John, the three Johannine epistles, and the Book of Revelation, exhibit marked similarities, although more so between the gospel and the epistles (especially the gospel and 1 John) than between those and Revelation. Most scholars therefore treat the five as a single corpus of Johannine literature, albeit not from the same author.

The gospel of John went through two to three stages, or "editions", before reaching its current form around AD 90–110. It speaks of an unnamed "disciple whom Jesus loved" as the source of its traditions, but does not say specifically that he is its author. Christian tradition identified this disciple as the apostle John, but for a variety of reasons the majority of scholars have abandoned this view or hold it only tenuously.

One of the most famous icons of the Apostle John depicts him dictating some of his writing to his disciple Prochorus, one of the first seven "deacons". Prochorus followed John like Luke followed Paul. If John dictated some of his writing to a different disciple later, it would appear to the higher critics that these later writings were written by a different person, since they were!



Byzantine [illumination](#) depicting John dictating to his disciple, [Prochorus](#) (c. 1100).

The writings of John are sometimes said to be linked in some way to the writings of Paul, and there is a connection. Before the Twelve Apostles left Jerusalem on their various missionary journeys, they divided the world up into various regions, then drew lots to see who went where. The Apostle John drew as his lot the area of Asia Minor¹⁶; however, he couldn't go there immediately since Christ had given him the charge of caring for the Virgin Mary as his own mother (John 19:25-27). If the Virgin Mary passed away in the mid-50's AD, John was delayed by this time in going to his own missionary journeys. To fill in for John, Paul did a lot of work in Asia Minor before the mid-50's and left many of his Epistles with the Asia Minor Churches.

Paul said of this, "Then last of all, as to an abortion, He was seen by me also. ⁹ For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God *which was* with me. ¹¹ Therefore, whether *it was* I or they, so we preach and so you believed" (1 Corinthians 15:8-11).

¹⁶ We see evidence of John's Lot being Asia Minor from Revelation 2-3, the letters to the seven Churches. Plus, John spent most of the latter part of his life in Asia Minor.

The Life of the Apostle Matthew

Gospel: Matthew 9:9-13: Matthew as a Publican

Matthew was the son of Alphaeus (Mark 2:14), who was also called Cleopas, and Matthew's brother, James, was also one of the Twelve Apostles. Since Cleopas was the brother of Joseph, the Betrothed of the Virgin Mary, Matthew was Jesus' step cousin. See Figure 1 for details. Matthew's father, Alphaeus (Cleopas), along with the Evangelist Luke, met the risen Christ on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-18). And his mother, Mary, the wife of Clopas, was one of the myrrh-bearing women at the foot of the Cross and at the Tomb (John 19:25).

A number of tax collectors had come to John the Baptist for baptism (Luke 3:12-13). Matthew may have been one of them. John the Baptist's instruction to them was to hold to the Mosaic Law and collect only what was appointed, and avoid gouging people.

Matthew's given name was Levi (Mark 2:14, Luke 5:27, Matthew 9:9), but he later took the name Matthew ("The gift of Yahweh") after his call to follow Jesus. As a publican, Matthew worked at "the tax office" (Matthew 9:9, Mark 2:14, Luke 5:27), which could also be called a "toll booth" for collecting use fees. The toll collector could charge whatever fees the traffic would bear, so long as he paid the Roman government what they thought they should get. As a result, Matthew was a wealthy man and owned a large house.

Tribute, by taxation, had to be paid to the Roman government¹⁷. Roman officials sold the right to collect taxes to the highest bidder. The tax commissioner, or chief publican, would then have to supply a certain amount of money from his area. He employed local people as the collectors (publicans) and both commissioner and collectors would tax excessively so that they made a good living as well as passing on what was required by the government. Zacchaeus was a chief publican (Luke 19:2) and Matthew was one of the local collectors.

Taxes were collected¹⁸ as "poll tax" and "ground tax". In addition, taxes were collected on imports and exports. The "poll tax" was collected according to the population of an area. To determine how much tax the chief publican needed to collect, "a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered" (Luke 2:1). The "ground tax" amounted to the monetary equivalent of 1/10 of all grain and 1/5 of all wine and fruit grown. Imports and exports were taxed at tollbooths along the great public highways and seaports. It is the consensus among the Early Church Fathers¹⁹ that Matthew's job was at one of these tollbooths.

Hatred of publicans in Palestine²⁰ was so intense that the Rabbis declared them incapable of bearing testimony in Jewish court, because they were regarded as being so dishonest. The standard used by the Levitical judges was the agreement of two or three witnesses (Deuteronomy 17:6, 19:15). Jesus repeated this standard for use in the Church (Matthew 18:16), and Apostolic Tradition followed Rabbinical tradition that was under strict requirements to inquire diligently

¹⁷ Ralph Gower, The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times, Moody Press, Chicago, 1998, p. 178.

¹⁸ Alfred Edersheim, Sketches of Jewish Social Life, Hendrickson, Peabody, MA, 1994, pp. 52-54.

¹⁹ Tertullian, "On Idolatry", I, ii, 12.

John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Timothy, XI, Moral

²⁰ Alfred Edersheim, Sketches of Jewish Social Life, Hendrickson, Peabody, MA, 1994, pp. 55-56.

into every matter (Deuteronomy 17:2-7). Some questions asked by the Early Church bishops²¹ were: “Is this the accused’s first case, or does he do this habitually? What is the character of the two or three witnesses? Are they jointly consenting in a lie, as did the Jewish leaders against Christ?” “Let the witnesses²² therefore be meek, free from anger, full of equity, kind, prudent, continent, free from wickedness, faithful, religious; for the testimony of such persons is firm on account of their character, and true on account of their mode of life”. In this light, publicans were legitimately excluded from testimony in court. Also citing the Scriptures (Deuteronomy 23:18), the Rabbis classed publicans with harlots and homosexuals and refused to accept their charitable gifts.

When John the Baptist came preaching repentance and the Coming of Christ, a number of tax collectors came to John for baptism (Luke 3:12-13). Matthew may have been one of them. John’s instruction to them was to hold to the Mosaic Law and collect only what was appointed, and avoid gouging people.

When Jesus called Matthew, the publican, He called someone who was the outcast of Jewish society. Immediately after Jesus called him, Matthew gave a great feast in his house, and he invited a great number of other tax collectors (Luke 5:29) and “sinners”, along with Jesus’ disciples (Mark 2:15). This feast was so prominent that the Scribes and Pharisees complained to Jesus’ disciples, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” Jesus answered with His much-quoted reply, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice’. For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance” (Matthew 9:12-13). This feast described by Matthew in his Gospel has been chosen as the Gospel lesson for the Feast Day of the Apostle Matthew (November 16) to illustrate the mercy of God that had been shown to Matthew.

Jesus criticized the Pharisees and lawyers later, saying, “For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon.’ The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners! But wisdom is justified by all her children’” (Luke 7:33-35).

John Chrysostom commented²³ on this to say that the Lord did not congregate with publicans as if He were one of them, but He sought them out where they were to lead them back to the Faith:

“For such is the quality of a physician; unless he endures the corruption of the sick, he does not free them from their infirmity. And yet He incurred here an evil report: first by eating with him, then in Matthew’s house, and thirdly, in company with many publicans. See how they reproach Him with this. And He was not ashamed, but overlooked all these things, that he might accomplish what He had set before him; which was accordingly done. For the publican was actually converted, and thus became a better man”.

“And to teach you that this great thing was done by his partaking of the table with him, hear what Zacchaeus, another publican, said. When he heard Christ saying, ‘Today, I must stay in your house’, the delight gave him wings, and

²¹ Roberts and Donaldson, Apostolic Constitutions II, 6, 47, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 7.

²² Roberts and Donaldson, Apostolic Constitutions II, 6, 49, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 7.

²³ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, 30, 2

he said, 'The half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold'. And to him Jesus said, 'This day has salvation has come to this house' (Luke 19:5-9). So, it is possible by all ways to give instruction".

"But how is it, one may say, that Paul commands, 'If any man that is called a brother be a fornicator or covetous, with such a one do not eat?' (1 Corinthians 5:11) In the first place, it is not clear whether he gives this charge to teachers also, and not rather to brethren only. Next, those at Matthew's banquet were not yet perfect, nor had they become brethren. And besides, with respect to them that had become brethren, Paul commands to shrink from them when they continue to live as if they hadn't. But these publicans had now ceased, and were converted".

Clement of Alexandria²⁴ connected Matthew's and Zacchaeus' experience to the words of Christ in the Beatitudes: Christ is not concerned with material things, but in finding that which was lost. He praises those who are meek by choice, not those who have been made meek by necessity.

"The commandment is expressed in these words, 'Take heed and beware of covetousness. For a man's life does not consist in the abundance of those things which he possesses' (Luke 12:15). 'For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?' (Matthew 16:26) 'Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. Life is more than food, and the body *is more* than clothing' (Luke 12:22-23). 'For your Father knows that you need these things' Luke 12:30). 'But seek first the kingdom of heaven, and its righteousness' for these are the great things, and the things which are small and appertain to this life 'shall be added to you' (Matthew 6:33)".

"Therefore Christ, who trains the soul, reckons one rich, not by his gifts, but by his choice. Zacchaeus, or, according to some, Matthew, the chief of the publicans, on hearing that the Lord had condescended to come to him, said, 'Lord, and if I have taken anything by false accusation, I restore him fourfold' (Luke 19:8); on which the Savior said, 'The Son of man, on coming today, has found that which was lost' (Luke 19:10).

Again, on seeing the rich cast into the treasury according to their wealth, and the widow two mites, He said 'that the widow had cast in more than them all,' for "they had contributed of their abundance, but she of her destitution' (Luke 21:1-4). And because He brought all things to bear on the discipline of the soul, He said, 'Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth' (Matthew 5:5). And the meek are those who have quelled the battle of unbelief in the soul, the battle of wrath, and lust, and the other forms that are subject to them. And He praises those meek by choice, not by necessity".

By leaving his job at the tax office, Matthew laid aside a well-paying trade for no worldly benefit and no worldly return. In addition, Matthew also left²⁵ all his worldly possessions behind.

²⁴ Clement of Alexandria, Stromata, IV, 6

When Jesus called others to do the same thing, such as the rich young synagogue ruler, they couldn't do it (Mark 10:17-22, Luke 18:18-23, Matthew 19:16-22). For making such a choice as the Twelve did in leaving everything to follow Jesus, they incurred a special reward (Matthew 19:27-30).

John Chrysostom spoke²⁶ of covetousness and love of money as a disease. Publicans had this disease more than most, but Matthew stripped himself of the mischief, quenched his thirst, and followed after spiritual gain. Others like Judas, Gehazi, Achan, Ahab, Ananias and Sapphira were not able to do that.

“Whoever fell into this disease, and was easily rid of it? That well-known Zacchaeus. For who could be fonder of money than a publican? But all at once he became a man of strict life, and put out all that blaze. Matthew in like manner; for he too was a publican, living in continual rapine. But he likewise all at once stripped himself of the mischief, quenched his thirst, and followed after spiritual gain. Considering therefore these, and the like to them, do not despair. For if you will, quickly you shall be able to recover. And if you please, according to the rule of physicians, we will prescribe accurately what you should do”.

“It is necessary then to be right in this, that we never despair of our salvation. Next, we must look not only upon the examples of those who have done well, but also upon the sufferings of those who have persisted in sin. For as we have considered Zacchaeus and Matthew, even so ought we also to take account of Judas (John 12:6), Gehazi (2 Kings 5:20-27), Achan (Joshua 7), Ahab (1 Kings 21:1-19), and Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11), in order that by the one, we may cast out all despair, and by the other cut off all indolence. And let us teach people to say what the Jews said on that day, approaching Peter (Acts 2:37, see also 16:30), ‘What must we do to be saved?’ And let them hear what they must do”.

The change in lifestyle for Matthew (and Zacchaeus) after the banquet was dramatic. Prior to that, Matthew lived in luxury in a large house with servants at his disposal. After the banquet, he had no income and began to follow Jesus, supported only by the donations of what came to be known as the Myrrh-bearing women (Luke 8:2-3). Gregory of Nyssa addressed²⁷ this: Matthew imitated Zacchaeus in making restitution for his life as a tax collector and in giving his goods to the poor.

“For as darkness is dispelled by light, and black disappears as whiteness is spread over it, so the old man also disappears when adorned with the works of righteousness. You see how Zacchaeus, by the change of his life, slew the publican, making fourfold restitution to those whom he had unjustly damaged, and the rest he divided with the poor — the treasure which he had before gotten by ill means from the poor whom he oppressed. The Evangelist Matthew, another publican, of the same business with Zacchaeus, at once after his call changed his life as if it had been a mask²⁸. Paul was a persecutor, but after the grace bestowed

²⁵ The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2003, November 16.

²⁶ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Corinthians, XI, 9

²⁷ Gregory of Nyssa, A Sermon for the Day of Lights

on him an Apostle, bearing the weight of his fetters for Christ's sake, as an act of amends and repentance for those unjust bonds which he once received from the Law, and bore for use against the Gospel. Such ought you to be in your regeneration; so ought you to blot out your habits that tend to sin. For after the grace bestowed, we are called His children".

The First Year of the Church: Matthew Drafts His Gospel

The current scholarly opinion on when Matthew drafted his Gospel, if indeed it was Matthew himself, is 70-110 AD based largely on scholarly work done by the German higher critics in the late 19th century. This scholarly opinion contrasts sharply with Orthodox tradition – which the scholars dismiss as being “not scholarly”. This document will explore Orthodox tradition much more extensively in order to contrast it with the 19th century German higher critics.

The last mention of the Twelve as being together in Jerusalem is at the ordination of the seven “deacons” (Acts 6:1-7). At the martyrdom of Stephen and the others, which occurred just short of one year after Pentecost²⁹, the saints “were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, where they went everywhere preaching the Word (Acts 8:4), except³⁰ the Apostles” (Acts 8:1). Only Peter and John from among the Twelve seem to have remained in the Jerusalem area. When Herod later killed James, the son of Zebedee, with the sword (Acts 12:2), James had just returned from evangelism in Spain. It is, perhaps, significant that Luke doesn't refer to the Twelve here and subsequently, since most of them had already left for missions abroad.

Before the Twelve Apostles left Jerusalem on their various missionary journeys, they divided the world up into various regions, then drew lots to see who went where. The Apostle John drew as his lot the area of Asia Minor³¹; however, he couldn't go there immediately since Christ had given him the charge of caring for the Virgin Mary as his own mother (John 19:25-27). If the Virgin Mary passed away in the mid-50's AD, John was delayed by this time in going on his own missionary journeys. To fill in for John, Paul did a lot of work in Asia Minor before the mid-50's and left many of his Epistles with the Asia Minor Churches.

Paul said of this, “Then last of all, as to an abortion, He was seen by me also. For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God *which was* with me. Therefore, whether *it was* I or they, so we preach and so you believed” (1 Corinthians 15:8-11).

²⁸ Fr. Stephen Janos concludes that Matthew, like Zacchaeus, also made fourfold restitution, and in addition, distributed his remaining possessions to the poor. See the web site www.oca.org for Matthew's Feast Day of November 16.

²⁹ That is, Stephen was stoned on December 27th of the same year as the Crucifixion. See Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue from Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, December 27.

³⁰ When Luke referred to “the Apostles”, he included the Seventy with the Twelve.

³¹ We see evidence of John's Lot being Asia Minor from Revelation 2-3, the letters to the seven Churches. Plus, John spent most of the latter part of his life in Asia Minor.

As we will see later in this document, Matthew's Missionary Journeys took him to Ethiopia, where he worked among the cannibals there; and he also died there. So, he had to have written his Gospel before he left for Ethiopia, since he needed access to the genealogical records that were kept in the Temple in order to complete his genealogy of Christ (Matthew 1:1-17).

The death of Stephen began a major bloodbath in Jerusalem. Nicanor, another of the seven "deacons", was martyred that same day also, along with 200 others in short succession³². According to tradition, Nicodemus also died as he and others were lamenting the death of Stephen, Nicanor and the others. The "great lamentation" (Acts 8:2) over the death of Stephen encompassed more than just Stephen. Gamaliel buried Stephen in his own crypt; then he buried Nicodemus in the same crypt, and was later buried there himself³³ a few years later.

"Now Saul (Paul) was consenting to Stephen's death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except for the apostles. As for Saul, he made havoc of the church entering every house and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison" (Acts 8:1, 3). In Paul's testimony nearly 30 years later, he admitted that he forced them to blaspheme (Acts 26:11). This persecution lasted for about three years, or until 34 AD when Paul was converted on the road to Damascus. With Paul not leading the attack against the Christians, "the Churches throughout all Judea, Galilee and Samaria had peace and were edified" (Acts 9:31).

In considering the spread of the Early Church, one might think about how terrible the persecutions were. However, as John Chrysostom put it³⁴, this was actually a great benefit to the Church because it forced the teachers – The Apostles – to spread out throughout the world.

"The persecution turned out to be no light benefit, as 'to those who love God all things work together for good' (Romans 8:28). If they had made it their express study how best to establish the Church, they would have done nothing else but this; they would have dispersed the teachers. When Stephen was slain, when Paul was twice in danger, when the Apostles were scourged, then the Gentiles received the word, and also the Samaritans. Paul declared: 'It was necessary that the Word of God should be spoken to you (the Jews) first; but since you reject it and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles' (Acts 13:46). It is no small part of providential management for Paul to be there. In this way that Voice of the Gospel, that Trumpet of Heaven is not shut up in Jerusalem. Truly this is the reason why it was there they were appointed to be called Christians, because Paul spent so long a time in Antioch!"

The consensus of many early writers³⁵ is that Matthew drafted his Gospel in Hebrew at

³² Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue from Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, July 28.

³³ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue from Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, August 2, December 27.

³⁴ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Acts, XXV.

³⁵ Irenaeus, Against Heresies, III, 1.

Clement of Alexandria, Stromata, I, 2

Eusebius, "The Writings of Papias", Church History, III, 39

Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures, XIV, 15

Schaff and Wace, "Appendix: The Canonical Epistle of Gregory of Nyssa", 8, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, v. 6

the request of the Jewish Christians prior to leaving the Jerusalem area for his missionary journeys. The other Apostles living in Jerusalem approved³⁶ such an undertaking for Matthew. Eusebius said of this³⁷,

“For Matthew, who had at first preached to the Hebrews, when he was about to go to other peoples, committed his Gospel to writing in his native tongue, and thus compensated those whom he was obliged to leave for the loss of his presence”.

Jerome wrote³⁸ about this Hebrew original, which still existed in his day, in the library at Caesarea.

“Matthew, also called Levi, apostle and before that a publican, composed a gospel of Christ at first published in Judea in Hebrew for the sake of those of the circumcision who believed, but this was afterwards translated into Greek though by what author is uncertain. The Hebrew itself has been preserved until the present day in the library at Caesarea which Pamphilus so diligently gathered. I have also had the opportunity of having the volume described to me by the Nazarenes of Beroea, a city of Syria, who use it. In this it is to be noted that wherever the Evangelist, whether on his own account or in the person of our Lord the Savior quotes the testimony of the Old Testament he does not follow the authority of the translators of the Septuagint but the Hebrew. Wherefore these two forms exist ‘Out of Egypt have I called my son’ (Matthew 2:14, Hosea 11:1), and ‘for he shall be called a Nazarene’ (Matthew 2:23)”.

Irenaeus wrote³⁹ that Matthew’s goal in drafting his Gospel was to emphasize the humanity of Christ.

“The Gospel according to Matthew was written to the Jews. For they laid particular stress upon the fact that Christ should be of the seed of David. Matthew also, who had a still greater desire to establish this point, took particular pains to afford them convincing proof that Christ is of the seed of David; and therefore, he commences with an account of His genealogy”.

Origin also stated⁴⁰ that Matthew emphasized the humanity of Christ: “For Matthew, writing for the Hebrews who looked for Him who was to come of the line of Abraham and of David, says, ‘The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham’”. Origin continued⁴¹, “I have learned by tradition that the Gospel according to

Schaff and Wace, “Prefaces to Jerome’s Commentary on the Four Gospels”, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, v. 6

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2003, November 16.

³⁶ The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2003, November 16, p. 709.

³⁷ Eusebius, “The Order of the Gospels”, Church History, III, 24.

³⁸ Jerome and Gennadius, “Lives of Illustrious Men”, II, 3, Post Nicene Fathers, Series II, v. 3.

³⁹ Roberts and Donaldson, “Fragments from the Lost Writings of Irenaeus”, 29, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 1

⁴⁰ Allen Menzies, “Origin’s First Book of the Commentary on John”, 6, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 10

⁴¹ Allen Menzies, “Fragments from Origin’s First Book of the Commentary on Matthew”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 10.

Matthew, who was at one time a publican and afterwards an Apostle of Jesus Christ, was written first; and that he composed it in the Hebrew tongue and published it for the converts from Judaism”. Origin also stated⁴², “Matthew is reported by tradition to have published his Gospel before the others, to the Hebrews, those, namely, of the circumcision who believed”.

John Chrysostom stated⁴³ that Matthew’s purpose in writing his Gospel was rooted in elaborating on Jesus’ humanity:

“Of Matthew it is said, that when those who from amongst the Jews had believed came to him, and asked him to leave to them in writing those same things, which he had spoken to them by word, he also composed his Gospel in the language of the Hebrews. And Mark too, in Egypt, is said to have done this self-same thing at the entreaty of the disciples”.

“For this cause then Matthew, as writing to Hebrews, sought to show nothing more, than that He was from Abraham, and David; but Luke, as discoursing to all in general, traces up the account higher, going back even to Adam. And the one begins with His generation, because nothing was so soothing to the Jew as to be told that Christ was the offspring of Abraham and David: the other does not so, but mentions many other things, and then proceeds to the genealogy”.

Tertullian also mentioned⁴⁴ Matthew’s purpose as being evident in the words he used to begin his Gospel:

“There is, first of all, Matthew, that most faithful chronicler of the Gospel, because the companion of the Lord. For no other reason in the world than to show us clearly the fleshly original of Christ, he thus begins his Gospel: ‘The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham’”.

Tertullian continued⁴⁵ to say the purpose of the four Gospel writers was not the same; because of this, they complement each other.

“Of the apostles, therefore, John and Matthew first instill faith into us; while of apostolic men, Luke and Mark renew it afterwards. These all start with the same principles of the faith, so far as relates to the one only God the Creator and His Christ, how that He was born of the Virgin, and came to fulfill the law and the prophets”.

Jerome stated⁴⁶ that the chief object of Matthew’s Gospel were the Jewish believers in Christ who adhered to the Law.

“The first evangelist is Matthew, the publican, who was surnamed Levi. He published his Gospel in Judaea in the Hebrew language, chiefly for the sake of Jewish believers in Christ, who adhered in vain to the shadow of the law, although the substance of the Gospel had come”.

⁴² Allen Menzies, “Origin’s Sixth Book of the Commentary on John”, 17, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 10.

⁴³ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, I, 7.

⁴⁴ Tertullian, On the Flesh of Christ, II, v, 5,22.

⁴⁵ Tertullian, Against Marcion, II, ii, 4, 2.

⁴⁶ Schaff and Wace, “Preface to Jerome’s Commentary on Matthew”, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, v. 6

Clement of Alexandria referred⁴⁷ to Matthew's Gospel as the "Gospel to the Hebrews". Quoting from portions of it, since copies were still extant in his day, Clement pointed out some differences between the Hebrew and the Greek, which may reflect some editing by the Apostles to reflect the consensus of the Church.

According to the Acts of Barnabas⁴⁸, the Apostle Barnabas carried a copy of the Gospel of Matthew in Hebrew with him on his missionary journeys after he and Paul split up in c. 48 AD (Acts 15:36-40).

Hippolytus stated⁴⁹ that Nathanael brought a copy of the Hebrew Gospel of Matthew to India. This would have been about the same time that Barnabas and Paul had split up. It is also traditional⁵⁰ that Nathanael translated the Gospel of Matthew into some of the languages of India, using the gift of tongues that he had received at Pentecost.

Eusebius wrote⁵¹ that Pantaenus, the head of the Catechetical School in Alexandria⁵², had gone to India in the 3rd Century. There he found a copy of the Gospel of Matthew in Hebrew that Nathanael had brought. Jerome concurs⁵³ with Eusebius that Nathanael had brought a copy of the Gospel of Matthew to India, and that Pantaenus had brought back from India a copy of one of the Hebrew manuscripts. There is the question as to whether the Christians in India could read the Hebrew Gospel anymore.

The hymns of the Church speak of Matthew and his Gospel as follows:

"The exceeding most wise Matthew⁵⁴, who was first to record the Gospel of Christ and illumined all creation under the sun, the excellent initiate of the mysteries of Christ, who is now honored with sacred hymns, begs forgiveness of sins for those who honor him with love".

"O Matthew, friend of Christ⁵⁵, you forsook all things for the love of Christ without hesitation, you ardently followed after Him Who called you, being the first evangelist in the world, describing the hour of judgment".

Matthew's Lifestyle as an Apostle

Clement of Alexandria stated⁵⁶ that, following Pentecost, "the apostle Matthew partook of seeds, nuts, and vegetables, without flesh, just as John the Baptist, who carried temperance to the

⁴⁷ Clement of Alexandria, Stromata, II, 9.

⁴⁸ Roberts and Donaldson, "The Acts of Barnabas", Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

⁴⁹ Hippolytus, On the Twelve Apostles, Where Each One of Them Preached, 6-7.

⁵⁰ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue from Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, June 11.

⁵¹ Eusebius, Church History, V, 10

⁵² This school dated to the planting of the Church in Alexandria by the Apostles according to Clement of Alexandria, Stromata, I, ii.

⁵³ Jerome and Gennadius, Lives of Illustrious Men, II, 36

⁵⁴ "Sedalion for Matins of the Commemoration of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew, August November 16th", Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

⁵⁵ "Ode VI for Matins of the Commemoration of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew, August November 16th", Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

⁵⁶ Clement of Alexandria, The Instructor, II, 1.

extreme in eating locusts and wild honey”. This implies that Matthew lived the rest of his life in a strict Orthodox fast.

An Orthodox fast can be a short fast where one refrains from food and water, or it can be an extended fast where one refrains from certain foods. In the strictest form of this extended fast, one refrains from meat, fish, dairy products, olive oil and alcohol. During Jesus’ earthly ministry, the Pharisees fasted twice a week (Luke 18:12) on Monday and Thursday⁵⁷. This was to remember Moses going back to Mt. Sinai the second time on a Thursday and returning on a Monday. The twice weekly fasts were also abstinence from all food from evening to evening.

Besides one day fasts, the Scripture also speaks of extended fasting where ordinary food was not consumed. This probably was something akin to Orthodox fasts where the faster consumes one uncooked vegetarian meal per day. Some examples are Queen Esther (Esther 4), King David (Psalm 35:9-16, 109:21-29), the people of Nineveh (Jonah 3), and Nehemiah and Ezra (Nehemiah 9:1-3).

In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul fasted a lot. For example, besides keeping the appointed fast days such as the Day of Atonement (Acts 27:9), Paul and Barnabas fasted and prayed over the ordination of presbyters (Acts 14:21-23). As the Lord instructed (Matthew 6:16-18), Paul did not trumpet his fasting to sound spiritual, but we get hints that he did it a lot (2 Corinthians 6:5, 11:27).

One of the points of fasting was to subdue the fleshly desires. In the Mosaic Law (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy), the Hebrew word *tsoom* (meaning “to cover the mouth” or to fast) is not used at all. Instead the people were instructed to “humble your souls” at the Day of Atonement. Fasting was just a means of doing so (see Ezra 8:21, Daniel 9:3, 10:12).

John Chrysostom commented⁵⁸ on fasting to say that it brings blessings. One who prays and fasts is not covetous, but is light, wakeful and humble. The Apostles were almost always fasting, and this is why they were so effective.

“Do you see how He now proceeds to lay beforehand in them the foundation of His doctrine about fasting? You see, at any rate, how many blessings spring from (both prayer and fasting). For he who is praying as he ought, and fasting, has not many wants, and he who has not many wants cannot be covetous; he who is not covetous, will be also more disposed for almsgiving. He who fasts is light, and winged, and prays with wakefulness, and quenches his wicked lusts, and propitiates God, and humbles his soul when lifted up. Therefore, even the Apostles were almost always fasting. He who prays with fasting has his wings double, and lighter than the very winds. For neither does he yawn or stretch himself or grow lazy in prayer as is the case with most men, but is more vehement than fire. Such a one is most especially an enemy to the evil spirits. Nothing is mightier than the man who prays sincerely.”

⁵⁷ Merrill Unger, Unger’s Bible Dictionary, Moody Press, Chicago, 1967, p. 346.

⁵⁸ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, LVII, 4.

The hymns of the Church refer to the character of Matthew's missionary journeys as follows:

“You utterly abandoned⁵⁹ the tumult of earthly things; for having hearkened to the voice of the incarnate Word, you were shown to be a steward and God-pleasing herald of His grace. As an eye-witness and servant of the shining Word of the pre-eternal Father, O Apostle, you went forth, proclaiming the glad tidings of His coming to all the nations”.

“With the trumpet of your words⁶⁰ you summoned men to the knowledge of God, O ever lauded one. Having driven the assemblies of the deceived from the earth, you guided the faithful to one unity of mind. Pray now that those who ever celebrate your honored memory with faith may be delivered from corruption and misfortunes”.

Matthew Begins His Missionary Journeys

To determine who went where on their missionary journeys, the Twelve had divided up the world into different regions, and then cast lots as to who went to which region⁶¹. For example, Thomas' lot was India and the Far East; John's lot was Ephesus and Asia Minor; Andrew's lot was Russia plus other areas and Matthew's lot⁶² was Ethiopia in Africa. The Church Historian, Socrates Scholasticus, also stated⁶³ that Matthew's lot was Ethiopia, which extended into Central Africa. According to tradition⁶⁴, Matthew first traveled to Media and Parthia for a while. But little is known of his missionary journeys until the time of his death. Also, some confusion exists in distinguishing between Matthew and Matthias due to the similarity of their names and due to the fact that they both went to Africa.

Clement of Alexandria referred⁶⁵ to some of the teachings current in his day regarding how Matthew proceeded in his missionary journeys.

“They say in the traditions that Matthew the apostle constantly said, that ‘if the neighbor of an elect man sin, the elect man has sinned. For had he conducted himself as the Word prescribes, his neighbor also would have been filled with such reverence for the life he led as not to sin’”. By “sin”, he is referring to a constant, habitual sin, as the Lord said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin” (John 8:34). This gives us a hint of the high standards that Matthew set in his missionary journeys.

⁵⁹ “Ode I for Matins of the Commemoration of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew, August November 16th”, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

⁶⁰ “Stichera for Vespers of the Commemoration of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew, August November 16th”, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

⁶¹ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue from Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 6, October 9, November 30.

⁶² The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2003, November 16, p. 710.

⁶³ Socrates Scholasticus, Ecclesiastical History, I, 19.

⁶⁴ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue from Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, November 16.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2003, November 16, p. 710.

⁶⁵ Clement of Alexandria, The Stromata, VII, 13.

John Chrysostom stated⁶⁶ that Matthew continued to style himself as a publican even in the days of his Apostleship (Matthew 10:3). He did this out of humility, owning up to the sins of his youth. In a similar manner, David cried out saying “My iniquities have gone over my head, and as a heavy burden have been burdensome to me” (Psalm 38:4). Isaiah also lamented, “I am unclean, and have unclean lips” (Isaiah 6:5). The three children in the furnace of fire, confessed and said that they have sinned and transgressed, and have not kept the commandments of God⁶⁷. Daniel again makes the same lamentation (Daniel 9:20-21).

As Matthew proceeded on his missionary journeys, he had no difficulty communicating with the various peoples he came in contact with. With the Gift of speaking in Tongues that he received at Pentecost, along with the rest of the 120 in the Upper Room, he was able to speak all the dialects of the Ethiopian language as well as other languages.

Matthew’s missionary journeys are commemorated in the hymns of the Church as follows:

“You were a divine image⁶⁸ of the primal Effulgence, as a disciple set afire by His splendors. Chanting to Him, you said, ‘O all-hymned Lord and God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!’” As servant of the Word, O most blessed one, you made your abode in the divine mansions where Christ abides, as the one all-divine Lord and God of our fathers promised you. Infirmities are banished and a multitude of demons are forced to flee by the gifts of the divine Spirit which are in you; wherein you did chant, O all-hymned Lord and God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!”

“You received the tree of life⁶⁹ as is meet, O preacher of the living God, having spread the glad tidings of life, the visitation of God to the world. For you did not permit your mind to become corrupt through the tree of knowledge, remaining an unshaken and immovable foundation of the Church, O most blessed one”.

Matthew Gets Help from the Ethiopian Eunuch

In Matthew’s days, there was a large Jewish population in (black) Ethiopia, that (still) traces its roots to the Queen of Sheba of Solomon’s time (1 Kings 10:1-10). People came from Ethiopia to Jerusalem regularly in obedience to the Mosaic Law (Deuteronomy 16:16), just as people were in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost from very remote areas (Acts 2:8-11). From Luke’s record in Acts, we see that Matthew had some advance help in Ethiopia from an unlikely source. This came as the Deacon Philip was traveling the desert road from Jerusalem to Gaza, where he met an Ethiopian eunuch who had come to Jerusalem to worship, and who was on his way home⁷⁰. The eunuch had great authority, reporting directly to the Queen of Ethiopia⁷¹, and

⁶⁶ John Chrysostom, Concerning the Power of Demons, I, 1.

⁶⁷ Septuagint Old Testament, Song of the Three Children, 1:4-6.

⁶⁸ “Ode VII for Matins of the Commemoration of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew, August November 16th”, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

⁶⁹ “Ode IX for Matins of the Commemoration of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew, August November 16th”, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

⁷⁰ His home was in Upper Nubia, South of the present Nubian Desert.

⁷¹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Acts, XIX, stated that in Ethiopia women were the rulers, and this was the law among them.

had charge of all her treasury (Acts 8:27-28).

John Chrysostom noted⁷² that even though he resided in Ethiopia and was beset with so much business, he came “to Jerusalem to worship” even when there was no festival going on. Great also is his studiousness, “sitting in his chariot, reading”, and that in the most violent heat of the day. And “the Spirit said to Philip, go and join yourself to this chariot. And Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, ‘Do you understand what you are reading?’ And he said, ‘How can I, except some man should guide me?’” (Acts 8: 29-31) Observe his piety; though he did not understand, he read, and then after reading, he examined.

Chrysostom noted⁷³ the lack of haughtiness of the eunuch. He was riding in a chariot and had servants to do the driving while he read from the scroll. This was obviously not a war chariot with spiked wheels, but a royal chariot such as was used by the Queen. Philip, on the other hand, was on foot, and would rank socially somewhere below the eunuch’s servants. When Philip spoke to the eunuch, the eunuch did not respond by saying, “Who are you?” The eunuch instead invited Philip to come up into the chariot to sit with him. He confessed his ignorance and showed his hurt to the physician. Philip, running alongside the chariot, showed that he had something to say, but yet he did it in a way that was very respectful to the dignity of the eunuch. The eunuch recognized the Grace of God in Philip, and did not *order* Philip to baptize him, but requested baptism from a lowly servant.

The eunuch was reading from Isaiah 53:7-8, which is a prophecy about the Crucifixion of Christ, which had just occurred in Jerusalem a little over a year earlier. Philip explained to him the significance of what he had been reading. Chrysostom commented, “Observe how it is Providentially ordered. First he reads and does not understand; then he reads the very text in which was the Passion and the Resurrection and the Gift”. After the baptism, when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away and translated him to Azotus (about 20 miles away). The eunuch, impressed out of his socks, went on his way rejoicing (Acts 8:32-40). This was done in order that the occurrence might be shown to be of God; that the eunuch might not consider it to be merely man.

Luke doesn’t mention whether the eunuch received the Gift of speaking in Tongues when he came up out of the water, but this is a possibility. The eunuch certainly wasn’t quiet about his experience when he returned home.

Chrysostom stated⁷⁴ that it was expedient that the Spirit caught Philip away; otherwise the eunuch would have desired to go with him, and Philip would have grieved him by declining to comply with his request; the time being not yet come. But at the same time here was an encouraging assurance for them that they shall also prevail over the heathen. For indeed the high character of the first believers was enough to move them. If the eunuch had stayed there, how could you fault him?

Chrysostom also noted⁷⁵ how angels assisted the preaching, not themselves preaching, but

⁷² John Chrysostom, Homilies on Acts, XIX.

⁷³ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XIX, v. 30.

⁷⁴ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XIX, v. 40.

⁷⁵ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XIX, Recapitulation.

calling the Apostles to the work. But the wonderful nature of the occurrence is shown also by this: that what of old was rare, and hardly done⁷⁶, here takes place with ease, and see with what frequency! The angel directed Philip in bodily matters to go to the desert road, but the Holy Spirit directed him in spiritual matters to begin speaking to the eunuch (Acts 8:26, 29).

With the conversion of the eunuch, a seed was planted in Ethiopia. A few years later, the Apostle Matthew came to Ethiopia, speaking the Ethiopian language, healing the sick and raising the dead, like the other Apostles. As Matthew moved about in Ethiopia, he had to deal with the cannibals in that area also, including those who had grossly disfigured their faces.

Matthew Returns to Jerusalem for the Funeral of the Virgin Mary

Matthew was busy on his missionary journeys in Ethiopia just prior to the time of the death of the Virgin Mary in c. 55 AD. As Mary reached her mid 70's, she was feeling the effects of old age. And it was then that the Archangel Gabriel appeared to her to tell her that her departure was imminent⁷⁷, and would occur in three days.

Shortly after Gabriel left, the Apostle John was translated in a bright cloud from wherever he was at the time. This was similar to the way the Deacon Philip was translated from the desert road between Jerusalem and Gaza to Azotus (Acts 8:26, 39-40), and as Habakkuk the prophet carried food to Daniel, who was in the lions' den, and quickly returned to Judaea⁷⁸. There is some disagreement among the Church Fathers as to whether John was in Ephesus or in some region of Judea. They contend that John did not leave the Virgin Mary alone during her lifetime, unless it was just briefly in the care of her stepson, James, the Lord's brother.

After John arrived⁷⁹, "the rest of the Twelve arrived also from whatever part of the world where they were then preaching the Gospel. All of the Twelve arrived except Thomas. They stood and went in, and greeted the queen mother with the following words: 'Hail, Mary, full of grace! The Lord be with you' (Luke 1:28). And she eagerly rose quickly, and bowed herself, and kissed them, and gave thanks to God. And Peter answered and said to the apostles, 'Let us each, according to what the Holy Spirit announced and commanded us, give full information to the mother of our Lord'. And those who had come likewise agreed to give an account of how they had come. So each of the Twelve gave Mary an account of where they were when they were summoned". "And Matthew also answered⁸⁰ and said, 'I have glorified and do glorify God, because when I was in a boat and overtaken by a storm, the sea raging with its waves, on a sudden a cloud of light overshadowing the stormy billow, changed it to a calm, and having snatched me up, set me down beside you'".

⁷⁶ Chrysostom is referring to angelic manifestations. For another occasion when the Word of the Lord was rare, see 1 Samuel 3:1.

⁷⁷ Roberts and Donaldson, "The Book of John Concerning the Falling Asleep of Mary", Ante-Nicene Fathers, v.8.
Roberts and Donaldson, "The Passing of Mary", Ante-Nicene Fathers, v.8.

⁷⁸ Lancelot C. L. Brenton, "Bel and the Dragon 1:33-39", The Septuagint with Apocrypha, Hendrickson, Peabody MA, 1990

⁷⁹ Roberts and Donaldson, ed., "The Passing of Mary, First Latin Form", Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

⁸⁰ Roberts and Donaldson, "The Book of John Concerning the Falling Asleep of Mary", Ante-Nicene Fathers, v.8.

“Then the blessed Mary said to her brethren: ‘What is this, that you have all come to Jerusalem?’ Peter, answering, said to her: ‘We had need to ask this of you. Certainly, as I think, none of us knows why we have come here today with such rapidity. And they all wondered that they were there when they heard these things. The blessed Mary said to them: ‘I asked my Son, before He endured the passion, that He and you should be at my death; and He granted me this gift. Whence you may know that my departure will be tomorrow’”.

“After Mary’s death the next day, the Apostles with great honor laid the body in a tomb on the Mount of Olives, then Thomas was suddenly brought to the Mount of Olives, like the others had been brought earlier. He saw Mary’s body going up to heaven, and began to cry out to her. Then the belt with which the Apostles had encircled her body was thrown down from heaven to the blessed Thomas. And taking it, and giving thanks to God, he came again into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, finding all the Apostles and a great crowd there. Then Thomas said, ‘Where have you laid her body?’ And they pointed out the sepulcher with their finger. And he said, ‘The body is not there’. But they didn’t believe Thomas. Then they went to the sepulcher, which was a new one hollowed out in the rock, and took up the stone; but they did not find the body, and did not know what to say. Then Thomas told them how he was singing mass in India — he still had on his sacerdotal robes. He, not knowing the word of God, had been brought to the Mount of Olives, and saw the body of the blessed Mary going up into heaven, and prayed her to give him a blessing. She heard his prayer, and threw him her belt, which she had about her. And the Apostles seeing the belt which they had put about her, glorified God, on account of the benediction which the blessed Mary had given him, and because he had seen her body going up into heaven. Then Thomas gave them his benediction, and said, ‘Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!’”

“And the same cloud⁸¹ by which they had been brought carried them back each to his own place. And so also the Apostles quickly returned to where they had at first been, to preach to the people of God”.

⁸¹ Roberts and Donaldson, ed., “The Passing of Mary, First Latin Form”, *Apocrypha of the New Testament*, Ante Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

The Martyrdom of Matthew

Abridged accounts of Matthew's martyrdom in Ethiopia are found in several traditional sources⁸². The account presented here⁸³ comes from one of the New Testament Apocryphal sources for more details of the events.

Toward the end of his life, Matthew was resting in a desert-like mountain during a time of prayer and fasting. There was no water nearby and his only food at that time was any fruit that had fallen because of the movement of the winds. While there, he had a vision from the Lord to go to the nearby city of Mryna⁸⁴, the city of the man-eaters, and to plant a rod that was given to him by the gate of the Church that he had founded. The rod, Matthew was told, would grow into a tree, great and lofty and with many branches, and its branches would extend to thirty cubits. And of each single branch the fruit would be different both to the sight and the eating, and from the top of the tree would flow down much honey; and from its root there would come forth a great fountain, giving drink to this country round about. And in it the man-eaters would wash themselves, and eat of the fruit of the trees, of the vine and of the honey; and their bodies would be changed, and their forms would be altered so as to be like those of other men. And they would be ashamed of the nakedness of their body, and they would put on clothing of the rams of the sheep, and they would no longer eat unclean things. And there would be fire in abundance, preparing the sacrifices for offerings, and they would bake their bread with fire. And they would see each other in the likeness of the rest of men, and they would acknowledge Christ, and glorify His Father who is in the heavens.

Also, in the vision, Matthew received word that his departure from the body through fire was at hand, and that he would receive the crown of his endurance.

And Matthew went down from the mountain, hastening to the city. And as he was about to enter into the city, there met him Fulvana, the wife of the king, and his son Fulvanus and his wife Erva, who were possessed by an unclean spirit. They cried out shouting, 'Who has brought you here again, Matthew? Or who has given you the rod for our destruction? For we see also Jesus, the Son of God, who is with you. Do not go then, O Matthew, to plant the rod for the food, and for the transformation of the man-eaters; for I have found what I shall do to you. For since you did drive me out of this city, and prevent me from fulfilling my wishes among the man-eaters, behold, I will raise up against you the king of this city, and he will burn you alive. And Matthew, having laid his hands on each one of the demoniacs, put the demons to flight, and made the people whole; and they followed him.

Plato the bishop, having heard of the presence of the Apostle Matthew, met him with all the clergy, and Matthew went with them into the church. And Matthew, having come out to the gate of the church, stood upon a certain lofty stone; and when the whole city ran together,

⁸² Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue from Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, November 16.

Isaac Lambertsen, The Lives of the Holy Apostles, Holy Apostles Convent Press, Buena Vista, CO, 1990, pp. 169. The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2003, November 16.

⁸³ Roberts and Donaldson, "Acts and Martyrdom of St. Matthew the Apostle", Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

⁸⁴ Also called Mirmena.

especially the brethren who had believed, began to speak to them. ‘Men and women, you have believed in the universe, but now know Him who has upheld and made the universe. You have worshipping the Satyr, and have been mocked by ten thousand false gods, but now through Jesus Christ acknowledge the one and only God, Lord and Judge. You have laid aside the immeasurable greatness of evil, and put on love, which is of like nature with affection towards men. You were once strangers to Christ, but now confess Him Lord and God. You were formerly without form, but are now transformed through Christ. Behold, the staff which you see in my hand. I shall plant this rod in this place, and it shall be a sign to your generations, and it shall become a tree, great and lofty and flourishing, and its fruit beautiful to the view and good to the sight; and the fragrance of perfumes shall come forth from it. And there shall be a vine twining round it, full of clusters; and from the top of it honey coming down. And a fountain of water shall come forth from the root of it, giving drink to all the country round about.

And having said this, and called upon the name of the Lord Jesus, he fixed his rod in the ground. Immediately it sprang up to one cubit; and the sight was strange and wonderful. For the rod shot up, increased in size, and grew into a great tree, as Matthew had said. And the apostle said, ‘Go into the fountain and wash your bodies in it, and then partake both of the fruits of the tree, and of the vine and the honey, and drink of the fountain, and you shall be transformed in your likeness to that of men. And after that, having gone into the church, you will clearly recognize that you have believed in the living and true God. And having done all these things, they saw themselves changed; then, having thus gone into the church, they worshipped and glorified God. And when they had been changed, they knew that they were naked; and they ran in haste each to his own house to cover their nakedness, because they were ashamed.

And Matthew and Plato remained in the church spending the night, and glorifying God. And there remained also the king’s wife, and his son and his wife, and they prayed the apostle to give them the seal in Christ. And Matthew gave orders to Plato; and he, having gone forth, baptized them in the water of the fountain of the tree, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Thereafter, having gone into the church, they communicated in the holy mysteries of Christ. And they exulted and passed the night, along with many others who came with them; and all in the church sang the whole night, glorifying God.

And when dawn had come, Matthew and the bishop Plato stood in the place in which the rod had been planted, and he saw the rod grown into a great tree. And near it a vine twined round it, and honey coming down from above even to its root; and that tree was at once beautiful and flourishing, like the plants in paradise. And a river proceeded from its root watering all the land of the city of Myrna. And all ran together, and ate of the fruit of the tree and the vine, just as any one wished.

And when what had come to pass was reported in the palace, King Fulvanus⁸⁵, having learned what had been done by Matthew about his wife, and his son, and his daughter-in-law, rejoiced for a time at their purification. But seeing that they were inseparable from Matthew, he was seized with rage and anger, and endeavored to put him to death by fire. And on that night in which the king intended to lay hands on Matthew, Matthew had a vision of Jesus saying to him, ‘I am with you always to save you, Matthew; be strong, and be a man’.

⁸⁵ Also referred to as Fulvian.

And the blessed Matthew, awoke, sealed himself over all the body, rose up and proceeded into the church; and having bent his knees, prayed earnestly. Then the bishop having come, and the clergy, they stood in common in prayer, glorifying God. And after they had ended the prayer, and they had sat down, the apostle said to the bishop Plato, and to all the clergy, 'I wish you, children, to know that the king of this city is going to send soldiers against me, the devil having entered into him, and armed him against us. But let us give ourselves up to Jesus, and He will deliver us from every trial, and all who have believed in Him'.

And the king, plotted against Matthew how he should lay hands on him, and seeing also that the believers were very many, was in great difficulty.

Therefore, the wicked and unclean demon, who had come forth from the king's wife, and his son, and his daughter-in-law, transformed himself into the likeness of a soldier, and stood before the king. And he said to him, 'O king, why are you put out by this stranger and sorcerer? Do you not know that he was a publican, but now he has been called an apostle by Jesus, who was crucified by the Jews? For behold, your wife, and your son, and your daughter-in-law, instructed by him, have believed in him, and along with him sing in the church. And now Matthew is going forth, and Plato with him, and they are going to the gate called Heavy. But hurry and you will find them, and you shall do to him all that may be pleasing in your eyes.

The king having heard this, sent four soldiers against Matthew, having threatened them, and said, 'Unless you bring Matthew to me, I shall burn you alive with fire; and the punishment which he is to undergo, you shall endure'. And the soldiers went in arms to where the Apostle Matthew and the bishop Plato were. And when they came near them, they heard them speaking indeed, but saw no one. And having returned, they said to the king, 'We pray you, O king, we went and found no one, but only heard the voices of them talking'. And the king, being enraged, and having blazed up like fire, gave orders to send another ten soldiers — man-eaters — saying to them, 'Go stealthily to the place, and tear them in pieces alive, and eat up Matthew, and Plato, who is with him'. And when they were about to come near Matthew, they had a vision of the Lord Jesus Christ, holding a torch of fire that burned out their eyes. Having cried out and thrown down their arms, they fled and came to the king, and were speechless.

And the demon who had before appeared to the king in the form of a soldier, again stood before the king, and said to him, 'You see, O king, this stranger has bewitched them all. Learn, then, how you shall take him. The king said to him, 'Tell me first where his strength is, that I may know, and then I will draw up against him with a great force'. And the demon, compelled by an angel, said to the king, 'Since you wish to hear accurately about him, O king, I will tell you all the truth. Unless he shall be willing to be taken by you of his own accord, you labor in vain, and you will not be able to hurt him. But if you wish to lay hands on him, you will be struck by him with blindness, and you will be paralyzed. And if you send a multitude of soldiers against him, they also will be struck with blindness, and will be paralyzed. And we, seven unclean demons, shall go and immediately make away with you and your whole camp, and destroy all the city with lightning, except those naming that name of Christ. For wherever a footstep of theirs has come, we flee. And even if you shall apply fire to him, to him the fire will be dew. And if you shall shut him up in a furnace, to him the furnace will be a church. And if you shall put him in chains in prison, and seal up the floors, the doors will open to him of their own accord. And

all who believe in that name will go in and say, 'This prison is a church of the living God, and a holy habitation of those that live alone'. Behold, O king, I have told you all the truth'. The king therefore said to the pretended soldier, 'Since I do not know Matthew, come with me, and point him out to me from a distance, and take from me gold, as much as you may wish, or go yourself, and with your sword kill him, and Plato his associate'. The demon said to him, 'I cannot kill him. I dare not even look into his face, seeing that he has destroyed all our generation through the name of Christ, proclaimed through him'.

The king said to him, 'And who are you?' And he said, 'I am the demon who dwelt in your wife, and in your son, and in your daughter-in-law; and my name is Asmodaeus; and this Matthew drove me out of them. And now, behold, your wife, and your son, and your daughter-in-law sing along with him in the church. And I know, O king, that you also after this will believe in him'. The king said to him, 'Whoever you are, spirit of many shapes, I adjure you by the God whom Matthew proclaims, get out of here without doing harm to any one'. And immediately the demon, no longer like a soldier, but like smoke, became invisible; and fled.

Then the king, affected with great fear at the answer of the demon, remained quiet that day. And the night having come, and he was not able to sleep, leaped up at dawn, and went into the church, with only two soldiers without arms, to take Matthew by craft, that he might kill him. And having summoned two friends of Matthew, he said to them, 'Show to Matthew that I wish to be his disciple'. And Matthew hearing, and knowing the craft of the tyrant, and having been warned also by the vision of the Lord to him, went forth out of the church, led by the hand by Plato, and stood in the gate of the church. And they said to the king, 'Behold Matthew in the gate!' And he said, 'Who he is, or where he is, I see not'. And they said to him, 'Behold, he is in front of you'. And he said, 'All the while I see nobody'. For he had been blinded by the power of God. And he began to cry out, 'Woe to me! What evil has come upon me, for my eyes have been blinded, and all my limbs paralyzed? O Asmodaeus! All that you have said to me has come upon me. But I pray you, Matthew, servant of God, forgive me as the herald of the good God; for assuredly the Jesus proclaimed by you three days ago through the night appeared to me altogether resplendent as with lightning, like a beautiful young man. He said to me, 'Since you are entertaining evil counsels in the wickedness of your heart in regard to my servant Matthew, know I have disclosed to him that through you will be the release of his body'. And immediately I saw him going up into heaven. If therefore He is your God, and if He wishes your body to be buried in our city for a testimony of the salvation of the generations after this, and for the banishing of the demons, I shall know the truth for myself by this, by you laying on hands upon me, and I shall receive my sight'. And the apostle having laid his hands upon his eyes, he made him receive his sight instantly.

And immediately the king, laying hold of the apostle, and leading him by the right hand, brought him by craft into the palace; and Plato was on Matthew's left hand, going along with him. Then Matthew said, 'O crafty tyrant, how long before you fulfill the works of your father the devil? And he was enraged at what had been said; for he perceived that the king would inflict upon him a more bitter death. For he resolved to put him to death by fire. And the king commanded several executioners to come, and to lead him away to the place by the seashore, where the execution of malefactors took place, saying to the executioners, 'I hear that the God whom he proclaims delivers from fire those who believe in him'. Having laid him, therefore, on the ground on his back, they stretched him out, pierced his hands and feet with iron nails, and

covered him over with paper, having smeared it with dolphins' oil, and covered him up with brimstone and asphalt and pitch, and put brushwood above. Thus, apply the fire to him; and if any of the same tribe with him rise up against you, he shall get the same punishment.

And the apostle exhorted the brethren to remain undismayed, and that they should rejoice, and accompany him with great meekness, singing and praising God. Having therefore come to the place, the executioners, like most evil wild beasts, pinned down to the ground Matthew's hands and feet with long nails; and having done everything as they had been bid, applied the fire. And they indeed labored closely, kindling it all round; but all the fire was changed into dew, so that the brethren, rejoicing, cried out, 'The only God is the Christians', who assists Matthew, in whom we have believed. The only God is the Christians', who preserves His own apostle in the fire'. And by their voice the city was shaken. And some of the executioners, having gone forth, said to the king, 'We indeed, O king, by every contrivance of vengeance, have kindled the fire; but the sorcerer by a certain name puts it out, calling upon Christ, and invoking his cross. And the Christians surrounding him play with the fire, and walking in it with naked feet, laugh at us, and we have fled ashamed.

Then he ordered a multitude to carry coals of fire from the furnace of the bath in the palace, and the twelve gods of gold and silver; and to place them in a circle round the sorcerer, lest he may even somehow bewitch the fire from the furnace of the palace. And there being many executioners and soldiers, some carried the coals; and others, bearing the gods, brought them. And the king accompanied them, watching lest any of the Christians should steal one of his gods, or bewitch the fire. And when they came near the place where the apostle was nailed down, his face was looking towards heaven, and all his body was covered over with the paper, and much brushwood over his body to the height of ten cubits. And he ordered the soldiers to set the gods in a circle round Matthew, five cubits away, securely fastened that they might not fall. Again, he ordered the coal to be thrown on, and to kindle the fire at all points.

And Matthew, having looked up to heaven, cried out, 'O God the Father, O Lord Jesus Christ, deliver me, and burn down their gods which they worship. And let the fire also pursue the king even to his palace, but not to his destruction, for perhaps he will repent and be converted'. And when he saw the fire to be monstrous in height, the king, thinking that Matthew was burnt up, laughed aloud, and said, 'Has your magic been of any avail to you, Matthew? Can your Jesus now give you any help?'

And as he said this a dreadful wonder appeared. All the fire along with the wood went away from Matthew, and was poured round about their gods, so that nothing of the gold or the silver was any more seen. And the king fled, and said, 'Woe is me! My gods are destroyed by the rebuke of Matthew, of which the weight was a thousand talents⁸⁶ of gold and a thousand talents of silver. Better are the gods of stone and of earthenware, in that they are neither melted nor stolen.

And when the fire had thus utterly destroyed their gods, and burnt up many soldiers, there came to pass another stranger wonder. For the fire, in the likeness of a great and dreadful dragon, chased the tyrant as far as the palace, and ran here and there round the king, not letting

⁸⁶ 1000 talents was about 75,000 pounds.

him go into the palace. And the king, chased by the fire, and not allowed to go into his palace, turned back to where Matthew was, and cried out, saying, 'I beseech you, O Matthew, whom so great a pyre has not touched, remove from me this dreadful and fiery dragon. Forget the evil I have done, as also when you made me receive my sight. And Matthew, having rebuked the fire, and the flames having been extinguished, and the dragon having become invisible, stretching his eyes to heaven, and praying in Hebrew, and commending his spirit to the Lord, said, 'Peace to you!' And having glorified the Lord, he went to his rest about the sixth hour.

Then the king, having ordered more soldiers to come, and the bed to be brought from the palace, which had a great show of gold, he ordered the apostle to be laid on it, and carried to the palace. And the body of the apostle was lying as if in sleep, and his robe and his tunic unstained by the fire; and sometimes they saw him on the bed, and sometimes following, and sometimes going before the bed, and with his right hand, put upon Plato's head, and singing along with the multitude, so that both the king and the soldiers, with the crowd, were struck with astonishment. And many diseased persons and demoniacs, having only touched the bed, were made sound; and as many as were savage in appearance, in that same hour were changed into the likeness of other men.

And as the bed was going into the palace, we all saw Matthew rising up, as it were, from the bed, and going into heaven, and twelve men in shining garments came to meet him, having golden crowns on their head; and we saw how in a flash of lightning they went away to heaven.

And the king stood at the gate of the palace, and ordered that no one should come in but the soldiers carrying the bed. And having shut the doors, he ordered an iron coffin to be made, put the body of Matthew into it, and sealed it up with lead. Through the eastern gate of the palace at midnight, he put it into a boat, no one knowing of it, and threw it into the deep part of the sea.

And through the whole night the brethren remained before the gate of the palace, spending the night, and singing; and when the dawn rose there was a voice, 'O bishop Plato, carry the Gospel and the Psalter of David. Go along with the multitude of the brethren to the east of the palace, and sing the Alleluia, and read the Gospel, and bring as an offering the holy bread. And having pressed three clusters from the vine into a cup, communicate with me, as the Lord Jesus showed us how to offer up when He rose from the dead on the third day'.

And the bishop ran into the church, and took the Gospel and the Psalter of David, assembled the presbyters and the multitude of the brethren, and came to the east of the palace at the hour of sunrise. And having ordered the one who was singing to go upon a certain lofty stone, he began to praise in singing of a song to God, 'Precious in the sight of God is the death of His saints' (Psalm 116:15). And again, 'I laid me down and slept; I arose: because the Lord will sustain me' (Psalm 3:5 LXX). And they listened to the singing of a song of David⁸⁷, 'Shall he that is dead not rise again? Now I shall raise him up for myself', saith the Lord. And all shouted out the Alleluia. And the bishop read the Gospel, and all cried out, 'Glory to You, You who have been glorified in heaven and on earth'. And so, then they offered the gift of the holy offering for Matthew; and having partaken for thanksgiving of the undefiled and life-giving

⁸⁷ The Psalm referred to here is not certain.

mysteries of Christ⁸⁸, they all glorified God. And it was about the sixth hour, and Plato saw the sea opposite about seven furlongs off; and, behold, Matthew was standing on the sea, and two men, one on each side, in shining garments. And all the brethren saw these things, and they heard them saying 'Amen, Alleluia'. And one could see the sea fixed like a stone of crystal, when out of the depth of the sea a cross came up, and at the end of the cross the coffin going up in which was the body of Matthew. And in the hour of the piercing on the cross, the coffin was placed on the ground, behind the palace towards the east, where the bishop had offered the offering for Matthew.

And the king having seen these things from the upper part of the house, and being terror-struck, went forth from the palace, and ran and worshipped towards the east at the coffin, and fell down before the bishop, and the presbyters, and the deacons, in repentance and confession, saying: Truly I believe in the true God, Christ Jesus. I entreat, give me the seal in Christ, and I will give you my palace, in testimony of Matthew, and you shall put the coffin upon my golden bed, in the great dining-room; only, having baptized me in it, communicate to me the Eucharist of Christ. And the bishop having prayed, and ordered him to take off his clothes, and having examined him for a long time, and he having confessed and wept over what he had done, having sealed him, and anointed him with oil, put him down into the sea, in the name of Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost. And when he came up from the water, he ordered him to put on himself splendid garments, and so then having given praise and thanks, communicating the holy bread and mixed cup, the bishop first gave them to the king, saying: Let this body of Christ, and this cup, His blood shed for us, be to you for the remission of sins unto life. And a voice was heard from on high: Amen, amen, amen. And when he had thus communicated in fear and joy, the apostle appeared and said: King Fulvanus, your name shall no longer be Fulvanus; but you shall be called Matthew. And you, the son of the king, shall no longer be called Fulvanus, but Matthew also; and you Ziphagia, the wife of the king, shall be called Sophia; and Erva, the wife of your son, shall be called Synesis. And these names of yours shall be written in the heavens, and there shall not fail of your loins from generation to generation. And in that same hour Matthew appointed the king a presbyter, and he was thirty-seven years old; and the king's son he appointed deacon, being seventeen years old; and the king's wife he appointed a presbyteress; and his son's wife he appointed a deaconess, and she also was seventeen years old. And then he thus blessed them, saying: The blessing and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ shall be with you to time everlasting.

Then the king, having awakened out of sleep, and rejoiced with all his house at the vision of the holy Apostle Matthew, praised God.

And the king, having gone into his palace, broke all the idols to pieces, and gave a decree to those in his kingdom, writing thus: King Matthew, to all those under my kingdom, greeting. Christ having appeared upon earth, and having saved the human race, the so-called gods have been found to be deceivers, and soul-destroyers, and plotters against the human race. Whence, divine grace having shone abroad, and come even to us, and we having come to the knowledge of the deception of the idols, that it is vain and false, it has seemed good to our divinity that there should not be many gods, but one, and one only, the God in the heavens. And you, having received this our decree, keep to the purport of it, and break to pieces and destroy every idol; and

⁸⁸ That is, the Eucharist.

if anyone shall be detected from this time forth serving idols, or concealing them, let such an one be subjected to punishment by the sword. Farewell all, because we also are well. And when this order was given out, all, rejoicing and exulting, broke their idols to pieces, crying out and saying: There is one only God, He who is in the heavens, who does good to men.

And after all these things had come to pass, Matthew the apostle of Christ appeared to the bishop Plato, and said to him: Plato, servant of God, and our brother, be it known unto you, that after three years shall be your rest in the Lord, and exultation to ages of ages. And the king himself, whom after my own name I have called Matthew, shall receive the throne of your bishopric, and after him his son. And he, having said Peace to you and all the saints, went to heaven.

And after three years the bishop Plato rested in the Lord. And King Matthew succeeded him, having given up his kingdom willingly to another, whence there was given him grace against unclean demons, and he cured every affliction. And he advanced his son to be a presbyter, and made him second to himself.

And Saint Matthew finished his course in the country of the man-eaters, in the city of Myrna, on the sixteenth of the month of November, our Lord Jesus Christ reigning, to whom be glory and strength, now and ever, and to ages of ages. Amen.

The hymns of the Church remember the ministry and the martyrdom of Matthew as follows:

“You shone forth⁸⁹, O Apostle, as luminous as the sun, with the rays of the Spirit, and have illumined the whole world with the knowledge of God, O blessed one. And you have dispelled the gloom of polytheism, O most wise Matthew. Wherefore we celebrate today your all-radiant and right wondrous solemnity as a well-spring of sanctification”.

“Seated on the heights of divine knowledge, O Apostle, you received the effulgence of the Spirit, which appeared to you in the guise of a tongue of fire. And you did manifestly consume all the tinder of the impiety of ungodliness. Wherefore we honor you as an Apostle and herald of God, celebrating your holy festival today”.

“You thundered forth sacred and saving teachings unto the whole world, O most wise Matthew. You have cleansed all creation of the madness of idolatry, and illumined the people with the splendors of the Gospel. Having destroyed the pagan temples by means of grace, you raised up Churches to the glory of God”.

“Having armed⁹⁰ the most valiant Matthew with Your armor, O Savior, You made him mightier than the tormentors and showed him to be the destroyer of the deception of idolatry, O Master Who loves mankind”.

“The sound of your fiery tongue consumed the temples of the demons, O divinely inspired Matthew. You are an instrument of the Comforter, through whom Christ, the hypostatic Life of all, is proclaimed”.

⁸⁹ “Ode IX for Matins of the Commemoration of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew, August November 16th”, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

⁹⁰ “Ode III for Matins of the Commemoration of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew, August November 16th”, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

The Epistle Lesson for the Apostles: 1 Corinthians 4:9-16

The Epistle lesson is not used at all in the Western lectionary. In the Orthodox lectionary, the Epistle lesson is also used for the Feast Days of many of the Twelve Apostles as follows:

Name	Calling
Andrew	Of the Twelve Apostles
James, son of Alphaeus	Of the Twelve Apostles
Matthew	Of the Twelve Apostles
Philip	Of the Twelve Apostles
Simon the Zealot	Of the Twelve Apostles
Thomas	Of the Twelve Apostles
Simeon	Of the Seventy, 2 nd Bishop of Jerusalem

The message of this Epistle Reading is that the Twelve Apostles have been exhibited as a spectacle of the ways of God. “For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men” (1 Corinthians 4:9).

From the world’s point of view, there have been many people throughout the ages who think that the things they do in secret are hidden from the eyes of God. For example, murderers often think, “The Lord does not see” (Psalm 94:7), slanderers often say, “Who can see them?” (Psalm 64:2-6), and adulterers think that, “No eye will see me” because their activities are private and in the dark (Job 24:15). But yet Paul says that “there is no creature hidden from His sight but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account” (Hebrews 4:13). Paul spoke of the Lord’s return when He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness (1 Corinthians 4:5) and judge the secrets of men (Romans 2:16). Thus, everything we do – even the most private things – we do as it were in a fishbowl with many observers looking in.

The Spectacle of the Apostles in Their Work

Paul said, “For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men” (1 Corinthians 4:9). Why to angels? Table I is a brief summary of New Testament references to the function of angels; that is, a list of the things angels are recorded as doing.

One of the things angels do is witness human affairs and the working out of our salvation. Angels desire very much to look into the things the Prophets ministered (literally deaconed) to us, and into the evangelization of the Church by the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 1:12). For example, Paul cautioned the Hebrews not to forget to entertain strangers; they may be angels looking in on human affairs (Hebrews 13:2). Another example occurs when a sinner repents as a result of the Holy Spirit’s evangelism; there is joy in the presence of the angels (Luke 15:10). Recognizing this, Paul, when he set Timothy up as overseer (1 Timothy 5:21), charged him before God, the Lord Jesus and the angels (who look in) to do things right.

**TABLE I
WHAT ANGELS DO**

1. Surround Throne of God	Hebrews 12:22
2. Always see Face of the Father	Matthew 18:10
3. Witness Christ's confession of us	Mark 8:38, Luke 12:8-9; 9:26
4. Are subject to Christ	1 Peter 3:22
5. Are personal servants of Christ	Matthew 4:6, 11; 26:53, Mark 1:13, John 1:51
6. Passed Law on to men	Acts 7:53, Galatians 3:19
7. Sang praise to God at nativity	Luke 2:15
8. Don't judge anyone	2 Peter 2:11
9. Are witnesses to human affairs	Luke 15:10, 1 Corinthians 4:9, 1 Timothy 3:16; 5:21, Hebrews 13:2, 1 Peter 1:12
10. Guard Children	Matthew 18:10
11. Don't marry; we'll be like them	Matthew 22:30, Mark 12:25, Luke 20:34-36
12. Gather righteous at 2 nd Coming	Matthew 13:39-49; 16:27; 24:31; 25:31, Mark 13:27
13. Don't know time of 2 nd Coming	Matthew 24:36, Mark 13:32
14. Are judged by the righteous	1 Corinthians 6:3

Quoting an ancient hymn or creed, Paul referred to the mystery of godliness as having at least six parts (from 1 Timothy 3:16):

- The incarnation
- Justified in the Spirit (baptism and resurrection) see Matthew 3:16, Romans 1:4
- Seen by angels
- Preached among the Gentiles
- Believed on in the world
- Received up in glory

Most of us would see the incarnation, justification, preaching, believing and receiving as a much bigger deal than just being seen by angels. Perhaps that's because we're so focused on our own human affairs that we don't realize that we are in the fishbowl and they are all watching us.

John Chrysostom commented⁹¹ that there is more to this than meets the eye, and that Paul was speaking of a very severe rule of life.

“There is a great depth of meaning and severity implied in (Paul's) saying...’us the Apostles’ who are enduring such innumerable ills, who are sowing the word of godliness, who are leading you to this severe rule of life. But what does ‘unto angels’ mean? It is possible to ‘become a spectacle unto men’, but not so to angels when the things done are ordinary. But our wrestling is such as to be worthy even of angelic contemplations”.

Paul said, “We *are* morons for Christ's sake, but you *are* wise in Christ! We *are* weak, but you *are* strong! You *are* distinguished, but we *are* dishonored! To the present hour we both

⁹¹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Corinthians, XII, 6.

hunger and thirst, we are poorly clothed, punched out, and homeless. And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the refuse of the world, the offscouring of all things until now” (1 Corinthians 4:10-13).

So what is Paul doing that is worthy of angelic contemplation? He and others are:

- Morons because of Christ
- Weak or feeble
- Dishonored
- Hungry and thirsty
- Poorly clad
- Punched out (with the fist)
- Homeless
- Working with their hands
- Reviled
- Persecuted
- Defamed
- Refuse (lit. Pot scrubbing) of the world
- Off scouring (lit. floor sweepings) of all things

Yet Paul said that the Corinthians claimed to be:

- Wise in Christ
- Strong
- Held in Honor

Clement of Alexandria stated⁹² that there is contempt for the Faith on the part of the multitude. As a result, Paul’s words are not appreciated and his work is not understood.

“To the multitude, the vain labor of stuffing themselves to satiety like cattle is desirable. But to us the apostle says, ‘Now we know this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin’ (Romans 6:6). Does not the apostle then plainly add the following, to show the contempt for faith in the case of the multitude? ‘For I think that God has set forth us the apostles last, as appointed to death we are made a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men. Up to this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are beaten, and are feeble, and labor, working with our hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat; we are become as it were the off scouring of the world’ (1 Corinthians 4:9-13). Such also are the words of Plato in the *Republic*: ‘The just man, though stretched on the rack, though his eyes are dug out, will be happy’”.

Tertullian stated⁹³ that the “spectacle to the world” does not refer to just unbelievers but to both men and angels, both of whom have work to do in the world.

⁹² Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, IV, 7.

⁹³ Tertullian, *Five Book Against Marcion*, II, ii, v, 7.

“He has promised Christ to be a Light, and He has declared Himself to be a lamp, ‘searching the hearts and reins’ (Psalm 7:9 LXX). From Him also shall ‘praise be had by every man’ (1 Corinthians 4:5); from Him proceeds also, as from a judge, the opposite of praise. You say he interprets the world to be the God thereof, when he says, ‘We are made a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men’ (1 Corinthians 4:9). If by world he had meant the people, he would not have afterwards specially mentioned ‘*men*’. The Holy Spirit has providentially explained the meaning of the passage thus, ‘We are made a spectacle to the world’, *i.e.* ‘both to *angels*’, who minister therein, ‘and to *men*’, who are the objects of their ministration”.

Chrysostom stated⁹⁴ that Paul put it this way to shame them and was leading up to addressing the immoral man who had his father’s wife in the next chapter.

“How can it be that you should be wise and we fools in the things relating to Christ? Here he sets himself against the noble and those who plumed themselves upon external advantages. How can it be that the Apostles are beaten, despised, dishonored and esteemed as nothing, while the Corinthians enjoy honor and are looked up to by many as a wise and prudent kind of people? We (the Apostles) take no account of outward pomp, but we look to God only. This everyone needs to practice in every place. For not only are angels looking on, but even more than they: He that presides over the spectacle”.

“Let us not then desire any others to applaud us. For this is to insult Him; hurrying past Him, as if He were insufficient to admire us, we make our way quickly to our fellow servants. For just as they who contend in a small theatre seek a larger audience, as if this were insufficient for their display, so also do they. Contending in the sight of God, (they are not content); afterwards they seek the applause of men. Giving up the greater praise and eager for the lesser, they draw upon themselves severe punishment. This turns everything upside down”.

Our Imitation of the Apostles

Paul spoke to the Corinthians as a father, since he had founded the Church in Corinth. As a father desiring to correct his spiritual children, Paul could have returned to Corinth with a “rod” (1 Corinthians 4:21) to discipline them. But he preferred to come in a spirit of gentleness. As a father, he urged the Corinthians to imitate him (1 Corinthians 4:16) as an example, as we all imitate our parents.

Cyril of Jerusalem pointed out⁹⁵ that it is not only a natural father who is called “father” in the Scriptures. Paul, Job, Christ and Joseph are all called a “father” for people other than their natural children.

“In the Divine Scriptures the natural father is not the only one called ‘father’. Paul was father of the Corinthians, not by having begotten them after the flesh, but by having taught and begotten them again after the Spirit (1 Corinthians 4:15). Hear Job also said, ‘I was a father of the needy’ (Job 29:16); for he called himself a father, not as having begotten them all, but as caring for them. And God’s Only-begotten Son Himself, when nailed in His flesh to the tree at the time

⁹⁴ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Corinthians, XII, 6-7.

⁹⁵ Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures, VII, 9.

of crucifixion, on seeing Mary, His own Mother according to the flesh, and John, the most beloved of His disciples, said to him, ‘Behold! your mother’, and to her, ‘Behold! your Son’ (John 19:26-27). He taught her the parental affection due to him, and indirectly explained that which is said in Luke, ‘and His father and His mother marveled at Him’ (Luke 2:33): words which the tribe of heretics snatches up, saying that He was begotten of a man and a woman. For as Mary was called the mother of John, because of her parental affection, not from having given him birth, so Joseph also was called the father of Christ, not from having begotten Him, but because of the care bestowed on His nurture”.

How do we imitate Paul and the other Apostles as the fathers of the Faith? By our strictness and dedication to the things of the Lord! If we can see ourselves as in a fishbowl, where the angels and the bodiless powers are constantly watching to see how we will do, we will gain a better perspective. To this end, tribulation may be helpful, even if it is very unpleasant.

John Chrysostom stated⁹⁶ that tribulation is expedient for us, as we imitate the Master. If he took the path of affliction while we take the path of ease and comfort, it may be open to question whether we are on the same path.

“For a great, a truly great consolation are both the sufferings of Christ, and those of the Apostles. For He so well knew that this is the better way of virtue, as even to go that way Himself, not having need thereof. He knew so well that tribulation is expedient for us, and that it becomes rather a foundation for repose. For hear Him saying, ‘If a man doesn’t take his cross, and follow after Me, he is not worthy of Me’ (Matthew 10:38). If you are a disciple, He means, imitate the Master, for this is to be a disciple. But if He went by the path of affliction and you go by that of ease, you no longer tread the same path, which He trod, but another. How then do you follow, when you don’t follow? How shall you be a disciple, not going after the Master? This Paul also says, ‘We are weak, but you are strong; we are despised, but you are honored’ (1 Corinthians 4:10). How is it reasonable, he means, that we should be striving after opposite things, and yet that you should be disciples and we teachers?”

Ambrose of Milan stated⁹⁷ that part of Paul’s humility in his persecution was his repentance for persecution of the Church. This was like plowing land in order to remove brambles and produce good fruit.

“Let us then not be ashamed to confess our sins unto the Lord. Shame indeed there is when each makes known his sins; but that shame, as it were, plows his land, removes the ever-recurring brambles, prunes the thorns, and gives life to the fruits which he believed were dead. Follow him who, by diligently plowing his field, sought for eternal fruit. ‘Being reviled we bless, being persecuted we endure, being defamed we entreat, we are made as the off scouring of the world’ (1 Corinthians 4:13). If you plow after this fashion you will sow spiritual seed. Plow that you may get rid of sin and gain fruit. Paul plowed so as to destroy in himself the last tendency to persecution of the Church. What more could Christ

⁹⁶ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Hebrews, XXVIII, 6.

⁹⁷ Ambrose, Two Books Concerning Repentance, II, 5.

give to lead us on to the pursuit of perfection, than to convert and then give us for a teacher one who was a persecutor?”

Dionysius the Great of Alexandria gave⁹⁸ an example of how the saints of the 3rd century interpreted Paul’s words about seeking humility in the helping of others. By sacrificing themselves and their own comfort, they received the martyr’s crown.

“Certainly, very many of our brethren, while, in their exceeding love and brotherly kindness, did not spare themselves, but kept by each other, and visited the sick without thought of their own peril. They ministered to them, and treated them for their healing in Christ; they died from time to time most joyfully along with them, bringing on themselves pains derived from others. They drew upon themselves their neighbors’ diseases, and willingly took over to their own persons the burden of the sufferings of those around them. And many who had thus cured others of their sicknesses, and restored them to strength, died themselves, having transferred to their own bodies the death that lay upon these. And that common saying, which otherwise seemed always to be only a polite form of address, they expressed in actual fact, as they departed this life, like the ‘off scouring of all’ (1 Corinthians 4: 13). The very best of our brethren have departed this life in this manner, including some presbyters and some deacons, and among the people those who were in highest reputation. Because of the distinguished piety and the steadfast faith, which were exhibited in it, this form of death appeared to come in nothing short of martyrdom itself”.

The Problem in Corinth

The Corinthians had tolerated sexual immorality such as was not even named among the Gentiles (1 Corinthians 5:1). They had separated into cliques: some of Paul, some of Apollos, some of Peter, etc. (1 Corinthians 1:12). Paul could not speak to them as spiritual people but as fleshly people, who needed milk and not solid food (1 Corinthians 3:1-3). If the Corinthians thought they were wise in Christ, strong and held in honor, the question is, “Who says so?” Paul thought they were puffed up and was planning to come to see what power was behind their haughtiness (1 Corinthians 4:18-21). Paul’s aim was to get the Corinthians to imitate him (1 Corinthians 4:16) and focus on what God considers good rather than what their peers consider good.

To help them with this, Paul had sent Timothy (one of the Seventy who had been traveling with Paul for about seven years at this point) on ahead to remind them of Paul’s ways in Christ (1 Corinthians 4:17). While the Corinthians had become somewhat puffed up (1 Corinthians 4:18, 19; 5:2), they were unaware of their problem (which everyone outside the fishbowl could see). Paul was diligent to point this out as a loving father concerned for his children (1 Corinthians 4:14-15).

And this is what the Epistle lesson illustrates. The Twelve Apostles took a great deal of abuse in this life in being loving fathers concerned for their children. This can also be illustrated by the use of salt and saltiness to describe the work of the Twelve and those that followed them.

⁹⁸ Dionysius, “Epistle to the Alexandrians”, XII, 4, in Extant Fragments, VI.

Salt and Saltiness:

Salt in ancient times was valuable and was an important commodity in trade. Besides seasoning food, it was also used to keep food from spoiling in the absence of refrigeration. In all the sacrifices offered to the Lord, salt had to be present (Leviticus 2:13). The significance of this was that nothing rotting or putrefying was to be offered to the Lord. And the Twelve left everything (Matthew 19:27) and offered their lives to the Lord as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1).

The recipient of the animal sacrifices (after they were offered) and of the tithe, were the priests and Levites. They had no inheritance and owned no land like the other twelve tribes since the Lord was their inheritance (Numbers 18:20-24). The term used to describe the priests' and Levites' portion was called a "covenant of salt" (Numbers 18:19; 2 Chronicles 13:5). In this aspect, salt took on the implication of unbending truthfulness and lack of corruption.

This has strong implications, especially as applied to the Apostles and Fathers of the Church. Matthew 5:13 reads literally, "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt becomes foolish (or moronic), by what shall it be salted? It has no longer strength for anything but to be thrown out and be trampled underfoot by men." From the context as applied to Jesus' disciples (and their followers as the pillars of the Faith), this verse has much to say.

John Chrysostom⁹⁹ commented on this exchange between the Lord and His disciples. We are not drawn to ordinary conflicts; we are the salt of the earth. We don't turn rottenness into good things; Christ did that! We use our saltiness to preserve what is good.

"'Think not then,' He says, 'that you are drawn on to ordinary conflicts, or that for some small matters you are to give account. You are the salt of the earth. When then; did they restore the decayed? By no means! For neither is it possible to do any good to that which is already spoiled, by sprinkling it with salt. This therefore they did not. But rather, what things had been before restored, and committed to their charge, and freed from that ill savor, these they then salted, maintaining and preserving them in that freshness, which they had received of the Lord. For that men should be set free from the rottenness of their sins was the good work of Christ; but not returning to it again any more was the object of these men's diligence and travail. See how by degrees He indicates their superiority to the very prophets? In that He says they are teachers, not of Palestine, but of the whole world?'"

If the Apostles and Fathers of the Church (both in ancient times and in the present times) adhere to unbending truthfulness and are morally straight, the whole earth will tend in that direction also. If they don't, they're worse than useless. Salt that's thrown out can't be put where anything is growing (Luke 14:35) because it alters the pH of the soil (acid/alkali balance) and inhibits growth. (That's why crops can't be irrigated with seawater). The only place to put it is on roads or paths where nothing is supposed to grow.

⁹⁹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XV, 10.

Chrysostom continues¹⁰⁰ to say that if the Lord's disciples don't adhere to unbending truthfulness and righteousness, they will be trodden under foot. We need so much the greater diligence. It is not an evil report that you should fear, but lest you should prove partners in hypocrisy.

“Be not then impatient, as though my sayings were too burdensome. For while it is possible for others who have lost their savor to return by your means, you, if you should come to this, will with yourselves destroy others also. So that in proportion as the matters are great, which you have put into your hands, you need so much the greater diligence. For other men, though they fall never so often, may possibly obtain indulgence: but the teacher, should this happen to him, is deprived of all excuse, and will suffer the most extreme vengeance. Thus, lest at the words, ‘when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you,’ they should be too timid to go forth, He tells them, ‘unless you are prepared to combat with all this, you have been chosen in vain.’ For it is not an evil report that you should fear, but lest you should prove partners in hypocrisy. For then, ‘You will lose your savor, and be trodden under foot’. But if you continue sharply to brace them up, and then are evil spoken of, rejoice; for this is the very use of salt, to sting the corrupt, and make them smart. And so their censure follows of course, in no way harming you, but rather testifying your firmness. But if through fear of it you give up the earnestness that becomes you, you will have to suffer much more grievously, being both evil spoken of, and despised by all. For this is the meaning of trodden under foot”.

The Light of the World:

The salt of the earth is also the light of the world. One doesn't light a lamp (i.e. an oil burning lamp) and put it under a basket; one puts it on a lamp stand. In Revelation 1:11-20 the seven Churches in Asia to whom the Apostle John addressed chapters 2 and 3 are referred to as seven lamp stands. They were the light of that part of the world. Yet they each had something that they needed to repent of and correct. And if they didn't do so, John said that their lamp stand would be removed from its place (Revelation 2:5). These are the things that the Apostles and Church Fathers were very much involved with. Chrysostom pointed out¹⁰¹ that they were to be the light of the world; not of one nation, not of twenty states, but of the whole inhabited earth.

A lamp set on a lamp stand, like a thriving Church in its own region of the world, is a city set on a hill (Matthew 5:14). It's not easy to hide a thriving Church because people see their good works and glorify our Father in Heaven (Matthew 5:16). Chrysostom wrote¹⁰²:

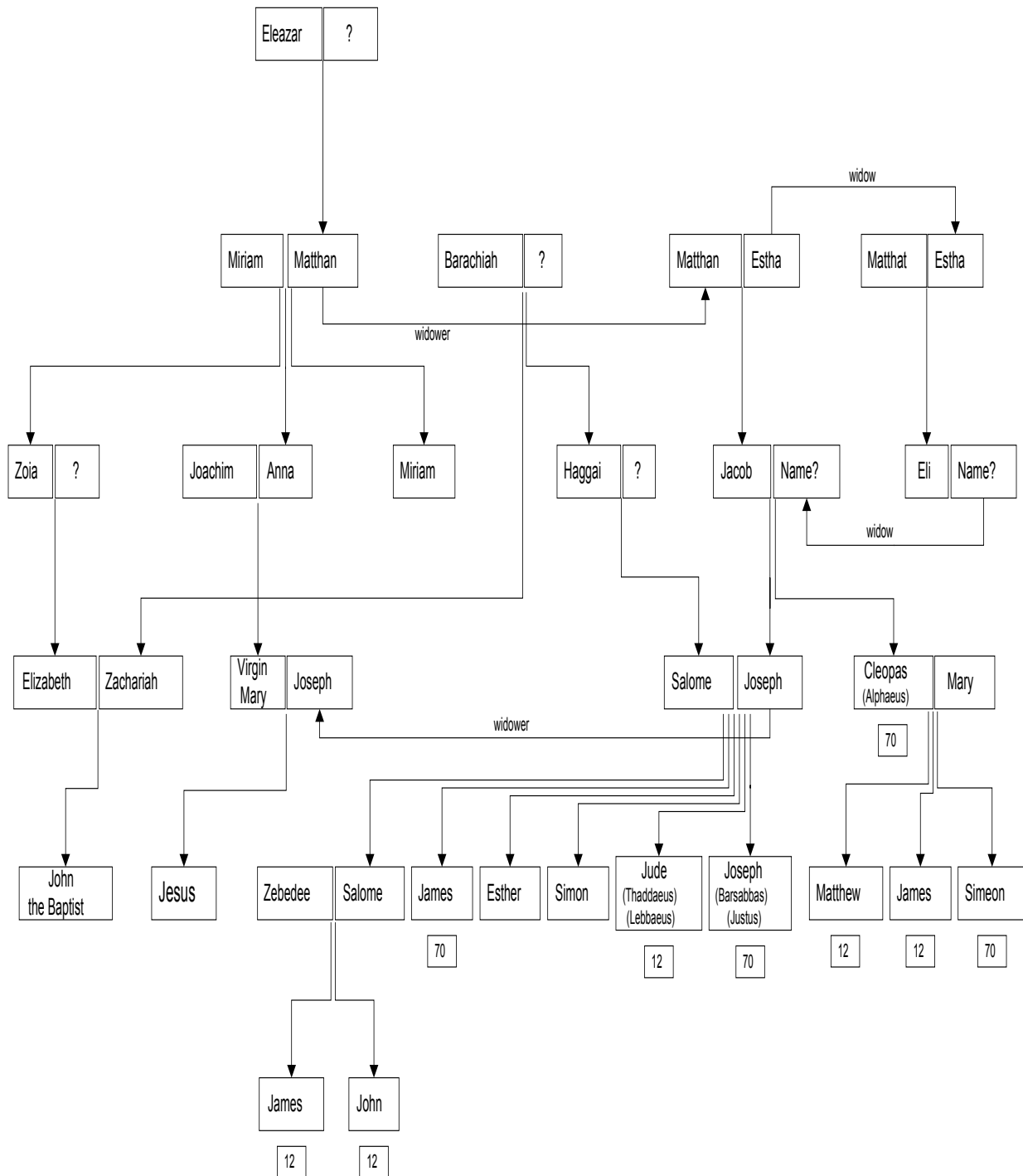
“Again, by these words He trains them to strictness of life, teaching them to be earnest in their endeavors, as set before the eyes of all men, and contending in the midst of the amphitheater of the world. ‘For look not to this,’ He says, ‘that we are now sitting here, that we are in a small portion of one corner. For you shall be as conspicuous to all as a city set on the ridge of a hill, as a candle in a house on the candlestick, giving light’”

¹⁰⁰ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XV, 10.

¹⁰¹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XV, 11.

¹⁰² John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XV, 11.

FAMILY TREE OF JESUS



The Life of Mark the Evangelist

Many people have confused the Evangelist Mark with another member of the Seventy, John surnamed Mark (Acts 12:12). In addition, there was a third member of the original Seventy Apostles named Mark, who was the cousin of Barnabas (Colossians 4:10). They are three different individuals who came from different locales and who had much different roles in the Early Church. Modern accounts of these three individuals are often blended together. The Evangelist Mark was originally an idolater¹⁰³ from Cyrene of Pentapolis, which is near Libya. He came to the Faith of Christ through the Apostle Peter. John Mark, on the other hand, in addition to being one of the original Seventy Apostles, was born at Jerusalem¹⁰⁴, and the house of his mother Mary (Acts 12:12) adjoined the Garden of Gethsemane. John Mark was later Bishop of Byblos in Phoenicia just north of Beirut on the Mediterranean coast. Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, was¹⁰⁵ also one of the original Seventy Apostles and was later the Bishop of Apollonia in Samaria, just north of Joppa on the Mediterranean coast. Since Barnabas was native to Cyprus (Acts 4:36), Mark, his cousin, probably was also native to Cyprus. After Pentecost, the Evangelist Mark accompanied the Apostle Peter (1 Peter 5:13), much as the Evangelist Luke accompanied the Apostle Paul. John Mark, on the other hand, accompanied the Apostles Paul and Barnabas on their First Missionary Journey (Acts 13:5, 13), and later worked with Barnabas on Cyprus (Acts 15:39). Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, later worked with the Apostle Paul (Colossians 4:10, 2 Timothy 4:11) toward the end of Paul's missionary work.

The Evangelist Mark versus John Mark versus Mark the Cousin of Barnabas

That the three men couldn't be the same person is illustrated by the writings of the Jewish philosopher Philo, a native of Alexandria. Sometime before his death in 50 AD, Philo wrote¹⁰⁶ a short work praising the work of the Evangelist Mark in Alexandria and the lives of the monks in the monasteries Mark started. At the same time that Philo was visiting the Evangelist Mark's monasteries in Egypt, John Mark was leaving Antioch to accompany Paul and Barnabas on their First Missionary Journey. Jerome stated¹⁰⁷ that Philo saw in the monasteries of Egypt something of credit to his nation, since there was still a distinct Jewish flavor to their life together.

“Philo, most learned of the Jews, seeing the first church at Alexandria still Jewish in a degree, wrote a book on their manner of life as something of credit to his nation. He recorded what he saw was done at Alexandria, under the learned Mark, as being very similar to what Luke says, the believers had all things in common at Jerusalem”.

¹⁰³ For details, see www.goarch.org, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese website for April 25th.

¹⁰⁴ For details, see www.oca.org, the Orthodox Church in America website for April 25th.

¹⁰⁵ The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 30.

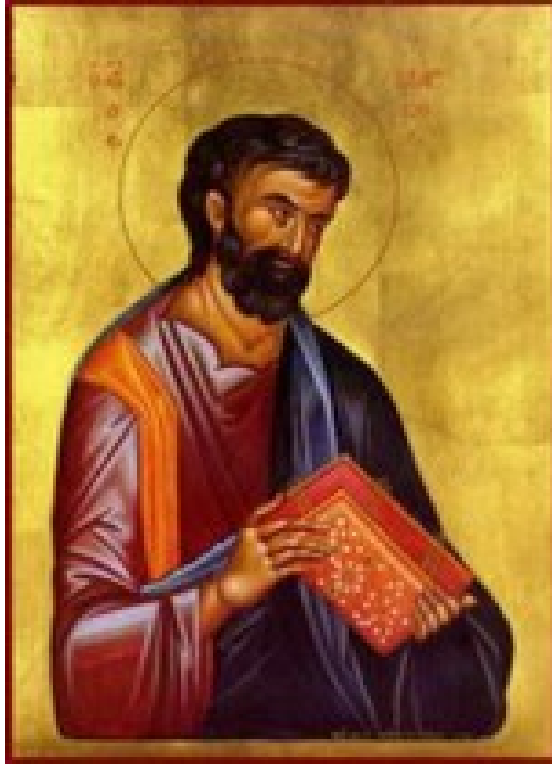
Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 30.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for October 30.

¹⁰⁶ C. D. Yonge, tr., “On the Contemplative Life”, The Works of Philo, Updated Edition Database, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, II:10 to IV:39.

¹⁰⁷ Jerome, “Lives of Illustrious Men”, Chapter 8, Jerome and Gennadius, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 3.



The Evangelist Mark¹⁰⁸

As further proof that the three Marks are different individuals, the Evangelist Mark was martyred¹⁰⁹ in Alexandria in the 8th year of Nero, or 61 AD. Yet Paul wrote to Timothy in 67 AD, just before his own martyrdom, to get Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, and bring him to Rome (2 Timothy 4:11). Later in his life John Mark attained great boldness before God, so that his very shadow healed the sick¹¹⁰, just like Peter's shadow had in earlier years (Acts 5:15).

Other testimony that they were different individuals includes Hippolytus¹¹¹, Nickolai Velimirovic¹¹², and Demetrius of Rostov¹¹³. There are the names of two Apostles named Mark listed in the Byzantine, Greek and Russian Menaion for January 4th, the Feast Day for the Seventy, and they are referred to by the St. Sabbas Typicon (6th century). Both are also included in the Painter's Manual of Dionysius of Fourn¹¹⁴ as different individuals.

¹⁰⁸ See www.goarch.org, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese website for April 25th

¹⁰⁹ Eusebius Pamphilus, *Church History*, II, 24.

Jerome, "Lives of Illustrious Men", Chapter 8, *Jerome and Gennadius*, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 3.

¹¹⁰ <http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for September 27.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, September 27.

¹¹¹ Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, v. 5, portrays both Mark's as members of the Seventy.

¹¹² Nickolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986 gives the Feast Day of April 25 for the Evangelist Mark, and September 27 and October 30 for John Mark.

¹¹³ Demetrius of Rostov, "The Great Collection of the Lives of the Saints", January 4, tr. by Fr. Thomas Marretta, Chrysostom Press, House Springs, MO, 2002. Two Apostles named Mark are commemorated on the Feast Day for the Seventy, January 4th.

¹¹⁴ Paul Hetherington, tr, *The 'Painter's Manual' of Dionysius of Fourn*, Oakwood Publications, Torrance, CA 90505, 1981, pp. 52-53.

Perhaps much of this confusion between the three Mark's comes from the New Testament apocryphal work¹¹⁵ "The Acts of Barnabas", written by John Mark, which describes Barnabas' work on Cyprus, and which ends with the martyrdom of Barnabas on Cyprus¹¹⁶ in c. 61 AD. At the end of the account, the author states that he left for Alexandria, but gives no connection to any work with the Apostle Peter. Thus both the Evangelist Mark and John Mark may have been in Alexandria for a short time, but doing different things.

Papias, the Early Apostolic Church Father (60-130 AD), stated¹¹⁷ that the Evangelist Mark "neither heard the Lord nor accompanied Him. He accompanied the Apostle Peter, who taught based on the needs of his hearers, and Mark drafted his Gospel based on the Apostle Peter's teachings, but not as a chronological narrative of the Lord's life".

Hippolytus, another Early Church Father (170-236 AD), stated¹¹⁸ that the Evangelist Mark had a maimed finger. However, this maimed finger does not show up clearly in any of the extant icons of the Evangelist Mark, such as illustrated in Figure 1. According to tradition¹¹⁹, Mark was referred to as "stump-fingered", but no information is available as to what caused this.

Hippolytus also listed¹²⁰ both the Evangelist Mark, Mark the cousin of Barnabas and John Mark as among the original Seventy Apostles (Luke 10:1-20) that the Lord sent out ahead of Him in the last year of His public ministry.

Hippolytus further stated¹²¹ that both the Evangelists Mark and Luke were among those who were offended by Jesus when He stated,

"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever" (John 6:53-58).

Mark and Luke were scattered by the offense of the word which Christ spoke (John 6:66). But the one was induced to return to the Lord by Peter's instrumentality, and the other by Paul's. They were honored to preach that Gospel on account of which they also suffered martyrdom; the Evangelist Mark was burned to death, while John Mark was crucified on an olive tree.

¹¹⁵ "The Acts of Barnabas", Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8.

¹¹⁶ Cross and Livingstone, Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, 2nd Ed., Oxford University Press, 1978, p. 134.

¹¹⁷ Fragments of Papias, 5, in Roberts and Donaldson, "The Apostolic Fathers", The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1.

¹¹⁸ Hippolytus, Refutation of All Heresies, VII, 18.

¹¹⁹ Cross and Livingstone, Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, Oxford University Press, 1978, p. 874, quoting Hippolytus and others.

¹²⁰ Hippolytus, On the Seventy Apostles, 14, in Roberts and Donaldson, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 5.

¹²¹ Hippolytus, On the Seventy Apostles, 14, in Roberts and Donaldson, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 5.

According to Church Tradition, on the night that Christ was betrayed, the Evangelist Mark followed Him to the Garden of Gethsemane, wrapped only in a linen cloth¹²². When Mark was seized by soldiers, he fled away naked, leaving the cloth behind (Mark 14:51-52).

The Drafting of Mark's Gospel

Reasons for Drafting the Gospel

Clement of Alexandria stated¹²³ that Mark drafted his Gospel at the persistent request of the people in Rome that heard Peter preach. They wanted a written account of what Peter had said. Peter heard about this, approved Mark's Gospel, and authorized the Reading of the Gospel of Mark in the Churches. Clement stated:

“Such a ray of godliness shone forth on the minds of Peter's hearers, that they were not satisfied with the once hearing or with the unwritten teaching of the divine proclamation, but with all manner of entreaties asked Mark, to whom the Gospel is ascribed, he being the companion of Peter, that he would leave in writing a record of the teaching which had been delivered to them verbally. They did not let the man alone till they prevailed upon him; and so to them we owe the Scripture called the ‘Gospel by Mark’. On learning what had been done, through the revelation of the Spirit, it is said that the Apostle Peter was delighted with the enthusiasm of the men, and sanctioned the composition for reading in the Churches. Clement gives the narrative in the Sixth Book¹²⁴ of the Hypotyposes”.

Eusebius interpreted¹²⁵ the Apostle Peter's remarks about “Babylon” (1 Peter 5:13) as a reference to the drafting of Mark's Gospel in the city of Rome.

“Peter makes mention of Mark in his first Epistle, which they say that he wrote in Rome itself, as is indicated by him, when he calls the city, by a figure, Babylon, as he does in the following words. ‘The Church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, salutes you; and so does Mark my son’”.

Papias (60-130 AD) referred¹²⁶ to the Evangelist Mark as “the interpreter of the Apostle

¹²² According to tradition, the young man was the Evangelist Mark himself, who lived nearby, and who was roused out of bed by the commotion. See April 25th for the Lives of the Saints at the web site www.oca.org. According to the web site www.celticchristianity.org, Mark's simple wrap indicates that he probably went out of the house that was in the garden when he heard the multitude arrive in the middle of the night. Ancient tradition states that this part of the Garden of Gethsemane belonged to the family of St. Mark.

¹²³ Clement of Alexandria, “From the Catena on Luke Edited by Corderius”, in Fragments of Clemens Alexandrinus, Ed. Roberts and Donaldson, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2. Quoted by Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, II, 15.

Jerome, Lives of Illustrious Men, II, 8, in Jerome and Gennadius, The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Volume 3.

Clement of Alexandria, “Fragments” 1, From the Latin Translation of Cassiodorus, Comments on 1 Peter, 1, in Roberts and Donaldson, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 2.

¹²⁴ The Hypotyposes of Clement of Alexandria have been lost. All that is extant are fragments that were quoted by other writers.

¹²⁵ Eusebius, Church History, II, 15.

¹²⁶ Fragments of Papias, 5, in Roberts and Donaldson, “The Apostolic Fathers”, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1. Eusebius, Church History, III, 39.

Peter”. By “interpreter”, he does not mean that Peter could not communicate with people who didn’t speak Hebrew. The Apostle Peter, like the Evangelist Mark, had the gift of speaking in tongues that they received at Pentecost. The way this gift worked was described by Rufinus of Aquilea¹²⁷.

“After Pentecost, they were enabled to speak a variety of different languages such that they found no nation strange to them and no foreign speech beyond their comprehension”

As “interpreter” of Peter, the Evangelist Mark wrote down accurately whatever he remembered from Peter’s preaching. He did not write down the sayings or deeds of Christ in the exact order that they happened. Eusebius stated¹²⁸ that Mark composed his Gospel per Peter’s instructions, which implies that there was some editing that occurred after Mark’s first draft. Irenaeus stated¹²⁹ that “Mark handed down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter, but that this occurred after Peter’s departure”.

Some manuscripts of Mark’s Gospel add the following sentences at the end of Chapter 16, verse 20:

“And they promptly reported all these instructions to Peter and his companions. And after that, Jesus Himself sent out through them from East to West the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation”.

Clement of Alexandria also stated¹³⁰ that the order of the drafting of the four Gospels is the same as their order appears in modern Bibles; that is, Matthew first and John last.

“The Gospel according to Mark had this occasion. As Peter had preached the Word publicly at Rome, and declared the Gospel by the Spirit, many who were present requested that Mark, who had followed him for a long time and remembered his sayings, should write them out. And having composed the Gospel he gave it to those who had requested it”.

From the above, we can obtain an approximate date for the drafting of the Gospel of Mark. He wrote his Gospel when the Apostle Peter was still in Rome, which was in the mid-40’s AD. We can get a rough check on this by looking carefully at when Luke wrote his Gospel. Luke ended his account of the travels of Paul with Paul still under house-arrest in Rome, which ended in c. 62 AD. Luke wrote his Gospel a few years before he wrote Acts, or about 58 AD. Thus we can see that this lines up with Clement’s understanding. Matthew wrote his Gospel before leaving on his missionary journeys in the early 30’s. Mark drafted his Gospel in the mid

Jerome, Lives of Illustrious Men, II, 1, in Jerome and Gennadius, The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Volume 3.

¹²⁷ Rufinus of Aquilea, “Commentary on the Apostles’ Creed”, Schaff and Wace, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series v.3.

¹²⁸ Eusebius, Church History, VI, 25.

¹²⁹ Irenaeus, Against Heresies, III, I, 1.
Eusebius, Church History, V, 8.

¹³⁰ Clement of Alexandria, “From the Catena on Luke Edited by Corderius”, in Fragments of Clemens Alexandrinus, Ed. Roberts and Donaldson, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2.

Quoted by Eusebius Pamphilius, Church History, VI, 14.

40's, and John wrote his Gospel toward the end of the 1st Century. The order of the Gospels reflects the order of their writing.

Content of Mark's Gospel

The Evangelist Mark began and ended his Gospel with a reference to what the Prophets had said about Christ. He began with a reference to Isaiah and Malachi, and ended with a reference to David. Irenaeus noted¹³¹ this as follows:

“Mark, the interpreter and follower of Peter, began his Gospel narrative: ‘The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; as it is written in the prophets, ‘Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You. The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord; Make His paths straight before our God’ (Mark 1:2-3, Isaiah 40:3 LXX, Malachi 3:1). Plainly the commencement of the Gospel quotes the words of the holy prophets, and points out Him at once, whom they confessed as God and Lord. The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ had promised Him that He would send His messenger before His face, who was John, crying in the wilderness, in ‘the spirit and power of Elijah’ (Luke 1:17, Matthew 11:14), ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight paths before our God’ (Isaiah 40:3 LXX). For the prophets announced one and the same God, under various aspects, and many titles. For varied and rich in attribute is the Father”.

“Towards the conclusion of his Gospel, Mark says: ‘So then, after the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God’ (Mark 16:19). This confirmed what had been spoken by the prophet: ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool”’ (Psalm 110:1). Thus God and the Father are truly one and the same; He who was announced by the prophets, and handed down by the true Gospel; we Christians worship and love Him with the whole heart, as the Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things”.

Irenaeus compared¹³² the four Gospels to the four living creatures in the books of Ezekiel and Revelation. Other writers such as Augustin and Victorinus have expressed different links to these creatures¹³³. Irenaeus said that Matthew's Gospel corresponded to the man; Mark's, to the flying eagle; Luke's, to the calf that was slain, and John's, to the lion.

“It is not possible that the Gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are. Since the Church is scattered throughout all the world, and the ‘pillar and ground’ of the Church is the Gospel and the spirit of life; it is fitting that she should have four pillars, breathing out immortality on every side. The Word, the Creator of all, He that sits upon the cherubim, and contains all things,

¹³¹ Irenaeus, Against Heresies, III, x, 5.

¹³² Irenaeus, Against Heresies, III, xi, 8.

¹³³ Augustin, Harmony of the Gospels, I, vi, 9 identified Matthew with the lion due to his emphasis on Jesus' descent from kings and John with the eagle due to his soaring theological understanding. That left him with Mark depicting the man since Mark's accounts did not emphasize the royal or priestly aspects of Jesus' life. Victorinus, Commentary on the Apocalypse of the Blessed John, Chapter 4, 7-10 on the other hand, agreed with Irenaeus on Matthew and Luke, but likened Mark to the lion due to his reference to “crying in the wilderness” (Mark 1:3) where lions lived. Irenaeus seems to express more depth in understanding the Gospel of Mark than do Augustin and Victorinus.

He who was revealed to men, has given us the Gospel under four aspects, but bound together by one Spirit. As David says, when entreating His manifestation, ‘You that sit between the cherubim, shine forth’ (Psalm 80:1). For the cherubim, too, were four-faced, and their faces were images of the dispensation of the Son of God. As the Scripture says (Ezekiel 1:8-10, 10:14, Revelation 4:7), ‘The first living creature was like a lion’, symbolizing His effectual working, His leadership, and royal power. The second living creature was like a calf, signifying His sacrificial and sacerdotal order. But ‘the third had, as it were, the face as of a man’ — an evident description of His advent as a human being. ‘The fourth was like a flying eagle’, pointing out the gift of the Spirit hovering with His wings over the Church”.

“The Gospels are in accord with these things, among which Christ Jesus is seated. For the Gospel according to John relates His original, effectual, and glorious generation from the Father, thus declaring, ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God’ (John 1:1). Also, ‘all things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made’ (John 1:3). For this reason, too, is John’s Gospel full of confidence, like the royal presence of a lion, for such is His person”.

“But that according to Luke, taking up His priestly character, like a calf about to be slain, commenced with Zachariah the priest offering sacrifice to God. For now the fatted calf was made ready, about to be immolated for the finding again of the younger son” (Luke 15:32).

“Matthew relates His generation as a man, saying, ‘The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham’ (Matthew 1:1); and also, ‘The birth of Jesus Christ was as follows’ (Matthew 1:18). This, then, is the Gospel of His humanity; for which reason it is that the character of a humble and meek man is kept up through the whole Gospel”.

“Mark, on the other hand, commences with a reference to the prophetic spirit coming down from on high to men, saying, ‘The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is written in Isaiah the prophet’ (Mark 1:1-2), pointing to the winged aspect of the Gospel, like a flying eagle. On this account he made a compendious and cursory narrative, for such is the prophetic character”.

“The Word of God Himself used to converse with the ante-Mosaic Patriarchs, in accordance with His divinity and glory; but for those under the Law he instituted a sacerdotal and liturgical service. Afterwards, being made man for us, He sent the gift of the celestial Spirit over all the earth, protecting us with His wings. As was the course followed by the Son of God, so was also the form of the living creatures. And such as was the form of the living creatures, so was also the character of the Gospel. For the living creatures are quadriform, and the Gospel is quadriform, as is also the course followed by the Lord. For this reason, four principal covenants were given to the human race:

1. Prior to the Deluge, under Adam
2. After the Deluge, under Noah
3. The giving of the Law, under Moses
4. That which renovates man, and sums up all things in itself by means of the Gospel, raising and bearing men upon its wings into the heavenly kingdom”.

In Mark's Gospel, there is internal evidence of Peter's editing, where Peter, in his humility, had Mark delete accounts that glorified himself, but yet let him include accounts of his weakness.

For example, Matthew recorded an incident in his Gospel where Jesus paid the Temple Tax¹³⁴. Jesus had Peter cast a hook into the Sea of Galilee, and the first fish that he caught would have a piece of money in its mouth. Jesus instructed Peter to use that money to pay the Temple Tax for both of them (Matthew 17:24-27). This was an incredible miracle that showed Jesus' complete mastery over the sea, everything in it and the order of events. This was quite an honor for Peter also that Jesus would do this for him.

While Matthew recorded this event, Mark did not, even though Mark was the constant companion of Peter. John Chrysostom noted¹³⁵ that it was rather significant for Mark to omit this event, since Mark did not omit details of Peter's denial (Mark 14:66-72)! Chrysostom concluded that Peter, out of humility, asked Mark to omit the things that made him look good, but let him include the things that showed his weakness. Chrysostom stated:

“Regarding the incident of the Temple Tax, Mark, the follower of this Apostle, did not set it down, because it indicated the great honor paid to Peter. But regarding Peter's denial, he did write about it. The things that made him illustrious, Mark passed over in silence, his master perhaps entreating him not to mention the great things about himself. And Jesus used the phrase, ‘for Me and you’. Now as you are amazed at Christ's power, so I ask you to admire also the disciple's faith, that to a thing beyond possibility he listened to. For it was very far beyond possibility by nature to find money in a fish's mouth. In answering for his faith, He joined him to Himself in the payment of the tribute”.

Chrysostom also pointed out¹³⁶ that the Evangelist Mark, a disciple of Peter and one of the Seventy, declares his master's weakness in more detail than the rest, since he learned this from Peter himself.

“But Mark said, that when he had once denied, then first the cock crew, but when he denied Him for the third time, then the cock crew for the second time. For he declares more particularly the weakness of the disciple, and that he was utterly dead with fear; having learned these things of his master himself, for he was a follower of Peter. In which respect one would most marvel at him, that so far from hiding his teacher's faults, he declared it more distinctly than the rest on this very account, that he was his disciple”.

Mark's Early Missionary Work

¹³⁴ This “Temple Tax” was required from foreigners - payable in shekels of the sanctuary - before they could bring any offering forward. And the moneychangers could charge anything they saw proper to perform this “service”.

¹³⁵ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, LVIII, 2.

¹³⁶ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, LXXXV, 1.

The Evangelist Mark developed a close relationship with the Apostle Peter in the days following Pentecost, and he followed Peter similar to the way the Evangelist Luke followed the Apostle Paul, and the Apostle Prochorus (of the Seventy) followed the Apostle John. There are numerous references documenting the Evangelist Mark as being a disciple¹³⁷ and “spokesman” for the Apostle Peter. Just as with Luke and Prochorus, everywhere Peter went, the Evangelist Mark went also. This formed a foundation for the drafting of Mark’s Gospel, since he used Peter’s words in his preaching as the basis for his text.

The Beginning of the Church in Rome

At Pentecost, 30 AD, when the Holy Spirit was given to the Church, there had been visitors in Jerusalem from Rome, both Jews and Gentile converts (Acts 2:10). Many of these visitors stayed and made up part of the 3000 that were added to the Church as a result of Peter’s preaching (Acts 2:41). One year later, at the stoning of Stephen, the Church was scattered due to the bloodbath in Jerusalem (Acts 8:4). While the Scripture records just the stoning of Stephen one year after Pentecost, in actuality, two hundred others were also stoned¹³⁸ that same day, including deacon Nicanor (Acts 6:5). Thus, people were leaving town to avoid a major bloodbath organized by the Jewish leaders. Those who had come to Jerusalem from Rome, and stayed after Pentecost, may have returned to Rome at this time.

Things were so stressful that Nicodemus, who had defended Jesus before fellow members of the Sanhedrin (John 7:50-52), died as he was mourning the death of Stephen, and he was buried in Gamaliel’s tomb. Nicodemus was an old man at the time, and he had also helped Joseph of Arimathea with the burial rite of Jesus (John 19:38-42).

Meanwhile, Mary Magdalene, who was quite wealthy, had traveled on her own to Rome to appear before Tiberias Caesar and tell him the whole story of Pilate’s unjust trial of Jesus, his release of a murderer-insurrectionist and his cowering to the Jewish leaders. As a result of this, Pilate was summoned to Rome, was unable to defend his actions and was banished to Gaul where he later committed suicide. Mary Magdalene stayed in Rome for a long time working as an evangelist before moving to Ephesus in the 60’s AD to work with the Apostle John. Mary was a pioneer for the Church in Rome. In doing this, she would have had to liquidate all her wealth along with the others after Pentecost (Acts 4:34-37).

Mark Leaves for Rome in the mid 40’s

In the Days of Unleavened Bread, 44 AD¹³⁹, James the son of Zebedee was beheaded by Herod Agrippa I and Peter was imprisoned, expecting the same fate after Passover. Peter was released from prison by an angel (Acts 12:1-17), and headed North to Antioch, taking the Evangelist Mark with him. Eventually they made their way to Rome.

¹³⁷ Irenaeus, Against Heresies, III, I, 1.

Clement of Alexandria, “Comments on the First Epistle of Peter”, Fragments of Clemens Alexandrinus, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2.

Tertullian, Five Books Against Marcion, II, ii, 4, 5.

¹³⁸ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, July 28.

¹³⁹ Unger gives the date of Herod’s death as 44 AD. See Merrill Unger, Unger’s Bible Dictionary, Moody Press, Chicago, 1967, p. 486.

After Peter arrived in Rome, Mary stayed to continue helping the Church, and Paul addressed her by name in his Epistle (Romans 16:5). In that Epistle, dated about 55 AD, Paul also addressed 18 members of the original Seventy Apostles (Romans 16:3-23), who had been sent to Rome by Peter and Paul to aid in the work Mary started. Mary Magdalene came to be called “Equal to the Apostles” for her role in the young church, primarily in Rome and later in Ephesus with the Apostle John.

Thus when Peter and the Evangelist Mark arrived in Rome, there were a number of believers already there and organized by Mary Magdalene. There was a core group who were familiar with the Apostles, and who had received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and who had lived in the Church in Jerusalem for a while, where everyone had all things in common

One of the first places that the Apostle Peter sent the Evangelist Mark after their arrival in Rome was to the city of Aquilea (near Venice). Mark’s excursion to Aquilea became significant hundreds of years later, after the Islamic Conquest of Egypt, when his relics were moved away from Alexandria to prevent desecration; they were moved to Aquilea.

After spending a short time in Aquilea, the Apostle Peter ordained the Evangelist Mark as Bishop, and sent him go to Alexandria in Egypt. According to tradition, he stopped at his hometown of Pentapolis and cities nearby first. From the Prologue¹⁴⁰ of Ochrid:

“Mark was chosen by the Apostle Peter to be a bishop and was sent to Egypt to preach. Egypt was oppressed by the thick darkness of paganism, idolatry, divination and malice. With the help of God, the Evangelist Mark succeeded in sowing the seed of the knowledge of God in Libya, Ammonicia and Pentapolis. From Pentapolis, he went to Alexandria where the Spirit of God led him”.

At some time in the late 40’s AD, Emperor Claudius had expelled all the Jews from Rome. Because of this, the Apostle Paul ran into the Apostle Aquila (of the Seventy) and his wife Priscilla in Corinth (Acts 18:1-3), where Paul, Aquila and Priscilla worked together for a number of years after this. This edict by the Emperor, expelling the Jews, may have been the occasion for Peter sending the Evangelist Mark to Egypt.

Mark Finds the Church in Alexandria

There are numerous references, a few included here¹⁴¹, documenting the sending of the Evangelist Mark to Alexandria by the Apostle Peter to raise up the Church there, since he was a disciple¹⁴² and “spokesman” for Peter.

¹⁴⁰ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 25.

¹⁴¹ Gregory the Great, Book of Pastoral Rule, V, 1.
Gregory the Great, Epistles, Book VI, 60.

¹⁴² Irenaeus, Against Heresies, III, I, 1.

Clement of Alexandria, “Comments on the First Epistle of Peter”, Fragments of Clemens Alexandrinus, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2.

It is difficult to date the exact year that the Apostle Peter sent Mark to Egypt to preach the Gospel. One account quotes¹⁴³ Eutychius, patriarch of Alexandria, as saying this occurred in the 9th year of the Emperor Claudius, or 49 AD. However, this may have occurred earlier than 49 AD. The Jewish philosopher Philo visited some of the monasteries that the Evangelist Mark established, and wrote¹⁴⁴ a short article expressing his admiration for these communities. [More about this later.] If Philo died in 50 AD, after reporting a great number of monasteries in the neighborhood of Alexandria, it may have taken Mark more than a year to get these monasteries started. However, a number of the monks had been in Jerusalem after Pentecost (Acts 2:10) only to return to Egypt during the persecution. Having a history of living together under the Apostles, they may have been able to develop monastic communities quicker than we might realize.

On the other hand, they could have gotten started earlier. Jerome stated¹⁴⁵ that Peter left for Rome in the 2nd year of Claudius, or 42 AD. Others state that Peter left Jerusalem in the year of Herod Agrippa's death, which was the year 44 AD. Sometime during this interval 42 AD to 49 AD, the Evangelist Mark went to Rome at the direction of the Apostle Peter, where the people of Rome encouraged him to write his Gospel, before he was sent to Egypt.

Mark's Apostolic Predecessors in Egypt

The Evangelist Mark was not the first of the Apostles to go to Egypt. After Pentecost, the Twelve made preparations for their various missionary journeys, and cast lots to divide up the world into regions¹⁴⁶ where each of the Twelve had one lot. The lot for James the son of Alphaeus included Egypt, but may have included other areas of the world as well. Also during this first year, Matthew had finished writing his Gospel in Hebrew¹⁴⁷, and the Twelve had finished drafting¹⁴⁸ what was later called "The Apostles' Creed". The Creed was a common statement of the Faith that they and their successors could use as a metric, since they realized that they may never see each other again.

A brief summary¹⁴⁹ of the work of James the son of Alphaeus in Egypt notes that there was a great deal of conflict with pagans such that James was crucified in Egypt.

Tertullian, Five Books Against Marcion, II, ii, 4, 5.

¹⁴³ Isaac Lambertsen, The Lives of the Holy Apostles, Holy Apostles Convent Press, Buena Vista, CO, 1990, p. 247. This is a translation from the following:

The Lives of the Saints in the Russian Language, According to the Menology of St. Dimitri of Rostov, Synodal Press, Moscow, 1906, v. 8, (April) pp. 403-416.

¹⁴⁴ C. D. Yonge, tr., "On the Contemplative Life", The Works of Philo, Updated Edition Database, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, II:10 to IV:39.

¹⁴⁵ Jerome, "Lives of Illustrious Men", Chapter 1, Jerome and Gennadius, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 3.

¹⁴⁶ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 6, October 9, November 30.

¹⁴⁷ For details of Matthew's draft of his Gospel in Hebrew, see the separate study on the life of Matthew.

¹⁴⁸ Rufinus, A Commentary on the Apostles' Creed, Post-Nicene Fathers, Series 2, v. 3.

¹⁴⁹ Isaac Lambertsen, The Lives of the Holy Apostles, Holy Apostles Convent Press, Buena Vista, CO, 1990, pp. 218-220. This is a translation from the following:

The Lives of the Saints in the Russian Language, According to the Menology of St. Dimitri of Rostov, Moscow, Synodal Press, 1904, v. 2, (October) pp. 166-167.

“Aflame with the fire of divine zeal, he burned up the thorns of ungodliness, smashed idols to pieces, destroyed their temples, healed diverse illnesses, drove evil spirits out of people, and brought a great multitude of people to Christ. For this he acquired for himself a new name, the ‘Divine Seed’. Because he sowed the seed of the Word of God in men's hearts, planted faith and grew piety, he was called the ‘Divine Seed’. Going about many lands, he sowed the seed of heaven, and ended his earthly course in the steps of Christ. Being an emulator of the sufferings of Christ, he surrendered his spirit into the hands of God while nailed to a cross in Egypt.”

Another traditional account¹⁵⁰ of James’ missionary work reads as follows.

“After the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, it fell to the lot of the Apostle James to preach Christ’s Gospel in Eleutheropolis (i.e. Greece) and the surrounding area, and then in Egypt, where he suffered for his Savior. With great power, both in word and in act, James spread abroad the saving news of the incarnate Word of God, rooting out idol worship, driving demons out of men, healing all manner of sickness and disease in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. His labors and his zeal were crowned with great success. Many pagans came to believe in Christ the Lord, Churches were founded and set in order, and priests and Bishops were made. He suffered in Egypt in the town of Ostracina¹⁵¹, being crucified by the pagans”.

The Apostle Nathanael (or Bartholomew) also spent a short time in Egypt. Nathanael’s early missionary journeys have not been well documented, and we know considerably more about his later missionary journeys, both when he traveled with the Apostle Philip (of the Twelve) and by himself. The Roman Martyrology states¹⁵² that during his early missionary journeys, he preached in Egypt for a time, as did some of the other Apostles. From a fragment of the writings of an unknown author¹⁵³ of the late 2nd Century, Pantaenus of Alexandria “became a zealous missionary to the Oriental Ethiopia, and found there the traces of Matthias’ labors, and those also of Nathanael. Pantaenus returned from this mission about 192 AD”.

The Beginning of the Work of the Evangelist Mark in Egypt

One characteristic difference between the missionary work of the Twelve versus that of the Seventy is that the Twelve continued traveling their whole lives, while the Seventy were more fixed to one locale as Bishop. Most of the Seventy follow this pattern, but there are a few exceptions, such as the Evangelist Luke. The work of James the son of Alphaeus and Nathanael in Egypt, where they continued traveling widely, followed by the Evangelist Mark, who was more closely associated with Alexandria and vicinity, seems to fit this pattern.

¹⁵⁰ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 9.

¹⁵¹ Ostracina is at the Eastern side of the Nile Delta, right on the Mediterranean Coast, where Alexandria is on the Western side of the Nile Delta. See www.christusrex.org/www1/ofm/mad/legends/legends131.html for a detailed location.

¹⁵² Thurston and Attwater, Butler’s Lives of the Saints, Christian Classics, Westminster, MD, 1990, August 24.

¹⁵³ Roberts and Donaldson, ed., “Pantaenus, the Alexandrian Philosopher, Introduction”, Remains of the Second and Third Centuries, Ante Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

Concerning the difficulty that Mark faced with Egyptian idolatry when he arrived in Alexandria, Jerome remarked¹⁵⁴ that, “No nation was so given to idolatry and worshipped such a countless number of monsters as the Egyptians”.

To get a perspective of the significance of the Church in Alexandria that resulted from his efforts, we must remember what Alexandria was like in the 1st Century. It was a seat of great learning, and it had a very large Jewish population. Its rulers were receptive to Christianity, and Pharaoh Ptolemy was the one who had commissioned the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek in the 3rd Century BC. His purpose was to make the Hebrew Scriptures available to the large Jewish population in Egypt, who didn’t speak Hebrew. He assembled seventy scholars to do this, and therefore the translation is called the Septuagint or the LXX. It was this version of the Old Testament that was used exclusively by the Early Church throughout the world.

One account¹⁵⁵ of Mark’s work at the time of his arrival in Alexandria reads as follows:

“In Alexandria, he succeeded in establishing the Church of God, in giving her bishops, priests and deacons and in rooting everything firmly in faithfulness and devotion. Mark confirmed his preaching with many great miracles. When the pagans brought accusations against Mark, as a destroyer of their idolatrous faith, and when the governor of the city began to search for Mark, he fled to Pentapolis, where he continued his earlier work. After two years, Mark again returned to Alexandria to the great joy of all his faithful, whose number had already increased greatly”.

Personal Details of the Work of Mark in Egypt

Another account¹⁵⁶ of Mark’s arrival in Alexandria gives some personal interaction of Mark with a local cobbler. As Mark arrived in the Alexandria neighborhood, at a place called Medion, his sandal split in two. He took this to be a favorable omen, and went to a nearby cobbler shop to get his sandal repaired. While working on Mark’s sandal, the cobbler accidentally ran his awl through his hand; crying out in pain, the cobbler called on the Name of God. Hearing this exclamation, Mark rejoiced in spirit, seeing that the Lord was laying out before him a good path.

The wound in the cobbler’s hand was very painful, and he was losing a lot of blood. Mark, remembering what Jesus had done (John 9:6), spit on the ground to make clay, and anointed the cobbler’s hand. As he did this, he said, “In the Name of Jesus Christ, Who lives forever, be whole!” Immediately, the cobbler’s wound closed up and his hand was healed.

The cobbler was completely stunned at such power in the man standing before him and in the effects of his words. Mark’s presence, and the purity and sanctity of his life, had already

¹⁵⁴ Jerome, The Life of Paulus, the First Hermit, 8.

Jerome, Against Jovinianus, II, 7.

¹⁵⁵ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 25.

¹⁵⁶ Isaac Lambertsen, The Lives of the Holy Apostles, Holy Apostles Convent Press, Buena Vista, CO, 1990, p. 247.

This is a translation from the following:

The Lives of the Saints in the Russian Language, According to the Menology of St. Dimitri of Rostov, Synodal Press, Moscow, 1906, v. 8, (April) pp. 403-416.

been apparent. The cobbler begged that Mark come to his house for the evening meal, and stay the night, in appreciation for the mercy that he had shown to his servant, the cobbler. Mark joyfully consented and said, “May the Lord bestow on you the Bread of Life, the Bread of Heaven!”

The cobbler joyfully led Mark to his home. Entering into the house, Mark said, “May the blessing of the Lord be upon this place! Brethren, let us pray to God”. Mark was following Jesus’ instruction for both the Twelve and the Seventy in doing this. When they entered a house to stay at, Jesus had said to “let your peace come upon that household” (Matthew 10:13, Luke 10:5). If the household was worthy, or if a son of peace was there, their peace would rest upon that household. If not, their peace would return to them and it would be more tolerable on Judgment Day for Sodom than for that house or that city. This “peace” was incorporated¹⁵⁷ into the Church Liturgy in the 1st Century, where the presiding presbyter or bishop would say, “Peace be to all”, and the people would respond, “And to your spirit!” This is an Apostolic blessing and, in similar fashion, it will be more tolerable on Judgment Day for Sodom than for that Church that rejects the Apostolic blessing.

After praying, when everyone reclined at table, the cobbler initiated the conversation by saying, “Father, who are you? And where did you get the power that is in your speech?” Mark replied, “I am the servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God”. The cobbler said, “I would like to see this Son of God”. Mark replied that he would show Him to them. Then beginning with the Gospel and the Prophets, Mark explained how they all foretold concerning Christ. The cobbler replied that he had never heard of the Hebrew Scriptures, only the Iliad, the Odyssey, and what Egyptian youths are taught. Mark continued to show him clearly that all the wisdom of the world is foolish in the sight of God.

The cobbler, whose name was Ananias, believed all that Mark told him, and beholding the miracles that Mark performed, accepted baptism. His whole household was also baptized, along with a great multitude of people in that area. Day by day, the number of the faithful increased.

Eventually, the rulers of the city of Medion became aware that Mark’s work was hindering the sacrifices customarily offered to their gods, and that he was “blaspheming” their idols. They sought to murder this “foreigner” and gathered together to take counsel on how to arrest him.

Mark learned of their decision, and hurriedly ordained Ananias as Bishop for the faithful, and three priests (Malchus, Sabinus and Cedronus), along with seven deacons and eleven lesser clergymen for the ministry of the Church. Then he left town and went back to Pentapolis. Mark spent two years in Pentapolis, confirming the brethren in the Faith, ordaining Bishops, priests and clergymen for the surrounding regions and cities before returning to Alexandria.

On his return, he found that the brethren had increased in number and excelled in grace and faith in the Lord. Ananias had also built a Church building near the sea in a place called Bukulus. On seeing the Church, Mark rejoiced greatly, and kneeling down, gave glory to God.

¹⁵⁷ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XXXII, 9.

Mark stayed in Alexandria for a considerable time, and the Christians of that Church increased in number to a multitude. They grew strong in the Faith, and openly criticized the Greeks for their idolatry. The pagan city officials, knowing that Mark was in the city performing many miracles, were enraged at him in their hatred and malice, and again sought to kill him. Their efforts were long in vain, and they assembled in their pagan temples and gnashed their teeth wrathfully, saying, “O what trouble this wizard and sorcerer is causing us!”

The Evangelist Mark Travels Throughout Egypt

According to tradition, the Evangelist Mark traveled throughout Egypt, finding a receptive people as he went. In some places the people had been prepared by Christ Himself, when He was a child during the Flight to Egypt (Matthew 2:13-15). The end of the journey of Joseph, Mary, Jesus and James was Upper Egypt near the Qousqam Mountains about 100 miles from Thebes, where they lived in a cave for the better part of a year. Today this cave is the site of the Dair al-Muharraq Monastery. The first church was built on that location by about 60 AD, following the Evangelist Mark’s travels throughout Egypt. The Monastery there was built in the 4th century as were a number of other monasteries and churches that commemorated the various places Joseph, Mary, Jesus and James stayed. Many of these still exist today and the historic sites are visited by many people every year¹⁵⁸.

The Apostle Peter visited the Evangelist Mark in Egypt during this time, after visiting Spain and Carthage. Together they went all the way up the Nile to Thebes in Upper Egypt to the place where Jesus, Joseph, Mary and James stayed when Jesus was a toddler during the Flight to Egypt (Matthew 2:13-15). While there, Peter ordained Rufus, of the Seventy, as bishop of Thebes. Rufus was the son of Simon of Cyrene, the man who carried Jesus’ cross to Golgotha. Of the four evangelists, only Mark mentioned Rufus’ relation to Simon of Cyrene (Mark 15:21). Rufus also was in Rome as Paul wrote Romans (Romans 16:13) and must have joined Peter in Egypt or traveled with him. This dates Peter’s visit to Egypt to probably the late 50’s AD.

Alexandria as the Seat of Christian Learning

Roberts and Donaldson speak¹⁵⁹ of the Alexandrian Church as the leader of the Churches throughout the world. Prior to the 5th Century, the only Patriarchate that could claim “papal authority” as Rome later claimed, was Alexandria, not Rome. The spirituality and the wisdom of Alexandria can be traced to the efforts of the Evangelist Mark and the Apostle Apollos of the Seventy and their successors.

“In this volume (Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6), the moral grandeur and predominance of the See of Alexandria are conspicuously illustrated. The mastery, which its great school continued to exercise over Christian thought, will all present themselves forcibly to every reflecting reader of this book. One half of this volume presents the Alexandrian school itself in its glorious succession of doctors and pupils¹⁶⁰, and the other half in the reflected light of its universal

¹⁵⁸ Holy Apostles Convent, The Life of the Virgin Mary, pp. 284-285

¹⁵⁹ Roberts and Donaldson, “Introductory Notice to Volume 6”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, 1975.

¹⁶⁰ Some of these standouts of the Church in Alexandria were the Evangelist Mark and the Apostle Apollos in the 1st Century, Pantaenus and Clement in the 2nd Century, Dionysios and Gregory Thaumaturgos in the 3rd Century, and Athanasius and Cyril in the 4th Century.

influence”.

“Because it was the capital of the empire, therefore Rome was reckoned the *first*, but not the chief, of Sees, as the Council of Nicaea declared; and because Byzantium had become ‘New Rome’, therefore it is made *second* on the list, but equal in dignity. The endowment of Alexandria was not asserted; it was unquestioned and unchallenged because as yet unholy ambition had not infected the Apostolic churches”.

“It is time to disabuse the West of its narrow ideas concerning ecclesiastical history. Dean Stanley rebuked¹⁶¹ this spirit and called on us to enlarge our petty Occidental horizon. He added words of reproach which invite us to reform the entire scheme of our ecclesiastical history by presenting the Eastern Apostolic churches as the main stem of Christendom, of which the church of Rome itself was, for three hundred years, a mere colony”.

““The early Roman church was but a colony of Greek Christians or Grecized Jews. The earliest Fathers of the Western Church wrote in Greek. The early popes were not Italians, but Greeks. The name of pope is not Latin, but Greek; she is the mother, and Rome the daughter. It is her privilege to claim a direct continuity of speech with the earliest times. She read the whole code of Scripture, Old as well as New, in the language in which it was read and spoken by the Apostles”” (i.e. Greek).

““The See of Alexandria was then the most important in the world. The Alexandrian Church was the only great seat of Christian learning. Its episcopate was the Evangelical See, as founded by the chair of St. Mark. Its occupant was the only potentate of the time who bore the name of pope. After the Council of Nicaea he became the judge of the world, from his decisions respecting the celebration of Easter; and from the obedience paid to his judgment in all matters of learning, secular and sacred’. ‘The head of the Alexandrian church,’ says¹⁶² Gregory Nazianzen, ‘is the head of the world’”.

Because of the efforts of especially Apollos and the Evangelist Mark, Alexandria had become the earliest seat of Christian learning¹⁶³. Catechetical schools in Alexandria enrolled some of the brightest students from across the Empire, and with the resources of the Alexandrian library at hand, something like a Christian university came into being. And this occurred at a time when Christianity was still being persecuted.

By the beginning of the 4th Century, Alexandria was the mother of Churches and the intellectual and the ecclesiastical primacy of Christendom¹⁶⁴, virtually “the light of the world”. Egypt was again the pharos of the world as it was in the days of Moses. The “men of Galilee” had taken possession of the great Alexandrian Library for their ultimate use. The Evangelist Mark and the eloquent Apollos had founded the schools of Christendom and shaped the theology of their day.

Monasteries of the Alexandrian Church

¹⁶¹ Dean Stanley, Lectures on the Eastern Church,

¹⁶² Gregory Nazianzen, Oration XXI, 7.

¹⁶³ Roberts and Donaldson, “Introductory Note to Clement of Alexandria”, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 2.

¹⁶⁴ Roberts and Donaldson, “Introductory Note to Peter of Alexandria”, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 6.

Monasticism in and around Alexandria began in the late 40's AD, and the characteristics of the monastic life there was modeled after Church life in Jerusalem following Pentecost about 15 years earlier. We can see this from the testimony of the Jewish Philosopher Philo.

The Jewish philosopher Philo (20 BC to 50 AD) had great admiration¹⁶⁵ for the monastic communities in Egypt, whom he called "*The Therapeutae*" or healers¹⁶⁶. Eusebius devoted¹⁶⁷ a chapter of his Church History to quoting Philo's account of 1st Century monasticism¹⁶⁸, saying,

"The multitude of believers, both men and women, that were collected at these monasteries at the very outset, and lived lives of the most philosophical and excessive asceticism, was so great, that Philo thought it worthwhile to describe their pursuits, their meetings, their entertainment, and their whole manner of life".

Jerome stated¹⁶⁹ that Philo, a native of Alexandria of the priestly class, saw in the monasteries of Egypt something of credit to his nation, since there was still a distinct Jewish flavor to their life together.

Some characteristics of these monastic communities, as described by Philo in the above referenced work "On the Contemplative Life" are:

1. They consisted of men and women living in separate quarters.
2. They leave their possessions to relatives or friends when they join the community.
3. The communities are located primarily in desert areas with no city walls.
4. These communities are located in Greece and other barbarian lands, but the largest concentration is in Egypt, especially near Alexandria.
5. Their houses are very plain, just adequate to shield them from the sun and the cold.
6. They don't live close to one another as men do in cities (i.e. wall-to-wall), but yet close enough for fellowship.
7. Every house has a sacred shrine, which is called the holy place.
8. They study the Laws of God, the Prophets, hymns and Psalms, and "the writings of the ancients", which is probably the writings of the Apostles, which Philo wouldn't recognize as such. At this early date, all they could have had were the Gospels of Matthew and Mark. None of the rest of the New Testament had yet been written.
9. They pray twice every day, at sunrise and sunset.
10. During the six days of the week, each retires into solitude by himself, to work, study and compose hymns and psalms. Thus they practice the Prophets' mode of life.

¹⁶⁵ C. D. Yonge, tr., "On the Contemplative Life", *The Works of Philo*, Updated Edition Database, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, I:2, II:10 to IV:39.

¹⁶⁶ Philo applied this name to refer to the healing of the soul and the worship of God in purity and sincerity.

¹⁶⁷ Eusebius, *Church History*, II, 17.

Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History*, I, 12.

¹⁶⁸ The Protestant Reformers had a strong reaction to monasticism in general, and were unwilling to believe that a well-developed monasticism could have existed at all until much later, never mind before the death of Philo in 50 AD. They concluded that these communities were either not Christian, or that the accounts were a later addition to the works of Philo. See Philip Schaff, ed., Eusebius, *Church History*, II, 17, Footnote 2, Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Volume 1.

¹⁶⁹ Jerome, "Lives of Illustrious Men", Chapter 8, *Jerome and Gennadius*, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 3.

11. On the 7th day, they all come together, sitting down on the floor according to age, to listen to their eldest (i.e. bishop) speak with great powers of reasoning and prudence.
12. The men and women both listen, but from separate areas of the house.
13. They only eat after sunset, leaving the daytime for work and study, and part of the night for the necessities of the body. Deacons help serve tables.
14. Some men go 3-6 days between meals, which consist of bread with a little salt¹⁷⁰ and perhaps hyssop. They eat no meat and don't drink wine, only water from a spring.
15. Their clothes are very plain: a cloak of some shaggy hide for winter, and a thin mantle or linen shawl for summer.
16. They sleep on the ground on a bed of straw.
17. They practice complete simplicity, looking upon falsehood as the foundation of pride, but truth as the origin of simplicity.
18. Their common assemblies are very cheerful in their praise to God.

A monastic community in Alexandria as early as the late 40's may be surprising to us in the 21st century, but it should not be if we understand those parts of the Scriptures that we tend to pass over too quickly. The Lord told the Twelve Apostles, "Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life" (Matthew 19:29). We tend to read past "wife and children" too quickly without understanding what the Lord was referring to.

All of the Twelve and the Seventy¹⁷¹, after their call by the Lord, left behind both the things of this world and the pleasures of this world. Thus they gave up their land and property, and also sexual relations with their wives. Those Apostles that had wives often had their wives and even their children travel with them on their missionary journeys. The Apostle Paul, who didn't have a wife traveling with him, referred to others who did. "Do we have no right to take along a sister, a wife, as do also the other Apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?" (1 Corinthians 9:5) For example, the Apostle Philip traveled with his wife and three daughters for at least part of his missionary journeys¹⁷².

If the Apostles were living a celibate life, it was natural for many others to do so also, especially during the days following Pentecost. Philo's description of daily life in the monasteries of Alexandria reads so much like the life of the Church following Pentecost that we need to reassess exactly what was going on after Pentecost. What is apparent is that everyone in the Church was doing what the Apostles were doing: they were leaving behind the things of this world, and presumably also the pleasures of this world. That everyone was leaving behind the things of this world is apparent. "All who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need" (Acts 2:44-45). And again, "Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold,

¹⁷⁰ It is interesting that their diet was the same as that of the Apostle Thomas a continent away in India. See Roberts and Donaldson, ed., "Acts of the Holy Apostle Thomas, When He Came Into India", Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante Nicene Fathers, v. 8

¹⁷¹ That is, those who remained faithful to the Lord. Four of the Seventy apostatized to follow the Arch Heretic Simon Magus and therefore don't fit this model. For details of this, see Mark Kern, Simon Magus the Heresiarch, St. Athanasius Press, 2004.

¹⁷² For details, see Mark Kern, The Apostle Philip, St. Athanasius Press, 2002.

and laid *them* at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need" (Acts 4:34-35).

About 25 years after Pentecost, Paul hints that many people had been trying to abandon the pleasures of this world as the Apostles did. He starts out, "It is good for a man not to touch a woman" (1 Corinthians 7:1), implying a general favor toward celibacy. But then he adds, "Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband" (1 Corinthians 7:2). For those who could not live the celibate life, Paul has comforting words, "Even if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Nevertheless such will have trouble in the flesh, but I would spare you" (1 Corinthians 7:28).

The Apostles Ordain Lent

John Cassian stated¹⁷³ that the Lenten Fast was ordained for the benefit of the weak brethren who were imitating Ananias and Sapphira in retaining their worldly possessions and who were almost ignorant of abstinence and contrition. This occurred in the 1st century¹⁷⁴ prior to the Fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD; this occurred for several reasons because of changes to the early life in the Church of Jerusalem.

"As the primitive church retained its perfection unbroken, the observance of Lent did not exist. They were not bound by the requirements of this order, or confined in the very narrow limits of the fast, since the fast was embraced by everyone all year long. Gradually the multitude of believers began day by day to decline from that apostolic fervor. They began to look after their own wealth, and not to portion it out for the good of all the faithful in accordance with the arrangement of the Apostles; they developed an eye to their own private expenses. They tried not only to keep it but actually to increase it, not content with following the example of Ananias and Sapphira. Then it seemed good to all the priests that men who were hampered by worldly cares, and almost ignorant of abstinence and contrition, should be recalled to the pious duty by a fast canonically enjoined. This way they might be constrained by the necessity of paying the legal tithes; this certainly was good for the weak brethren and did not do any harm to the perfect who were living under the grace of the Gospel and by their voluntary devotion going beyond the Law. The strong brethren succeeded in attaining the blessedness that Paul speaks of: 'For sin shall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the Law but under grace' (Romans 6:14-15). For sin cannot exercise dominion over one who lives faithfully under the liberty of grace."

¹⁷³ John Cassian, *First Conference of Abbot Theonas*, III, xxi, 30.

¹⁷⁴ The Christians left Jerusalem in the late 60's AD well before the Fall of Jerusalem. First, we don't see Paul's Churches having everything in common as the Church in Jerusalem did in 30 AD. Instead, the Gentile Churches took up a collection for the Churches in Judea (1 Corinthians 16:1-3). This would have been difficult if they had sold all their property. Second there had been a persecution in Jerusalem beginning in 31 AD with the death of Archdeacon Stephen and the scattering of the Church (Acts 7:59-8:1). Part of this persecution was a confiscation of all personal belongings, leaving the Church in Jerusalem impoverished, and in dire need of help from the Gentile Churches. Third, those that wished to continue living with all things in common were forced to move to monasteries, such as the ones started by the Evangelist Mark near Alexandria in the mid 40's AD.

One might note that it was only in the Churches of Judea that everyone sold what they had and laid the proceeds at the Apostles' feet (Acts 4:34-35). This was not happening in the Gentile Churches that Paul started. In the Gentile Churches, people held onto their own property such that they were able to donate substantially to the relief of the Church of Jerusalem (Acts 11:29; Romans 15:26; 1 Corinthians 16:1-3).

Angelic Visitors to the Monasteries of Alexandria

One of the characteristics of the Alexandrian Church instituted by the Evangelist Mark was a strong monastic community. John Cassian, at one time a monk in Egypt, described¹⁷⁵ some details of life among the monks in Egypt during the early days of monasticism in Egypt. They were considering how many Psalms to include at Vespers, where some wanted to include over fifty Psalms¹⁷⁶. One evening at Vespers, an angel joined them, unrecognized, and chanted twelve Psalms; then he disappeared. From that time on, they fixed the number of Psalms at Vespers at twelve. The interesting aspect of this event is that the angel didn't stand out as being unusual! Cassian described the demeanor and holiness of the monks in Egypt as being similar to the early Church in Jerusalem after Pentecost:

“In the early days of the faith only a few, and those the best of men, were known by the name of monks, as they received that mode of life from the Evangelist Mark of blessed memory, the first to preside over the Church of Alexandria as Bishop. They preserved those grand characteristics, which we read in the Acts of the Apostles, that the Church and multitude of believers in primitive times was famous for. That is, ‘The multitude of believers had one heart and one soul. Nor did any of them say that any of the things which he possessed was his own: but they had all things common’ (Acts 4:32, 2:44-45). The Egyptian monks added to these characteristics others still more sublime. Withdrawing into more secluded spots outside the cities they led a life marked by such rigorous abstinence that, even to those of another creed, the exalted character of their life was a standing marvel. For they gave themselves up to the reading of Holy Scripture and to prayers and to manual labor night and day with such fervor that they had no desire or thoughts of food — unless on the second or third day bodily hunger reminded them. They took their meat and drink not so much because they wished for it as because it was necessary for life; and even then they took it not before sunset, in order that they might connect the hours of daylight with the practice of spiritual meditations, and the care of the body with the night”.

Another example of angels attending the Liturgy in Alexandria is given from the account of the life of Peter, Bishop of Alexandria from 300 to 311 AD. During the Hierarchical Liturgies¹⁷⁷, Peter often sat on the footstool in front of the Bishop's Throne and not on the chair itself. Out of love and respect for their Bishop, all the people and the clergy asked him to sit on the chair, but he often didn't. Finally, one day when they were particularly insistent, he explained¹⁷⁸ his secret to the clergy after the Liturgy.

¹⁷⁵ John Cassian, *Institutes of the Coenobia*, II, 5.

¹⁷⁶ This has to be describing very early times, since the Liturgy was well established by 60 AD.

¹⁷⁷ A “Hierarchical Liturgy” is one where the Bishop is present and presides, rather than a priest.

¹⁷⁸ Roberts and Donaldson, Ed., “The Genuine Acts of Peter”, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Volume 6.

“Very often when I wish to draw near to that seat, I see an angel sitting on it, exceedingly radiant with the brightness of its light. Then, being in suspense between joy and fear, I acknowledge that I am altogether unworthy to sit on such a seat. I would not even venture to sit on the stool itself, but I do so to avoid offending the people. Thus it is, my beloved sons, that I seem to you, in this, to transgress the pontifical rule. Nevertheless, many times when I see it vacant, as you yourselves are witnesses, I refuse not to sit upon the chair after the accustomed manner”.

Later Developments of the Monasteries of Egypt

John Cassian recounted¹⁷⁹ the history of the Coenobitic¹⁸⁰ monastics in Egypt, who were the descendants of the monks that were first organized by the Evangelist Mark. They took their direction from the Early Church described in Acts, which Cassian says was a monastic-like community. Since the leaders of the Early Church were celibate, including the Twelve and the Seventy, many people naturally imitated them, including the Apostle Paul after his conversion (1 Corinthians 7:7-8). Cassian lamented the lack of monastic zeal in later centuries, as Church leaders began to keep their own property and possessions.

“The system of the Coenobites took its rise in the days of the preaching of the Apostles. For such was all that multitude of believers in Jerusalem, which is thus described in the Acts of the Apostles. ‘But the multitude of believers was of one heart and one soul, neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. They sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need’ (Acts 4:32, 2:45). And again, ‘Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid *them* at the apostles’ feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need’ (Acts 4:34-35). The whole Church was then such as now exists among those few who can be found with difficulty in Coenobia. At the death of the Apostles the multitude of believers began to grow cold. Especially so was that multitude which had come to the Faith from diverse foreign nations, from whom the Apostles out of consideration for the infancy of their faith and their ingrained heathen habits, required nothing more than that they should ‘abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood’ (Acts 15:29). That liberty which was conceded to the Gentiles because of the weakness of their newly-born faith, had by degrees begun to mar the perfection of that Church which existed at Jerusalem. The fervor of that early faith cooled down owing to the daily increasing number both of natives and foreigners. Not only those who had accepted the Faith, but even those who were the leaders of the Church relaxed somewhat in their strictness. For some, fancying that what they saw permitted to the Gentiles because of their weakness, was also allowable for themselves. They thought that they would suffer no loss if they followed the faith and confession of Christ, keeping their property and

¹⁷⁹ John Cassian, Conference of Abbot Piamun, XVIII, 5.

¹⁸⁰ The term “Coenobite” comes from the Greek words *koinos* and *bios*, meaning “common” and “life” respectively. They lived in communities, as opposed to those who lived as hermits, and they had all things in “common”, just like the Early Church following Pentecost.

possessions. But those who still maintained the fervor of the Apostles, mindful of that former perfection, left their cities and those who thought that carelessness and a laxer life was permissible to themselves and the Church of God. They began to live in rural and more sequestered spots, and there, in private and on their own account, to practice those things which they had learned to have been ordered by the Apostles throughout the whole body of the Church in general. That whole system, of which we have spoken, grew up from those disciples who had separated themselves from the evil that was spreading. And these, by degrees, were separated from the great mass of believers. Because they abstained from marriage and cut themselves off from their kinsmen and the life of this world, were termed monks or solitaries from the strictness of their lonely and solitary life. It followed that from their common life they were called Coenobites and their cells and lodgings Coenobia. These were the earliest kind of monks, which were first not only in time but also in grace, and which continued unbroken for a very long period up to the time of Abbot Paul and Antony¹⁸¹; and even to this day we see its traces remaining in strict coenobia”

According to tradition¹⁸², the early Irish monks modeled themselves after the monks at the hermitages of Scetis in Egypt. Early Irish monks used tones similar to that set by the Evangelist Mark in Egypt.

“As Mark went to the other cities of Egypt, he also went to interior lands in Africa, Libya, Cyrenaica and Pentapolis. Pagan temples collapsed, idols toppled and were shattered, and the people saw miracles of healing the sick, and cleansing of lepers. Many other miracles came to the truth and the people were enlightened. Even the pagans and Jews praised the virtue of the Egyptian Christians, and Egypt became a center of asceticism known throughout the Christian world. The Irish monks later modeled themselves after the monks at the hermitages of Scetis in Egypt, and it is said the ‘Scotus’ or northern Celts sang according to the tones set by the Evangelist Mark, so they must have been taught directly by some monks of Egypt. Those who seek historically accurate music for the early Celtic Rite may do research into the tones set by the early Church in Egypt or Ethiopia, because these are likely the tones sung by the Irish before other influences came into Ireland and Scotland. Other influences also came into the Middle East because of the invasion of peoples from the Far East, but some of the fragments of music of the ancient Irish Church match some portions of church music of the Egyptians and Ethiopians, who have mainly preserved their music from the ancient Church”.

Mark Travels to Jerusalem for the Funeral of the Virgin Mary

During the time that the Evangelist Mark was working in the Churches in Egypt, the Virgin Mary was growing old in Bethlehem. In c. 55 AD, as Mary reached her mid 70’s, she was feeling the effects of old age. It was then that the Archangel Gabriel appeared to her to tell her that her departure was imminent¹⁸³, and would occur in three days.

¹⁸¹ Paul and Antony were early Anchorite monks of the late 3rd Century, who lived as hermits in the desert. They are distinguished from Coenobite monks from their solitary mode of life.

¹⁸² See the web site www.celticchristianity.org.

Shortly after Gabriel left, the Apostle John was translated from wherever he was at the time. This was similar to the way the Deacon Philip was translated from the desert road between Jerusalem and Gaza to Azotus (Acts 8:26, 39-40), and as Habakkuk the prophet carried food to Daniel, who was in the lions' den, and quickly returned to Judea¹⁸⁴. There is some disagreement among the Church Fathers as to whether John was in Ephesus or in some region of Judea. They contend that John did not leave the Virgin Mary alone during her lifetime, unless it was just briefly in the care of her stepson, James, the Lord's brother.

After John arrived¹⁸⁵, "the rest of the Twelve arrived also from whatever part of the world where they were then preaching the Gospel. Peter came from Rome¹⁸⁶, Paul from Tiberia, Thomas from Western India, James from Jerusalem. Simon the Zealot and Jude, who had fallen asleep, were raised by the Holy Spirit out of their tombs. To them the Holy Spirit said, 'Do not think that it is now the resurrection; but on this account you have risen out of your tombs, that you may go to give greeting to the honor and wonder-working of the mother of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, because the day of her departure is at hand, of her going up into the heavens'.

Nathaniel (i.e. Bartholomew) said¹⁸⁷, "I was in the Thebais (possibly Thebes, in Upper Egypt) proclaiming the Word, and behold the Holy Spirit said to me, 'The mother of your Lord is taking her departure; go, then, to greet her in Bethlehem'. And, behold, a cloud of light snatched me up, and brought me to you". Matthew answered¹⁸⁸, "I have glorified and do glorify God, because when I was in a boat and overtaken by a storm, the sea raging with its waves, all of a sudden a cloud of light overshadowing the storm, changed it to a calm, and having snatched me up, set me down beside you". The Evangelist Mark likewise coming from Alexandria, stated¹⁸⁹, "And when I was finishing the canon of the third day in the city of Alexandria, just as I was praying, the Holy Spirit snatched me up, and brought me to you".

All of the Twelve arrived except Thomas. They stood and went in, and greeted the queen mother with the following words: 'Hail, Mary, full of grace! The Lord be with you' (Luke 1:28). And she eagerly rose quickly, and bowed herself, and kissed them, and gave thanks to God. Peter said to the Apostles, 'Let us each, according to what the Holy Spirit announced and commanded us, give full information to the mother of our Lord'. And those who had come likewise agreed to give an account of how they had come. So each of the Twelve gave Mary an account of where they were when they were summoned".

"Then the blessed Mary said to her brethren: 'What is this, that you have all come to Jerusalem?' Peter, answering, said to her: 'We need to ask this of you. Certainly, as I think,

¹⁸³ Roberts and Donaldson, "The Book of John Concerning the Falling Asleep of Mary", Ante-Nicene Fathers, v.8.

Roberts and Donaldson, "The Passing of Mary", Ante-Nicene Fathers, v.8.

¹⁸⁴ Lancelot C. L. Brenton, "Bel and the Dragon 1:33-39", The Septuagint with Apocrypha, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody MA, 1990

¹⁸⁵ Roberts and Donaldson, ed., "The Passing of Mary, First Latin Form", Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

¹⁸⁶ Roberts and Donaldson, "The Book of John Concerning the Falling Asleep of Mary", Ante-Nicene Fathers, v.8.

¹⁸⁷ Roberts and Donaldson, "The Book of John Concerning the Falling Asleep of Mary", Ante-Nicene Fathers, v.8.

¹⁸⁸ Roberts and Donaldson, "The Book of John Concerning the Falling Asleep of Mary", Ante-Nicene Fathers, v.8.

¹⁸⁹ Roberts and Donaldson, "The Book of John Concerning the Falling Asleep of Mary", Ante-Nicene Fathers, v.8.

none of us knows why we have come here today with such speed. All declared plainly the place where they had been that day. And they all wondered that they were there when they heard these things. The blessed Mary said to them: ‘I asked my Son, before He endured the passion, that He and you should be at my death; and He granted me this gift. Therefore you may know that my departure will be tomorrow’”.

“After Mary’s death the next day, the Apostles with great honor laid the body in a tomb on the Mount of Olives, then Thomas was suddenly brought to the Mount of Olives, like the others had been brought earlier. He saw Mary’s body going up to heaven, and began to cry out to her. Then the belt with which the Apostles had encircled her body was thrown down from heaven to the blessed Thomas. And taking it, and giving thanks to God, he came again into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, finding all the Apostles and a great crowd there. Then Thomas said, ‘Where have you laid her body?’ They pointed out the sepulcher with their finger; but he said, ‘The body is not there’. But they didn’t believe Thomas. Then they went to the sepulcher, which was a new one hollowed out in the rock, and took away the stone; but they did not find the body, and did not know what to say. Then Thomas told them how he was singing mass in India — he still had on his sacerdotal robes. He, not knowing the word of God, had been brought to the Mount of Olives, and saw the body of the blessed Mary going up into heaven, and prayed her to give him a blessing. She heard his prayer, and threw him her belt, which she had about her. And the Apostles seeing the belt which they had put about her, glorified God, on account of the benediction which the blessed Mary had given him, and because he had seen her body going up into heaven. Then Thomas gave them his benediction, and said, ‘Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!’”

In another account¹⁹⁰, it states, “And Thomas said, ‘While traversing the country of India, when the preaching was prevailing by the grace of Christ, the king’s sister’s son, Labdanus by name, was about to be sealed by me in the palace. All of a sudden the Holy Spirit said to me, ‘Thomas, go to Bethlehem to greet the mother of your Lord, because she is taking her departure to the heavens’. And a cloud of light having snatched me up, set me down beside you”.

“And the same cloud¹⁹¹ by which they had been brought carried them back each to his own place. And so also the Apostles quickly returned to where they had at first been, to preach to the people of God”.

The Liturgy of St. Mark for the Church in Alexandria

A number of ancient liturgies existed in the Early Church, and the Liturgy of St. Mark served as a very important development of the Early Church. An important concept for us to understand is that all these Liturgies developed as a smooth transition from the Old Testament worship to the New Testament worship.

The perceptions of these liturgies by modern scholars depends greatly on the background of the scholar. Some, who are hostile to early liturgies and liturgy in general, claim that these

¹⁹⁰ Roberts and Donaldson, “The Book of John Concerning the Falling Asleep of Mary”, Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v.8.

¹⁹¹ Roberts and Donaldson, ed., “The Passing of Mary, First Latin Form”, Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

liturgies were not written before the 3rd Century. Others, who are comfortable with liturgies, claim that these Early Liturgies are very representative of 1st Century practice. The early liturgies that are extant are as follows, where the first three are better known:

1. The Liturgy of St. James¹⁹²: for Jerusalem and vicinity in Aramaic
2. The Liturgy of St. Mark¹⁹³: for Egypt and North Africa in Coptic
3. The Liturgy of the Holy Apostles¹⁹⁴: for Persia and the Far East in Greek
4. The Clementine or Roman Liturgy: for Rome and vicinity in Latin
5. The Gallican Liturgy¹⁹⁵: for Gaul and the Western outposts in Latin
6. The Liturgy of St. Thomas for the Far East in some Indian dialect

Some difficulties in studying these ancient liturgies are that the oldest manuscripts date from no earlier than the 10th Century AD. None of these Liturgies appear to have been written down¹⁹⁶ before the 4th Century, and for obvious reasons – Christianity was illegal and the Liturgy was referred to as the “mysteries” of the Faith (1 Corinthians 4:1). The Liturgy of St. James is admittedly the oldest of these liturgies, and there are three schools of thought regarding its content. One group claims that it is entirely destitute of any claim to an apostolic origin, and that it belongs to a much later age. Another group claims that the main structure of this liturgy is the work of St. James, while they admit that it contains some evident interpolations. A third group claims that the whole is the genuine production of the Apostle. Most scholars regard the Liturgy of St. Mark as of about the same age as the Liturgy of St. James.

Those in the second group point to the words in the texts that we have of these Liturgies, such as the words “consubstantial” and “mother of God”, that were catch-words during the controversies of the 4th Century, and say that this is evidence of later additions. But these are just a few words in a four-hour-long liturgy, where the basic form and content is Apostolic. In the words¹⁹⁷ of one modern scholar, of the second group, the Rev. J. Mason Neale:

“These liturgies, though not composed verbatim by the Apostles whose names they bear, were the legitimate development of their unwritten tradition respecting the Christian Sacrifice. The words, probably, in the most important parts, the general tenor in all portions, descending unchanged from the Apostolic authors”.

¹⁹² “The Liturgy of James, the Holy Apostle and Brother of the Lord”, in *Fathers of the Third and Fourth Centuries*, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 7, Publisher, p. 537.

¹⁹³ “The Divine Liturgy of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist Mark, the Disciple of the Holy Peter”, in *Fathers of the Third and Fourth Centuries*, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 7, Publisher, p. 551.

¹⁹⁴ The Liturgy of the Holy Apostles is attributed to Thaddaeus, one of the Seventy, who was sent to Edessa in Persia by the Apostle Thomas. This is similar to the Malabar Liturgy used by the Apostle Thomas in India. See “The Liturgy of the Blessed Apostles”, in *Fathers of the Third and Fourth Centuries*, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 7, Publisher, p. 561.

¹⁹⁵ The Gallican Liturgy may be of later origin, but Irenaeus refers to its common practice in his days (c. 130-200 AD). See A. Cleveland Coxe, “Introductory Notice to Early Liturgies”, in Fathers of the Third and Fourth Centuries, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7.

¹⁹⁶ Although they were not written down until later, many early writers refer to their existence in a precise format and order. Some examples from the late 1st and early 2nd Century are:

Ignatius, Epistle to the Ephesians, XX.

Justin Martyr, First Apology, 65-67.

Irenaeus, Against Heresies, V, ii, 2-3.

¹⁹⁷ A. Cleveland Coxe, “Introductory Notice to Early Liturgies”, in Fathers of the Third and Fourth Centuries, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7.

A. Cleveland Coxe gave¹⁹⁸ a good overview of the transition from the Old Testament liturgy, that was set up by Samuel and David, to the New Testament liturgies that were set up by the Apostles. For further information regarding various aspects of the Old Testament Liturgy, see the study¹⁹⁹ on the life of the Apostle Peter.

“Hippolytus, in a few sentences²⁰⁰, has pointed out the epoch of David, as the dawning of Christianity itself. The pivot of Hebrew history turns on the whole system of the ‘goodly fellowship of prophets’ who heralded the Sun of Righteousness as successive constellations rise before the day. The learned Dean Payne-Smith, more minutely than Hippolytus, identifies Samuel, the master of David, as the great instrument of God in shaping the institutions of Moses to be a prelude to the Advent; in other words, transforming a local and tribal religion into that of Catholicity. The value of the Dean’s condensed and luminous elaboration can hardly be overstated”.

“But, to go behind even the Dean’s stand-point, we shall better comprehend the era of which, under God, Samuel was the author, by noting the immense importance of that specific Mosaic ordinance which not only made it possible. An all-wise *prolepsis* or anticipation governed the whole Law of Moses. We generally conceive of the Mosaic system as one of unlimited burnt offerings. On the contrary, it was a system restricting and limiting the unsystematic primeval institution of sacrifice, which had done its work by passing into the universal religions and rituals of the Gentiles. When the seminal idea of expiation, atonement, and the blood of innocence as a propitiation for guilt, was communicated to all the families of the earth, the Mosaic institutions limited sacrifices for the faithful, and localized them (i.e. to Jerusalem) with marvelous significance. Previously the faithful everywhere had imitated the sacrifices of their fathers, Noah and Abraham, who reared their altars everywhere, as Job also did, wherever they dwelt”.

“Note, further, that all this provision and *prevision* was part of the great Messianic system, which reached its crisis in the time of David, as prophetic of ‘the Son of David’. It was the office of Samuel to take the Mosaic ordinances, and to shape them for the advent of the Lamb of God, for His sacrifice upon Calvary, and for the setting-up of His universal kingdom. The Institutions of Samuel, therefore, were *in essence* institutions for the Gospel-day, and they were completed by the anointing of David as king, and by his prophetic mission to provide the Psalter. Then the Ark came out of curtains, and the Lord chose and appointed *the place* of which Moses had spoken, none other than the spot where Abraham had rehearsed in type the Sacrifice and Resurrection of Christ. According as it was written: ‘And Abraham called the name of the place *Jehovah-Jireh* (The-Lord-Will-Provide); as it is said *to this day*, “In the Mount of the Lord it shall be provided”’ (Genesis 22:14). Thus, all sacrifice acceptable to God was

¹⁹⁸ A. Cleveland Coxe, “Introductory Notice to Early Liturgies”, in Fathers of the Third and Fourth Centuries, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7.

¹⁹⁹ Mark Kern, The Apostle Peter, Unpublished Work, St Athanasius Press, 2005, p. 258.

²⁰⁰ Hippolytus, “On the Psalms”, Part I Exegetical Works, Extant Works and Fragments, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5.

shown to have reference to the Paschal Lamb, who on that mount of the Lord should be sacrificed, and rise again, as was accomplished in a figure earlier.

“The Temple itself was supplied with an expository liturgy. Moreover, a liturgical system, revolving about the central worship of the Temple, was brought to every man’s door by the establishment of the synagogue for the villages of Israel. The synagogue-worship became, therefore, the education and preparation of the faithful for the simple and spiritual worship of the new Law. This our Lord Himself expounded to the outcast Samaritans: ‘The hour is coming, when you will neither on this mountain, nor at Jerusalem, worship the Father. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth’ (John 4:21-23). We have seen that the hour promised by Malachi was supposed by the Ante-Nicene Fathers to be here intended: ‘My name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered to My Name, and a pure offering’” (Malachi 1:11).

“The primitive writers were universally impressed with these principles, and they are essential to the study of the liturgies”.

Specific developments in the Old Testament Liturgy, as outlined²⁰¹ by Coxe, included the following:

1. Samuel instituted “Schools of the Prophets,” out of which grew the synagogue system supplying the Rabbinical education to Israel, and furnished chiefs to the synagogues. See Acts 3:24; and compare 1 Samuel 10:5, 19:20, and 1 Chronicles 9:22.
2. Choral worship and the chanting of hymns — e.g., of Moses and Miriam, and Hannah (Samuel’s mother) — was in full operation under Samuel.
3. David, inspired as “the sweet singer of Israel,” supplied the Psalter, which in diverse arrangements has continued among Christians to be the marrow of public worship “in every place,” and throughout the world.
4. The reading of the law and the prophets was now set in order; and not only was the Temple supplied with teachers, but also the villages in every tribe.
5. Thus the Christian Church was provided with a system of worship from the hour of its institution, the synaxis succeeding the synagogue. The “ministration of the word” was enriched by Gospels and Epistles, by psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, and by “the prayers”, based upon the *Shemone esre*²⁰², which now began to be composed and multiplied in the churches. Touching “spontaneous prayer” as exemplified in the first ages, Cyprian (3rd Century) encouraged²⁰³ spontaneous prayer to pray for the lapsed.

All the Early Liturgies had a similar format, and were divided into two parts: the first part for everyone, including Gentiles, penitents, catechumens, and the faithful, and the second part for only the faithful. Coxe gave²⁰⁴ a brief summary of this first part as follows:

²⁰¹ A. Cleveland Coxe, “Introductory Notice to Early Liturgies”, in Fathers of the Third and Fourth Centuries, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7.

²⁰² The *Shemone esre* was part of the Jewish liturgies, and the petitions of the Lord’s prayer were extracted almost verbatim from the Jewish liturgies. See Cyprian, Treatises, “Elucidations”, III, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5.

²⁰³ Cyprian, Epistles, XXX, 6.

“After the Psalms and Lessons with which the service commenced, a section from the Acts of the Apostles or the Epistles was read; after which the deacon or presbyter read the Gospel. Then followed an exhortation from one or more of the presbyters; and the bishop or president (similar to the synagogue ruler) delivered a Homily or Sermon, explanatory of the Scripture which had been read, and exhorting the people to imitate the virtues exemplified. When the preacher had concluded his discourse with a doxology in praise of the Holy Trinity, a deacon made proclamation for all non-communicants to withdraw. Then came the dismissal of the several classes of catechumens and penitents, after the prayers for each respectively, and the second part commenced”.

“The second part consisted of two halves, essentially distinct: prayers for the faithful, for mankind in general and the introductory to the Oblation; then the Anaphora or Oblation itself. The introductory part varied considerably in the formularies of different churches; but in the Anaphora all the existing liturgies so closely agree, in substance at least, if not in words, that they can always be the same²⁰⁵. The following essential points belong, without exception, to them all”:

1. The Kiss of Peace;
2. The form beginning, *Lift up your hearts*;
3. The Hymn, *Therefore with angels*, etc.;
4. Commemoration of the words of Institution;
5. The Oblation;
6. Prayer of Consecration;
7. Prayers for the Church on Earth;
8. Prayers for the dead;
9. The Lord’s Prayer;
10. Breaking of the Bread;
11. Communion.

The Martyrdom of the Evangelist Mark

According to Eusebius²⁰⁶ and Jerome²⁰⁷, the Evangelist Mark was martyred in the 8th year of Nero, or 62 AD, and was succeeded as Bishop of Alexandria by Annianus. According to tradition²⁰⁸, this occurred at Bucolia, which is near Alexandria.

In Alexandria, he succeeded in establishing the Church of God, in giving her bishops, priests and deacons and in rooting everything firmly in faithfulness and devotion. Mark confirmed his preaching with many great miracles. When the pagans brought accusations against Mark, as a destroyer of their idolatrous faith, and when the governor of the city began to

²⁰⁴ A. Cleveland Coxe, “Introductory Notice to Early Liturgies”, in Fathers of the Third and Fourth Centuries, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7.

²⁰⁵ A major change to this part of the liturgy occurred in the West in the 14th Century. Instead of the Eucharist being “Holy things for the Holy”, i.e. holy things for holy people, it became an elevation of the host to God, where the people just watched instead of partaking.

²⁰⁶ Eusebius, Church History, II, 24.

²⁰⁷ Jerome, “Lives of Illustrious Men”, Chapter 1, Jerome and Gennadius, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 3.

²⁰⁸ Roberts and Donaldson, Ed., “The Genuine Acts of Peter of Alexandria”, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6.

search for Mark, he fled again to Pentapolis, where he continued his earlier work. After two years, Mark again returned to Alexandria to the great joy of all his faithful, whose number had already increased greatly. The pagans took the opportunity to seize Mark, and they bound him tightly and began to drag him over the cobblestone pavement crying: "We're taking the ox to the stall."

Wounded and bloodied throughout, they cast Mark into prison where, at first, a heavenly angel appeared to him encouraging and strengthening him. After that, the Lord Jesus Himself appeared to him and said: "Peace be to you Mark, my Evangelist!" To that Mark replied: "Peace be to you also my Lord Jesus Christ!" The next day the vicious men brought Mark out of prison and again dragged him throughout the streets with the same cry: "Let us drag the ox to the pen." Completely exhausted and worn out, Mark uttered: "Into Your hands O Lord, I give up my spirit." Mark expired and his soul was translated into a better world. His holy relics were honorably buried by Christians and, through the centuries, his relics give healing to people from all of their afflictions, pains and diseases.

Additional details surrounding the martyrdom of the Evangelist Mark were recorded²⁰⁹ by Symeon Metaphrastes, a Church Historian of the 9th Century. In the year of Mark's martyrdom, the Feast of Pascha (Easter in the West) coincided with the festival of the idol Serapis, or April 24th. As the Evangelist Mark was celebrating the Divine Liturgy that day, the pagans assembled a great mob for their own festival. They suddenly attacked the Church and arrested Mark. Tying him up with thongs, they dragged him through the streets and lanes saying, "Let us lead this bullock to the trough". Mark, however, bore these torments calmly, and gave thanks to the Lord saying, "I thank You, O Lord Jesus Christ, that You have counted me worthy to endure these sufferings for Your Name".

As they dragged him along the ground littered with sharp stones, his body was torn by the rocks and covered with wounds, such that blood stained the path that they took. Finally they brought the severely lacerated Mark to prison and cast him in at the onset of evening, as they gathered to take counsel as to what sort of death they would subject him to. At midnight, an angel appeared to Mark and strengthened him for the struggle ahead. Also the Lord Jesus Christ was revealed to him, comforting him with His appearance.

The following morning, the savage mob of pagans dragged the Apostle from his dungeon cell and again dragged him through the streets of the city. Mark could not sustain any more wounds, and soon expired, giving thanks to God and saying, "Into Your hands, O Lord, do I surrender my spirit".

The wickedness of the pagans was not satisfied with the death of the Apostle, so they decided to consume his body with fire. After they built a large fire, suddenly darkness descended, along with a dreadful clap of thunder. The earth quaked, and rain and hail fell, scattering the crowd and extinguishing the fire. The pious Christians took the body of Mark with reverence, and laid it in a tomb of stone in the place where they held their prayer services.

²⁰⁹ Symeon Metaphrastes, as quoted in Holy Apostles Convent, The Lives of the Holy Apostles, Buean Vista CO, 1990, pp. 255-256.

In the year 310 AD, a Church was erected over the tomb of the Evangelist Mark, and his relics remained in Alexandria until the 9th Century. In 828 AD, when the dominion of Islam and the heresy of Monophysitism had greatly weakened the Orthodox Church in Egypt, the relics of the Evangelist Mark were transferred to Venice, near where he had preached the Gospel in Aquileia. Today there is a magnificent Church dedicated to him, where there is preserved an ancient manuscript of his Gospel on Egyptian papyrus that was written, according to tradition, by his own hand.

According to tradition²¹⁰, the Evangelist Mark had already ordained Annianus as Bishop before his departure, but perhaps not as Patriarch of Alexandria. The successor to Annianus as Patriarch was Avilius, who was ordained by the Evangelist Luke after the death of the Apostle Paul.

The Extent of the Influence of the Church of Alexandria

According to tradition, as described²¹¹ in “The Teaching of the Apostles” from Persia, the Bishops in the Church were first called “Rulers” and “Guides”. This short work describes the area directed by some of the Twelve and the Seventy. It doesn’t cover where all of the Apostles went, but it does mention the area covered by the Evangelist Mark as including not just Egypt, but also the Sinai Peninsula and points East to Persia.

“And after the death of the Apostles there were Guides and Rulers in the Churches; and, whatever the Apostles had committed to them, they continued to teach to the multitude through their entire lives. At their deaths they committed to their disciples whatever they had received from the Apostles; that is, what James had written from Jerusalem, and Simon from the city of Rome, and John from Ephesus, and Mark from Alexandria the Great, and Andrew from Phrygia, and Luke from Macedonia, and Thomas from India. The epistles of an Apostle were received and read in the Churches that were in every place, just as the achievements of their Acts, which Luke wrote, are read. In this way, the Apostles were known, and the prophets, and the Old Testament and the New. One truth was proclaimed in them all: that one Spirit spoke in them all, from one God whom they had all worshipped and had all preached. And the diverse countries received their teaching. Everything, therefore, which had been spoken by our Lord by means of the Apostles, and which the Apostles had delivered to their disciples, was believed and received in every country, by the operation of our Lord, who said to them: ‘I am with you, even until the world shall end’. The Guides disputed with the Jews from the books of the prophets, and contending also against the deluded pagans with the terrible mighty-works, which they did in the Name of Christ. All the peoples, even those that dwell in other countries, quietly and silently received the Gospel of Christ. Those who became confessors cried out under their persecution: ‘This our persecution today shall plead on our behalf, lest we be punished, for having been formerly persecutors ourselves’. For there were some of them against whom death by the sword was ordered. There were others of them from whom they took away whatever they possessed, and let them

²¹⁰ Roberts and Donaldson, Apostolic Constitutions VII, iv, 46, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 7.

²¹¹ Roberts and Donaldson, ed., “The Teaching of the Apostles”, Memoirs of Edessa and Other Ancient Syriac Documents, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8.

go. The more affliction that arose against them, the richer and larger did their congregations become; and with gladness in their hearts did they receive death of every kind. And by ordination to the priesthood, which the Apostles themselves had received from our Lord, did their Gospel wing its way rapidly into the four quarters of the world.

Alexandria the Great, and Thebais, and the whole of Inner Egypt, and all the country of Pelusium (i.e. the Sinai Peninsula), and extending as far as the borders of the Indians, received the Apostles' ordination to the priesthood from Mark the Evangelist, who was ruler and guide there in the church which he had built, in which he also ministered.

Luke the Evangelist had such diligence that he wrote the exploits of the Acts of the Apostles, and the ordinances and laws of the ministry of their priesthood, and where each one of them went. By his diligence did Luke write these things, and more than these; and he placed them in the hand of Priscus and Aquilus, his disciples. They accompanied him up to the day of his death, just as Timothy and Erastus of Lystra, and Menaues, the first disciples of the Apostles, accompanied Paul until he was taken up to the city of Rome because he had withstood Tertullus the orator (Acts 24:1-9).

There was also a very strong monastic community that developed in the Sinai Peninsula, part of the Evangelist Mark's territory, that consisted of over 60 monasteries, some of which are still active. One of these, St. Catherine's Monastery²¹², which grew from a chapel erected by Helena (the Mother of Emperor Constantine) in the 4th century, is located at the foot of Mt. Sinai at the spot traditionally associated with the burning bush. At the peak of Mt. Sinai overlooking the cliff is a small chapel that was rebuilt from a sixth century church built by Justinian. Nearby the chapel is a cave that may be the "cleft of the rock" where God placed Moses. Other caves exist on Mt. Sinai, also. Many of these monasteries were destroyed during the Moslem conquest of the 6th and 7th centuries, but some survived intact; others have been rebuilt and others are currently being excavated. The 20th Century witnessed a veritable revolution in the study of these Judean desert monasteries, and an entire issue of an archaeology journal²¹³ was devoted to this remarkable concentration of monasteries, some built right into the side of a rock cliff. Current excavations indicate that these desert monasteries started in the 3rd Century, but much more work needs to be done in the excavations.

Gospel: Mark 6:7-13

Jesus called the twelve to *Himself*, and began to send them out two *by* two, and gave them power over unclean spirits. He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff -- no bag, no bread, no copper in *their* money belts -- but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics. Also He said to them, 'In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place. And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment than for that city!' So they

²¹² Biblical Archaeology Review, July/August 1985, pp 27-41.

²¹³ Biblical Archaeology Review, September/October 1995.

went out and preached that *people* should repent. They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them” (Mark 6:7-13).

This Gospel Reading concerns the sending out of the Twelve Apostles two-by-two, where the Evangelist Mark was not one of the Twelve. There are some differences in Mark’s account that do not appear in other accounts. Mark’s account doesn’t say anything about the Gentiles; Matthew says to avoid the Gentiles and Samaritans (Matthew 10:5); Mark doesn’t say anything about raising the dead; Matthew does (Matthew 10:8). Mark says to take sandals; Matthew says not to (Matthew 10:10). On the other hand, Mark is the only one who mentions the use of holy oil in healing.

The Evangelist Mark was numbered among the Seventy Apostles, along with the Evangelist Luke, whom the Lord sent out two-by-two a little later (Luke 10:1-20). He did not tell them to avoid the Gentiles and Samaritans, but He implied that they may be eating non-Kosher food (Luke 10:8). The Seventy were not instructed to raise the dead, but they did take sandals. We are not told if the Evangelist Mark volunteered to accompany some of the Twelve, but some early writers²¹⁴ mistakenly numbered him among the Twelve.

In all the accounts of the missions of the Twelve and the Seventy, many miracles are recorded. How are we to receive this?

Performing Miracles Does not Guarantee Salvation

What is the purpose of the miraculous gifts that seem to be so prevalent in the Scriptures? Why do we seem to see them less prevalent today? There can be fake miracles organized by the demons to lead us away from God. If we had the opportunity to perform miracles how receptive would we be to performing them the way God intended? Let us hear what the Church Fathers have had to say about the problems in performing miracles in their day.

Cyprian of Carthage noted²¹⁵ that doing the will of our Father is more important than the working of wonders. People may work wonders but not be saved.

“To prophesy, cast out demons, and do great acts upon the earth is certainly a sublime and an admirable thing; but one does not attain the kingdom of heaven although he is found in all these things, unless he walks in the observance of the right and just way. The Lord denounces, ‘Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’” (Matthew 7:21-23). There is need of righteousness, that one may deserve well of God the Judge; we must obey His precepts and warnings, that our merits may receive their reward.”

²¹⁴ Paul Hetherington, The ‘Painter’s Manual’ of Dionysius of Fournu, Oakwood Publications, London, 1981, p. 52.

²¹⁵ Cyprian of Carthage, Treatises, I, 15.

Early Christian tradition²¹⁶ put Apostolic gifts in perspective. Spiritual gifts for performing wonders are not for the benefit of the individual, but for the conviction of unbelievers. We do not rejoice over them, but only rejoice at our salvation. Not all unbelievers will be affected by the wonders; neither the Egyptians in Moses' day nor the Jewish leaders in Christ's day were any better off for having seen many wonders. We may be living in an age that scoffs at miracles, just like Moses' day and Christ's day.

"The gifts of the Spirit were first given to the Apostles when they were about to preach the Gospel to every creature; afterwards they were given to those who had believed. The gifts were given not for the advantage of those who perform them, but for the conviction of the unbelievers, that those whom the word did not persuade, the power of signs might put to shame. Signs are not for us who believe, but for the unbelievers, both for the Jews and Gentiles. There is no profit to us to cast out demons; the advantage is to those who are cleansed by the power of the Lord. The Lord Himself instructs us saying, 'Do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven' (Luke 10:20). It is not necessary that every one of the faithful should cast out demons, raise the dead, or speak with tongues. Unbelievers are often put to shame, not with the demonstration of the world, but by the power of the signs. Not all the ungodly are affected by wonders. God Himself is a witness, when He says in the Law, 'In the law it is written: "With *men of* other tongues and other lips I will speak to this people; and yet, for all that, they will not hear Me", says the Lord' (Isaiah 28:11, 1 Corinthians 14:21). The Egyptians did not believe in God when Moses had done so many signs and wonders (Exodus 7-11); nor did the multitude of the Jews believe in Christ when He healed every sickness and disease among them (Matthew 9:35). The Egyptians were not shamed by the rod which was turned into a living serpent (Exodus 7:9-13); by the hand which was made white with leprosy (Exodus 4:6); by the river Nile turned into blood (Exodus 7:17-22). The Jews were not shamed by the blind who recovered their sight (Matthew 9:27-34), by the lame that walked (Matthew 11:5), or by the dead who were raised (John 12:9-10). 'Moses was resisted by Jannes and Jambres (2 Timothy 3:8); Christ by Annas and Caiaphas (John 18:13-14). Thus signs do not shame all into belief, but only those of a good disposition."

Ambrose of Milan noted²¹⁷ that Jesus had said that His disciples would do greater miracles than He had done. The Lord prefers His disciples to perform these great works, rather than doing them Himself. Even though His disciples do these things, there is no power of man involved.

"It is the will of the Lord that His disciples should possess great powers; it is His will that the same things which He did when on earth should be done in His Name by His servants. He said, 'He who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do' (John 14:12). He gave them power to raise the dead. Whereas He could have restored to Saul the use of his sight by Himself, He nevertheless sent him to His disciple Ananias that by his blessing Saul's eyes might be restored. Peter also He bade walk with Himself on

²¹⁶ Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, VIII, I, 1.

²¹⁷ Ambrose of Milan, Concerning Repentance, I, viii, 34-35.

the sea, and because he faltered He blamed him for lessening the grace given him by the weakness of his faith. He Who Himself was the light of the world granted to His disciples to be the light of the world through grace. Because He purposed to descend from heaven and to ascend there again, He took up Elijah into heaven to restore him again to earth at the time which should please Him. Being baptized with the Holy Spirit and with fire, He foreshadowed the Sacrament of Baptism at the hands of John.”

“He gave all gifts to His disciples, of whom He said, ‘In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover’ (Mark 16:17-18). So then, He gave them all things; but there is no power of man exercised in these things, in which the grace of the divine gift operates.”

John Cassian recorded²¹⁸ the teachings of Abbot Nesteros (of the Desert Fathers) on the subject of three different methods of the workings of Spiritual Gifts. The first method is performed by certain righteous men on account of their holiness. The second can proceed even from sinners where healing can occur due to the faith of the sick person. The third method comes from the deceitfulness of demons, who pretend to flee from a man enslaved to sin so that people will admire him and copy him in his sin.

“The first is for the sake of healing, when the grace of signs accompanies certain elect and righteous men on account of the merits of their holiness. The Apostles and many of the saints did signs and wonders in accordance with the authority of the Lord Who says, ‘Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give’” (Matthew 10:8).

“The second is used for the edification of the church or on account of the faith of those who bring their sick, or of those who are to be cured, where the virtue of health proceeds even from sinners and men unworthy of it. Jesus said, ‘Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name? And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’ (Matthew 7:22-23). On the other hand, if the faith of those who bring them or of the sick is lacking, it prevents those on whom the gifts of healing are conferred from exercising their powers of healing. Luke said, ‘Jesus could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He marveled because of their unbelief’ (Mark 6:5-6). The Lord Himself said, ‘Many were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian’” (Luke 4:27).

“The third method of healing is copied by the deceit of demons, that, when a man who is enslaved to obvious sins is regarded as a saint and a servant of God out of admiration for his miracles, men may be persuaded to copy his sins. Thus an opening being made for finding fault and the sanctity of the Faith may be brought into disgrace. Or else he who believes that he possesses the gift of healing may be puffed up by pride of heart and so fall more grievously. When people invoke the names of those, who the demons know have no merits of

²¹⁸ John Cassian, Second Conference of Abbot Nesteros, II, xv, 1.

holiness or any spiritual fruits, they pretend that they are disturbed and made to flee from the bodies they have possessed. Of which Moses said, 'If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods' -- which you have not known -- 'and let us serve them,' you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your God is testing you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul' (Deuteronomy 13:1-3). Of these Jesus said, 'false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect'" (Matthew 24:24).

John Chrysostom compared²¹⁹ Judas Iscariot with Paul; both had similar opportunities and both were given similar grace. Paul pursued his gift, but Judas was overcome by his covetousness.

"Paul struggled with hunger, was at a loss to obtain necessary food, and daily underwent great sufferings, pursuing with great zeal the road which leads to heaven. Judas was called before Paul, enjoyed the same advantages as Paul did, was initiated in the highest form of Christian life, partook of the holy table and that most awesome of sacred feasts, received such grace as to be able to raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, and cast out demons, often heard discourses concerning poverty, and spent so long a time in the company of Christ Himself. He was entrusted with the money of the poor, so that his passion might be soothed, for he was a thief (John 12:6); even then did not become any better, although he had been favored with such great condescension. Christ knew that he was covetous and destined to perish on account of his love of money; yet he not only did not demand punishment of him for this at that time. He tried to soften his passion by entrusting him with the money of the poor, that having some means of appeasing his greed he might be saved from falling into that appalling gulf of sin, checking the greater evil by a lesser one."

Chrysostom also stated²²⁰ that many people in the early Church received Apostolic gifts, some more than others, as a sign to unbelievers that the Holy Spirit was speaking. This caused some division when those with the greater gifts became prideful of their gifts. This is one of the reasons that God caused extensive working of miracles to cease²²¹.

"Whoever was baptized immediately spoke with tongues and not with tongues only, but many also prophesied, and some performed many other wonderful works. On coming over from idols, without any clear knowledge or training in the Scriptures, they received the Spirit at their baptism. Yet they didn't see the Spirit, for It is invisible; therefore God's grace bestowed some tangible proof of that energy. One immediately spoke in Persian, another in Latin, another in Indian, another in some other such language; this made clear to those that were outside the Church that it is the Spirit in the person speaking. Therefore Paul says, 'The manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit *of all*' (1 Corinthians 12:7), calling the gifts 'a manifestation of the Spirit'. The Apostles

²¹⁹ John Chrysostom, A Treatise to Prove that No One Can Harm the Man Who Does Not Injure Himself, 11.

²²⁰ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Corinthians, XXIX, 1.

²²¹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XXXII, 11.

themselves received this sign first, and the faithful went on receiving it; many used to raise the dead, to cast out demons and to perform many other such wonders; some had more gifts, some less. More abundant than all was the gift of tongues among them; and this became a cause of division to them, not from its own nature but from the perverseness of those that had received it. The possessors of the greater gifts were lifted up against those that had the lesser; those with the lesser gifts were grieved, and envied the owners of the greater.”

Chrysostom further noted²²² that there were different ways that miracles were worked. Before the Crucifixion, the Apostles did this by power given to them by the Lord. Afterward, they did this by the Holy Spirit, and they also conferred the Holy Spirit to others. The Prophets also did their miracles by the Holy Spirit, but they were not able to confer the Holy Spirit to others.

“At first the Apostles didn’t cast out demons by the Spirit, but by power received from Jesus; as He said, ‘If I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast *them* out?’ (Matthew 12:27). He said this signifying that before the Crucifixion not everyone cast out demons by the Spirit, but that some did so by the power received from Him. On the other hand, when Jesus was about to send them out as Apostles after the Crucifixion He said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’ (John 20:22); Luke said, ‘The Holy Spirit came upon them’ (Acts 19:6), and then they worked miracles. When He first sent them out, the Scripture doesn’t say that He gave them the Holy Spirit, but that ‘He gave them power’ (Matthew 10:1), saying, ‘Cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give’ (Matthew 10:8). How did the Prophets prophesy and work wonders? In the case of the Prophets, everyone agrees that the Gift was that of the Holy Spirit. This Grace departed when Christ said, ‘Your house is left to you desolate’ (Matthew 23:38); even before that day its dearth had begun, for there was no longer any prophet among the Jews, nor did Grace visit their holy things. The Holy Spirit had been withheld, but was in the future to be shed abundantly. The beginning of this imparting was after the Crucifixion, not only as to its abundance, but also as to the increased greatness of the gifts. The Gift was more marvelous, as when It said, ‘You do not know what manner of spirit you are of’ (Luke 9:55); and again, ‘You did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption’ (Romans 8:15). The men of old possessed the Spirit themselves, but did not impart It to others; the Apostles filled tens of thousands with It. The Lord spoke of this grace, ‘The Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified’” (John 7:39).

Chrysostom also pointed out²²³ that the Scriptures record prophecy and miracles sometimes coming from the enemies of God.

“How does Paul call those ‘carnal’, who had attained so large a measure of the Spirit? Because they were carnal, to whom the Lord said, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness’ (Matthew 7:23). Yet they cast out demons, raised the dead, and uttered prophecies; it is possible even for one who

²²² John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, LI, 2.

²²³ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Corinthians, VIII, 2.

performed miracles to be carnal. God prophesied by Balaam; to Pharaoh and to Nebuchadnezzar He revealed things to come; Caiaphas prophesied, not knowing what he said; yea, and some others cast out demons in His name, though they were ‘not with Him’ (Luke 9:49), since not for the doers’ sake are these things done, but for others’ sake. Sometimes those who are positively unworthy are made instrumental to the work of God. If in the case of unworthy men these things are done for others’ sake, why wonder when they are done by saints?”

Chrysostom concluded²²⁴ that while working miracles can cause us problems, the greatest miracles are those associated with our own good deeds; these are the greatest signs.

“Miracles often distinguish a person, but they have also injured him who had the power, by lifting him up to pride and vainglory. But in our works there is no place for any such suspicion; they profit both the ones who do them and many others.”

“Let us perform these with much diligence. For if you change from inhumanity to almsgiving, you have healed a withered hand. If you withdraw from theaters and go to Church, you have cured the lame foot. If you avoid looking at a harlot, and from beauty not your own, you have opened the eyes that were blind. If instead of satanic songs, you learn spiritual psalms, you have caused the dumb to speak.”

“These are the greatest miracles; these are the wonderful signs. If we go on working these signs, we shall be a great and admirable sort of persons through these; we shall win over all the wicked unto virtue; and we shall enjoy the life to come.”

Taking Nothing for the Journey

Jesus called the twelve to *Himself*, and began to send them out two *by* two, and gave them power over unclean spirits. He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff -- no bag, no bread, no copper in *their* money belts -- but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics” (Mark 6:7-9).

This is quite a contrast to any kind of travel today, from taking a vacation to modern missionary travel. Common practice is to take along everything one will need for the journey, since one cannot necessarily count on the things we need being available at our destination. Yet the Twelve and the Seventy, along with Paul, did things much differently.

John Chrysostom pointed out²²⁵ that the Apostles were sent out as workmen, and that the people they met had an obligation to provide for their needs. The Apostles didn’t need to beg; the people they met owed them the provisions that they needed.

“In case the Apostles should say, ‘where are we to obtain our necessary food?’ Jesus didn’t say to them, ‘You have heard that I have told you before, “Behold the fowls of the air”’, for they were not yet able to realize this commandment in their actions. He added what came far short of this, ‘The

²²⁴ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XXXII, 11.

²²⁵ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XXXII, 7.

workman is worthy of his food' (Matthew 10:10, Luke 10:7), declaring that they must be nourished by their disciples. Thus they can't be high minded towards those whom they were teaching, as though they were giving everything and receiving nothing at their hands; this also insures that their disciples won't break away, as being despised by their teachers."

"After this, that they may not say, 'Do you then command us to live by begging?' and be ashamed of this, Jesus signifies the thing to be a debt, calling them 'workmen', and by terming what was given, 'hire'. He said, Don't think because the labor is in words, that the benefit conferred by you is small. The thing has much labor; and whatever they that are taught may give, it is not a free gift that they bestow, but a recompense which they render; 'for the workman is worthy of his food'. Jesus said this, not as declaring the worth of the apostles' labors to be just the food that they eat, far from it; God forbid. Instead He made it a law for them to seek nothing more, and as convincing the givers, that what they do is not an act of liberality, but a debt."

Ascetics Still Follow this Command

In monastic communities all over the world, monks still practice what Jesus taught. This lifestyle is not for everyone, but it is important for everyone to recognize what the monks are striving to achieve.

Basil the Great wrote²²⁶ of a conversation he had with a Bishop he met, who was serving one of the hospitals near Caesarea. The godly Bishop advocated poverty and said that everyone should limit his possessions to one garment as John the Baptist suggested (Luke 3:10-11). Further he suggested that we try to be perfect, sell what we have and give to the poor. No one should distribute his own wealth however, but should entrust it to whoever manages the affairs of the poor, similar to the way the Apostles did it. He said that experience was needed in order to distinguish between cases of genuine need and of mere greedy begging. Whoever gives to the afflicted gives to the Lord, and from the Lord shall have his reward; but he who gives to every vagabond casts to a dog, a nuisance indeed from his persistent appealing, but deserving no pity on the ground of want.

John Chrysostom pointed out²²⁷ differences between the Old Testament and the New. The great saints of the New Testament along with the Apostles are living like Elijah and Elisha. There is no longer a contempt for poverty and a blessing for wealth.

"One says, 'the wisdom of the poor man is despised' (Ecclesiastes 9:16). Another says, 'Give me neither riches nor poverty' (Proverbs 30:8), and another, 'Deliver me from the furnace of poverty' (Isaiah 48:10 OSB). Yet if riches and poverty are from the Lord, how can either poverty or riches be an evil? Why then were these things said? They were said under the Old Covenant, where there was much account made of wealth, where there was great contempt of poverty, where the one was a curse and the other a blessing. But now it is no longer so. But will you listen to the praises of poverty? Christ sought after it, and said, 'Foxes have

²²⁶ Basil the Great, Letter to Amphilochius, CL, 3-4.

²²⁷ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Hebrews, XVIII, 4.

holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head' (Matthew 8:20). Again He said to His disciples, 'Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, nor bag for *your* journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; for a worker is worthy of his food' (Matthew 10:9-10). Paul said, 'As having nothing and yet possessing all things' (2 Corinthians 6:10). Peter said to the man lame from birth, 'Silver and gold I do not have' (Acts 3:6). Under the Old Covenant, where wealth was held in admiration, who were the admired? Was not Elijah, who had nothing except the sheepskin? Was not Elisha? Was not John the Baptist?"

"Let no man then be humiliated on account of his poverty: It is not poverty which humiliates, but wealth, which compels us to have need of many, and forces us to be under obligations to many?"

Staying with the People They Meet

Jesus also told the Twelve (Mark 6:10-11) and the Seventy (Luke 10:5-7), "In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place. And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them".

There Are Those Who Hoard Material Things

On the opposite side from those who choose a life of poverty are those who hoard material things. One of the big dangers of a lifestyle like this is covetousness, which is idolatry (Colossians 3:5).

John Chrysostom focused²²⁸ on the case of Judas: he performed miracles himself and had daily instruction by Jesus. Yet covetousness caused him to live unnaturally instead of rejecting gold, silver and two coats. Jesus could do nothing for him because Jesus' call is not compulsory.

"Listen, all you covetous, you that have the disease of Judas; listen, and beware of the calamity. He that was with Christ, performed miracles, and had the benefit of so much instruction, yet was sunk into such a gulf, because he was not freed from the disease. How much more shall we, who do not so much as listen to the Scripture, who are constantly riveted to present things, become an easy prey to this calamity, unless we have the advantage of constant care. Every day Judas was with Him, who had nowhere to lay His head, and every day he was instructed by deeds, and by words, not to have gold, silver, or two coats. Yet he was not taught self-restraint; how do we expect to escape the disease, if we don't have the benefit of close personal attention, and do not use much diligence? Terrible is this monster; yet nevertheless, if we are willing, we will easily get the better of him. Covetousness is not natural; and this is clear from those that are free from it. Natural things are common to everyone; but this desire has its origin from negligence alone. From this it takes its birth and derives its increase; and when it has seized on those who look greedily after it, it makes them live contrary to nature. When they don't care about their fellow countrymen, their friends, their

²²⁸ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, LXXX, 4.

brethren, in a word all men, and with these even themselves, this is to live against nature. How did he become such a one, having been called by Christ? Because God's call is not compulsory, neither does it force the will of them who are not minded to choose virtue. It admonishes, advises, and manages all things, so as to persuade men to become good; but it does not compel. If we want to learn why Judas became such as he was, we will find him to have been ruined by covetousness."

Tertullian pointed out²²⁹ a connection between grief over lost items and an unwillingness to give. Both are a sin against God. We need to concentrate on heavenly things and not on earthly things like the Gentiles. Those who don't fear to lose something don't find it irksome to give alms.

"The love of money – that is, Covetousness -- is a root of all kinds of evil' (1 Timothy 6:10). Let us not interpret that covetousness as consisting merely in the lusting after what is another's; for even what seems ours is another's. Nothing is ours, since all things are God's, whose are we also ourselves. When suffering from a loss, if we grieve for what is lost from what is not our own, we are bordering on covetousness. We seek what is another's when we don't like to lose what is another's. He, who is greatly stirred with impatience at a loss, by giving things earthly the precedence over things heavenly, sins directly against God. We greatly shock the Holy Spirit for the sake of a worldly matter. Willingly, therefore, let us lose earthly things and let us keep heavenly things. Let the whole world perish, so I may make patience my gain! Would someone who has not made up his mind to patiently endure the loss of somewhat of his, either by theft, by force, or by carelessness, readily donate his own property in the cause of almsgiving? Patience in losses is an exercise in giving. He who doesn't fear to lose, doesn't find it irksome to give. Otherwise how will one, when he has two coats, give one to the naked (Luke 3:11), unless he is a man likewise to offer his cloak to one who takes away his coat as well? (Matthew 5:40) How shall we fashion to us friends from mammon (Luke 16:9), if we love it so much as not to put up with its loss? (Matthew 10:39) We shall perish together with the lost mammon. To exhibit impatience at all losses is the Gentiles' business, who give money the precedence perhaps over their soul. In their lust for lucre, there is nothing which damnation would fear which they hesitate to do. But we are distinguished from them in that we don't lay down our soul for money, but money for our soul, whether spontaneously in giving or patiently in losing.

Desiring to be Perfect

Jesus encouraged us to choose a life of poverty – that is avoiding a concentration on material things.

²²⁹ Tertullian, Of Patience, III, vi, 7.

Jerome pointed out²³⁰ that the life we live is our own choice. We are given the opportunity to give away all our property and live as monks in a state of worldly weakness, but we don't have to. The monks do this in an effort to be perfect as the Lord encouraged us to do.

“Our Faith does not train boxers, athletes, sailors, soldiers, or ditch-diggers; followers of wisdom, who devote themselves to the worship of God, know why they were created and are in the world, from which they are impatient to depart. Paul says, ‘When I am weak, then am I strong’ (2 Corinthians 12:10). ‘Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward *man* is being renewed day by day’ (2 Corinthians 4:16). And ‘I have the desire to depart and be with Christ, *which is* far better’ (Philippians 1:23). And ‘Make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts’ (Romans 13:14). Are all commanded to avoid two coats, food in their scribe, money in their purse, a staff in the hand, and shoes on the feet? (Matthew 10:9) Or to sell all they possess and give to the poor, and follow Jesus? (Matthew 19:21) Of course not; this command is for those who wish to be perfect. On the contrary John the Baptist lays down one rule for the soldiers, another for the publicans (Luke 3:10-14). But the Lord said to him who had boasted of having kept the whole Law, ‘If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me’ (Matthew 19:21). Jesus did not want to lay a heavy burden on unwilling shoulders; so He sent His hearer away with full power to please himself, ‘If you want to be perfect’. If you wish to be perfect, it is good not to drink wine, and eat meat. If you wish to be perfect, it is better to enrich the mind than to stuff the body. But if you are an infant and fond of the cooks and their preparations, no one will snatch the dainties out of your mouth.”

Shaking Off the Dust of Their Feet

Jesus said to the Twelve, “In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place. And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment than for that city!” (Mark 6:10-11).

Matthew adds some details to Jesus’ instructions: “Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out. And when you go into a household, greet it. If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment than for that city!” (Matthew 10:11-15)

John Chrysostom made²³¹ some observations on the limits imposed on the Apostles. They were required to stay with someone who is worthy, which benefits both the Apostles and their hosts; both end up being honored for this.

²³⁰ Jerome, Against Jovinianus, II, 6.

²³¹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XXXII, 8.

“It doesn’t follow from My saying, ‘The workman is worthy of his food’, that I have opened all men’s doors to you; but I do require you to observe limits. This will profit you both regarding your credit and your maintenance. If the person you stay with is worthy, he will surely give you food; especially when you ask nothing²³² beyond mere necessities.”

“He not only requires them to seek out worthy persons, but also not to change houses; this way they won’t bother him that is receiving them, or get the reputation for gluttony and self-indulgence. He declared this by saying, ‘There stay until you leave’. Notice how He made the Apostles honorable by this, and He made those that received them careful; those that receive the Apostles are the gainers, both in honor and in advantage. As champions of godliness, and preachers to the whole world, Jesus trained the Apostles to practice moderation, and made them objects of love.”

“Because you are teachers, do not wait to be greeted by others, but be first in showing that respect. Implying that this is not a mere greeting, but a blessing, Jesus said, ‘If the house is worthy, your peace shall come upon it’. But if it deals insolently, its first punishment will be not to have the benefit of your peace; and the second, that it shall suffer the doom of Sodom. ‘Shaking off the dust of your feet’ refers to a witness to those who reject the Apostles regarding the long journey which they had traveled for their sake.”

Chrysostom also pointed out²³³ what happens when an Apostle shakes off the dust of his feet in testimony against someone. The feet of the saints are holy; shaking off their dust serves to inflict punishment.

“Monasteries are houses of mourning. There is sackcloth and ashes; there is solitude; there is no laughter, no pressure of worldly business. There is fasting, and sleeping on the ground; there is no impure savor of rich food, no bloodshed, no tumult, no disturbance, or crowding. There is a serene harbor. They are as lights shining from a lofty place to mariners far off. They are stationed at the port, drawing all men to their own calm, and preserving from shipwreck those who gaze on them, and not letting those walk in darkness that look there. Go to them, and make friends with them; embrace their holy feet, more honorable to touch than the heads of others. If some clasp the feet of statues, because they bear but a likeness of the king, will you not clasp his feet who has Christ within him, and be saved? The Saints’ feet are holy, though they are poor men, but not even the head of the profane is honorable. Such power to produce effects is there in the feet of the Saints, that when they shake off the dust of their feet, they inflict punishment. When a saint is among us, let us not be ashamed of anything that belongs to him. All are saints, who unite a holy life with a right faith and though they do not work miracles nor cast out demons, still they are saints.”

“Go then to their tabernacles. To go to the monastery of a holy man is to pass, as it were from earth to heaven. We don’t see there what is seen in a private house. That company is free from all impurity. There is silence and profound

²³² The Twelve Apostles plus the Seventy and many of the Unmercenary Healers lived a life of prayer and fasting. Typically this meant that they would eat a little bread and water every few days. Asking for nothing beyond “necessities” refers to quite a bit less than most people require.

²³³ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Timothy, XIV, Moral.

quiet. The words ‘mine and yours’ are not in use among them. If you remain there a whole day or even two, the more pleasure you will enjoy.”

Chrysostom also noted²³⁴ that a special kind of “Peace” is given by the Apostles. This Peace is pronounced in most Christian Churches: “Peace be to all”; the response is “And to your spirit”.

“This is said not of the apostles alone, but also of the saints afterwards. This peace both comes and flies away again. It follows those who courageously speak well of those that teach, and also those who are worthy to receive. It is a huge loss, not to enjoy such peace. This peace the prophet proclaims, ‘How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace’ (Isaiah 52:7, Romans 10:15). Then to explain the value as part of the Gospel he added, ‘That bring glad tidings of good things’. This peace Christ also declared to be great, when He said, ‘Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you’ (John 14:27). We should do all things, so as to enjoy it, both at home and in Church. In Church the presiding minister gives peace. We should receive it with readily in heart before communion. Not to impart it after communion²³⁵ is disgusting; how much more disgusting to repel him that pronounces it! For us the presbyter sits, for us the teacher stands laboring. What plea then will we have, for not giving him so much welcome as to listen to Him?”

More Tolerable for Sodom at Judgment Day

Referring to the mission of the Twelve, Jesus stated, “Whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from that city, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment than for that city!” (Mark 6:11)

Jesus also “rebuked the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent: Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the Day of Judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the Day of Judgment than for you” (Matthew 11:20-24).

John Chrysostom stated²³⁶ that Jesus doesn’t add Sodom with the others for no reason, but to aggravate the charge against them. It is a very great proof of wickedness, when not only of them that now are, but even of all those that have ever been wicked, none are found so bad as they.

²³⁴ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XXXII, 9.

²³⁵ This refers to the “Kiss of Peace” just before the Eucharist.

²³⁶ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XXXVII, 6.

John Chrysostom stated²³⁷ why Jesus compared the people of his day to those of Sodom and Tyre & Sidon. The people of Capernaum were shown a much greater light than Sodom, and therefore more was required of them.

“Jesus didn’t add Sodom with the others for no reason, but to aggravate the charge against them. It is a very great proof of wickedness, when not only of them that live now, but even of all those that ever lived in wickedness, none are found as bad as they.”

“God has appointed a punishment worse than that of the Sodomites, if we won’t receive the strangers that come to us; I mean, when He commanded the Apostles to shake off the dust of their feet: and very fitly. Although the Sodomites committed a great transgression, yet it was before the Law and grace. But we, after so much care shown towards us, of what indulgence should we be worthy, showing so much inhospitality, and shutting our doors against them that are in need, and before our doors our ears? We do this not against the poor only, but against the Apostles themselves? Therefore we do it to the poor, because we do it even to the Apostles. Whereas Paul is read, and we don’t listen; whereas John preaches, and we don’t hear; when will we receive a poor man, if we will not receive an Apostle?”

Irenaeus of Lyons stated²³⁸ that the reason it will be more tolerable for Sodom is because of the additional grace given to people following Christ’s Advent – which they then rejected. This also implies that there will be different levels of punishment for those who reject Him in ignorance.

“He gives to those who believe on Him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life (John 4:14), but He causes the unfruitful fig-tree immediately to dry up (Mark 11:13-23). In the days of Noah He justly brought on the deluge for the purpose of extinguishing that most infamous race of men then existent, who could not bring forth fruit to God. He acted as He did in order that He might put a check on the sins of these men, but that at the same time He might preserve the archetype, the race of Adam. It was He who rained fire and brimstone from heaven, in the days of Lot, on Sodom and Gomorrah, ‘an example of the righteous judgment of God’ (Jude 1:7), that all may know, ‘that every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire’ (Matthew 3:10). It is He who says, that it will be more tolerable for Sodom in the general judgment than for those who beheld His wonders, and did not believe on Him, nor receive His doctrine. Since He gave by His advent a greater privilege to those who believed on Him, and who do His will, so also did He point out that those who did not believe on Him should have a more severe punishment in the judgment. Thus He extended equal justice to all, and He expects more from those to whom He gives more. By means of His advent, He has poured upon the human race the greater gift of paternal grace.”

²³⁷ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XXXVII, 6-7.

²³⁸ Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies, IV, xxxvi, 4.

John Chrysostom stated²³⁹ that the judgment to be imposed on those who didn't receive them was a great comfort and a confidence boost to the Twelve since it emphasized the importance of their mission.

“Had we been some great number, instead of just twelve; had we been wise, skilled in rhetoric, and mighty in speech, instead of ‘unlearned and ignorant’; had we been kings, with armies and abundance of wealth; how could we have persuaded any, without kindling up wars far worse than civil wars? (Matthew 10:21) Though we were to despise our own safety, who will listen to us? But none of these things did they either think or say, but simply yielded and obeyed. This came not from their virtue only, but also of the wisdom of their Teacher. Notice how to each of the fearful things He gave an encouragement; as in the case of those who didn't receive them He said, ‘It will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment than for that city!’ (Matthew 10:15) When He said, ‘You shall be brought before governors and kings’, He added, ‘for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles’ (Matthew 10:18). This is no small consolation, that they are suffering these things both for Christ, and for the Gentiles’ conviction. Thus God, though no one notices, is found to be everywhere doing His own works. These things were a comfort to them, not that they desired the punishment of other men, but that they might have ground of confidence, as sure to have Him everywhere present with them, who had both foretold these things.”

John Chrysostom continued to say²⁴⁰ that even though the Sodomites died a horrible death, they are not delivered from judgment; only that they can expect a less severe judgment than those who rejected Christ after the Incarnation.

“How did He ‘break to pieces the brazen gates, and crushed the iron bars?’ (Psalm 107:16 LXX) By His body; this was the first time a body was shown to be immortal, and destroying the tyranny of death. This indicates the destruction of the power of death, not the loosening of the sins of those who had died before His coming. If this were not so, but Christ delivered all those that were before Him from hell, how does He say, ‘It will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment than for that city?’ (Matthew 10:15) This saying supposes that those are also to be punished; more mildly indeed, yet still that they are to be punished. Yet the Sodomites also suffered in this life the most extreme punishment from the fire and brimstone; nevertheless not even this will deliver them. If this is so with them, much more with those as have suffered nothing.”

Anointing with Oil

There are many uses of (olive) oil outlined in Scripture: for healing, at Baptism (both discussed below), and as a symbol for almsgiving²⁴¹ as in the parable of the ten virgins who went

²³⁹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XXXIII, 4.

²⁴⁰ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XXXVI, 3.

²⁴¹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, LXXVIII, 1.

John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Thessalonians, XI.

John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Timothy, VI.

out to meet the Bridegroom (Matthew 25:1-13). In the parable of the ten virgins the oil is almsgiving and the poor are the sellers of the oil. When the Bridegroom finally came, there was no time for the five foolish virgins to buy additional oil from the poor. Other uses of oil were for anointing priests, kings and prophets; as part of the sacrifices; and Jacob anointed a pillar. Each of these other uses of oil is similar to the use of oil at Baptism, indicating the participation of the Holy Spirit.

Use of Holy Oil for Healing

When Jesus sent out the Twelve Apostles, “They went out and preached that people should repent. And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them” (Mark 6:12-13).

James, Bishop of Jerusalem in the 1st century, described the use of holy oil in healing the sick:

“Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (James 5:14-16).

Martin of Tours (4th century France) used holy oil for healing²⁴², but some of the other Unmercenary Healers²⁴³ and the Apostles did not. This may be due to the lack of availability of olive oil in the places where the Apostles and the Unmercenary Healers worked. In the area of Judea, where the Twelve Apostles were first sent, and where James was Bishop of Jerusalem, olive oil was available.

²⁴² Sulpitius Severus, Dialogues, III, 2-3.

Sulpitius Severus, On the Life of St. Martin, 16.

²⁴³ For more information on those in the Church referred to as “The Unmercenary Healers”, see Mark Kern, The Unmercenary Healers, St. Athanasius Press, 2001.

Use of Holy Oil at Baptism

Early Christian tradition²⁴⁴ stated why and how anointing with oil was done at baptism. New converts were anointed with oil for the participation of the Holy Spirit, then baptized into the death of Christ with water, and then sealed with ointment as the seal of the covenants. The new convert also fasted before baptism in imitation of the Lord's 40-day fast after His baptism.

“Now concerning baptism, O bishop, or presbyter, you shall so baptize as the Lord commanded us: ‘Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you’ (Matthew 28:19-20), of the Father who sent, of Christ who came, of the Comforter who testified. But you shall beforehand anoint the person with the holy oil, and afterward baptize him with the water, and in the conclusion shall seal him with the ointment. The anointing with oil may be the participation of the Holy Spirit; the water may be the symbol of the death of Christ; and the ointment may be the seal²⁴⁵ of the covenants. But if there is neither oil nor ointment, water is sufficient both for the anointing, and for the seal, and for the confession of Him that is dying together with Christ. But before baptism, let him that is to be baptized fast; for even the Lord, when He was first baptized by John, afterward fasted forty days and forty nights. He was baptized, and then fasted, not having Himself any need of cleansing or fasting, who was by nature pure and holy; but that He might testify the truth to John, and afford an example to us. Our Lord was not baptized into His own passion, death, or resurrection — for none of those things had then happened — but for another purpose. He by His own authority fasted after His baptism, as being the Lord of John. But he who is to be initiated into His death ought first to fast, and then to be baptized. It is not reasonable that he who has been buried with Christ, and is risen again with Him, should appear dejected (i.e. by fasting) at His resurrection.”

Cyril of Jerusalem summarized what the newly illumined are about to partake of. In Baptism, we are anointed, immersed and anointed again; in the anointing, the influence of the demons is driven away. The effect is not just the forgiveness of sins as in the Baptism of John, but the putting on of Christ also. As partakers of Christ, we are called by His Name and given the Holy Spirit. Just like the bread of the Eucharist is no longer mere bread, but the Body of Christ; so also the oil is no longer simple oil, but it is Christ's gift of grace. Just as Christ went out to defeat Satan after His Baptism, so we put on the whole armor of the Holy Spirit to stand against the power of our adversary after our Baptism.

“When we were stripped at Baptism²⁴⁶, we were anointed with exorcised oil²⁴⁷, from our head to your feet, and were made partakers of the good olive tree, Jesus Christ. We were cut off from the wild olive tree²⁴⁸, and grafted into the

²⁴⁴ Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, VII, ii, 22; III, ii, 17.

²⁴⁵ Philip Schaff and Henry Wace in “Introduction to Cyril of Jerusalem”, IV, 6, Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1995, p. xxv stated: The “Unction” was regarded in the Greek-speaking Church as the chief part. In the Latin-speaking Church the name Confirmation is of later date, and indicates that greater importance was then attached to the “Laying on of Hands” with prayer.

²⁴⁶ Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures, XX, 3.

²⁴⁷ For further discussion, see Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, VII, ii, 22.

good one, and were made to share the fatness of the true olive tree (Romans 11:17). The exorcised oil therefore was a symbol of the participation of the fatness of Christ, driving away every trace of hostile influence. The breathing of the saints and the invocation of the Name of God, like fiercest flame, scorch and drive out evil spirits. So also this exorcised oil receives such virtue by the invocation of God and by prayer, as not only to burn and cleanse away the traces of sins, but also to chase away all the invisible powers of the evil one.”

“Let no one then suppose that Baptism²⁴⁹ is merely the grace of remission of sins, or that of adoption. The Baptism of John was a baptism conferring only remission of sins (Mark 1:4, Luke 3:3); Baptism in the Church purges our sins, ministers to us the gift of the Holy Spirit, and is the counterpart of the sufferings of Christ. For this cause Paul said, ‘Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death’ (Romans 6:3-4). These words he spoke to some who thought that Baptism grants us the remission of sins and adoption, but does not have the fellowship, by representation, of Christ’s true sufferings.”

“Having been baptized into Christ²⁵⁰, and put on Christ (Galatians 3:27), we have been made conformable to the Son of God; for God predestined us to adoption as sons (Ephesians 1:5), and will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body (Philippians 3:21). Having therefore become partakers of Christ (Hebrews 3:14), we are properly called Christs, and of us God said, ‘Touch not My Christs’ (Psalm 105:15); that is, My anointed ones. Now we have been made Christs, by receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit; and all things have been done in us by imitation, because we are images of Christ. He washed in the river Jordan, and imparted the fragrance of His Godhead to the waters; He came up from them, and the Holy Spirit in the fullness of His being lighted on Him, like resting on like. To us in like manner, after we had come up from the pool of the sacred streams, there was given Unction, the same as that wherewith Christ was anointed; and this is the Holy Spirit. As Isaiah said in the person of the Lord, ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He has anointed Me; He has sent Me to preach glad tidings to the poor’” (Isaiah 61:1 LXX).

“And as Christ was in reality crucified²⁵¹, and buried, and raised, and we are in Baptism accounted worthy of being crucified, buried, and raised together with Him in a likeness, so is it with the unction also. As He was anointed with an oil of gladness, that is, with the Holy Spirit, called oil of gladness, because He is the author of spiritual gladness, so we were anointed with ointment, having been made partakers and fellow workers (1 Corinthians 3:9), fellow citizens and fellow heirs (Ephesians 2:19, 3:6) of Christ.”

“Beware of supposing that this is plain ointment²⁵². As the Bread of the Eucharist, after the invocation of the Holy Spirit, is no longer mere bread, but the Body of Christ, so also this holy ointment is no more simple ointment, after

²⁴⁸ For further discussion, see Irenaeus, Against Heresies, V, x, 1-2.

²⁴⁹ Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures, XX, 6.

²⁵⁰ Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures, XXI, 1.

²⁵¹ Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures, XXI, 2.

²⁵² Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures, XXI, 3.

invocation, but it is Christ's gift of grace. By the coming of the Holy Spirit, it is made fit to impart His Divine Nature. This ointment is symbolically applied to our forehead and our other senses; while our body is anointed with the visible ointment, our soul is sanctified by the Holy and life-giving Spirit."

"We are first anointed on the forehead²⁵³ that we might be delivered from the shame, which the first man, who transgressed, bore about with him everywhere; 'with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, we are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory' (2 Corinthians 3:18). Then on your ears; that you might receive the ears which are quick to hear the Divine Mysteries, of which Isaiah said, 'The Lord gave me an ear to hear' (Isaiah 50:4 LXX); and the Lord Jesus in the Gospel, 'He who has ears to hear let him hear!' (Matthew 11:15) Then on the nostrils; that receiving the sacred ointment you may say, We are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing (2 Corinthians 2:15). Afterwards on your chest; that having put on the breast-plate of righteousness, you may stand against the wiles of the devil (Ephesians 6:14, 11). For as Christ after His Baptism, and the visitation of the Holy Spirit, went forth and vanquished the adversary, so likewise you, after Holy Baptism and the Mystical Chrism, having put on the whole armor of the Holy Spirit, are to stand against the power of the adversary, and vanquish it, saying, 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me'" (Philippians 4:13).

Basil the Great stated²⁵⁴ that there is a great deal of unpublished teaching handed down from the Apostles regarding Baptism. The awesome dignity of the mysteries was preserved by silence, since those things that the uninitiated were not even allowed to look at was hardly likely to be publicly paraded in written documents.

"Of the beliefs and practices which are preserved in the Church, some we possess derived from written teaching; others we have received delivered to us 'in a mystery' by the tradition of the Apostles; and both of these in relation to the true Faith have the same force."

"Who has taught us in writing to sign with the sign of the cross those who have trusted in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ? What writing has taught us to turn to the East at the prayer? Which of the saints has left us in writing the words of the invocation at the displaying of the bread of the Eucharist and the cup of blessing? We are not content with what the Apostle or the Gospel has recorded, but we add other words as being of great importance to the validity of the ministry; these we derive from unwritten teaching. Moreover we bless the water of baptism and the oil of the chrism, and besides this the catechumen who is being baptized. On what written authority do we do this? Is not our authority silent and mystical tradition? By what written word is the anointing of oil itself taught? Where does the tradition of baptizing three times come from? From what Scripture do we derive the renunciation of Satan and his angels? Does not this come from that unpublished and secret teaching which our fathers guarded in a silence out of the reach of curious meddling and inquisitive investigation? Well

²⁵³ Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures, XXI, 4.

²⁵⁴ Basil the Great, On the Spirit, XXVII, 66.

had they learned the lesson that the awesome dignity of the mysteries is best preserved by silence. What the uninitiated are not even allowed to look at was hardly likely to be publicly paraded about in written documents.”

Cyprian of Carthage wrote²⁵⁵ about baptism by heretics: it is meaningless since there is no Church or altar to sanctify the anointing oil and the Eucharist.

“The questioning which is put in baptism is a witness of the truth. When we say, ‘Do you believe in eternal life and remission of sins through the holy Church?’ we mean that remission of sins is not granted except in the Church; among heretics, where there is no Church, sins cannot be put away. It is necessary that he should be anointed who is baptized; so that, having received the chrism, that is, the anointing (1 John 2:27), he may be anointed by God, and have in him the grace of Christ. The Eucharist and the oil, from which the baptized are anointed, are sanctified on the altar. But he cannot sanctify the creature with oil, who has neither an altar nor a church; thus there can be no spiritual anointing among heretics, since it is clear that the oil cannot be sanctified nor the Eucharist celebrated at all among them. It is written, ‘Let not the oil of a sinner anoint my head’ (Psalm 141:5 LXX), which the Holy Spirit before forewarned, lest anyone going out of the way and wandering from the path of truth should be anointed by heretics and adversaries of Christ. What prayer can a priest who is impious and a sinner offer for a baptized person? It is written, ‘God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him’ (John 9:31). Who can give what he himself doesn’t have? How can he discharge spiritual functions who himself has lost the Holy Spirit?”

Epistle: 1 Peter 5:6-14

This Reading is often used in the West for the 7th Sunday of Easter.

Background for Peter’s First Epistle

The Apostle Peter made several missionary journeys to Cappadocia, Galatia, Pontus, Bithynia and Northeastern Asia Minor prior to his imprisonment²⁵⁶ by Herod in 44 AD. In Peter’s First Epistle, he addresses the Epistle to the Churches in this region of his early missionary journeys. He wrote, “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:1-2).

We might also note that Jews along with Gentile converts to Judaism from this region had been in Jerusalem for Pentecost 30 AD when Peter spoke to the crowd (Acts 2:7-11). Peter’s preaching resulted in 3000 people from these outlying regions being added to the Faith, and most of these people stayed in Jerusalem, having all things in common (Acts 2:44, 4:32). During the persecution that followed the stoning of Stephen one-year later²⁵⁷, the Church was scattered, and

²⁵⁵ Cyprian of Carthage, Epistles, LXIX, 2.

²⁵⁶ For details, see the Study: Mark Kern, The Apostle Peter, St. Athanasius Press, 2005, p. 191.

²⁵⁷ That the stoning of Stephen occurred this early, see:

many of these people may have gone home. During the year they spent in Jerusalem, Peter probably got to know some of them well, and this may have prompted his visit to these regions first.

In Peter's First Epistle, he addressed his words to "The Pilgrims of the Dispersion". "The Dispersion" refers to those Jews living outside the borders of Israel among Greek-speaking people (John 7:35). These Jews living abroad made it a very high priority to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem three times a year according to the command in the Mosaic Law (Deuteronomy 16:16-17, Exodus 23:14-17, 34:21-24). For Peter to call them "Pilgrims" implies that many of them had been to Jerusalem regularly, and some of them may have been in Jerusalem when Peter spoke at Pentecost, 30 AD.

Silvanus of the Seventy, the Courier of the Epistle

We get a clue regarding when Peter wrote his First Epistle from some of the people he mentions. Peter closes his Epistle with the words:

"By Silvanus, our faithful brother as I consider him, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand. She who is in Babylon, elect together with *you*, greets you; and *so does* Mark, my son. Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen (1 Peter 5:12-14).

Silvanus was the courier of the Epistle, and he was also one of the original Seventy Apostles (Luke 10:1-20). Some people have speculated that Silvanus, the courier of Peter's Epistle, and Silas, who accompanied Paul on his Second Missionary Journey, were the same person. This comes from a study of the names themselves, which are a Greek version of the Hebrew name, Saul. Transliterated from Aramaic to Greek, *Sheelah* becomes *Silas* in Greek, where a contracted form of Silas is Silvan or Silvanus (Greek: *Silouanos*). Thus both Silas and Silvanus were Greek-speaking Hebrews.

According to a number of traditional sources, there were two members of the original Seventy Apostles: Silas and Silvanus, and both are remembered²⁵⁸ on the same day. Silas is remembered for his work as Bishop of Corinth, and Silvanus is remembered for his work as Bishop of Thessalonica. What makes it confusing is that Paul calls Silas "Silvanus" several times in his Epistles (2 Corinthians 1:19, 1 Thessalonians 1:1, 2 Thessalonians 1:1). Since one name is a contracted form of the other, this is understandable.

What is Babylon?

Peter also referred to the Evangelist Mark in his First Epistle, as being with him in "Babylon". There is a city in Egypt named "Babylon", and it is possible that Peter and Mark

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, July 28.

Demetrius of Rostov, The Great Collection of the Lives of the Saints, tr. Fr Thomas Marretta, Chrysostom Press, House Springs, MO, 2000, December 27.

²⁵⁸ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, July 30.

Hippolytus, On the Seventy, 16, 17.

Dorotheus of Tyre, The Choosing of the Seventy Holy Apostles, 15, 17.

could have been there together at one time. But this reference to “Babylon” refers to the city of Rome, where Peter was appalled²⁵⁹ at the extent of the corruption in Rome when he first arrived there. Eusebius wrote²⁶⁰

“And Peter makes mention of Mark in his first epistle, which they say that he wrote in Rome itself, as is indicated by him, when he calls the city, by a figure, Babylon, as he does in the following words: ‘She who is in Babylon, elect together with *you*, greets you; and *so does* Mark my son’” (1 Peter 5:13-14).

Other early writers also interpreted²⁶¹ the reference to “Babylon” in Revelation to the city of Rome. John wrote of a woman called, “Mystery Babylon, the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth” (Revelation 17:5). She was carried by a beast, which has seven heads and ten horns, where the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits (Revelation 17:7, 9). Since Rome, as a city, was built on seven hills or mountains, “Babylon” was interpreted as “Rome”.

Gregory the Great, Pope of Rome, clarified²⁶² the term “Babylon” as referring to the things of this world, where citizens of “Babylon” can be found doing task-work in the Church and vice versa.

“It commonly comes to pass that the citizens of Babylon serve in task-work for Jerusalem, while the citizens of Jerusalem, which is of the heavenly country, do the task-work of Babylon. When the elect of God, endowed with moral excellence, distinguished for moderation, seeking not their own gain, do their earthly business, what else is it but that the citizens of holy Jerusalem serve in the work of Babylon? And when some, unbridled in immorality, hold places of holy dignity, and in the very things, which they seem to do well, seek praise to themselves, what else is it but that the citizens of Babylon execute the task-work of the heavenly Jerusalem? For so Judas mixed with the apostles, preached the Redeemer of the human race, and did signs with the rest. But, because he had been a citizen of Babylon, he executed his work as task-work for the heavenly Jerusalem. But on the other hand, the Patriarch Joseph, who was carried into Egypt, served an earthly court, bore the charge of administration in temporal things, and exhibited whatever was justly due to a transitory kingdom. But, because he was still a citizen of holy Jerusalem, he administered the service of Babylon, in the way of task-work only”.

Gregory of Nyssa noted²⁶³ that “Babylon” means “confusion”, such as occurred at the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:4-9). Gregory referred to the heretics Montanus and Sabellius of his day as “Babylon” because they pervert and confuse the truth of the Church.

²⁵⁹ For a description of this corruption, see Mark Kern, *The Apostle Peter*, St. Athanasius Press, 2005, pp. 220-221.

²⁶⁰ Eusebius, *Church History*, II, 15.

²⁶¹ Tertullian, *An Answer to the Jews*, I, vii, 9.

Tertullian, *The Five Books Against Marcion*, II, ii, 3, 13.

Jerome, *Letter to Paula*, XLVI, 12.

²⁶² Gregory the Great, *Epistles*, VIII, 35.

²⁶³ Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius*, X, 2.

Also Gregory of Nyssa, “Funeral Oration on Meletius”, *Oratorical Works*, V.

“It seems to me that lamentations should be chanted when this imitator of Jehoiakim draws away those whom he deceives to this new kind of idolatry, banishing them from their ancestral inheritance, — I mean the Faith. They too, in a way corresponding to the Scriptural record, are carried away captive to Babylon from Jerusalem that is above, — that is from the Church of God to this confusion of pernicious doctrines, — for Babylon means ‘confusion’. And even as Jehoiakim was mutilated²⁶⁴, so this man, having voluntarily deprived himself of the light of the truth, has become a prey to the Babylonian despot. The poor wretch never learned that the Gospel commands us to behold eternal life alike in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit”.

The Date for the Writing of Peter’s First Epistle

If Peter visited Cappadocia, Galatia, Pontus, Bithynia and Northeastern Asia Minor in the early 40’s AD, and if he sent the Evangelist Mark to Egypt in the mid 40’s AD, there is a rather narrow window for the time of his drafting his First Epistle. Unless the Evangelist Mark returned to Rome for a brief time, for which we don’t have any record, Peter must have drafted his First Epistle by the mid 40’s AD²⁶⁵.

Prior to the persecution of Christians by the Emperor Nero in the 60’s AD, most of the persecution came at the hands of or at the instigation of the Jews. This is a consistent theme on Paul’s missionary journeys as recorded in Acts. Peter’s First Epistle was written to people living a few miles North of the cities Paul visited on his First Missionary Journey, and they were suffering similar persecution (1 Peter 1:6, 3:9, 3:16, 4:12-19). We might infer that this persecution was also incited and organized by the Jews in that area (1 Peter 2:7-8).

While Peter addressed his Epistle to the “Dispersion”, referring to Jews living abroad, Gentiles are included also (1 Peter 2:9-10). The Gentiles, who had not believed, were also involved in the persecution (1 Peter 2:12). There was a temptation on the part of the Christians to fight back. Peter cautioned them not to do this, but to endure it patiently, just as Christ had done (1 Peter 3:13-18).

Peter wrote of those (plural) who “have evangelized you” (1 Peter 1:12). That would be Andrew, Peter himself, and several of the Seventy, including the Evangelist Mark, who accompanied Peter. Peter also addressed the Bishops that he and Andrew had ordained for this region (1 Peter 5:1-4). He wrote instructions to them using words that are similar to the words Paul used in writing to Timothy and Titus.

Significant by its absence are two things: First, there is no reference to the work of the Apostle Paul in cities a few miles away. In Peter’s Second Epistle, probably written to the people in the same region, who were familiar with his First Epistle (2 Peter 3:1), Peter

²⁶⁴ Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, X, vi, 3 (97). Jehoiakim was a vicious man who encouraged the abomination of idolatry. For violating his oath to King Nebuchadnezzar, Jehoiakim was thrown over the city walls and left to rot without burial. Jeremiah had predicted that Jehoiakim would be “buried with a donkey’s burial, dragged off and thrown out beyond the gates of Jerusalem” (Jeremiah 22:19).

²⁶⁵ Most scholars put the drafting of Peter’s first Epistle a little later than this. In doing so, they don’t consider the details of what is happening at the time such as is outlined here.

acknowledged the work of “our beloved brother Paul” (2 Peter 3:15). The lack of reference to Paul’s work suggests that Peter wrote his first Epistle before Paul started his missionary journeys to that area. Paul began his First Missionary Journey in c. 46 AD and arrived in Asia Minor in c. 47 AD.

Second is the lack of any reference to the Council in Jerusalem in c. 48 AD, and the decrees regarding the Gentiles, where the Gentiles were not obligated to be circumcised or to follow the Mosaic Law (Acts 15:18-21). By this time, the Lord has already instructed Peter regarding Cornelius and the Gentiles (Acts 10). And Peter has put this instruction to good use in his Epistle. He writes to the “Dispersion”, but the Gentiles are included! All of this implies a date for the drafting of Peter’s First Epistle in the mid 40’s AD.

The Necessity for Humility

Peter stated, “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:6-7).

The subject of humility is also brought out in the Gospel Lesson for the 17th Sunday of Pentecost (q.v.) using the details of the Canaanite woman asking for Jesus to heal her demon-possessed daughter. Here we will deal to other references in the Scriptures to humility

John Chrysostom used²⁶⁶ the example of the Pharisee and the publican to compare the results of humility with that of pride. The Pharisee had a spotless life, but was handicapped with pride; the publican had a life of great sin, but came with humility and repentance. Because of his pride, the Pharisee was rejected and lost the benefit of his spotless life; because of his humility, the publican was accepted in spite of his life of sin. This has huge implications for us! Unless we start with a foundation of humility, we are building a foundation for our life on sand. If we couple a life of righteousness with humility, we will be greatly beloved of God.

“In comparing the Pharisee and the publican, we could picture them as two chariots, one representing virtue and one representing vice. We note how great is the gain of humbleness of mind, and how great is the damage of pride. Even when linked with righteousness, fasting and tithes, the chariot of the Pharisee fell behind. The publican’s chariot, even when yoked with sin, outstripped the Pharisee’s pair, even although the charioteer it had was a poor one. What was worse than the publican? Since he made his soul contrite, and called himself a sinner, which indeed he was, he surpassed the Pharisee, who had both fasting, tithes, and was removed from any vice. The Pharisee was removed from the greed of gain and robbery, but he had rooted his soul to the mother of all evils -- vain-glory and pride.”

“On this account he fell behind in the running. The Pharisee was like a ship, that had run through innumerable tsunamis, and had escaped many storms; then in the mouth of the harbor it was dashed against some rock, and lost the whole treasure which was stowed away in her. So did this Pharisee, after having undergone the labors of fasting, and all the rest of his virtue, since he did not master his tongue, in the harbor he underwent shipwreck with his cargo. In going

²⁶⁶ John Chrysostom, Homily Concerning Lowliness of Mind, 1-2.

home from prayer, where he ought to have derived gain, he was rather greatly damaged.”

“Knowing these things, beloved, even if we should have mounted to the absolute pinnacle of virtue, let us consider ourselves last of all. We need to learn that pride is able to cast down even from heaven him who doesn’t pay attention; conversely humbleness of mind bears up on high from the very abyss of sins, him who knows how to be sober. This is what placed the publican before the Pharisee; while humbleness of mind and the acknowledgment of his own sins brought the robber into Paradise before the Apostles. If the effect of confession of sins is so great, they who are conscious of many good qualities in their life, yet humble their own souls, how great crowns will they not win? When sinfulness is put together with humbleness of mind it runs with such ease as to out-strip righteousness combined with pride. If therefore you put it with righteousness, where will it not reach? Through how many heavens will it not pass? On the other hand if pride yoked with righteousness, by the excess weight of its own wickedness, was strong enough to drag it down; if it were put together with sinfulness, into how deep a hell will it not drag him who has it? These things I say, not that we should be careless with righteousness, but that we should avoid pride; not that we should sin, but that we should be sober-minded. Humbleness of mind is the foundation of the love of wisdom. Even if you should have built a superstructure of things innumerable; almsgiving, prayers, fasting, even all virtue; unless humility has first been laid as a foundation, all will be built upon it in vain and for no purpose. It will fall down easily, like that building which had been built on the sand (Matthew 7:26). All of our good deeds need this; there is no one separate from this that will be able to stand. Even if you should mention temperance, virginity, despising of money, anything whatever, all are unclean, accursed and loathsome, if humbleness of mind is absent. Therefore, let us take her with us, in words, in deeds, in thoughts, and with this let us build these graces.”

Jesus was invited to the house of Simon the Pharisee for dinner; while Jesus was there a prostitute washed His feet with her tears, wiped His feet with her hair and anointed His feet with costly fragrant oil. Simon was proudly indignant that Jesus didn’t know who was touching Him. Jesus explained to Simon that those who are forgiven much also love much; then He forgave the woman. Ephraim the Syrian used²⁶⁷ this example to explain how to teach humility to someone who isn’t humble:

“Instead of a stern reproof Jesus spoke a parable of persuasion to that Pharisee. He spoke the parable to him tenderly, that he, though willful, might unawares be enticed to correct his perversities. For the waters that are frozen by the force of a cold wind, the heat of the sun gently dissolves. So our Lord did not at once oppose him harshly, that he might not give occasion to the rebellious to rebel again. But by coaxing He brought him under the yoke, that when he had been yoked, He might work with him; though rebellious, he might work according to His will²⁶⁸. Because Simon was proudly minded, our Lord began humbly with

²⁶⁷ Ephraim the Syrian, *Three Homilies: On Our Lord*, I, 22.

²⁶⁸ After Pentecost, Simon the Pharisee took the name of Julian, was ordained Bishop of Gaul by the Apostles and spent the rest of his life evangelizing in what is now France.

him, that He might not teach him proudly. If that Pharisee retained the Pharisees' pride, how could our Lord cause him to acquire humility, when the treasure of humility was not in hand? Since our Lord was teaching humility to all men, He showed that His treasury was free from every form of pride. This was for our sakes, that He might teach us, that whatever treasuries pride enters into, it is by boastfulness that it gains access to them. On this account Jesus said, 'Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing' (Matthew 6:3). Our Lord did not employ harsh reproof, because His coming was of grace; He did not refrain from reproof, because His later coming will be of retribution. He caused men to fear in His coming of humility; because it is a fearful thing to fall into His hands when He shall come in flaming fire. But our Lord gave most of His help by persuasion rather than by reproof."

Ambrose of Milan observed²⁶⁹ that there is a mystery associated with a humble life. Peter encountered this mystery when the Lord washed his feet; he didn't understand at first. As we identify with our Lord and Master and imitate Him, we begin to understand the mystery.

"Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospel washed the feet of His disciples (John 13:5). When He came to Simon Peter, Peter said, 'You shall never wash my feet!' (John 13:8) He did not perceive the mystery, and therefore he refused the service; he thought that the humility of the servant would be injured, if he patiently allowed the Lord to serve him. The Lord answered him, 'If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me'. Hearing this, Peter replied, 'Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head'. Jesus answered, 'He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet to be completely clean'" (John 13:9-10).

"Peter was clean, but he must wash his feet, for he had a propensity to sin that he inherited from the first man²⁷⁰, when the serpent overthrew him and persuaded him to sin. His feet were therefore washed, as they are in repentance and confession; for our own sins are remitted through baptism."

"Observe at the same time that the mystery consists in the office of humility, for Christ says, 'If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet' (John 13:14). Since the Author of Salvation Himself redeemed us through His obedience, how much more ought we His servants to offer the service of our humility and obedience."

Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 5:3). John Chrysostom stated²⁷¹ that "poor in spirit" means humility, where the "spirit" refers to the soul. There are different kinds of humility; some are forced to be humble; others do it willingly. The latter is commended with the sense of sacrifice like the three youths in the

²⁶⁹ Ambrose of Milan, *Concerning the Mysteries*, VI, 31-33.

²⁷⁰ The Roman Catholic Church, follows the teachings of Augustine on "original sin", which is an inherited sin. In Orthodoxy, "original sin" is a heretical concept. Man inherited Adam's mortality and corruption, and hence the passions and a propensity to sin. But Adam's sin in the Garden was his, not ours. Men can refuse to sin and thus live a holy life. "Original sin" says that men are born guilty. Because of the doctrine of "original sin", the Roman Catholic Church also had to add "the Immaculate Conception" of the Virgin Mary so that she could qualify in terms of personal holiness to give birth to the Son of God. Otherwise the Son of God would have been born with original sin. An Immaculate Conception is impossible to justify from historical documents.

²⁷¹ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Matthew*, XV, 2-3.

Babylonian furnace. In contrast to this are those who imitate the devil in pride, which leads to great wickedness. Even Adam did this in the Garden; Christ became the remedy by teaching us humility.

“What is meant by ‘the poor in spirit?’ The humble and contrite in mind! For by ‘spirit’ He has here designated the soul, and the faculty of choice. Many are not humble willingly, but are compelled by stress of circumstances; this is not praiseworthy. He blesses them first, who by choice humble themselves. Why did Jesus not say, ‘the humble’, but rather ‘the poor?’ He means here those who are awestruck, and tremble at the commandments of God. God accepted Isaiah in just this way, ‘To who will I have respect, but to the humble and meek, and the man that trembles at my words?’ (Isaiah 66:2 LXX) There are many kinds of humility: someone may be humble in his own eyes; another, with excess of lowliness. It is this last lowliness of mind which that blessed prophet commends, picturing to us the temper that is not merely subdued, but utterly broken, when he said, ‘Sacrifice to God is a broken spirit: a broken and humbled heart God will not despise’ (Psalm 51:17 LXX). The Three Young Men offered this to God as a great sacrifice, ‘Yet with a contrite soul and humbled spirit²⁷² may we receive mercy’ (Daniel 3:39). This Christ now blesses.”

“The greatest of evils, and those which make havoc of the whole world, had their beginning with pride; the devil, not being such before, did thus become a devil (Isaiah 14:12-14). Paul plainly declared, ‘Lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the *same* condemnation as the devil’ (1 Timothy 3:6). Adam, the first man, puffed up by the devil with these hopes, was made an example of, and became mortal. Expecting to become a God, he lost even what he had; God criticized him with this, mocking his folly, said, ‘Behold, the man has become like one of Us’ (Genesis 3:22). Everyone that came after wrecked himself with impiety, fancying some equality with God. Since this was the stronghold of our evil, and the root and fountain of all wickedness, God prepared a remedy suitable to the disease, laid this law first as a strong and safe foundation. For this being fixed as a base, the builder in security lays on it all the rest. But if this be taken away, though a man reach to the Heavens in his course of life, it is all easily undermined, and issues in a grievous end. Though fasting, prayer, almsgiving, temperance, any other good thing whatever, be gathered together in you; without humility all fall away and perish.”

“It was this very thing that took place in the instance of the Pharisee. For even after he had arrived at the very summit, he “went down” with the loss of all, because he had not the mother of virtues: for as pride is the fountain of all wickedness, so is humility the principle of all virtue. Therefore Christ begins with this, pulling up boasting by the root out of the soul of His hearers.”

Practical Examples of Humility

Gregory the Great, Pope of Rome, gave²⁷³ his bishops and priests some guidelines on how to admonish and encourage people in the way of humility. There is a vast gap between the

²⁷² In the Septuagint (LXX) this is Daniel 3:39. In the Hebrew Bible, this has been separated into the Apocryphal document called “The Song of the Three Children”.

²⁷³ Gregory the Great, Book of Pastoral Rule, III, 17.

humble and the haughty: the humble ascend to the likeness of God; the haughty sink in imitation of their father the devil. This is a really important mystery to understand in the Christian life.

“Differently to be admonished are the humble and the haughty. To the humble insinuate how true is that excellence which they hold in hoping for it; to the haughty intimate how temporal glory is as nothing, and even when embracing it they don’t hold it. Let the humble hear how eternal are the things that they long for, how transitory the things which they despise; let the haughty hear how transitory are the things they court, how eternal the things they lose. Let the humble hear from the authoritative voice of the Truth, ‘Everyone that humbles himself shall be exalted’. Let the haughty hear, ‘Everyone that exalts himself shall be humbled’ (Luke 18:14). Let the humble hear, ‘Before honor is humility’ (Proverbs 15:33); let the haughty hear, ‘Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall’ (Proverbs 16:18). Let the humble hear, ‘To whom will I have respect, but to the humble and meek, and the man that trembles at my words’ (Isaiah 66:2 LXX)? Let the haughty hear, ‘How can he who is dust and ashes be proud?’ (Ecclesiasticus 10:9 LXX) Let the humble hear, ‘God regards the lowly’. Let the haughty hear, ‘But the proud He knows from afar’ (Psalm 138:6). Let the humble hear, ‘The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many’ (Matthew 20:28); let the haughty hear, ‘The beginning of all sin is pride’ (Ecclesiasticus 10:13 LXX). Let the humble hear that our Redeemer ‘humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of death*, even the death of the cross’ (Philippians 2:8); let the haughty hear what is written concerning their head, ‘He is king over all the children of pride’ (Job 41:34). The pride of the devil became the occasion of our perdition, and the humility of God has been found the argument for our redemption. For our enemy, having been created among all things, desired to appear exalted above all things; but our Redeemer, remaining great above all things, stooped to become little among all things.”

“Let the humble, then, be told that, when they abase themselves, they ascend to the likeness of God; let the haughty be told that, when they exalt themselves, they fall into imitation of that apostate angel. What, then, is more debased than haughtiness; while it stretches itself above itself, is flattened out below the stature of true loftiness? What is more outstanding than humility; while it depresses itself to the lowest, it joins itself to its Maker who remains above the highest?”

Ambrose of Milan gave²⁷⁴ some practical guidelines for maintaining our humility, even in the face of false charges being piled up against us. The evil spirits are directing these things, and we conquer by being silent.

“Let a man guard his humility. If he is unwilling to appear too humble, he thinks as follows: ‘Am I to allow this man to despise me, and say such things to my face against me, as though I could not open my mouth against him? Why should I not say something whereby I can hurt him? Am I to let him do me wrong, as though I were not manly? Is he to bring charges against me as though I could not bring together worse ones against him?’”

²⁷⁴ Ambrose of Milan, Duties of the Clergy, I, v, 19-20.

“Whoever speaks like this is not gentle and humble, nor is he without temptation. The tempter stirs him up, and puts such thoughts in his heart. Often the evil spirit employs another person, and gets him to say such things to him; but set your foot firm on the rock. Although a slave should abuse, let the just man be silent, and if a weak man utter insults, let him be silent, and if a poor man should make accusations, let him not answer. These are the weapons of the just man, so that he may conquer by giving way.”

John Chrysostom stated²⁷⁵ that Paul, in his humility, and in spite of visions of the Third Heaven (2 Corinthians 12:2) did not consider himself to have really comprehended much about God. But if Paul didn’t apprehend the things of God, who did? In contrast, the Pharisee in the parable was puffed up about his good deeds, and lost the benefit of having done them.

“Jesus says, ‘When you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, “We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do”’ (Luke 17:10). Paul, the Teacher of the world, said, ‘I do not count myself to have apprehended’ (Philippians 3:13). He alone can be humble-minded, who has persuaded himself that he has done no great thing, however many things he may have done, who thinks that he has not reached perfection. Many are elated on account of their humility; but let not us be so affected. Have you done an act of humility? Don’t be proud of it, otherwise all the merit of it is lost. Such was the Pharisee; he was puffed up because he gave his tithes to the poor, and he lost all the merit of it” (Luke 18:12).

Chrysostom also compared²⁷⁶ Satan with the Apostle Paul: one exalted himself; the other humbled himself. The one who humbled himself dominated the other in his life.

“Satan was an angel, who exalted himself (Isaiah 14:12-14). Was he not humbled beyond all other? Has he not the earth as his place? Is he not condemned and accused by all? Paul was a man, and humbled himself. Is he not admired? Is he not praised? Is he not the friend of Christ? Did he not do greater things than Christ? (Acts 19:12) Did he not often command the devil like he would a captive slave? (1 Corinthians 5:5, 1 Timothy 1:20) Did he not drag him about as an executioner? Did he not hold him up to scorn? Did he not hold his head bruised under his feet?” (Romans 16:20)

Our Enemy is Like a Roaring Lion

Most people today are not very familiar with the ferocity of lions. The only lions they ever see are the lazy creatures in zoos that are always sleeping. More realistic are the lions described in Daniel’s encounter with the Lions’ Den. When Daniel was there an angel shut the lions’ mouths (Daniel 6:22). But when the Babylonian king realized the treachery of Daniel’s enemies, and fed his enemies to the lions, the lions broke all their bones²⁷⁷ before they even reached the bottom of the den (Daniel 6:24).

²⁷⁵ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Philemon, II, Moral.

²⁷⁶ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Philippians, VII, vv. 9-11.

²⁷⁷ The jaws of lions are so strong that they can crunch up and eat the bones of their prey.

Peter said, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8). The image conveyed here is like the lions breaking our bones as they devour us. The roar of a lion, usually at night to advertise its presence, can be heard 5 miles away²⁷⁸. We can just imagine how terrifying this very loud roar can be in the dark when the lion is up close.

Athanasius of Alexandria described²⁷⁹ how the demons operate; they are utterly hateful when seen in their true light, but they try to conceal themselves in the things of God.

“The inventor of wickedness, the great spirit of evil, the devil, is utterly hateful; as soon as he shows himself, he is rejected by all men — as a serpent, as a dragon, as a lion seeking whom he may seize upon and devour. He conceals and covers what he really is, and craftily impersonates that Name which all men desire, so that deceiving by a false appearance, he may fix fast in his own chains those whom he has led astray. He is like one that desires to kidnap the children of others during the absence of their parents; he impersonates their appearance and puts a cheat on the affections of the children to carry them far away and destroy them. This evil and wily spirit, the devil, knows the love which men bear to the truth, impersonates its appearance, and so spreads his own poison among those that follow after him.”

“Thus he deceived Eve, not speaking his own, but artfully adopting the words of God, and perverting their meaning. Thus he suggested evil to the wife of Job, persuading her to pretend affection for her husband, while he taught her to blaspheme God. Thus the crafty spirit mocks men by false displays, delusion and drawing each into his own pit of wickedness.”

John Chrysostom noted²⁸⁰ how Scripture describes our adversity: like a hungry ferocious lion, a poisonous snake and a huge dragon. But yet we can trample him with the Lord’s help.

“The devil and his entire host are ferocious and unclean in their inclination. When Scripture shows us his rapacity, it says, ‘As a roaring lion he walks about, seeking whom he may devour’ (1 Peter 5:8). When it shows his poisonous, deadly, and destructive nature, it calls him a snake and a scorpion; ‘I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy’ (Luke 10:19). When it represents his strength as well as his venom, it calls him a dragon, ‘There go the ships; *and* this dragon that thou hast made to play in it’ (Psalm 104:26 LXX). Scripture everywhere calls him a dragon, a crooked serpent, and an adder (Psalm 74:13, 14 LXX). He is a beast of many folds, varied in his devices; his strength is great, he moves all things, he disturbs all things, he turns all things upside down (Isaiah 27:1; Ezekiel 29:3; 32:2). But fear not, neither be afraid; watch only, and he will be as a sparrow; for He said, ‘tread upon serpents and scorpions’. If we wish, He causes him to be trodden down under our feet.”

²⁷⁸ See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lion>.

²⁷⁹ Athanasius of Alexandria, *To the Bishops of Egypt*, I, 1-2.

²⁸⁰ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Philippians*, VI, vv. 5-8.

Chrysostom also described²⁸¹ how the demons use the passions of this life against us. The passions become to us like ravenous lions that are very difficult to control; we need the Blood of Christ (the Eucharist), the Scriptures and almsgiving²⁸² to help us.

“The Blood of Christ, if it is received with full assurance, has power to extinguish every disease; we should complement this with carefully listening to the divine Scriptures, and follow that with almsgiving. By means of all these things we shall be enabled to deaden the passions that mar our soul. Then only shall we live; for now we are in no better state than dead men. While those passions live, we live too, but we must certainly perish. Unless we first kill them here, they will be sure to kill us in the next life; or rather even in this life they will exact of us the utmost penalty. Every such passion is both cruel, tyrannical and insatiable, and never ceases to devour us every day. ‘Their teeth are the teeth of a lion’ (Joel 1:6), or rather far more fierce. The lion, as soon as he is satisfied, leaves the carcass that has fallen his way; but these passions are never satisfied, nor do they leave the man whom they have seized, until they have set him next to the devil. Whether it is with the love of women, riches or glory that anyone is entangled with, the passions cause him to laugh at hell and despise the kingdom of God, that he may work the will of these passions.”

Ambrose of Milan noted²⁸³ the principle of intimidation used by the demons. If wounds on our bodies can draw us away from the earnestness of our faith, he has accomplished his purpose. As an example of this, Ambrose noted the Patriarch Job, who was covered with wounds and sores over his whole body. Job did not give in to abandoning his faith, and he was rewarded for his steadfastness both in this life and in the age to come.

Ambrose of Milan cautioned²⁸⁴ people to consider what image we project to others. Do we project the image of the demons: anger and the image of wickedness; desire for money and the appearance of vice? Better it is to project no part of the image of demons.

“Don’t let the demons find their image in you; don’t let them find fury nor rage; for in these exists the likeness of wickedness. ‘Our adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour’ (1 Peter 5:8). Don’t let them not find desire for gold, or heaps of money, or the appearance of vices, lest he take from you the voice of liberty. The voice of true liberty is heard when you can say, ‘The ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me’” (John 14:30).

Cyril of Jerusalem stated²⁸⁵ that catechumens need to be prepared with their feet shod with the Gospel of peace so that the bites of the serpent won’t hurt as they come to the holy mysteries.

“Great is the Baptism that lies before you: a ransom to captives; a remission of offenses; a death of sin; a new-birth of the soul; a garment of light; a holy indissoluble seal; a chariot to heaven; the delight of Paradise; a welcome into

²⁸¹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, IV, 17.

²⁸² Someone might ask how almsgiving helps. The answer is that it shifts the focus from our selfish needs to the needs of others.

²⁸³ Ambrose of Milan, Sermon Against Auxentius on the Giving Up of the Basilicas, 4.

²⁸⁴ Ambrose of Milan, Duties of the Clergy, I, xlix, 250.

²⁸⁵ Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures, “Procatechesis”, 16.

the kingdom; the gift of adoption! But there is a serpent by the side of the road watching those who pass by; beware lest he bite you with unbelief. He sees so many receiving salvation, and is seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8). You are coming to the Father of Spirits, but you are going past that serpent. How then may you pass him? Have your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace (Ephesians 6:15); that even if he bite, he may not hurt you. Have faith indwelling, steadfast hope, a strong sandal, that you may pass the enemy and enter the presence of your Lord. Prepare your own heart for reception of teaching, for fellowship in holy mysteries.”

Cyril also warned²⁸⁶ that there are many wolves around looking to devour us, and who sow tares among wheat (Matthew 13:25-40) in order to envelop us. The terms “wolf”, “serpent” and “lion” are used interchangeably.

“Vice mimics virtue and the tares strive to be thought wheat, growing like wheat in appearance, but being detected by good judges from the taste. The devil also transfigures himself into an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14); not that he may re-ascend to where he was, for having made his heart hard as an anvil (Job 41:24), he has a will that cannot repent. He does this in order that he may envelop those who are living an Angelic life in the midst of blindness, and a pestilent condition of unbelief. Many wolves are going about in sheep’s clothing (Matthew 7:15), not so their claws and teeth; clad in their soft skin, they deceive the innocent by their appearance, and shed upon them from their fangs the destructive poison of ungodliness. We therefore need divine grace, and a sober mind, and of eyes that see, lest from eating tares as wheat we suffer harm from ignorance. If we take the wolf to be a sheep, we become his prey; from supposing the destroying Devil to be a beneficent Angel we are devoured. As the Scripture said, he walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8). This is the cause of the Church’s admonitions, the cause of the present instructions, and of the lessons which are read.”

We Will All Suffer

Peter stated, “Resist the devil, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you” (1 Peter 5:9-10).

In our age, we don’t like to deal with the idea of suffering; but the suffering of the people of God is addressed by the Scriptures too often to ignore. Among the Church Fathers, two have had much more to say than the rest. These are Cyprian of Carthage, who lived through the intense persecution of Decius (c. 250 AD) plus a major outbreak of the plague, and John Chrysostom, who lived through a time of peace²⁸⁷.

²⁸⁶ Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures, IV, 1.

²⁸⁷ John Chrysostom died in the harsh conditions of his exile by the Empress Eudoxia, against whom he was outspoken for her vanity and arrogance.

Many people might respond to suffering by saying, “Why me?” It interrupts our plans and would seem to conflict with our interpretation of the Scripture where Christ said, “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly” (John 10:10). This is usually translated into visions of peaceful times and still waters with no hardship of any kind. But is that what Christ promised?

Cyprian of Carthage pointed out²⁸⁸ the words of Christ regarding suffering that most people generally don’t want to hear today. Our willingness to accept suffering is related to our life in the age to come; refusal to accept this is akin to denying Christ.

“Peter taught that persecution occurs for the sake of proving us and that we should, by the example of righteous men who have gone before us, be joined to the love of God by death and sufferings. He wrote, ‘Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed *are you*, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified’ (1 Peter 4:12-14). Now the apostles taught us those things which they themselves also learned from the Lord’s precepts and the heavenly commands. The Lord Himself strengthens us, ‘There is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life’ (Luke 18:29-30). Again He says, ‘Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile *you*, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man’s sake. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! Indeed your reward *is* great in heaven’” (Luke 6:22-23).

“The Lord desired that we should rejoice and leap for joy in persecutions, because, when persecutions occur, then are given the crowns of faith; then the soldiers of God are proven; then the heavens are opened to martyrs. We have not given our name to warfare that we ought only to think about peace, and draw back from war, when in this warfare the Lord walked first -- the Teacher of humility, endurance and suffering. What He taught to be done, He first of all did, and what He exhorts to suffer, He Himself first suffered for us. Let it be before your eyes, beloved brethren, that He who alone has received all judgment from the Father. He will come to judge, has already declared the decree of His judgment and of His future recognition, foretelling and testifying that He will confess those before His Father who confess Him, and will deny those who deny Him.”

Yet many people suffer for Christ but don’t realize that they are doing so. They will be rewarded by their Master just as Job was. There are many aspects of suffering as outlined by the Church Fathers that will be explored in this section. Throughout all aspects of suffering, there is the hand of our ancient enemies, the demons, who delight in the suffering of the faithful.

Cyprian continued to point out²⁸⁹ that those who refuse to suffer are doing the will of the

²⁸⁸ Cyprian of Carthage, Epistle to the People of Thibaris, LV, 2-3.

²⁸⁹ Cyprian of Carthage, Epistle to the People of Thibaris, LV, 10.

devil, they are deserting or rebelling against God, and their eternal home will be with the devil.

“Paul announced that we shall receive greater things than anything that we here either do or suffer, ‘The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come which shall be revealed in us’ (Romans 8:18). When that revelation shall come, when that glory of God shall shine upon us, we shall be happy and joyful, honored with the condescension of God. Those others will remain guilty and wretched, who, either as deserters from God or rebels against Him, have done the will of the devil; so that it is necessary for them to be tormented with the devil himself in unquenchable fire.”

John Chrysostom listed²⁹⁰ eight reasons why the saints are afflicted. Some of these may seem obvious, but others may not be so obvious except from God’s viewpoint. God permits us to suffer evil:

1. That we may not too easily be exalted by the greatness of our good works and miracles.
2. That others may not have a greater opinion of us than belongs to human nature, and take us to be gods and not men.
3. That the power of God may be made clear, in prevailing, overcoming, and advancing the word preached, through the effects of men who are infirm and in bonds.
4. That our endurance may become more striking, serving God, as we do, not for a reward; but showing even such right-mindedness as to give proof of our undiminished good will towards Him after so many evils.
5. That our minds may be wise concerning the doctrine of a resurrection. When you see a just man, one abounding in virtue, suffering ten thousand evils, and thus departing the present life, you are altogether compelled, though unwillingly, to think somewhat of the future judgment. If men do not allow those who have labored for themselves to depart without wages and recompense, much more God will not let those who have so greatly labored to be sent away uncrowned. If He cannot reward those for the recompense of their labors in this life, there must be a time, after the end of the life here, in which they will receive the recompense of their present labors.
6. That all who fall into adversity may be consoled, by looking at such persons, by remembering what sufferings have befallen them.
7. That when we exhort you to the virtue of such persons, and we say to every one of you, ‘Imitate Paul, emulate Peter’, you may not, on account of the surpassing character of their good works, slothfully shrink from such an imitation of them, as thinking them to have been partakers of a different nature.
8. That when it is necessary to call any blessed, or the opposite, we may learn whom we ought to account happy, and whom unhappy and wretched.

What Do the Scriptures Say?

Let us review what the Scriptures have to say about the suffering of the righteous. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament address how blessed of God it is to voluntarily suffer for His Name’s sake. The Scriptures promise huge rewards for doing so! The rewards are so huge that the saints actually rejoice when they are given the opportunity to suffer for His Name’s sake.

²⁹⁰ John Chrysostom, Homilies on the Statues, I, 14.

From the Scriptures, suffering is not an option; it will happen in some form, and we need to be ready to accept whatever form it takes. Jesus spoke to His disciples many times about taking up their Cross in following Him, and in losing their life for His Name's sake. We will explore how the Church Fathers have interpreted Jesus' words in how they apply to us. Some quotes from the Scriptures:

Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? The Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works' (Matthew 16:24-27).

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great *is* your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you (Matthew 5:10-12).

Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master'. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also (John 15:20).

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world (John 16:33).

The Apostles departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name (Acts 5:41).

I will show Paul how many things he must suffer for My name's sake (Acts 9:16).

If children, then heirs -- heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us (Romans 8:17-18).

For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake (Philippians 1:29)

I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church (Colossians 1:24)

This is clear evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer; since *it is* a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you (2 Thessalonians 1:5-6).

Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution (2 Timothy 3:12).

By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin (Hebrews 11:24)

My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end *intended by* the Lord -- that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful. But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your "Yes," be "Yes," and *your* "No," "No," lest you fall into judgment. Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms (James 5:10-13).

What credit *is it* if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this *is* commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps (1 Peter 2:20-21).

If you should suffer for righteousness' sake, *you are* blessed. And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled. But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. For *it is* better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit (1 Peter 3:14-18).

Paul stated, "I sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith, that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know" (1 Thessalonians 3:2-4). John Chrysostom zeroed in²⁹¹ on Paul's words "We are appointed to this!" We are appointed for affliction, but we sometimes act like we are appointed for an easy and carefree life. The more we have suffered for Christ's sake, the more we will shine in His Presence.

"Let us hear who have ears to hear. The Christian is appointed to this. Concerning all the faithful is this said, 'We are appointed to this!' Yet we, as if we were appointed for ease, think it strange if we suffer anything; and yet what reasons have we for thinking that this is anything strange? 'For no season of affliction or temptation has overtaken us, but what is common to man' (1 Corinthians 10:13). It is a fit season for us to say, 'We have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin' (Hebrews 12:4). Or rather, this is not seasonable for us to say. Instead it might be said, 'We have not yet despised riches'. To them these words were said with reason, when they had lost all their own possessions; but this is said to those who retain theirs. Who has been robbed of his riches for Christ's sake? Who has been beaten? Who has been insulted, even in words, I mean? What have we to boast of? What confidences have we to say anything? So many things Christ suffered for us when we were enemies. What can we show that we have suffered for Him? We have suffered nothing, but we

²⁹¹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Thessalonians, III, Moral.

have received infinite good things from Him. How shall we have confidence in that Day? We know that the soldier, when he can show numberless wounds and scars, will then be able to shine in the presence of the king? But if he has no good action to show, though he may have done no harm, he will take rank among the least.”

Christ’s Sufferings as a Model

Immediately following Peter’s confession, “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God!” Jesus began to introduce His disciples to the notion of suffering on their part. When Peter tried to dissuade Jesus from suffering, Jesus called that the work of Satan.

“From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, ‘Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!’ But He turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men’. Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it’” (Matthew 16:21-25).

Irenaeus of Lyons, who lived through the intense persecution of Marcus Aurelius, stated²⁹² that persecution of the followers of Christ is the normal mode of the Christian life. This is something we cannot shrink from and still call ourselves Christians.

“Jesus did not say to take up our Cross to acknowledge the cross as some vague general thing, but with respect to the suffering which He Himself underwent, and that His disciples should endure. He implied that His disciples must suffer for His sake. He implied this also when He said to the Jews, ‘Therefore I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify’ (Matthew 23:34). To the disciples He said, ‘You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake; they shall scourge some of you, and slay you, and persecute you from city to city’ (Matthew 10:17-23). He knew both those who would suffer persecution, and He knew those who would be scourged and slain because of Him. He did not speak of any other cross, but of the suffering which He would Himself undergo first, and His disciples afterwards. For this purpose did He give them this exhortation: ‘Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell’ (Matthew 10:28). Thus He exhorted them to hold fast those professions of faith which they had made in reference to Him. He promised to confess before His Father those who would confess His name before men; but He declared that He would deny those who would deny Him, and would be ashamed of those who would be ashamed to confess Him. Some have expressed rashness, pouring contempt on the martyrs, berating those who are slain on account of the confession of the Lord, and who suffer all things predicted by the Lord. Those

²⁹² Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies, III, xviii, 4-5.

who strive to follow the footprints of the Lord's passion, having become martyrs of the suffering One; these we enroll with the martyrs themselves. When inquisition is made for their blood (Psalm 9:12 LXX), and they shall attain glory, then all who have cast a slur on their martyrdom shall be confounded by Christ. Jesus exclaimed at the cross, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do' (Luke 23:34); the long-suffering, patience, compassion, and goodness of Christ are exhibited, since He both suffered, and did Himself acquit those who had maltreated Him. The Word of God said to us, 'Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you' (Matthew 5:44); Himself did this very thing on the cross, loving the human race to such a degree, that He even prayed for those putting Him to death."

Paul stated, "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Hebrews 2:10). John Chrysostom noted²⁹³ that the "Captain", Who is Jesus, leads by example in suffering. For Him to suffer as He did was a far greater thing than His creating the world out of nothing. By this He showed us that just as He was made perfect through suffering, so we will also. Being "made perfect" refers to the giving up of His life for our salvation, the One for the many.

"'The Captain of their salvation', refers to 'the Cause of their salvation'. Notice how great is the space between Him and us! He is a Son, and we are sons; but He saves, and we are saved. Notice how He both brings us together and then separates us. 'Bringing many sons to glory' (Hebrews 2:10), where he brings us together; 'the Captain of their salvation', where he separates. 'To make perfect through sufferings' is a perfecting, and a cause of salvation. Notice that to suffer affliction is not the portion of those who are utterly forsaken; it was by this that God first honored His Son by leading Him through sufferings! Truly His taking flesh to suffer what He did suffer is a far greater thing than making the world, and creating it out of nothing. This is a token of His loving-kindness, and Paul points this out. 'He raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus'" (Ephesians 2:6-7).

"'It was fitting for Him, for whom *are* all things and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering' (Hebrews 2:10). He means that it became Him who takes tender care, and brought all things into being, to give up the Son for the salvation of the rest, the One for the many. However, the way he expressed himself is, 'to make perfect through sufferings', showing that the suffering for anyone not only profits 'him', but he himself also becomes more glorious and more perfect."

Chrysostom also marveled²⁹⁴ at the Apostles, how Jesus warned them that the whole

²⁹³ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Hebrews, IV, 4.

²⁹⁴ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XXXIII, 4.

world would be armed against them, but they didn't leave. Instead they realized that they would need to suffer for their Lord as they saw Him suffer for them.

“Jesus prepared His followers to be vigilant, assigning to them to suffer wrong, and permitting it to be inflicted on others. He taught them the victory is in suffering evil, and that His glorious trophies are thereby set up. He didn't say at all, ‘Fight and resist those that bother you’, but only, ‘You shall suffer the utmost evils’ (Matthew 10:16-23). How great is the power of Him that speaks! How great the self-command of them that listen! We have great cause to marvel, how they did not immediately leave Him on hearing these things, apt as they were to be startled at every sound, and who had never gone further than the Lake of Gennesaret, around which they used to fish. How is it that they did not reflect, and say to themselves, ‘Where after all this are we to flee? The courts of justice are against us; the kings, the governors, the synagogues of the Jews, the nations of the Gentiles, the rulers, and the ruled are against us’. By saying this He not only forewarned them of Palestine, and the evils there, but made known also the wars throughout the world, saying, ‘You shall be brought before kings and governors’; signifying that to the Gentiles also He was to send them as heralds. ‘You have made the world as our enemy; You have armed against us all them that dwell on the earth, peoples, tyrants, kings’”.

The Sufferings of Job

The sufferings of the Patriarch Job are often used as a model of how the people of God should approach hardship. All suffering has its origin with the forces of evil, and this is plainly apparent with Job. As Job suffered, he had no idea why he had been inflicted with so much evil all of a sudden. We may feel the same way, and we can greatly benefit from a careful study of the life of Job.

Job was a descendant of Esau who lived during the years that Israel was in Egypt. His ordeals began with the Lord pointing out to Satan that Job was unique on the earth “a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil” (Job 1:8). Job even offered prayers and offerings for his ten children consecrating them just in case they had sinned in their heart (Job 1:6). Satan felt that if Job were poor and destitute, Job would curse God to His face (Job 1:11). So the Lord allowed Satan to send several “messengers” (2 Corinthians 12:7) his way.

First the Sabeans attacked and took all Job's oxen and donkeys, killing Job's herdsmen in the process (Job 1:14-15). Second, “the fire of God” fell from heaven and burned up all the sheep, killing the shepherds with the sheep (Job 1:16). Third, the Chaldean raiders came and took all Job's camels, killing the keepers who were defending. Lastly, while Job's children were having a feast at the house of the oldest son “on his day” (probably his birthday, Job 1:4) a great wind came from across the wilderness, collapsing the house on top of them and killing them all (Job 1:18-19). Thus these messengers were two personal ones (the Sabeans and the Chaldeans) and two miraculous ones (the fire of God and the great wind). Today's insurance industry would refer to these last two as “acts of God” even though their source is an act of Satan.

John Chrysostom noted²⁹⁵ how excruciating it was for Job when his calamities came. If we can imitate Job when similar things happen to us, God will be merciful to us and defend us, and the Devil will leave us alone.

“If we have a sick son we constantly attend him. If he dies, we are there to hear him uttering his last words, and stand beside him while he draws his last breath and closes his eyes. However, Job did not see his ten children breathing their last gasp, but the house became the common grave of them all (Job 1:18-19). On the same table brains and blood were poured out, pieces of wood, tiles, dust, and fragments of flesh; all these things were mingled together. Nevertheless after such great calamities Job was not insolent, ‘The Lord gave, the Lord has taken away: as it seemed good to the Lord, so has it come to pass; blessed be the name of the Lord’ (Job 1:21). Let us talk like this also after every event that befalls us; whether it is loss of property, infirmity of body, insult, false accusation or any other form of evil incident to mankind. If we practice this spiritual wisdom, we shall never experience any evil, even if we undergo countless sufferings, but the gain will be greater than the loss; the good things will exceed the evil. By these words you will cause God to be merciful to you, and He will defend you against the tyranny of Satan. As soon as your tongue has uttered these words the Devil leaves you. When he has departed, the cloud of dejection also is dispelled and the thoughts which afflict us hurry off in company with him. In addition to all this we will win all manner of blessings both here and in Heaven.”

Job’s response to all this was to prepare himself to worship the Lord saying, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb and naked I shall return there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the Name of the Lord” (Job 1:21). Meanwhile, the Lord pointed out to Satan that Job held fast to his integrity “even though you incited Me against him to ruin him without cause” (Job 2:3). Satan replied that if Job were plagued with diseases on his bone and his flesh, he would curse God to His face (Job 2:5). So the Lord allowed Satan to send more “messengers” to Job.

The next “messenger from Satan” was a physical one: “severe boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head” (Job 2:7). Now destitute and unable to afford any medical attention, Job’s only medical alternative was scrapping the pus off his skin with a piece of broken pottery. Job was now completely disfigured by these diseases, and his wife was no comfort at all. “When much time had passed, Job’s wife said to him, ‘How long will you hold out, saying, “Behold, I wait yet a little while, expecting the hope of my deliverance?” For, look, your memorial is abolished from the earth, *even thy* sons and daughters, the pangs and pains of my womb which I bore in vain with sorrows. You yourself sit down to spend the nights in the open air among the corruption of worms, and I am a wanderer and a servant from place to place and house to house, waiting for the setting of the sun, that I may rest from my labors and my pangs which now beset me. Just say some word against the Lord, and die!’” (Job 2:9 LXX). When three of his friends came to see him after hearing of his adversity, they didn’t even recognize him at first because of his disfigurement. When they did, they openly wept (Job 2:11-12). Following this, they sat down with him for seven days without saying a word, for they saw

²⁹⁵ John Chrysostom, Homily on the Paralytic Let Down Through the Roof, 8.

that his pain was very great (Job 2:13). For Job, it was so bad he wished he had never been born (Job 3:1).

Following this came the last messenger: the inquisition. Job's three friends thought that Job had some secret sin that brought all this evil down on his own head. Eliphaz the Temanite suggested that those who plow iniquity and sow trouble harvest it. The innocent and upright don't perish for no reason (Job 4:7-8). Bilhad the Shuhite suggested that perhaps Job's sons had sinned and had gotten their just reward. If Job, himself were without guilt, surely God would have, by now, restored his righteous estate. After all, God will not reject a man of integrity nor will He support evil doers (Job 8:4, 6, 20). Job claimed he was innocent. Zephaniah the Naamathite suggested that the Lord knows false men without investigating their circumstances. "If you would direct your heart right and spread out your hand to Him (that is, in prayer); if iniquity is in your hand, put it far away and do not let wickedness dwell in your tents (Job 11:4, 11-14). The effect of all this on Job was that "the tents of the destroyers prosper while the just and blameless man is a joke (Job 12:4, 6).

This last messenger from Satan was perhaps the cruelest and the most difficult to deal with. After all, there was ample evidence all around Job that it was true! Chrysostom commented²⁹⁶ that "the reproaches of Job's friends appeared more grievous than the worms and the sores. There is nothing more intolerable to those in affliction than a word capable of stinging the soul". This is exactly what the "messengers of Satan" seek to convince us of also: that God is not faithful, that He doesn't care about us and that we should only trust in what we can see.

Paul reminds us that the usefulness of our "thorns in the flesh" or "messengers of Satan" are that we don't get exalted above measure (2 Corinthians 12:7). After all, we are to bear our crosses as our Lord bore His (Mark 8:34-37), and as He humbled Himself to death on the Cross, so should we. The Lord told Paul, and He tells us, "My grace is sufficient for you for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9). Going through all he went through, it's hard to imagine the Lord's grace being sufficient for Job; but it was. Paul also said, "God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

The Lord saw His own Cross (which itself was a messenger of Satan) as His Glory (John 12:23). Job wasn't aware of what was going on in heaven between the Lord and Satan, but eventually He realized that his ordeal was for his glory also. And as a result, Job was rewarded both in this life and in the age to come (Job 42:10-17, James 5:11).

John Chrysostom compared²⁹⁷ the sufferings of Job to the homeless poor of his day; Job was a lot worse off. The worst factor was that Job was conscious of no reason for his calamity, and it seemed that God was punishing him for being the most righteous man on earth (Job 1:8, 2:3). His body was rotting away and he was in constant pain as he sat on the dunghill; yet he was very humble when God informed him about what had happened.

"Poverty, and the pain which arises from it, seems to be the most unendurable of all sufferings. Everywhere all men bewail this. Job was poorer

²⁹⁶ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Corinthians, XII, 3.

²⁹⁷ John Chrysostom, Against Those Who Say that Demons Govern Human Affairs, III, 5.

than the outcasts²⁹⁸ at the baths, and those who sleep in the ashes of the furnace, poorer in fact than all men. These have one ragged garment, but he sat naked; he had only the garment which nature supplies, and this the Devil destroyed with a distressing kind of decay. These poor folk are at least under the roof of the porches at the baths as a shelter, but Job passed his nights in the open air. What is still greater, the poor are conscious of many terrible evils within themselves, but Job was conscious of no charges against himself. We notice this in each of the things that happened to him, a thing which caused him greater pain, and produced more perplexity; the ignorance of the reason of what took place. The outcasts have many things with which to reproach themselves, and this contributes no little to consolation in calamity; to be conscious in oneself of being punished justly. But Job was deprived of this consolation; he exhibited a conversation full of virtue, and endured the fate of those who had dared to do extreme wickedness.”

“Job overcame extreme poverty, in comparison with which it is impossible to find anyone. What could be poorer than the naked who has not even a roof over him? He did not even enjoy the bare ground, but he sat on the dunghill. Whenever we see ourselves come to poverty, consider the suffering of the just one, and immediately we shall rise up, and shake off every thought of despondency. This one calamity therefore seems to men to be the model of all sufferings together. Who was ever so disabled? Who endured such disease? Who saw anyone else receive so great an affliction? No one! Little by little his body was wasted, and a stream of worms on every side issued from his limbs; the running was constant. The evil smell which surrounded him was strong; his body was being destroyed little by little, decaying with such putrefaction, it used to make food distasteful so that he was not able to enjoy the nourishment which was given to him. He said, ‘I perceive my food as the smell of a lion *to be* loathsome’ (Job 6:7 LXX). Whenever we fall into weakness, remember Job’s body and saintly flesh. It was saintly and pure, even when it had so many wounds. Job was especially troubled and disturbed to think that the just God, who had in every way been served by him, was at war with him. He was not able to find any reasonable pretext for what took place; when at least he afterwards learned the cause, notice what piety he showed. God said to him, ‘Do you think that I have dealt with you in any other way, than that you might appear to be righteous?’ (Job 40:8 LXX). Conscious-stricken Job said, ‘I will lay my hand upon my mouth. I have spoken once; but I will not do so a second time’ (Job 40:4-5 LXX), and again ‘I have heard the report of You by the ear before; but now my eye has seen You. Therefore, I have counted myself vile, and have fainted; I esteem myself dust and ashes’” (Job 42:5-6 LXX).

John Chrysostom stated²⁹⁹ that no one can really harm us, since they need the permission of the Lord to even attempt this. The demons couldn’t harm Job, even with a herculean effort. The only way we are harmed is by our own hands.

“Satan, who is full of such great malice, set all his instruments in motion, discharged all his weapons, and poured out all the evils incident to man in a

²⁹⁸ The public baths were heated with a furnace; the 4th century homeless hung out around the baths for warmth and shelter.

²⁹⁹ John Chrysostom, Treatise to Prove that No One Can Harm the Man Who Does not Injure Himself, 3, 5, 17.

superlative degree upon the family and the person of that righteous man Job. But nevertheless, he did him no injury, but rather profited him. How shall anyone be able to accuse any man saying that they have suffered injury at his hands? The only way we are injured is by our own hands.”

“Can someone, then, harm the moral condition of the soul? If a man suffers that kind of damage, the damage does not come from another but proceeds from within, and from the man himself. How so? When anyone, who is beaten by another, deprived of his goods, or given some other grievous insult, utters a blasphemous word, he certainly sustains great damage from this. Nevertheless this does not proceed from him who has inflicted the insult, but from the man’s own littleness of soul. No man, if he were infinitely wicked, could attack anyone more wickedly or more bitterly than Satan, that revengeful demon. Yet this cruel demon didn’t have power to upset or overthrow Job, who lived before the Law³⁰⁰, and before the time of grace. Although he discharged so many and such bitter weapons against Job from all quarters, Job’s force of nobility of soul prevailed”

“If anyone is harmed and injured he certainly suffers this at his own hands, not at the hands of others, even if there are countless multitudes injuring and insulting him. If he does not suffer injury at his own hands, all the creatures that inhabit the earth and sea, if they combined to attack him, would not be able to hurt one who is vigilant and sober in the Lord.”

Suffering on Behalf of Christ

Why do we need to suffer on behalf of Christ? From the Scriptures, the issue is that two kingdoms are in conflict: the Kingdom of God versus the kingdoms of this world. Some think that it is merely a case of good versus evil, but it is more than just this. We are given the choice of which we give our allegiance to; if we choose the Kingdom of God, the kingdoms of this world attempt to change our mind.

The Scriptures state, “The Apostles departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name (Acts 5:41). Jesus said, “I will show Paul how many things he must suffer for My name's sake” (Acts 9:16). Paul said, “For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake” (Philippians 1:29). And also, “I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church” (Colossians 1:24).

John Chrysostom stated³⁰¹ that it is a transcendent honor that surpasses all things to suffer on behalf of Christ. It is better to be suffering for Christ than to be standing in His Presence around the Throne of God. This Christ Himself did and this the Apostle Paul did. It is this perspective that we today have a very difficult time grasping.

“I am ashamed to compare earthly riches and golden attire to Paul’s bonds. Speaking of heavenly glories, this alone is a great reward: to suffer these hardships for the sake of the Beloved. They that love are more delighted to suffer

³⁰⁰ Job lived prior to Moses during the 430 years when Israel was in Egypt.

³⁰¹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Ephesians, VIII, vv. 1-2.

for, than to be honored by those they love. To fully understand these things belongs to the holy company of the Apostles and to them alone. Listen to what Luke said, 'They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name' (Acts 5:41). To all others it seems to be foolishness, that to suffer dishonor is to be counted worthy. But to those that understand the love of Christ, this is of all things the most blessed. Were any to offer me my choice, the whole Heaven or Paul's chain, that chain I would prefer. Were any to ask whether he should place me on high with the Angels or with Paul in his bonds, the prison I would choose. Were any about to change me into one of those powers that are in Heaven round about the throne, or into such a prisoner as this, such a prisoner I would choose to be. Nothing is more blessed than that chain. I wish that I could be at this moment in that very spot, for Paul's chains are said to be still in existence, to behold and admire those men, for their love of Christ. Would that I could behold the chains, at which the devils fear and tremble, but which Angels reverence. Nothing is nobler than to suffer any evil for Christ's sake. I don't count Paul as happy when he was 'caught up to Paradise' (2 Corinthians 12:4), as when he was cast into the dungeon. I don't count him as happy because he heard 'inexpressible words', as when he endured those bonds. I don't count him as happy because he was 'caught up into the Third Heaven' (2 Corinthians 12:2), as I count him happy for those bonds' sake. That the bonds are greater than those visions, listen to how he himself knew this. He didn't say, I who 'heard inexpressible words', beseech you; but 'I, the prisoner³⁰² in the Lord, beseech you' (Ephesians 4:1). He doesn't inscribe this in all his Epistles because he wasn't always in prison. I consider it more desirable to suffer evil for Christ's sake, than to receive honor at Christ's hands. This is transcendent honor; this is glory that surpasses all things. If He Himself who became a servant for my sake, and 'made Himself of no reputation' (Philippians 2:7), yet didn't think Himself so truly in glory, as when He was crucified for my sake, what ought not I to endure? Listen to His own words: 'Father, Glorify Your Son' (John 17:1). What is this You are saying? You are being led to the cross with thieves and grave-robbers; You endure the death of the accursed; You are about to be spit on and punched; and You call this glory? Yes, He said, for I suffer these things for My beloved ones, and I count them true glory. If He who loved the miserable and wretched calls this glory, not to be on His Father's throne, but in dishonor, -- if this was His glory, and if this He set before the other, much more ought I to regard these things as glory."

Cyprian of Carthage noted³⁰³ that even babies can suffer for Christ's sake. This illustrates that those suffering for Christ are innocent.

"The nativity of Christ witnessed the martyrdom of infants³⁰⁴, so that they who were two years old and under were slain for His Name's sake (Matthew 2:16-18). An age not yet fit for battle appeared fit for the crown. That it might be

³⁰² See also Ephesians 3:1, 2 Timothy 1:8, Philemon 1:1. Paul is in essence saying that he counts the prison experience as greater than hearing the inexpressible words. This is quite a statement!

³⁰³ Cyprian of Carthage, Epistle to the People of Thibaris, LV, 6.

³⁰⁴ From Nicholai Velimirovic, The Prologue from Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, December 29, Herod slew 14,000 babies in his effort to kill the infant Jesus.

clear that those who are slain for Christ's sake are innocent, innocent infancy was put to death for His Name's sake. No one is free from the peril of persecution, when even these infants accomplished martyrdom. But how serious is the case of a Christian man, if he, a servant, is unwilling to suffer, when his Master first suffered. We should be unwilling to suffer for our own sins, when He who had no sin of His own suffered for us! The Son of God suffered that He might make us sons of God; we need to be willing to suffer that we may continue to be a son of God!"

Chrysostom took a close look³⁰⁵ at the words of Christ and the things the Apostles did regarding suffering. They rejoiced in terrible suffering! Today we would not think about rejoicing and throwing a party after we had been badly beaten; but that's what they did! This is a dramatically different mindset than we have today!

"Consider a man who has nothing for which to condemn himself, but cherishes a good conscience, and yearns after the future state, and the fulfillment of those good hopes. What will be able to throw such a person into sadness? Death? The expectation of this is so far from grieving him, that it makes him more joyful; for he knows that the arrival of death is a release from labor, and a speeding toward the crowns and rewards laid up for those who have contended in the race of piety and virtue. How about the untimely end of his children? No, he will also bear this nobly, and will take up the words of Job, 'The Lord has taken away: as it seemed good to the Lord, so has it come to pass; blessed be the name of the Lord' (Job 1:21). Much less can the loss of money, dishonor, reproaches, or false accusations at any time affect a soul so great and noble! Not even anguish of body; the Apostles were scourged, yet they were not made sad. Instead of being made sad, they considered their scourging, as a ground of additional pleasure. 'They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name' (Acts 5:41). Did any person insult and revile such a one? He was taught by Christ to rejoice in these reviling. 'Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you' (Matthew 5:11-12). But suppose a man has fallen into disease? Well, he has heard another admonishing, and saying, 'In disease and poverty trust in Him; for gold is tested in the fire, and acceptable men are tested in the furnace of humiliation'" (Ecclesiasticus 2:4-5 LXX).

"Again, Christ speaks: 'Blessed are they that mourn; blessed are the humble; blessed are the meek; blessed are the peacemakers; blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake' (Matthew 5:3-10). Notice how the divine laws everywhere pronounce blessed none of the rich, the well-born, or the possessors of glory, but the man who has gotten hold of virtue. What is required of us is, that in everything we do or suffer, the fear of God should be the foundation. If you implant this as the root, not merely will ease, honor, glory and attention, produce fruit that will be pleasurable to you; but hostilities also, slander, contempt, disgrace, torments, and all things without exception. Just as the roots

³⁰⁵ John Chrysostom, Homilies on the Statues, XVIII, 7, 10.

of trees are bitter in themselves, and yet produce our sweetest fruits, so godly sorrow will bring us an abundant pleasure. They know who have often prayed with anguish and shed tears, what gladness they have reaped; how they purged the conscience; how they rose up with favorable hopes! It is not the nature of the things, but our disposition which tends to make us sad or joyful. If we can render our disposition such as it ought to be, we shall have a pledge for all gladness. With the body, it is not so much the nature of the air, or the things it meets outside the body, but its own internal condition, that either injures or assists it; so also it is in the case of the soul, and much more so. Paul, when he had endured innumerable evils -- ship-wrecks, wars, persecutions, plots, the assaults of robbers, and things too numerous to be recounted -- was so far from grieving or being discontented, that he gloried and rejoiced. He said, 'I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the Church' (Colossians 1:24). Again: 'And not only *that*, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance' (Romans 5:3). Now, glorying signifies an extension of pleasure."

The Scripture nowhere says that the Apostles returned rejoicing because they had done miracles, but it does say that they rejoiced that 'they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name' (Acts 5:41). This they were taught by Christ, 'Do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven' (Luke 10:20). For the joy indeed is this, to suffer anything for Christ's sake.

Chrysostom noted³⁰⁶ that Christ doesn't deliver us from suffering, but He brings us to the point where we are above it and despise it. We learn to look down on the suffering the Demons put in our path with contempt and scorn, understanding God's much greater purpose. God is teaching us to look with scorn on those arrows of the devil -- in whatever form they come. If we think of very strong soldiers who in spite of the tortures they might be experiencing laugh with contempt at their torturers, we understand the bigger picture.

"Notice how Christ does not promise us deliverance from death, but permits us to die, granting us more than if He had not allowed us to suffer it? Deliverance from death is not near so great as persuading men to despise death. He does not push them into dangers, but sets them above dangers, and in a short sentence fixes in their mind the doctrines that relate to the immortality of the soul. He comforts them also by other considerations."

"In order that we don't think that when killed and butchered, we are men forsaken by God to suffer this, He introduced again the argument of God's providence, 'Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered' (Matthew 10:29-30). What is more common than sparrows? Not even these shall be taken without God's knowledge; nothing that is done is hid from Him. If then He is not ignorant of anything that happens to us, and loves us more truly than a father, and so loves us as to have numbered our hairs; we ought not to be afraid. He said this not that God numbers our hairs, but that He

³⁰⁶ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XXXIV, 2.

might indicate His perfect knowledge, and His great providence over us. If therefore He knows all the things that are done, and is willing and able to save you, whatever you may have to suffer, think not that as persons forsaken you suffer. It is not His will to deliver you from the terrors, but to persuade you to despise them, since this is, more than anything, deliverance from the terrors.”

Chrysostom also stated³⁰⁷ that there are two meanings to being “dead with Christ”. One meaning refers to Baptism; the other refers to suffering on His behalf, which includes much patient endurance. From the contrary point of view, if we refuse to suffer and thus deny Him, He will also deny us.

“Paul said, ‘If we are died with *Him*, We shall also live with *Him*’ (2 Timothy 2:11). Shall we partake with Him in things laborious and painful; and shall we not in things beneficial? But not even a man would act thus; if one had chosen to suffer affliction and death with him, he wouldn’t refuse him a share in his rest, when he had attained it. But how are we ‘dead with Him?’ This death he means both of that in the Laver of Baptism and that in sufferings. Paul speaks about this in several places: ‘Carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus’ (2 Corinthians 4:10); and ‘We were buried with Him through baptism into death’; and ‘Our old man was crucified with Him’; and ‘We have been united together in the likeness of His death’ (Romans 6:4-6). But he also speaks here of death by trials, and that more especially, for he was also suffering trials when he wrote it. ‘If we have suffered death on His account, shall we not live on His account? This is not to be doubted. ‘If we died with Him, we shall also live with Him. If we endure, we shall also reign with Him,’ (2 Timothy 2:11-12). Not absolutely, we shall reign, but ‘if we suffer’; it is not enough to die once, (Paul died daily,) but there was need of much patient endurance. Timothy especially had need of it. Tell me not, he says, of your first sufferings, but that you continue to suffer.”

“Then on the other side he exhorts Timothy, not from the good, but from the evil. If wicked men were to partake of the same things, this would be no consolation. If having endured they were to reign with Him, this would be fine; but if they didn’t endure, and they were to suffer no worse evil, this would not be enough to affect most men with concern. Therefore he speaks of something more dreadful still. If we deny Him, He will also deny us. So then there is retribution not of good things only, but of the contrary. Consider what it is probable that he will suffer, who is denied in that kingdom. ‘Whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven’ (Matthew 10:33). The retribution is not equal, though it seems so expressed. For we who deny Him are men, but He who denies us is God; and how great is the distance between God and man!”

Chrysostom further stated³⁰⁸ that someone who curses his persecutor is not pleased to suffer for Christ. By agreeing to suffer for Christ, however, we testify that we are traveling to another life.

³⁰⁷ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Timothy, V, vv. 11-14.

³⁰⁸ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans, XXII, v. 14..

“He that curses his persecutor shows that he is not much pleased at suffering this for Christ; he that blesses shows the greatness of his love. Do not abuse him, that you yourself may gain the greater reward. Christ Himself said, ‘Rejoice when men say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake’ (Matthew 5:11). For this reason the Apostles returned with joy not from having been evil spoken of only, but also at having been scourged (Acts 5:40-41). There will be another gain, and that no small one, that you will make, instructing your adversaries by your actions that you are traveling to another life. If he sees you joyous, and elevated, from suffering evil, he will see clearly from the actions that you have other hopes greater than those of this life.”

Paul said, “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ” (2 Corinthians 1:3-5). Paul also said, “I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the Church” (Colossians 1:24). Chrysostom noted³⁰⁹ that Jesus had said, “He who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do³¹⁰, because I go to My Father” (John 14:12). Therefore Chrysostom concluded that the people of God will go through greater sufferings³¹¹ than Christ did as well as perform greater miracles than He did. This is what Paul meant by “our comfort abounds”.

“What is equal to being scourged for Christ’s sake and holding conversation with God? We are more than match for all things; we gain the better of those who cast us out; we are unconquered by the whole world; and we expect hereafter such good things ‘as eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man!’ (1 Corinthians 2:9). What is equal to suffering affliction for godliness’ sake? We receive infinite consolations from God; we are rescued from sins so great and counted worthy of the Spirit, being sanctified and justified; and we regard no man with fear and trembling, and in peril itself we outshine everyone.”

Suffering during Sickness Is Also Suffering for Christ

Our suffering for Christ takes many forms, and some of these forms may go unnoticed. For example, someone who is sick for a long time, and often in pain, yet who is cheerful and willing to accept his/her lot, is very much like the Patriarch Job. We shouldn’t underestimate what we are dealing with! In everything we should give glory to God (1 Corinthians 10:31, 2 Corinthians 4:15, Philippians 2:11).

³⁰⁹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Corinthians, I, 4.

³¹⁰ People took handkerchiefs or aprons from Paul to heal the sick (Acts 19:12). People came from all over Judea to be healed by Peter’s shadow (Acts 5:15). These works are often spoken of as “greater than those of Christ”.

³¹¹ Paul’s sufferings (2 Corinthians 11:24-28) are sometimes compared to those of Christ as greater than Christ’s.

John Chrysostom stated³¹² that those who are sick and bear it nobly with thanks to God shall receive the same reward as the Apostles who were scourged for His Name's sake. If we love Him sincerely, even the feebleness and pain of sickness will not hinder us.

Call to mind the Apostles; they rejoiced at being scourged, at being driven about and undergoing numberless sufferings, because they were 'counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name' (Acts 5:41). If we are sick, bear it nobly, and thank God for it, we shall receive the same reward as them. But how, when in feebleness and pain, are we to be able to feel grateful to the Lord? We will if we love Him sincerely. If the Three Children who were thrown into the furnace, and others who were in prisons, and in countless other evils, ceased not to give thanks, much more will they who are in a state of disease, be able to do this. For there is not, assuredly there is not, anything which vehement desire does not get the better of. When the desire is that of God, it is higher than anything, and neither fire, nor the sword, nor poverty, nor infirmity, nor death, nor anything else of the kind appears dreadful to one who has gotten this love. But scorning them all, he will fly to heaven, and will have affections no way inferior to those of its inhabitants, seeing nothing else, neither heaven, nor earth, nor sea, but gazing only at the one Beauty of that glory. Neither the vexations of this life present will depress him, nor the things which are attractive and attended with pleasure elate him or puff him up. Let us then love with this love, for there is not anything equal unto it, both for the sake of things present and for the sake of things to come. Or rather, more than for these, for the nature of the love itself!

Chrysostom wrote³¹³ to Olympias³¹⁴, a young widow, to encourage her in her sickness. She may wish to pray for a speedy death to end her misery, but Chrysostom likened her ordeal to that of Job. What she was doing was the greatest work she had undergone in her life!

"Nothing, Olympias, redounds so much to the credit of anyone as patient endurance in suffering. This is indeed the queen of virtues, and the perfection of crowns; and as it excels all other forms of righteousness, so this particular species of it is more glorious than the rest."

"Remember when Job was delivered over to sickness and sores; then he also longed for death, then he bewailed himself and lamented. You can understand how this kind of suffering is more severe than all others, and this form of patience the highest of all. The Devil himself is aware of this fact; when he perceived that Job remained untroubled and undismayed, he rushed to this as the greatest contest of all. He said that all the other calamities were bearable, such as loss of child, property, or anything else; this is what is meant by the expression 'Skin for skin! All that a man has he will give for his life' (Job 2:4). The deadly blow was when pain was inflicted on a man's body."

"Do not think therefore that to pray for death now is exempt from blame, but listen to the voice of Paul when he says, 'To me, to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain. I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with

³¹² John Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans, IX, v. 23.

³¹³ John Chrysostom, Letter #2 to Olympias, 2-3.

³¹⁴ Olympias was a very wealthy woman, married just two years, who decided to devote the rest of her life to helping the poor with many charitable works. Olympias was exiled shortly after Chrysostom in 408 AD for refusing to have communion with Chrysostom's enemies; and like Chrysostom, she also died in exile.

Christ, *which is* far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh *is* more needful for you' (Philippians 1:21-24). For in proportion as the strain of the affliction is increased are the garlands of victory multiplied; in proportion as the gold is heated does it become purified; the longer the merchant makes his voyage on the sea, the larger is the freight which he collects. Do not then think that the labor now allotted to you, which consists in infirmity of body, is a slight one. Rather it is higher than everything which you have undergone."

"Therefore even if you remain at home, and are set fast in bed, do not consider your life an idle one. You undergo more severe pains than those who are dragged, maltreated, and tortured by executioners, inasmuch as in this excessive infirmity of yours you have a perpetual executioner residing with you."

Chrysostom also stated³¹⁵ how it is that we must approach suffering for Christ. However we are afflicted, if we bear it patiently, give thanks, etc., like Job, we do it for Christ. If we are impatient, curse, or complain, we blaspheme.

"How can we suffer for Christ, you ask? If one accuses you falsely, not on account of Christ, yet if you bear it patiently, if you give thanks, if you pray for him, all this you do for Christ. But if you curse him, if you utter discontent, if you attempt to revenge it, though you are not able, it is not for Christ's sake; you suffer loss, and are deprived of your reward on account of your intention. We are accountable for the disposition of our own minds. For instance, great were the sufferings of Job, yet he suffered with thankfulness; and he was justified, not because he suffered, but because in suffering he endured it thankfully. Another under lighter sufferings, exclaims, is impatient, curses the whole world, and complains against God. He is condemned and sentenced, not because he suffered, but because he blasphemed. He blasphemed, not from any necessity arising from his afflictions, since if necessity arising from events were the cause, Job too must have blasphemed. Since Job, who suffered more severely, did no such thing, it did not come to pass from suffering, but from the man's weakness of purpose. We need therefore strength of soul; with it, nothing will appear grievous. But if our soul is weak, we find a grievance in everything."

The Purpose of Suffering

One of the Epistle readings for the Unmercenary Healers³¹⁶ is 2 Timothy 2:1-10. Paul penned his last words before his martyrdom in encouraging Timothy to continue the Apostolic work that he was called to. Paul wrote that he himself had "finished the race" and that "his departure (i.e. martyrdom) was at hand" (2 Timothy 4:6,7). Sometime earlier, Paul had established Timothy as Bishop of Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3), and his encouragements to Timothy were:

- Be strong in the Grace that is in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 2:1).
- The things you heard from me, commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also (2 Timothy 2:2).

³¹⁵ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Timothy, IX, v. 8.

³¹⁶ See the Study Mark Kern, The Unmercenary Healers, St. Athanasius Press, 2001. This Study appears on the St. Athanasius web site many times during the year at the Feast Days the various Unmercenary Healers.

- You must endure hardship as a good soldier of Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 2:3).

Why should Timothy, Paul, the Lord, the Twelve and the Unmercenary Healers have to suffer? The answer is that they do this for the sake of those who follow them in the Faith, i.e. for us of today. They help others to see what is beyond this life and what really matters.

John Chrysostom made³¹⁷ some analogies. Wounded soldiers who recover are an encouragement to their fellow soldiers; so holy men and women who bear up patiently under persecution are an encouragement to the Church.

“In war, the Captain who sees his General wounded and recovered again, is much encouraged. Thus it produces some consolation to the faithful, that the Apostle Paul should have been exposed to great suffering and not rendered weak by the utmost of them. Timothy heard that Paul, who possessed so great powers (see Acts 19:11-12), was a prisoner and afflicted, yet was not impatient or discontented on the desertion of his friends. Timothy, if ever exposed to the same sufferings himself, would not consider that it proceeded from human weakness, nor from being a disciple, nor because he was inferior to Paul, but that all this happened in the natural course of things. For if Paul endured these things, much more Timothy ought to be able to bear them.”

In this regard, the Lord had said, “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. If they have called the Master of the house ‘Beelzebub’, how much more will they call those of His household?” (Matthew 10:24)

Chrysostom added³¹⁸ that Timothy knew where the battle lines were drawn and that “we do not wrestle against flesh and blood” (Ephesians 6:12). Paul said to stand firm not to depress Timothy but to excite him.

“Be sober therefore, he means, and watch; have the Grace of the Lord cooperating with you, and aiding you in the contest; contribute your own part with much cheerfulness and resolution. When we go to watch a wrestling match today, we don’t go there in depression, but with excitement to root for our favorite contestant. In the same vein, we are all contestants in a larger wrestling match where the angels and saints are cheering for us.

Chrysostom concluded³¹⁹ with a very fitting example: a comparison of the Emperor Nero with the Apostle Paul, where it was Nero who had Paul beheaded. Even though Nero had all the power, he couldn’t stop Paul from proclaiming the Word. Nero had the entire honor from the world; Paul had none. Yet at the Second Coming of Christ, this situation will be reversed.

“Nero had the glory of this world; Paul had the dishonor of this world. Nero was a tyrant who had great success, many trophies, wealth overflowing, numerous armies, the greater part of the world in his sway, the Senate crouching to him and a splendid palace to live in. When he went out, he was arrayed in gold and precious stones and was surrounded by guards and attendants. When he sat down, he was clothed in robes of purple. He was called lord of land and sea,

³¹⁷ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Timothy, IV, vv. 1-7.

³¹⁸ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Timothy, IV, vv. 1-7.

³¹⁹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Timothy, IV, Moral.

Emperor, King and other high-sounding names. Even wise men, potentates and sovereigns trembled at him for he was said to be a cruel and violent man. He wished to be thought of as a god, and he despised both all the idols and the very God Who is over all.”

“Now in opposition to him, let us consider Paul, a Cilician, a tent-maker, a poor man, unskilled in the wisdom of Rome, knowing the Hebrew language, which was especially despised by the Italians. He was a man that often lived in hunger, often went to bed without food, a man that didn’t have clothes to put on, often in cold and nakedness (2 Corinthians 11:27). Paul was cast into prison by Nero himself, confined with robbers, impostors, grave-robbers and murderers, and scourged as a malefactor. Yet (in the 4th Century), the greater part of the world had never heard of Nero while Paul is daily celebrated among Greeks, Barbarians, Scythians and those who inhabit the extremities of the earth. No one knows where Nero’s grave³²⁰ is, while the tent-maker occupies the midst of the city³²¹ as if he were a king and living.”

“Yet let us consider what the case was when Paul was in chains, dragged bound from prison, while Nero was clothed in purple and walked out from a palace. Nero, with armies at his command, said, ‘Do not disseminate the Word of God!’ Paul said, ‘I cannot stop, the Word of God is not chained!’ (2 Timothy 2:9) Thus the Cilician, the prisoner, the poor tent-maker, who lived in hunger, despised the rich Roman emperor with all his armies. He that was in chains was a conqueror; he that was in a purple robe was conquered. A single man defeated the Emperor and his armies. The surrounding multitudes were all slaves of Nero, yet they admired not their lord but him who was superior to their lord.”

“And yet I am but praising the lion for his claws, when I ought to be speaking of his real honors. How will Paul come in shining garments with the King of Heaven? How will Nero stand then, mournful and dejected? Let us, my beloved children, be imitators of Paul, not in his faith only, but in his life, that we may attain to heavenly glory, and trample upon that glory that is here”.

Chrysostom also pointed out³²² that as Christians we conquer not by doing wrongfully, but by suffering wrongfully. This is exactly the opposite from those who overreach, and the result is that the victory is shown to be of God and not of man.

“Let us not seek victory everywhere. He that has overreached has conquered the person wronged, but with an evil victory, and one that brings destruction to him that has won it. But he that is wronged, and seems to have been conquered, if he has born it with self-command, this above all is the one that has the crown. Often to be defeated is better, and this is the best mode of victory. Whether one overreaches, smites, or envies, he that is defeated, and enters not into the conflict, this is he who has the victory.”

³²⁰ See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nero>. When Nero was about to be overthrown, he committed suicide and was buried in the Mausoleum of the Domitii Ahenobarbi, in what is now the [Villa Borghese \(Pincian Hill\)](#) area of Rome.

³²¹ See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_the_Apostle. Paul’s gravesite was in the middle of the city of Rome at the [Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls](#).

³²² John Chrysostom, [Homilies on Matthew](#), LXXXIV, 4.

“Similarly he that is dragged to martyrdom conquers by being bound, beaten, maimed and slain. What is in wars defeat, namely for the combatant to fall, this with us is victory. Nowhere do we overcome by doing wrongfully, but everywhere by suffering wrongfully. Thus the victory becomes more glorious, when we sufferers get the better of the doers. By this it is shown that the victory is of God. It has an opposite nature to outward conquest, which fact is an infallible sign of strength. Thus the rocks on the seashore, by being struck, break the waves; thus also all the saints were proclaimed, crowned, and set up their glorious trophies, winning this tranquil victory. ‘Don’t stir yourself’, He said, ‘don’t weary yourself. God has given you this might to conquer not by conflict, but by endurance alone. Don’t oppose yourself, and you have conquered; don’t fight, and you have gained the crown. Why do you disgrace yourself? Don’t allow him to say that by fighting you have got the better, but allow him to be amazed and to marvel at your invincible power; and to say to all, that even without entering into conflict you have conquered’”.

Suffering is a Result of the Fall of Adam

Where did suffering originate? The ultimate answer is that it originated in the Garden of Eden as a result of sin. Prior to that, there was no suffering; after that, there was suffering everywhere.

John Chrysostom noted³²³ when suffering first originated: with Adam’s sin. Adam thought that he could become like God; to repel this thought, God made Adam subject to suffering and disease. It was a concept Adam couldn’t understand until he was allowed by God to suffer such evil. To illustrate clearly to Adam what he brought on himself, Adam got to watch his son Abel corrupting and decaying in death before he died himself.

“Notice what manner of body God formed us with at the first, in Paradise, and survey the Man that was created at the beginning. That body was not corruptible and mortal; but like some statue of gold just brought from the furnace, that shines splendidly; it was free from all corruption. Labor did not trouble it; sweat did not deface it. Cares did not conspire against it; nor sorrows besiege it; nor was there any other affection of that kind to distress it. But man did not bear his happiness with moderation, but threw contempt on his Benefactor, and thought a deceiving demon more worthy of credit than God who cared for him. God had raised him to honor, and when he expected to become himself a God, and conceived thoughts above his proper dignity, then God humbled him by decisive acts, and made him mortal as well as corruptible. He fettered him with varied necessities not from hatred or aversion, but in care for him, and to repress at the very outset that evil and destructive pride. Instead of permitting it to proceed any further, He admonished Him by actual experience, that he was mortal and corruptible. This was to convince him that he must never again think or dream of such things as he had done. The devil’s suggestion, was, ‘You shall be as gods’ (Genesis 3:5 LXX). God desired utterly to eradicate this idea; so He made the body subject to much suffering and disease, to instruct him by its very

³²³ John Chrysostom, Homilies on the Statues, XI, 3.

nature that he must never again entertain such a thought. That this is true is really most evident from what befell him; for after such an expectation, he was condemned to this punishment. Consider also with me the wisdom of God in this matter. God did not allow him to be the first to die, but permitted his son to suffer death first. Seeing before his eyes the body corrupting and decaying, he might receive a striking lesson of wisdom from that spectacle; Adam learned what had come to pass, and was duly chastened before he departed.”

Cyprian of Carthage, writing from exile to prisoners facing martyrdom, encouraged³²⁴ them to look forward to their reward for confessing their Faith. This has happened to all the righteous since the beginning of the world and no one shall attain to His Kingdom but those who have followed Him in His own way.

“Don’t let anything be resolved in your hearts and minds besides the divine precepts and heavenly commands, with which the Holy Spirit has animated you to the endurance of suffering. Let no one think of death, but of immortality; not of temporary punishment, but of eternal glory; since it is written, ‘Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints’ (Psalm 116:15). Again, ‘Sacrifice to God is a broken spirit: a broken and humbled heart God will not despise’ (Psalm 51:17 LXX). And again, the sacred Scripture³²⁵ speaks of the tortures which consecrate God’s martyrs, and sanctify them in the trial of suffering: ‘Though in the sight of men they were punished, their hope is full of immortality. Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good, because God tested them and found them worthy of Himself; like gold in the furnace He tried them, and like a sacrificial burnt offering He accepted them. In the time of their visitation they will shine forth, and will run like sparks through the stubble. They will govern nations and rule over peoples, and the Lord will reign over them forever’ (Wisdom 3:4-8 LXX). When we reflect that we shall judge and reign with Christ the Lord, we need to exult and tread under foot present sufferings, in the joy of what is to come. We know that from the beginning of the world it has been so appointed that righteousness should suffer in the conflict of the world. Since in the beginning, even at the first, the righteous Abel was slain, and thereafter all righteous men, prophets, and apostles who were sent. To all of whom the Lord has appointed an example, teaching that none shall attain to His kingdom but those who have followed Him in His own way, saying, ‘He that loves his life in this world shall lose it; and he that hates his life in this world shall keep it for eternal life’” (John 12:25).

The Forgiveness of Our Sins

Suffering in this life can also work toward the forgiveness of our sins. John Chrysostom stated³²⁶ that we are not really injured by any of our sufferings. Unjust suffering (under which many illnesses fall) can either work toward forgiveness of our sins or toward greater rewards.

³²⁴ Cyprian of Carthage, Epistle to Sergius, Rogatianus, et al, LXXX, 2.

³²⁵ The Early Church used the Septuagint (Greek or LXX) translation of the Old Testament, which included what is now called the Apocryphal Books of the Old Testament.

³²⁶ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, IX, 2.

“Although there are many that injure, yet is there not so much as one that is injured. I mean, that what we may suffer unjustly from anyone, it tells either to the doing away of our sins, God so putting that wrong to our account; or to the recompense of rewards.”

“Let us conduct our argument in the way of illustration. Suppose a certain servant who owes much money to his master; suppose also that this servant has been despitefully used by unjust men, and robbed of some of his goods. If then the master, in whose power it was to stop the plunderer, instead of restoring that same property, should reckon what was taken away towards what was owed him by his servant, is the servant then injured? By no means! But what if he should repay him even more? Has he not then even gained more than he has lost? Every one, I suppose, perceives this.”

“Now this same reckoning we can make in regard to our own sufferings. In consideration of what we may suffer wrongfully, we either have sins done away, or receive more glorious crowns, if the amount of our sins is not so great.”

Chrysostom also noted³²⁷ that sometimes we suffer so much that we draw out the mercy of God beyond what we might deserve. Examples are Jerusalem at the time of the Captivity for the positive and Elisha’s servant Gehazi for the negative.

“When you see a rich man plundering the poor, weep for the plunderer, not the one that is suffering wrong. The poor man gets rid of filth; the rich man smears himself with more filth. Such was the fate of Gehazi, Elisha’s servant, in the story of Naaman (2 Kings 5). Though he didn’t take by violence, yet he did a wrong; for to get money by deceit is a wrong. What happened then? With the wrong, Gehazi received also the leprosy; he that was wronged was benefited, but he that did the wrong received the greatest possible harm. The same happens now in the case of the soul. This is of so great force that often by itself it has propitiated God. Though he who suffers evil is unworthy of aid, yet when he suffers so much in excess, by this alone he draws God to the forgiveness of himself, and to the punishment of him that did the wrong. God had said of old to the heathen, ‘I am very angry with the heathen that combined to attack Jerusalem and Zion. I was a little angry with Jerusalem, but the heathen combined to attack *her* in such an evil way that I will return to Jerusalem with compassion’ (Zechariah 1:15-16 LXX); but the heathen shall suffer evils irremediable. There is nothing that so much exasperates God as plunder, violence and extortion.”

Chrysostom further stated³²⁸ that the faith versus works issue (James 2:26) comes down to a willingness to suffer for Christ’s sake. Then is when our Faith shines.

“Not through believing only cometh our salvation, but also through the suffering and enduring affliction. This is like a boxer, who is an object of admiration. When he does personal appearances, he has his skill within himself; but when he is in action, enduring blows and striking his adversary, then most of all he shines, because then his good training is put in action, and the proof of his skill is shown. So truly is our salvation then put in action, displayed, increased,

³²⁷ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Corinthians, XXIII, v. 12.

³²⁸ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Corinthians, II, 1.

heightened, when it has endurance, when it suffers and bears all things nobly. The work of salvation consists not in doing evil, but in suffering evil.”

Why Do Some Suffer and Others Don’t?

Many people might respond to suffering by saying, “Why me?” It interrupts our plans and would seem to conflict with our interpretation of the Scripture where Christ said, “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly” (John 10:10). Christ did not say that we will never suffer during our “abundant life”, as was shown from numerous quotes from the Scriptures earlier. Actually we all suffer, but we suffer in different ways. We just don’t call it “suffering” all the time; we only call it such when we experience a lot of pain and anguish.

John Chrysostom spoke³²⁹ about why some suffer while others don’t. When one suffers, God does not desert him; this is a process of correcting him, like the Paralytic who spent 38 years in his condition because of his sin (John 5:14). Chastening and suffering are useful for us if we bear it thankfully.

“If our openly acknowledged sins bring upon us inevitable chastisement, if we were to reckon up our secret sins, then we shall see especially that the providence of God does not bring upon us punishment for each sin. When we see anyone rapacious, covetous, and not chastened, we can unfold our own conscience; reckon up our own life, and go over the sins which we have committed. We shall learn rightly that in our own case first, it is not expedient to be chastened for each of our sins. Most people make reckless statements, since they do not look on their own case before that of others; we ignore our own case and examine everyone else. Let us no longer do this, but the reverse; if we see any righteous man chastened, remember Job. If anyone is righteous, he will not be more righteous than Job and he will not even be close. No matter how much he suffers, he will not suffer as much as that man.”

“Keeping this in mind, cease blaming the master; learn that God does not desert someone who suffers evil, but through a desire to crown him, He makes him more distinguished. If you see a sinner punished, remember the paralytic who spent 38 years on his bed. That that man was delivered over to that disease through sin; hear Christ say, ‘See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you’ (John 5:14). When we are chastened, we either pay the penalty of our sins, or else we receive the occasion of crowning if, when we live in rectitude, we suffer evil. Whether we live in righteousness, or in sins, chastening is a useful thing for us, sometimes making us more distinguished, sometimes rendering us more self-controlled, and lightening the punishment to come for us. That it is possible that one chastened here, and bearing it thankfully should experience milder punishment there Paul said, ‘For this reason many *are* weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world’” (1 Corinthians 11:30-32).

³²⁹ John Chrysostom, Against Those Who Say that Demons Govern Human Affairs, I, 7-8.

Chrysostom also addressed³³⁰ the case where an evil man is not punished while a good man suffers from poverty and disease. Some people accuse God of being unjust, which is blasphemy. God knows what He is doing; we need to trust Him in this.

“A certain man is rich, overbearing, rapacious and covetous; he drains the substance of the poor day by day, and suffers no terrible affliction. Another lives in forbearance, self-restraint, and uprightness, and is adorned with all other good qualities; yet he is chastened with poverty, disease, and extremely terrible afflictions. Do these matters offend you? If we see the rapacious, the many chastened, and those living virtuously, some enjoying countless goods, why are we not content with the Almighty? It is this which offends me more. Why when there are two evil men, is one chastened, and another gets off; why when there are two good men, is one honored, and the other continues under punishment? This thing is a very great work of God’s providence. If He were to chasten all the evil men here; and if He were to honor here all the good men, a day of judgment would be superfluous. If He were to chasten no wicked man, nor were to honor any of the good, then the base would become baser and worse, as being more careless than the excellent. Those who were minded to blaspheme would accuse God all the more, and say that our affairs were altogether deprived of his providence.”

Basil the Great wrote³³¹ to the Church in Alexandria during the persecution by the Arians. Basil was so perturbed that he wondered whether the last hours were coming and the appearing of the Antichrist was near. He encouraged the Alexandrians to persevere in the Faith, since this is what the saints of old did in these circumstances. The more we are allowed to suffer for Christ, the more blessed we are; our suffering is not worthy to be compared to the glory that will be revealed in us.

“I have heard of the persecution in Alexandria and the rest of Egypt, and I am deeply affected. I have observed the ingenuity of the devil’s mode of warfare. When he saw that the Church increased under the persecution of enemies and flourished all the more, he changed his plan. He no longer carries on an open warfare, but lays secret snares against us, hiding his hostility under the name which they bear, in order that we may suffer like our fathers. At the same time, we may seem not to suffer for Christ’s sake, because our persecutors too bear the name of Christians. With these thoughts for a long time we sat still, dazed at the news of what had happened, for our ears tingled on hearing of the shameless and inhuman heresy of your persecutors. They have not revered age, services to society, or people’s affection. They inflicted torture, disgrace, and exile; they plundered all the property they could find; they were careless alike of human condemnation and of the awful retribution to come at the hands of the righteous Judge. All this has amazed me and all but driven me out of my senses. To my reflections has been added this thought too; can the Lord have wholly abandoned His Churches? Has the last hour come, and is ‘the falling away’ thus coming upon us, that now the lawless one ‘may be revealed the son of perdition who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped? (2

³³⁰ John Chrysostom, Against Those Who Say that Demons Govern Human Affairs, I, 7.

³³¹ Basil the Great, Letter to the Alexandrians, 139, 1.

Timothy 2:4) If the temptation is for a season, bear it, you noble athletes of Christ. If the world is being delivered to complete and final destruction, let us not lose heart for the present, but let us await the revelation from heaven, and the revealing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. If all creation is to be dissolved, and the fashion of this world transformed, why should we be surprised that we, who are a part of creation, should feel the general woe. We will then be delivered to afflictions, which our just God inflicts on us according to the measure of our strength, not letting us ‘be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it’ (1 Corinthians 10:13) Brothers, martyrs’ crowns await you! The companies of the confessors are ready to reach out their hands to you and to welcome you into their own ranks. Remember how none of the saints of old won their crowns of patient endurance by living luxuriously; but all were tested by being put through the fire of great afflictions. ‘Others had trial of mocking and scourging. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were slain with the sword’ (Hebrews 11:36-37). These are the glories of saints. Blessed is he who is deemed worthy to suffer for Christ; more blessed is he whose sufferings are greater, since ‘the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us’” (Romans 8:18).

Chrysostom pointed out³³² some contrasts between Paul’s struggles and life in his own times (4th century). We do not have to put up with anything close to what Paul had to endure. We should keep this in mind when we have to put up with annoyances in our life, and also when we consider what luxuries we enjoy every day.

“Listen to Luke saying, ‘The Apostles returned from the presence of the council, rejoicing that, they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name’ (Acts 5:41). This is totally foreign to us! Both suffering shame and being put in prison is being ‘counted worthy’. He, who is in love, considers it gain to suffer anything for the sake of his loved one; much rather than it is so to suffer for the sake of Christ. We should not be dejected at our tribulations for Christ’s sake; let us remember Paul’s bonds, and let this be our incitement: Do you exhort any to give to the poor for Christ’s sake? Remind them of Paul’s bonds that he gave up even his body to bonds for His sake; but we will not give even a portion of our food? Are we proud of our good deeds? Remember Paul’s bonds that you have suffered nothing of that kind, and you will be proud no more. Do we covet any of the things that are our neighbor’s? Remember Paul’s bonds, and you will see how unreasonable it is, that while he was in peril, we should be enjoying ourselves. Is our heart set on self-indulgence? Picture in our minds Paul’s prison-house; we are his disciple, his fellow-soldier. How is it reasonable, that our fellow-soldier should be in bonds, and we in luxury? Are we in affliction? We should not consider ourselves forsaken. Hear of Paul’s bonds, and you will see that to be in affliction is no proof of being forsaken. Do we wear silk clothing? Remember Paul’s bonds; and these things will appear to us as worthless as the filthy rags. Do we array ourselves with golden trinkets? Picture in our minds Paul’s bonds, and these things will seem to us no better than a

³³² John Chrysostom, Homilies on Colossians, XII, v. 18.

withered bulrush. Do we coif our hair in order to be beautiful to look at? Think of Paul's squalidness within that prison-house, and we will long for that beauty, and consider this the extreme of ugliness."

Practical Aspects of Suffering

So suffering can take many forms, and the Scriptures teach us that we will all suffer in some way. Let's look at some of the details of this to see what is beneficial and what is not. There is a great benefit to suffering for Christ, and most suffering unjustly is in fact suffering for Christ if we are thankful for it. As Christians we all share in each other's suffering; but we might ask just how we can suffer in a time of so-called peace when no one is persecuting the Church. Also we might ask when we are persecuted, how do we know when to run and when to stand and suffer?

Suffering Unjustly

We may suffer unjustly in almost any situation: on the job, at home by the kids, in the community by neighbors, in sickness, as well as by adversaries to the Faith. The big question is how we handle it, however.

John Chrysostom spoke³³³ about the effects of suffering; anyone who suffers anything and bears it nobly is akin to the martyrs. This is demonstrated by Job. Suffering in this life helps to do away with our sins also, as we see with the rich man and Lazarus. How we carry ourselves is more important than where we live; this is illustrated by the three youths in the furnace.

"He is well approved, who suffers in the cause of God. He who is suffering anything unjustly, and bearing it nobly, and giving thanks to God who permits it, is not inferior to him who sustains these trials for God's sake. The blessed Job is a proof of this, who received so many intolerable wounds through the devil's plotting against him uselessly, vainly, and without cause. Yet, nevertheless, because he bore them courageously, and gave thanks to God who permitted them, he was invested with a perfect crown."

"If we suffer any evil unjustly, during the present life, we discharge a multitude of sins. Therefore it is a great advantage to have the chastisement of our sins here, and not there; for the rich man received no evil here, and therefore he was scorched in the flames there; that this was the reason why he did not enjoy any consolation, hear in proof what Abraham said. 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things; therefore you are tormented'. Regarding the good things bestowed on Lazarus, not only his virtue, but his having here suffered a thousand ills, contributed; we learn this also from the patriarch's words. Having said to the rich man, 'You have received your good things', he goes on to say, 'and likewise Lazarus evil things, and for this reason he is comforted' (Luke 16:25). Those who live virtuously, and are afflicted, receive a double reward from God; so he who lives in wickedness, and fares sumptuously, shall have a double punishment."

³³³ John Chrysostom, Homilies on the Statues, VI, 9-10.

“Let us again call to mind those three youths, who were in the midst of the furnace, yet suffered no evil; and those who cast them into it, how they that sat around were all consumed (Daniel 3:20-25). What is more wonderful than this? The fire freed those it held possession of, and violently seized those whom it did not hold; this teaches us that not the habitation, but the habit of life, brings safety or punishment. Those inside the furnace escaped, but those outside were consumed. Each had the same kind of bodies, but not the same dispositions. For this reason neither were the effects on them the same. Hay, although it lies outside the flame, is quickly kindled; but gold, although it remains inside, becomes more resplendent!”

Chrysostom also encouraged³³⁴ us to be kind to our enemies, like the Twelve Apostles who welcomed 3000 converts from among the people who had crucified Christ seven weeks earlier. If we learn to feel for the evils our neighbors suffer, we shall learn to endure the evils they inflict.

“Let us be kind to our enemies, even those who have given us numberless pains. Whatever good thing we may have, let us give to them; let us not pass them by in our acts of beneficence. If we sate their rage by suffering evil, much more by doing them good; for this is not as hard as suffering evil. It is not the same to do good to an enemy, and to be willing to suffer greater wrongs than he wishes to inflict; but from the one we shall come on to the other. This is the dignity of Christ’s disciples. Those crucified Him, when He had come for the very purpose of doing them good. His disciples they scourged; and after all this, He admits them to the same honor with His disciples, making them equally partakers of His gifts (Acts 2:36-40). I beseech you, let us be imitators of Christ; in this regard it is possible to imitate Him. This makes a man like God; this is more than human. Let us hold fast to Mercy; she is the schoolmistress and teacher of that higher Wisdom. He that has learned to show mercy to the distressed will learn also not to resent injuries; he that has learned this will be able to do good even to his enemies. Let us learn to feel for the evils our neighbors suffer, and we shall learn to endure the evils they inflict.”

Chrysostom further pointed out³³⁵ that the nature of victory is in suffering evil with long-suffering; it is not at all like the competition in the heathen games.

“God has commanded us when punched out not only to endure it, but even to offer ourselves to suffer something worse. We resist God with such vehemence, that we not only refuse to offer ourselves to suffer evil, but even avenge ourselves; often we are the first to act on the offensive, and think we are disgraced if we do not respond to evil with more evil in return. The mischief is that when we are utterly beaten by refusing to suffer evil, we think ourselves conquerors; when receiving ten thousand blows from the devil, then we imagine that we are mastering him. I exhort you to understand what the nature of this victory is; let us follow after this kind of nature. To suffer evil is to get the crown. If then we wish to be proclaimed victors by God, let us not in these contests

³³⁴ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XIV, v. 34.

³³⁵ John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, IV, 4.

observe the laws of heathen games, but those of God, and learn to bear all things with long-suffering. This is the only way to get the better of our antagonists, and obtain both present and promised rewards.”

In addition, Chrysostom described³³⁶ the practical effects of returning good for evil. We end up taking vengeance on our enemies indirectly, when others see us being kind and turn to criticize our enemies. Even dogs reverence a man who is willing to suffer evil from them! This is why Christ told us to turn the other cheek.

“If you wish to take vengeance, do it in this manner. Return good for evil, that you may achieve a glorious victory. If you go about resenting someone’s evil, everyone will blame both you and him alike. But if you endure it patiently, it will be the opposite. You will be applauded and admired; but him they will criticize. What greater punishment can there be to an enemy, than to behold his enemy admired and applauded by all men? What is bitterer to an enemy, than to see himself criticized by everyone before his enemy’s face? If you avenge him, you will both be condemned; whereas, if you forgive him, everyone will be avengers in your place. This will be far more severe than any evil he can suffer, that his enemy should have so many to avenge him. If you open your mouth, they will be silent; but if you are silent, you are more avenged. If you criticize him, many will imply that your words are those of passion; but when others who have suffered no wrong from him overwhelm him with criticism, the revenge is especially clear of all suspicion. When they who have suffered no evil, feel and sympathize with you, as though they had been wronged themselves, this is a vengeance clear of all suspicion. ‘But what then’, you will say, ‘if no man should take vengeance?’ It cannot be that men will be such stones, as to behold such wisdom and not admire it. Even if they don’t take their vengeance on him at the time; still, afterwards, when they are in the mood, they will do so, and they will continue to scoff at him and abuse him. If no one else admires you, the man himself will most surely admire you, though he may not admit it. Why do you suppose that our Lord Christ said, ‘Whoever slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also?’ (Matthew 5:39) Is it not because the more long-suffering a man is, the more significant the benefit he confers both on himself and on the other? For this cause, He charges us to ‘turn the other also’, to satisfy the desire of the enraged. Who is such a monster as not to be put to shame by this? Even dogs are said to feel this; if they bark and attack a man, and he throws himself on his back and does nothing, he puts a stop to their entire wrath. If they reverence the man who is ready to suffer evil from them, much more will the race of man do so, since humans are more rational than dogs.”

Leo the Great, Pope of Rome, stated³³⁷ that patience and perseverance is essential for the Bishops in their watch over their flock. Active persecution should not stop him; nor should other persecution due to his nonconformity to worldly expectations.

“The Lord says, ‘He who endures to the end shall be saved’ (Matthew 24:13); where shall this blessed perseverance come from, except from the strength

³³⁶ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Ephesians, XVI, Moral.

³³⁷ Leo the Great, Letter to Rusticus, 167, 2.

of patience? As Paul proclaims, ‘All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution’ (2 Timothy 3:12). It is not only reckoned persecution, when sword, fire or other active means are used against the Christian Faith. The direst persecution is often inflicted by nonconformity of practice and persistent disobedience and the barbs of ill-natured tongues. All the members of the Church are always liable to these attacks, and no portion of the faithful are free from temptation. Neither a life of ease nor a life of labor is devoid of danger. Who shall guide the ship amidst the waves of the sea, if the helmsman quits his post? Who shall guard the sheep from the treachery of wolves, if the shepherd himself is not on the watch? Who shall resist the thieves and robbers, if love of quiet draws away the watchman that is set to keep the outlook in the strictness of his watch? One must abide, therefore, in the office committed to him and in the task undertaken.”

A Great Good Results

The rewards we obtain for suffering for Christ are not mentioned much in most Churches, probably because persecution is not an obvious factor. Persecution is raging but we often don’t recognize it. It doesn’t affect us immediately and personally (so we think), so we just go blithely on afraid to speak out for fear of being persecuted. The rewards for suffering for Christ are huge, but they may not be spelled out in detail!

Cyprian of Carthage stated³³⁸ that we receive much more as the reward of our suffering than what we endure in the suffering itself. In order to understand this, one has to see things from the viewpoint of Paul and others who have gotten a glimpse of Paradise. By suffering, we enter Paradise, where Adam once lived; by refusing to be bullied by demons, we conquer him who had conquered Adam in Paradise.

“Paul testifies that he heard unspeakable words that he saw Jesus Christ by the faith of sight, and says: ‘The sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us’ (Romans 8:18). Who, then, does not with all his powers labor to attain to such a glory that he may become the friend of God, that he may at once rejoice with Christ, that after earthly tortures and punishments he may receive divine rewards? Soldiers of this world find it glorious to return in triumph to their country when the foe is vanquished. How much more excellent and greater is the glory, when the devil is overcome, to return in triumph to paradise, and to bring back victorious trophies to that place from which Adam was ejected as a sinner, after casting down him who formerly had cast Adam down. We offer to God the most acceptable gift -- an uncorrupted faith. We accompany Him when He comes to receive vengeance on His enemies, to stand at His side when He shall sit to judge, to become co-heir of Christ, to be made equal to the angels. What persecution can conquer, what tortures can overcome such thoughts as these? The brave and steadfast mind endures unmoved against all the terrors of the devil and the threats of the world, when it is strengthened by the sure and solid faith of things to come. In persecutions, earth is shut up, but heaven is opened; Antichrist is threatening, but Christ is protecting; death is brought in, but immortality follows; the world is

³³⁸ Cyprian of Carthage, Treatises, XI, 13.

taken away from him that is slain, but paradise is set forth to him restored; the life of time is extinguished, but the life of eternity is realized. What a dignity it is, and what a security, to go gladly from here, to depart gloriously in the midst of afflictions and tribulations. In a moment we close the eyes with which men and the world are looked upon, and at once we open them to look on God and Christ! Of such a blessed departure how great is the swiftness! You shall be suddenly taken away from earth, to be placed in the heavenly kingdoms. It behooves us to embrace these things in our mind and consideration, to meditate on these things day and night.”

John Chrysostom pointed out³³⁹ the effects of us returning kindness to those that cause us to suffer. Everyone acknowledges us as the better person and we rid ourselves of trouble. We also put off our sins as the Publican did by meekly bearing the Pharisee’s accusations. By doing so, we receive a double crown: one for the evil we suffer and one for the good we do.

“This is the truest wonder that we are so far from being injured, if we are right-minded, that we are even benefited, by the very things that we suffer unjustly at the hands of others. Reflect then; has someone insulted us? We have the power of making this insult redound to our honor. If we insult in return, we only increase the disgrace. But if we bless him that insulted us, we will see that all men acknowledge us, and proclaim our praise. Notice how by the things wherein we are wronged, we get good done to us if we are so minded? This one may see happening in the case of money matters, of beatings, and the same in everything else. If we repay them with the opposite, we are but twining a double crown about us, one for the evils we have suffered, as well as one for the good we are doing. Whenever then a person comes and tells us that ‘such a one has insulted us, and keeps continually speaking evil of us to everybody, praise the man to those who tell us of him. For thus even if we wish to avenge ourselves, we will have the power of inflicting punishment. Those who hear us, even if they ever so foolish, will praise us, and hate him as fiercer than any brute beast, because he, without being at all wronged, caused us pain, but we, even when suffering wrong, repaid him with the opposite. So we will have it in our power to prove that all that he said was to no purpose. He who feels the tooth of slander, gives by his vexation a proof that he is conscious of the truth of what is said. But he who smiles at it, by doing this acquits himself of all suspicion with those who are present. Consider how many good things we cull together from this. First, we rid ourselves of all vexation and trouble. Secondly (rather this should come first), even if we have sins, we put them off, as the Publican did by bearing the Pharisee’s accusation meekly. Besides, we will by this practice make our soul heroic, we will enjoy endless praises from all men, and we will divest yourself of any suspicion arising from what is said. But even if we are desirous of taking revenge on the man, this too will follow in full measure, both by God’s punishing him for what he has said, and before that punishment by our heroic conduct taking the place of a mortal blow. There is nothing that cuts those who insult us so much to the heart, as for we who are insulted to smile at the insult.”

³³⁹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans, XII, v. 13.

John of Damascus summarized³⁴⁰ the workings of God according to His good-will and according to what He permits. Sometimes our sufferings have far-reaching consequences that we wouldn't have dreamed of. Other times our sufferings are intended to correct some fault, such as pride. In most cases, the choice of what is to be done is in our own hands.

“The works of the Providence of God are partly according to the good-will (of God) and partly according to permission. Works of good-will include all those that are undeniably good, while works of permission have many forms of concession. Providence often permits the just man to encounter misfortune in order that he may reveal to others the virtue that lies concealed within him, as was the case with Job (Job 1:9-12). At other times it allows something strange to be done in order that something great and marvelous might be accomplished through the seemingly-strange act, as when the salvation of men was brought about through the Cross. In another way it allows the pious man to suffer terrible trials in order that he may not depart from a right conscience or lapse into pride on account of the power and grace granted to him, as was the case with Paul (2 Corinthians 12:7).”

“One man is forsaken for a season with a view to another's restoration, in order that others when they see his state may be taught a lesson, as in the case of Lazarus and the rich man (Luke 16:19-21). Our nature tends to be downcast when we see persons in distress. Another is deserted by Providence in order that another may be glorified, and not for his own sin or that of his parents, just as the man who was blind from his birth ministered to the glory of the Son of Man (John 9:1-3). Again another is permitted to suffer in order to stir up the hearts of others to do the same, so that others by magnifying the glory of the sufferer may resolutely welcome suffering in the hope of future glory and the desire for future blessings, as in the case of the martyrs. Another is allowed to fall at times into some act of baseness in order that another worse fault may be thus corrected. For instance, God may allow a man who takes pride in his virtue and righteousness to fall away into fornication in order that he may be brought through this fall to the perception of his own weakness and be humbled, approach and make confession to the Lord.”

“Moreover, the choice of what is to be done is in our own hands. But the final issue depends, in the one case when our actions are good, on the cooperation of God, Who in His justice brings help according to His foreknowledge to such as choose the good with a right conscience. In the other case when our actions are to evil, God desert us, Who again in His justice stands aloof in accordance with His foreknowledge.”

Chrysostom stated³⁴¹ that we can suffer for the King of the universe many times every day; and we receive a reward every time it happens. People did this also under the Old Covenant but the rewards were not as great.

“It is not for men, nor for any other of the things of this life that we suffer, but for the King of the universe. This is not the only crown, for Paul encircles them with another besides, varied and manifold. Since they were men, they could

³⁴⁰ John of Damascus, Exposition of the Christian Faith, II, 29.

³⁴¹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans, XV, v. 36.

not have deaths without number to undergo; he shows that in this way the prize is none the less. For even if by nature it were fated to die once, by choice God has granted us to suffer this every day, if we are so minded. Therefore, it is plain that we shall depart with as many crowns as we have lived days, or rather with many more. For it is possible in a day to die not once alone or twice, but many times. He who is always ready for this, keeps continually receiving a full reward. This is what the Psalmist hints at, when he says, ‘For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter’ (Psalm 44:22). For this reason, Paul brought the Psalmist before them to rouse them up the more. If those in the old dispensation, who had the land as their reward, and the other things which come to a close along with this life, did so look down upon the present life and the temptations and dangers of it, what pardon should we find if we deal so languidly after the promise of Heaven, the Kingdom above, and its unutterable blessings, so as not to come even up to the same measure as they?”

Christians Share in Each Other’s Suffering

As members of the Body of Christ (Romans 12:5, 1 Corinthians 12:12), we have Christ as our head (Ephesians 1:22, Colossians 1:18, 2:19) and many other Christians as our brothers and sisters. Paul worked very hard on behalf of his fellow Christians, even though they did not know as much as he did about the Christian Faith. The heathen thought Paul was a fool to be willing to do all this for someone else besides himself. As we show love to our brothers and sisters in Christ, the love of God is revealed and the demons, who try to hinder us, are overthrown. We should undertake this work together joyfully since there are great rewards in store for us if we do it faithfully.

John Chrysostom pointed out³⁴² the labor of love of the Thessalonians. Because they believed, they were willing to suffer all things; their Faith was shown through their works. In this, the labor of love was difficult and it exposed the Thessalonians to great danger.

Because no one among men was praising their actions, no one giving them any reward, Paul says this, ‘You labor in the sight of our God’. What is ‘the work of faith? (1 Thessalonians 1:3)’. Nothing has turned aside their steadfastness; this is the work of faith! If you believe, suffer all things; if you do not suffer, you do not believe. Are not the things promised such that he who believes would choose to suffer even ten thousand deaths? The kingdom of heaven is set before him, plus immortality and eternal life. He therefore who believes will suffer all things. Faith then is shown through his works (James 2:24-26). Justly one might have said, not merely did you believe, but through your works you demonstrated it, through your steadfastness, through your zeal.

Paul also referred to a ‘labor of love’ (1 Thessalonians 1:3). Why? What labor is it to love? Merely to love is no labor at all. But to love genuinely is great labor. When a thousand things are stirred up that would draw us from love, and we hold out against them all, is that not labor? What did not these men suffer, that they might maintain their love? Those that warred against the Preaching went to Paul’s host, and not having found Paul, dragged Jason before the rulers of

³⁴² John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Thessalonians, I, vv. 1-3.

the city (Acts 17:5-6). Is this a slight labor, when the seed had not yet taken root, to endure so great a storm and so many trials? They demanded security of Jason. Having given security, Jason sent Paul away. Is this a small thing, tell me? Did not Jason expose himself to danger for Paul? This Paul calls a labor of love, because they were thus bound to him.

Paul stated, “Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat; we are made as the filth of the world” (1 Corinthians 4:12-13). John Chrysostom stated³⁴³ that when Paul was speaking about the care that Christ offers, he described the Cross in his own life. The heathen referred to Paul as a fool because he was willing to suffer for others.

“The meaning of ‘fools for Christ’s sake’ (1 Corinthians 4:10) is someone who suffers wrong and doesn’t avenge himself or get angry; thus he is reckoned a fool by the heathen, and they consider him dishonorable and weak. Paul did not speak distastefully by referring the sufferings he was speaking of to their city; but what did he say? ‘We are made the filth’, not ‘of your city’, but, ‘of the world’. Again, we are ‘the off-scouring of all things until now’ (1 Corinthians 4:13); not of you alone, but of everything. When he is speaking of the providential care of Christ, the Cross is what he brings forward. When he desires to attract them to himself, he doesn’t speak of all his miracles, he speaks of his sufferings on their account. This is our method also; when we are injured and despised by anyone, whatever we have endured for them, we bring the same forward.”

“‘The off-scouring of all things until now’ is a vigorous blow which he gave at the end, not of the persecutors only, but of those also for whom we suffer these things. Greatly are we obliged to them! It is the expression of one seriously concerned; not in pain himself, but desiring to make them feel that he who has any complaints to make should keep the Apostles in mind. And therefore Christ commanded us to bear insults meekly that we might both maintain a high strain of virtue, and put others to shame. One produces that effect not so well by reproach as by silence.”

Chrysostom further stated³⁴⁴ that as we suffer patiently through everything the demons throw at us, the Devil is overthrown and injured. This occurred in the case of Job, where God even taunted Satan () on how powerless he was against Job. Chrysostom pointed out how a similar thing occurred with the Apostle Paul.

“The Church’s trophy and a brilliant victory occur when the Devil is overthrown as we suffer injury. When we suffer, he is taken captive; he suffers harm when he tries to inflict it on us. This happened in Paul’s case also; and the more the Devil plied him with perils, the more was he defeated. He didn’t raise up against him only one kind of trial, but various and diverse. Some involved labor, others sorrow, others fear, others pain, others care, others shame, others all these at once; but yet Paul was victorious in all. Like a single soldier, having the whole world fighting against him, he moved through the ranks of his enemies, and suffered no harm. Paul did this, showing himself singly, among barbarians, among Greeks, on land and on sea, remaining unconquered. Like a spark falling

³⁴³ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Corinthians, XIII, 2.

³⁴⁴ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Corinthians, XXV, vv. 31-32.

on dry reeds and hay, he kindled all he touched; he made all things change over to the truth; like a winter torrent, sweeping over all things and overturning every obstacle. Like some champion who wrestles, runs and boxes; or a soldier engaged in storming, fighting on foot, and on shipboard; so Paul tried every form of fight, breathing out fire, and was unapproachable by all. With his single body he took possession of the world; with his single tongue he put all to flight. Not with such force did those many trumpets fall on the stones of Jericho (Joshua) and throw them down; Paul's voice both dashed to the earth the devil's strongholds and brought over to himself those that were against him."

Chrysostom also noted³⁴⁵ that suffering for Christ should be undertaken joyfully, no matter what we do. This will be easier when we consider the benefit of doing so.

"When we suffer anything for Christ's sake, let us not just bear it nobly but also rejoice. If we fast, let us leap for joy as if we are enjoying luxury; if we are insulted, let us dance as if we are praised; if we spend, let us feel as if we are gaining; if we give to the poor, let us count ourselves as if we receive. He that doesn't give like this will not give readily. When we have a mind to scatter abroad, don't consider only almsgiving, but also every kind of virtue. Compute not only the severity of the work, but also the sweetness of the prizes; and before all the subjects of this wrestling, our Lord Jesus. Then we will readily enter the contest, and will live the whole time in pleasure. Nothing tends to cause pleasure as a good conscience."

How We Achieve Martyrdom in a Time of Peace

If martyrdom is a blessing and brings a huge reward, does this mean that these rewards are not available during times of peace? Times of peace can produce worse persecution than times of war against the Faith. There will always be conflict and torture against the Faith, but its form may change and the soul may be under attack as well as the body. Everyone who helps and contributes is worthy of a reward; not just the ones who are killed for the Faith. As the Body of Christ works in harmony serving her Lord, the demons get angry and work to try to stop us.

John Chrysostom stated³⁴⁶ that the times of peace are the times of the worst persecution, since it induces sleep into the soul. Instead of persecution by men, we are persecuted by the demons. Our passions, like wild beasts, attack us on every side. We think that we are at peace, not war; so that we do not even arm ourselves against it; no one fears, no one trembles. During times of persecution, few of these passions are able to disturb us because we are in fear all the time and on guard.

"Paul said, 'All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution' (2 Timothy 3:12). They that live godly are always undergoing persecution, if not from men, at any rate from evil spirits, which is a more grievous persecution. Yes, first and foremost, it is as a result of ease and comfort, that those who are not vigilant undergo this. Do you think it is a trifling persecution to be living at ease? This is more tougher than all other kinds of

³⁴⁵ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Corinthians, XII, 5.

³⁴⁶ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXIV, 44-46.

persecution. Like an open wound, ease makes the soul languid; like the contrast between summer and winter, so is persecution and ease. To show you that this is the worse persecution, listen; it induces sleep in the soul, an excessive yawning and drowsiness, it stirs up the passions on every side, it arms pride, it arms pleasure, it arms anger, envy, vainglory, jealousy. But in time of persecution none of these is able to make a disturbance; fear enters in and plies the lash vigorously, as one does to a barking dog, and will not let any of these passions so much as attempt to give tongue. Who shall be able in time of persecution to indulge in vainglory? Who to live in pleasure? Not one; but there is much trembling and fear, making a great calm, composing the harbor into stillness, filling the soul with awe. I have heard from our fathers that in the persecution of old time, one might see men that were indeed Christian. None of them cared for money, none for wife, none for children, or home, or country; the one great concern with all was to save their souls. They were hiding, some in tombs and sepulchers, some in deserts; yes tender and dainty women too, fighting all the while with constant hunger. Then think whether any longing for sumptuous and dainty living at all came into the mind of a woman, while in hiding beside a coffin. Waiting for her maidservant to bring her meal, trembling lest she should be taken, lying in her terror as in a furnace; was she even aware that there was such a thing as dainty living that such things as dress and ornaments exist at all? Do you see that now in a time of peace is the persecution, with our passions, like wild beasts, attacking on us on every side? Now is the trying persecution, both in this regard, and especially if it is not even thought to be persecution at all. For this persecution has another evil in it, that being war, it is thought to be peace; so that we do not even arm ourselves against it; no one fears, no one trembles. But if you do not believe me, ask the heathen, the persecutors, at what time was the conduct of the Christians stricter, at what time were they all more proven? Few had they become then in number, but they were rich in virtue.”

John Chrysostom asked³⁴⁷ how the Lord’s words about suffering applied to times of peace when there is no open persecution. There will always be conflict and torture, but its form changes in times of peace. Things done in “passion” are sufferings, and they are present all the time. He that gets angry suffers; he wounds and bruises the soul. But he who is not angry does not suffer.

“What if there is no persecution? Make your stand against glory, and should anyone speak anything against you, don’t fear to be evil spoken of for Christ’s sake. Make your stand against the tyranny of pride, against the fighting of anger, against the torment of lust. These also are torments. What is the worst of tortures? Is it not that the soul is pained and is on fire? On the soul alone comes all the smart when one is angry, when one is envious, whatever else of this kind one suffers. It is not action, but passion; not a doing, but a suffering: to be angered, to feel envy. Therefore, indeed they are called passions (or sufferings) of the soul, wounds and bruises. It is worse than suffering! You that are angry, do you think that you do such things in ‘passion’, in a state of suffering? Therefore, he who is not angry does not suffer. Notice that not he who is abused

³⁴⁷ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XV, v. 8.

is the sufferer, but he that abuses. That he is a sufferer is plain in the first place from the very fact that such a thing is called by this name of passion.”

“‘But he insulted my boy’, you say; ‘he called him a clown’. Don’t think it is weakness if you don’t do the same thing yourself. I know what passions are engendered in such cases. ‘But’, you say, ‘what do I do if he despises me, what if he says it again?’ Show him that he is in the wrong; rebuke him, entreat him; by meekness anger is put down. In cases of wrong done to ourselves it is right not to do even this, yet it is quite necessary to do it in behalf of others. Do not look on it as an insult to yourself that your boy has been insulted, annoyed though you may be for his sake. It does not follow because your boy has been ill-treated, that you are disgraced, but he is disgraced that did the evil. Quench that sharp sword of your anger; let it lie in its scabbard. If we have it unsheathed, we shall be apt to use it even when the time is not proper. Christ would not have us be angry on his account.”

Cyprian of Carthage pointed out³⁴⁸ that those who teach the true Faith are worthy of the same rewards as those who suffer martyrdom.

“The Lord will reward you for that love of yours, and will restore to you the fruit due to this so good work. He who exhorts is not less worthy of the reward of the crown than he who suffers; not less worthy of praise is he who has taught, than he who has acted also. He is not less to be honored who has warned, than he who has fought; except sometimes the weight of glory overflows more to him who trains, than to him who has shown himself a teachable learner. The learner, perchance, would not have had what he has practiced, unless the teacher had taught him.”

John Chrysostom stated³⁴⁹ that when we perform good deeds in Christ’s Name, it is like we are goading the demons. We can expect them to respond in some way. To continue to do this when we have been struck by some demon-orchestrated calamity is to truly do it for God’s sake.

“Men do not provoke that evil monster the devil to wrath by small achievements. When we see a righteous man performing great and excellent deeds, yet suffering innumerable ills, don’t marvel. On the contrary, one might well marvel if the devil were to receive so many blows yet keep quiet and bear the wounds meekly. Similarly, we shouldn’t be surprised if a serpent were continually goaded and spring on the person that goaded it. No serpent steals on us so fiercely as the devil, leaping up against everyone, like a scorpion with its stinger raised. We shouldn’t let this disturb us, since he that returns from war and slaughter will be bloody, and will often have received wounds. When we see anyone doing alms and performing numberless other good works and so curtailing the power of the devil, and then falling into temptations and perils; don’t be troubled by this. This is the reason why Paul fell into temptations, because he mightily smote the devil.”

³⁴⁸ Cyprian of Carthage, Epistle to Moyses, Maximus, et al., XXV, 1.

³⁴⁹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Corinthians, XLIII, 6.

“‘Why did God permit it?’ we might say. That he might be crowned more signally; that the devil might receive a more severe wound. When a man suffers after benefits are conferred, and yet continually gives thanks, it is a blow to the devil. It is a great thing, even when our affairs are flowing on prosperously, to show mercy and to adhere to virtue; but it is far greater in grievous calamity to continue this noble occupation; this is he who may be most truly said to do so for God’s sake. So then, though we are in peril, though we suffer ever so greatly, let us with the greater zeal apply ourselves to our labors for virtue’s sake.”

How Do We Know When to Run and When to Suffer?

If we are faced with persecution, should we stand and face it so that we won’t be tempted to deny Christ, or should we leave and flee? The Scriptures present a contrast at different times. This leads to the question of what we should do. The Scriptures don’t present a clear cut-and-dried answer, but it seems to say that we need to be aware of the Will of God at all times.

Flee Persecution		Face Persecution	
Jesus said, “Flee”	Matthew 10:23	Jesus headed for persecution	Luke 9:51
Jesus fled Nazareth	Luke 4:29-31, John 8:59	Jesus didn’t flee the Cross	Matthew 26:39-42
Paul fled Damascus	Acts 9:24-26	Paul refused to flee Jews	Acts 21:10-14
Peter fled Jerusalem	Acts 12:3-17		
Paul fled Iconium	Acts 14:6		
Flee during the end times	Matthew 24:15-26		

For example Paul fled when he was facing persecution and death in Damascus (Acts 9:23-26) and in Iconium (Acts 14:5-6). But when he came to Jerusalem after his 3rd Missionary Journey, he knew it was the Will of God to face the angry Jewish leaders in Jerusalem (Acts 21:10-14).

Tertullian of Carthage presents³⁵⁰ a dramatic contrast between standing and suffering versus fleeing to avoid persecution. He notes that fleeing demonstrates a lack of Faith, a denying of Christ and is the portion of the outcast at the Last Judgment. Tertullian admits that the Scriptures present these things in a rather stark and harsh manner.

“Do our Lord’s ordinances agree that we should always flee persecution? In the first place, if persecution is from God, what are we to think of our being ordered by the party who brings it on us to take ourselves out of its way? If He wanted it to be evaded, He had better not have sent it, that there might not be the appearance of His will being thwarted by another will.”

“Sometimes He asks us to suffer persecution; sometimes He asks us to flee from it. If to flee, how do we suffer? If to suffer, why do we to flee? In fact, what utter inconsistency in the decrees of One who commands to flee, and yet urges us to suffer, which is the very opposite! ‘Whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven’ (Matthew 10:32). How will he confess, fleeing? How will he flee, confessing? ‘Whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His *own* glory, and in His Father’s, and of the holy angels’ (Luke 9:26). If I avoid suffering, I am ashamed to confess. ‘Blessed are you when they

³⁵⁰ Tertullian of Carthage, De Fuga in Persecution, IV, ix, 7.

revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake' (Matthew 5:11). Unhappy, therefore, are they who, by running away, will not suffer according to the divine command. 'He who endures to the end will be saved' (Matthew 10:22). How then, when you ask me to flee, do you wish me to endure to the end? If views so opposed to each other do not correspond with the divine dignity, they clearly prove that the command to flee had, at the time it was given, a reason of its own. We are not to fear our persecutors. 'Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell' (Matthew 10:28). What does He allot to the fearful? 'He who values his life more than Me, is not worthy of Me; and he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me' (Matthew 10:37-38 loosely). Last of all, He does not propose flight to the 'cowardly', but a miserable portion among the rest of the outcast, in the lake of brimstone and fire, which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8).

"These things may seem harsh and impossible to endure; but recall that God has said, 'He who is able to accept *it*, let him accept *it*' (Matthew 19:12); that is, let him who does not receive it go his way. He, who fears to suffer, cannot belong to Him who suffered. But the man who does not fear to suffer, he will be perfect in love – that is, in the love of God. 'There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love' (1 John 4:18). 'And therefore many are called, but few are chosen' (Matthew 22:14). It is not asked who is ready to follow the broad way, but who the narrow. 'Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it' (Matthew 7:13-14). Therefore the Comforter is required, who guides us into all truth (John 16:13), and animates to all endurance. Those who have received Him will neither stoop to flee from persecution nor pay to avoid it. They have the Lord Himself, One who will stand by us to aid us in suffering, as well as to be our mouth when we are put to the question."

Tertullian pointed out³⁵¹ that there was a time when the Apostles were traveling all over the earth, when they had to flee persecution or the Gospel message would not get proclaimed. We can experience similar conditions when we have important work to do; this doesn't negate to command to confess Christ before men.

"If you are not willing to confess, you are not willing to suffer; and to be unwilling to confess is to deny. But if this is wholly in God's hand, why do we not leave it to His will? We recognize His might and power; just as He can bring us back to trial when we flee, so He can screen us when we do not flee."

"He commanded the Apostles to flee for a time -- not with the object of eluding danger, which is what persecution would suggest. Rather He was in the habit of proclaiming that they would suffer persecution and that these must be endured. In order to further the proclamation of the Gospel message, the diffusion of the Gospel might be prevented if all the Apostles were killed at once."

³⁵¹ Tertullian of Carthage, De Fuga in Persecution, IV, ix, 5-6.

Let us consider two well-known examples of flight by people who are considered saints today: Gregory the Theologian³⁵² and Athanasius of Alexandria.

Gregory the Theologian made a significant impact in the Church regarding Trinitarian theology during the days that the Arian heresy was prevalent. [The Arians claimed that Jesus was not really God.] Yet at the age of 32, when Gregory was ordained a priest by his father against his will, Gregory fled from his flock to live an ascetic life with Basil the Great. About a year later, Basil convinced Gregory to return to help his father, where his father really needed him. Gregory later gave an oration in which called his actions “cowardice”. He had wanted to escape from the world of human affairs and concentrate on the things of God. He went on to describe the obligations and dignity of the priestly office that has been drawn on by all later writers on the subject. Thus Gregory repented of his flight and went on to contribute greatly to the Early Church.

Athanasius of Alexandria was a pivotal figure at the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD during the arguments on the correct interpretation of the Scriptures regarding the Deity of Christ. The arguments by Athanasius were so strong and convincing that the Arians were thoroughly embarrassed; they secretly vowed vengeance against Athanasius and the others. By 330 AD the Arians had gotten rid of a number of their “enemies” (i.e. those that spoke the truth) from the Council of Nicaea. Athanasius himself was able to outwit the Arians on a number of occasions. When Athanasius was on trial by the Arians, Athanasius showed dramatically that their accusations were fraud. Embarrassed, the Arians proceeded to raise a huge uproar in the courtroom and tried to tear Athanasius apart to murder him. Some nearby soldiers managed to drag Athanasius away and get him out of town.

This campaign of intrigue went on for most of Athanasius’ life. He was exiled five times, but kept in contact with his flock in Alexandria with letters and other written documents. His justification to hiding rather than standing, facing his slanderers, and letting them murder him, was that his flock needed him alive to testify to the extent of the evil generated by the Arians. In retrospect, from the writings of Athanasius as he was hounded from place to place, it was the will of God that Athanasius should be persecuted all his life to demonstrate what the character of the Arians was really like.

The Kiss of Peace

Peter concluded his Epistle with, “Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus” (1 Peter 5:14). Even as Peter wrote these words, “the Kiss of Peace” was a liturgical term. At one point during the early Christian worship, the people assembled in the Church greeted each other with a warm embrace – men with men, women with women. This had a practical effect in that it was difficult to be angry at someone if you gave them a warm embrace frequently.

³⁵² Gregory the Theologian or Gregory Nazianzen is considered a saint in both the East and the West. In the Roman Catholic Church, he is numbered as one of the “Doctors of the Church”. In the Orthodox Church, he is referred to as one of the Three Holy Hierarchs along with Basil the Great and John Chrysostom. He is also honored in the Episcopal Church and the Lutheran Church.

Justin Martyr (mid-2nd century), addressed an Apology of the Christian Faith to Emperor Antoninus Pius³⁵³ and the Roman Senate, where he described³⁵⁴ the Christian Liturgy as centered on the Eucharist. Prior to the Eucharist, the members of the Church greeted each other with a kiss.

“After we have washed him who has been convinced and has assented to our teaching, we bring him to the place where those who are called brethren are assembled, in order that we may offer prayers in common for ourselves and for the baptized [illuminated] person, and for all others in every place. Having been counted worthy and having learned the truth, by our works we also are good citizens and keepers of the commandments, so that we may be saved with an everlasting salvation. Having ended the prayers, we greet one another with a kiss. The president of the brethren is then brought bread and a cup of wine mixed with water. He takes them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at His hands. When he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all the people present express their assent by saying ‘Amen’. This word ‘Amen’ answers in the Hebrew language to ‘so be it’. When the president has given thanks, and all the people have expressed their assent, those who are called deacons give to each of those present of the bread and wine mixed with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced; and to those who are absent they carry away a portion.”

Cyril of Jerusalem described³⁵⁵ the purpose of the Kiss of Peace: reconciliation between members of the Church. Peter and Paul refer to this Kiss of Peace also in their Epistles.

“Then the Deacon cries ‘Receive one another; and let us kiss one another’. Do not think that this kiss is of the same character with those given in public by common friends. It is not such; this kiss blends souls one with another, and courts entire forgiveness for them. The kiss therefore is the sign that our souls are mingled together, and banish all remembrance of wrongs. For this reason Christ said, ‘If you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift’ (Matthew 5:23-24). The kiss therefore is reconciliation, and for this reason is holy. As the blessed Paul cried, ‘Greet one another with a holy kiss’ (1 Corinthians 16:20); and Peter, ‘Greet one another with a kiss of love’” (1 Peter 5:14).

Ambrose of Milan stated³⁵⁶ that “We kiss Christ with the Kiss of Communion!” This makes sense from what the Lord stated will be His basis at the Last Judgment, “I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink” (Matthew 25:35-37); and “inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me” (Matthew 25:40). We kiss Christ in other ways also.

³⁵³ Eusebius Pamphilus, Church History, IV, 18.

³⁵⁴ Justin Martyr, First Apology, 65.

³⁵⁵ Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures, XXIII, 3.

³⁵⁶ Ambrose of Milan, Letter to His Sister, XLI, 15.

“The Scriptures teach us concerning the infusion of special grace, that he kisses Christ who receives the Spirit, where the prophet says: ‘I opened my mouth and drew in the Spirit’ (Psalm 119:131 LXX). He, then, kisses Christ who confesses Him. ‘For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation’ (Romans 10:10). He, again, kisses the feet of Christ who, when reading the Gospel, recognizes the acts of the Lord Jesus, and admires them with pious affection, and so piously he kisses, as it were, the footprints of the Lord Jesus as He walks. We kiss Christ, then, with the kiss of communion: ‘Let him that reads understand’” (Compare Matthew 24:15).

Paul referred to “a holy kiss” in several of his letters, but never mentions just “a kiss”. We can infer that Paul is referring to the “Kiss of Peace” on these occasions that was part of the Early Christian worship. Paul states:

“Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you” (Romans 16:16).

“All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss” (1 Corinthians 16:20).

“Greet one another with a holy kiss” (2 Corinthians 13:12).

“Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss” (1 Thessalonians 5:26).

John Chrysostom referred³⁵⁷ to Paul’s statement, “Greet one another with a holy kiss” (2 Corinthians 13:12). In this we declare that we are bound to each other. We kiss each other with the same lips that partake of the Lord’s Body and Blood, and that makes it a “holy kiss”.

“What is ‘holy?’ Not hollow, not treacherous like the kiss that Judas gave to Christ (Matthew 26:48). The kiss is given that it may be the fuel of love, that it may kindle the disposition, that we may so love each other, our brothers as their brothers, our children as their parents, our parents as their children. But even more! Those things are a disposition implanted by nature, but the Kiss of Peace is given by spiritual grace. Thus our souls are bound to each other. When we return after an absence we kiss each other. The mouth is that member which most of all declares to us the workings of the soul. About this holy kiss somewhat else may be said. We are the temple of Christ; we then kiss the porch and entrance of the temple when we kiss each other. Notice how many people kiss the porch of this temple, some stooping clown, others grasping it with their hand, and putting their hand to their mouth. Through these gates and doors Christ both entered into us, and still enters whenever we communicate. You who partake of the mysteries understand what I say. It is in no common manner that our lips are honored, when they receive the Lord’s Body. It is for this reason chiefly that we partake of the ‘Kiss of Peace’”.

Misuse of the Kiss of Peace

Among the misuses of the Kiss of Peace, the most obvious and glaring is the one given to Christ by His betrayer Judas Iscariot.

³⁵⁷ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Corinthians, XXX, v. 12.

John Chrysostom described³⁵⁸ the audacity and depravity that Judas exhibited in the Garden of Gethsemane when he betrayed Jesus. Judas used the “Kiss of Peace” that brothers use to show a warm regard for a close friend, as a capital crime arrest warrant. When Jesus received them, He first showed His power to thwart their purpose if He desired; then He willingly gave in to their deceit.

“Jesus foreknew that Judas would come to betray Him at Gethsemane; instead of running, He even went to meet him. ‘While He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and elders of the people’ (Matthew 26:47). Swords and clubs surely are the instruments of these priests! Again Jesus calls Judas ‘of the twelve’, and is not ashamed. Judas gave them a sign, ‘Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him’ (Matthew 26:48). What depravity had the traitor’s soul received! With what kind of eyes did he then look at his Master? With what mouth did he kiss Him? O accursed purpose; what did he devise? What did he dare? What sort of sign of betrayal did he give? ‘Whomever I shall kiss’, he said. He was instilled with boldness by his Master’s gentleness, which more than anything was sufficient to shame him, and to deprive him of all excuse since he was betraying One so meek.”

“But why does Jesus say this? Often when seized by them Jesus had gone out through the midst, without their knowing it (See Luke 4:30; John 8:59, 10:39). This also would have been done if it had not been His own will that He should be taken. To teach them this, He blinded their eyes, and Himself asked, ‘Whom are you seeking?’ (John 18:4) They didn’t know Him, even having lanterns and torches, and having Judas with them. As they said, ‘Jesus’, He said, ‘I AM’ and ‘they drew back and fell to the ground’ (John 18:6). Here again, He said to Judas, ‘Friend, why have you come?’” (Matthew 26:50)

“Having shown His own strength, then He yielded Himself. But John said, that even up to that moment He continued to reprove Judas, saying, ‘Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?’ (Luke 22:48) Are you not ashamed even of the form of the betrayal? Nevertheless, forasmuch as not even this checked Judas, He submitted to be kissed, and gave Himself up willingly. And they laid their hands on Him, and seized Him that night on which they ate the Passover.”

Chrysostom also noted³⁵⁹ that Christ treated Judas, who He knew would betray Him, exactly as He had instructed His followers to do to their enemies (Matthew 5:44-45).

“Christ repaid Judas, who was about to betray Him, with everything opposite from what we would think. He washed his feet, convicted him secretly, rebuked him sparingly, tended him, allowed him to share His table and His kiss, and not even by these was Judas made better. Nevertheless Christ continued doing His own part.”

Chrysostom further pointed out³⁶⁰ in detail the magnitude of Judas’ treachery, how cold and unfeeling he had become. Yet He was warm and friendly to Judas right to the end.

³⁵⁸ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, LXXXIII, 2.

³⁵⁹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, XIII, 3.

³⁶⁰ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans, XXI, v. 13.

Chrysostom made this an example for us on how we should deal with our enemies and those that hate us.

“Jesus shows us that we ought not to disassociate ourselves even from those that would lead us away to death. Do not tell me that so and so has done us grievous harm, but just consider what Christ did near the Cross, wishing to amend by His kiss the traitor by whom He was on the point of being betrayed. Notice how much power He used to shame him. He said, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?” (Luke 22:48) Who is there He would not have softened? Who is there that these words would not have made to yield? What a beast! Do not then say, that such a one murdered such a one, and that is why I disassociate myself from him. Even if he were on the point of thrusting a sword down into you, or plunging a dagger into your neck, kiss this same right hand! Christ even kissed the mouth that caused His death! Therefore we should not hate him that plots against us, but bewail and pity him. Such a one deserves pity at our hands, and tears. We are the servants of Him Who kissed even the traitor (I will not cease dwelling on that continually), and spoke words to him more gentle than the kiss. Jesus did not say, ‘O you foul and villainous traitor, is this the sort of recompense you return for so great a benefit?’ But in what words? ‘Judas’, using his own name, which is more like a person bemoaning, and recalling him, than one angry at him. Jesus does not say, your Teacher, your Master, and Benefactor, but ‘the Son of Man’. It is with One Who is so gently, so unpretentiously affected towards you, as even to kiss you at the time of betrayal, that a kiss was the signal for the betrayal. Is it with Him that you play the part of a traitor? Blessed are You, O Lord! What lowliness of mind, what forbearance have You given us examples of!”

Other misuses of the Kiss of Peace come in everyday life when we partake of the Eucharist in hypocrisy, pretending to love our brethren, but concealing our hatred or dislike. Of this Chrysostom stated³⁶¹ that it is an outrage:

“How shall we present ourselves before the judgment-seat of Christ, if we presume upon His body with polluted hands and lips? We would not attempt to kiss a king with an unclean mouth; yet the King of heaven do we kiss with an unclean soul? This is an outrage!”

Readings from James 1:1 to 2:13

Important Feast Days in the Orthodox Church often prescribe Readings from the Old Testament for the Vespers service the evening before the Feast Day. In some cases, such as with the Twelve Apostles, the Old Testament Readings are replaced with Readings from the New Testament. For example, the Readings for Vespers are the same for the Evangelist Mark as for the Apostle James the Son of Zebedee; and parts of the Readings from the Epistle of James for the Evangelist Mark are used also for the Readings for the Apostles Thomas, Philip and James the Son of Alphaeus.

The Usefulness of the Wisdom Literature of the Scriptures

³⁶¹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Ephesians, III, Moral.

James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings. My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him (James 1:1-5).

Cyril of Jerusalem contrasted³⁶² the Wisdom of God (such as the Wisdom Literature) with the wisdom of man. Paul referred to this contrast also where his message was not man's wisdom but the wisdom of God

“Our speech and our preaching is not in persuasive words of human wisdom (1 Corinthians 2:4). We stir now no sophistical contrivances; for these become exposed; we do not conquer words with words, for these come to an end; but we preach Christ Crucified (1 Corinthians 1:23), who has already been preached before by the Prophets. Please receive the testimonies, and seal them in your heart. Listen now to a few of the more important as time permits; having received these beginnings, be diligent to seek out the remainder. Don't let your hand be extended to receive, but withdrawn when it is time to work (Ecclesiasticus 4:31). ‘If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him’ (James 1:5). May He through your prayer grant utterance to us, who speak, and faith to you who listen.”

The Double-Minded

The term, “double-minded” occurs several places in Scripture. James stated, “Let a man ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. Let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; *he is* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away. For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits” (James 1:6-11). James also stated, “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded” (James 4:8).

The Psalmist stated, “I have inherited Your testimonies forever; for they are the joy of my heart. I have inclined my heart to perform Your ordinances forever, in return for Your mercies. I have hated transgressors; but I have loved Your Law” (Psalm 119:111-113 LXX). And again, “Everyone has spoken vanity to his neighbor; their lips are deceitful, they have spoken with a double heart” (Psalm 12:2 LXX).

But what does “double-minded” really mean? Gregory the Great described³⁶³ what double-mindedness is and what its effects are. It occurs when someone is crooked but pretends

³⁶² Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures, XIII, 8.

³⁶³ Gregory the Great, Pope of Rome, The Book of Pastoral Rule, III, 11.

he is wise and kind. The prophets described these people using the terms “fenced cities” and “lofty corners”; fenced in that they do not allow the truth to reach them; corners in that they are insincere and doubled back on themselves in duplicity.

“It is a special evil of the double-minded, that while they deceive others by their crooked and double conduct, they glory as though they were surpassingly prudent beyond others. They do not consider the strictness of retribution; they exult, miserable men that they are, in their own losses. Let them hear the power of divine rebuke, ‘Behold the day of the Lord cometh, great and horrible, the day of wrath, that day; a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of cloud and whirlwind, a day of trumpet and clangor, upon all fenced cities, and upon all lofty corners’ (Zephaniah 1:15-16). What is expressed by fenced cities but minds suspected and surrounded ever with a fallacious defense; minds which, as often as their fault is attacked, do not allow the darts of truth to reach them? What is signified by lofty corners (a wall being always double in corners) but insincere hearts? While they shun the simplicity of truth, they are in a manner doubled back on themselves in the crookedness of duplicity; what is worse, from their fault of insincerity, they lift themselves in their thoughts with the pride of prudence. Therefore the day of the Lord comes full of vengeance and rebuke on fenced cities and on lofty corners, because the wrath of the last judgment both destroys human hearts that have been closed against the truth, and exposes such as have been folded up in duplicities. Then the fenced cities fall, because souls which God has not penetrated will be damned. Then the lofty corners tumble, because hearts which erect themselves in the prudence of insincerity are prostrated by the sentence of righteousness.”

Double mindedness is listed among the worst sins³⁶⁴ in the Early Church, and there are many references to this among the early written documents. The sin of “double-mindedness” is spoken of in company with such sins as covetousness, lying and slander among others. These things are opposite Godliness, and are pleasing to demons.

Moses gave an example of a double-minded man, “If any man is afraid and of a fearful heart let him not go to war; let him go back and return home, lest he make the hearts of his brethren to fear as he himself is timid and frightened” (Deuteronomy 20:8). John Cassian referred³⁶⁵ to such a person as being “double-minded”; going to battle to fight what God has commanded, but being fearful of doing so.

“They are asked to withdraw from the battle and return to their homes, because a man cannot fight the Lord’s battle with a double heart. ‘He is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways’ (James 1:8). According to that Parable in the Gospel, he who goes out with ten thousand men against a king, who comes with twenty thousand, cannot possibly fight (Luke 14:31-32). While he is yet a great way off, ask for conditions of peace. That is, it is better for someone not even to take the first step towards the Lord’s ministry, rather than afterwards following it up with a lukewarm Faith, involving himself in still greater dangers.

³⁶⁴ See for example: Clement of Rome, 1st Epistle to Corinth, 23.

The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, 2

Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, II, ii, 6; II, iii, 21; IV, ii, 14; VII, I, 4.

³⁶⁵ John Cassian, Institutes of the Coenobia, VII, 15.

‘It is better that you should not vow, than that you should vow and not pay’ (Ecclesiastes 5:5 LXX). There is great insight for the one to be described as coming with ten thousand and the other with twenty. For the number of sins, which attack us, is far larger than that of the virtues which fight for us. But ‘no man can serve God and Mammon’ (Matthew 6:24). And ‘No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God’” (Luke 9:62).

Ambrose of Milan used³⁶⁶ anger as an illustration of double-mindedness. Anger digs up sin, but it is possible to be angry and not sin. If one is alternately angry and calm, he is not governing his anger; how will it be possible for him to govern others?

“It is an old saying: Accustom yourself to be consistent, that your life may set forth as it were a picture, always preserving the same representation which it has received. How can he be consistent who at one time is inflamed by anger, at another blazes up with fierce indignation, whose face now burns, and now again is changed to paleness, varying and changing color every moment? It is natural for one to be angry, but there is generally a cause; it is a man’s duty to restrain anger and not to be carried away like a lion by fury. He needs to know how to be quiet, how not to spread tales, how not to embitter family quarrels. It is written, ‘A wrathful man digs up sin’ (Proverbs 15:18). He will not be consistent who is double-minded; he cannot be consistent who cannot restrain himself when angry. David well says, ‘Be angry, and do not sin’ (Psalm 4:4). If we don’t govern our anger, we indulge our natural disposition; we cannot prevent anger but we may moderate it. Therefore even though we are angry, let our passion admit only such emotion as is according to nature, not sin contrary to nature. If we are unable to govern ourselves, how will we be able to govern others?”

The Unstable

James stated, “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. Let a man ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. Let not those men suppose that they will receive anything from the Lord; they are double-minded men, unstable in all their ways” (James 1:5-8).

Athanasius of Alexandria stated³⁶⁷ that the Arians of his day were double-minded and unstable in their ways. No one could pin them down regarding what they believed, and thus they were children of the devil.

“They are committing a crime in their thought to slander so great and ecumenical a Council as at Nicaea. They are in transgression when they dare to confront that good definition against Arianism, acknowledged as it is, by those who had taught them heresy. Even after signing the decrees of the Council, Eusebius of Nicomedia and his fellows changed again, and return like dogs to their own vomit of heresy. These slanderers deserve to be detested further, because they sacrifice their souls’ liberty to others; they are willing to take these

³⁶⁶ Ambrose of Milan, Letters, Epistle 63, 60.

³⁶⁷ Athanasius of Alexandria, Defense of the Nicene Definition, II, 4.

persons as masters of their heresy. They are double-minded men, unstable in all their ways (James 1:8); they don't have just one opinion, but change it back and forth, now recommending certain statements, but soon dishonoring them, and in turn recommending what they had previously slandered. This is 'the child of the devil', and the response of hucksters rather than of doctors. What our Fathers have delivered, this is truly doctrine; and this is truly the token of doctors, to confess the same thing with each other, and to vary neither from themselves nor from their fathers. They who don't have this character are to be called not true doctors but evil doctors. The Greeks, not witnessing to the same doctrines, but quarrelling one with another, have no truth of teaching; but the holy and trustworthy heralds of the truth agree together, and do not differ. Though they lived in different times, yet they one and all tend the same way, being prophets of the one God, and preaching the same Word harmoniously."

Basil the Great stated³⁶⁸ that men are like clouds, unstable, shifting with the winds. But he said that the Arians of his day were the worst of all, worse than the heathen. They were always changing their opinions, depending on who they were with, and who challenged them.

"Men are like clouds, shifting here and there in the sky with the change of the winds. Of all men who have ever come within my experience, the Arians are the most unstable. As to the other business of life, those who have lived with them may give evidence. But as to what is within my own knowledge, their inconsistency regarding the Faith, I have never myself observed it or heard from anyone else, of anything like it. Originally they were followers of Arius; then they went over to Hermogenes, who was diametrically opposed to the errors of Arius, as is evinced by the Creed originally recited by him at Nicaea. Hermogenes fell asleep, and then they went over to Eusebius, the leader of the chorus of the Arian ring, as we know on personal evidence. Leaving this, for whatever reasons, they came home again, and once more concealed their Arian sentiments. After reaching the episcopate, how many creeds did they generate? They generated one at Ancyra; another at Seleucia; another at Constantinople, the famous one; another at Lampsacus, then that of Nike in Thrace; and now again the creed of Cyzicus. They have suppressed the homoousion³⁶⁹, and are supporting the 'like in essence', while they subscribe with Eunomius the blasphemies against the Holy Spirit. All of the creeds which I have enumerated may not be opposed to one another, yet they alike exhibit the inconsistency of the men's minds, from their never standing by the same words."

John Chrysostom stated³⁷⁰ that there are some who have the Name of Faith, but who are unstable and easily led astray; Christ does not commit Himself to them, but conceals many things from them. Similarly He did not give signs to the Jewish leaders when they asked for them.

³⁶⁸ Basil the Great, Letter to Patrophilus, Bishop of Aegae, CCXLIV, 9.

³⁶⁹ "Homoousion" is the Greek word used at the Council of Nicaea to describe Jesus as being "consubstantial" with the Father. This word was used specifically to counteract the Arian opinion. The Arians tiptoed around this for many decades with terms such as "like in essence": that is, Christ is not equal to the Father, but is "like the Father".

³⁷⁰ John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, XXIV, 1.

“He Who dwells in men’s hearts, and enters into their thoughts, paid no attention to outward words. Knowing well that their warmth was but for a season, He didn’t place confidence in them as perfect disciples right away, nor committed all His teaching to them as though they had already become firm believers. To know what is in the heart of men belongs to God alone, ‘He looks on all the inhabitants of the earth; He fashions their hearts individually’ (Psalm 33:14-15). Solomon added, ‘You alone know the hearts of all the sons of men’ (1 Kings 8:39). He therefore didn’t need witnesses to learn the thoughts of His own creatures, and so He felt no confidence in them because of their temporary belief. Men, who know neither the present nor the future, often entrust everything without any reserve to persons who approach them deceitfully and who soon will fall away from them. Christ did not do so, for well He knew all their secret thoughts. There are many such now, who have the name of the Faith, but are unstable and easily led away; therefore Christ does not commit Himself to them, but conceals from them many things, just as we do not place confidence in mere acquaintances but only in real friends. Listen to what He said to His disciples toward the end of His ministry, ‘No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you’ (John 15:15). Why is this? He gave no signs to the Jews who asked for them, because they asked tempting Him. The asking for signs is a practice of tempters both then and now; for even now there are some that seek them and say, ‘Why don’t miracles take place at this present time?’ If you are faithful, as you ought to be, and love Christ as you ought to love Him, you have no need of signs; they are given to the unbelievers. ‘How then were they not given to the Jews?’ one asks. Given they certainly were; and if there were times when they asked and they did not receive them, it was because they asked them not that they might be delivered from their unbelief, but in order the more to confirm their wickedness.

Clement of Alexandria stated³⁷¹ that men sin by choosing the same things as the demons; by doing so, they become unstable and fickle like the demons.

“Let no one say that he who does wrong and sins transgresses through the agency of demons; for then he would be guiltless. He sins by choosing the same things as demons; being unstable, light and fickle in his desires, like a demon, he becomes a demoniac man. He, who is bad, having become through evil sinful by nature, becomes depraved, having what he has chosen. Being sinful, He sins also in his actions. Contrariwise, the good man does right. Therefore we call not only the virtues, but also right actions, good.”

Clement also stated³⁷² that most men are unstable and resemble storms. The Sabbath Day was an antidote: to restrain men from evil and direct them to doing good.

Most men have a disposition that is unstable and heedless, like the nature of storms. Those who lack faith have done many good things, and those of faith have done many evil things. But to disbelieve truth brings death, but to believe

³⁷¹ Clement of Alexandria, Stromata, VI, 12.

³⁷² Clement of Alexandria, Stromata, IV, 3.

truth brings life; again, to believe the lie and to disbelieve the truth hurries to destruction. The same is the case with self-restraint and licentiousness. To restrain one's self from doing good is the work of demons; but to keep from wrong is the beginning of salvation. This is why the Sabbath was ordained; by abstinence from evil, it indicates self-restraint.

Enduring Temptation

“Blessed *is* the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren” (James 1:12-16).

Athanasius of Alexandria, in documenting the Life of Antony the Great, noted³⁷³ that the struggle against temptation is a life-long endeavor in battling the demons.

“Let us struggle that wrath doesn’t rule us nor lust overcome us; for it is written, ‘The wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God’ (James 1:20). And, ‘When lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death’ (James 1:15). Thus living, let us keep guard carefully, and as it is written, ‘Keep your hearts with all watchfulness’ (Proverbs 4:23). We have terrible and crafty foes -- the evil spirits -- and against them we wrestle. As Paul said, ‘We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*’ (Ephesians 6:12). Great is their number in the air around us, and they are not far from us. But at this time it is pressing and necessary for us only to know their wiles against ourselves.”

Athanasius continued³⁷⁴ to describe the tactics of the demons. First they try temptations to get us to sin; if this doesn’t work, they try to frighten us into doing what they want. If they are beaten by this, they try to disguise themselves in spiritual things; if that fails, they bring their leader and start over again.

“If the demons see any Christians laboring cheerfully and advancing, they first make an attack by temptation and place hindrances to hamper our way, such as evil thoughts. But we need not fear their suggestions, for by prayer, fasting and faith in the Lord, their attack immediately fails. But even when they fail, they don’t cease, but knavishly by subtlety come on again. When they cannot deceive the heart openly with foul pleasures they approach in different disguise. Shaping displays they attempt to strike fear, changing their shapes, taking the forms of seductive women, wild beasts, creeping things, gigantic bodies, and troops of soldiers. Not even then do you need to fear their deceitful displays. They are nothing and quickly disappear, especially if a man fortifies himself beforehand

³⁷³ Athanasius of Alexandria, Life of Antony, 21.

³⁷⁴ Athanasius of Alexandria, Life of Antony, 23.

with faith and the sign of the cross. Yet they are bold and very shameless, for if they are beaten in this manner they make an onslaught in another manner. They pretend to prophesy, foretell the future, and show themselves of a height reaching to the roof and of great strength. They do this that they may stealthily catch by such displays those who could not be deceived by their arguments. If after all this they find the soul strengthened by faith and a hopeful mind, then they bring their leader to their aid.”

Jerome of Bethlehem, in writing against Montanus and Novatian, who contended that true Christians do not sin after Baptism, pointed out³⁷⁵ what James and Peter said. We all sin, but we are all able to repent. God remembers our good deeds and is not around just to punish sin. When we make it our goal to serve the Lord, temptations will come to us!

“Montanus and Novatian contend that it is ‘impossible to renew them again to repentance, those who crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put *Him* to an open shame’ (Hebrew 6:4-6). Paul corrects this notion by saying: ‘We are confident of better things of you, things that accompany salvation; for God *is* not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His Name, *in that* you have ministered to the saints, and still do minister’ (Hebrews 6:9-10). The unrighteousness of God would be great, if He merely punished sin, and did not welcome good works. I have so spoken, says Paul, to withdraw you from your sins, and to make you more careful through fear of despair. But, beloved, I am confident of better things of you, and things that accompany salvation. For it is not accordant with the righteousness of God to remember sins only and forget good works, and the fact that you have ministered and do minister to the Saints for His Name’s sake. James, knowing that the baptized can be tempted, and fall of their own free choice, says, ‘Blessed *is* the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him’ (James 1:12). That we may not think that we are tempted by God, James adds, ‘Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren’ (James 1:13-16). God created us with free will, and we are not forced by necessity either to virtue or to vice. Otherwise, if there is just necessity, there would be no crown. As in good works it is God who brings them to perfection, for ‘it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy’ (Romans 9:16) and gives us help that we may be able to reach the goal. So in things wicked and sinful, the seeds within us give the impulse, and these are brought to maturity by the devil. When he sees that we are building on the foundation of Christ, hay, wood, stubble, then he applies the match. Let us then build gold, silver, costly stones, and he will not venture to tempt us; although even thus there is not a sure and safe possession. The lion lurks in ambush to slay the innocent. ‘As a furnace tests a potter’s vessels, so a man’s reasoning process reveals his heart’ (Ecclesiasticus 27:5 LXX). Sirach also said, ‘My sons, if you

³⁷⁵ Jerome of Bethlehem, Against Jovinianus, II, 3.

come forward to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for temptation' (Ecclesiasticus 2:1 LXX). Again James says: 'Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was' (James 1:22-24). It would have been useless to warn them to add works to faith, if they could not sin after baptism. He tells us, 'Whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is guilty of all' (James 2:10). Which of us is without sin? 'God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all' (Romans 11:32). Peter also says: 'The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations'" (2 Peter 2:9).

John Cassian pointed out³⁷⁶ an important aspect of what we pray for in the Lord's Prayer. We do not pray to escape all temptation; we pray for the ability to endure it.

"We pray, 'And do not lead us into temptation' (Matthew 6:13), on which there arises no unimportant question. If we pray that we may not be allowed to be tempted, how then will our power of endurance be proven? 'A man who has not been tested knows little' (Ecclesiasticus 34:10 LXX); and again, 'Blessed is the man who endures temptation' (James 1:12). The clause then, 'Lead us not into temptation', does not mean 'do not permit us ever to be tempted', but do not permit us when we fall into temptation to be overcome. For Job was tempted, but was not led into temptation. He did not ascribe folly or blasphemy to God, nor with impious mouth did he yield to that wish of the tempter toward which he was drawn. Abraham was tempted; Joseph was tempted; but neither of them was led into temptation for neither of them yielded his consent to the tempter. Next there follows, 'But deliver us from evil'; i.e., do not allow us to be tempted by the devil above that we are able, but 'with the temptation also make the way of escape, that we may be able to bear it'" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

John Cassian noted³⁷⁷ how we go about enduring temptation: its foundation is profound humility. Patience during temptation is only worthy of admiration if it is preserved when attacked by enemies. It is like the house founded on the rock and not on the sand. Saints and sinners are both tempted the same; but the saint is not beaten even by a great assault while the sinner is overcome by even a small temptation.

"True patience and tranquility is neither gained nor retained without profound humility of heart. It will seek no external support from anything, if it has the internal support of the virtue of humility, its mother and its guardian. If we are disturbed when attacked by anyone it is clear that the foundations of humility have not been securely laid in us, and at the outbreak even of a small storm, our whole edifice is shaken and ruinously disturbed. Patience would not be worthy of praise and admiration if it only preserved its tranquility when attacked by no darts of enemies. It is grand and glorious because when the storms of temptation beat on it, it remains unmoved. Patience gets its name from the passions and endurance, and so no one can be called patient but one who bears

³⁷⁶ John Cassian, First Conference of Abbot Isaac, I, ix, 23.

³⁷⁷ John Cassian, Conference of Abbot Piamun, III, xviii, 13.

without annoyance all the indignities offered to him. It is not without reason that he is praised by Solomon, ‘A man slow to anger is better than a strong *man*; he that governs *his* temper is better than he that takes a city’ (Proverbs 16:32 LXX); and again: ‘A man slow to wrath abounds in wisdom: but a man of impatient spirit is very foolish’ (Proverbs 14:29 LXX). When anyone is overcome by a wrong and blazes up in a fire of anger, we should not say that the bitterness of the insult offered to him is the cause of his sin. Rather it is the revealing of secret weakness, in accordance with the parable our Lord spoke about the two houses, one of which was founded on a rock, and the other on the sand. On both houses the tempest of rain, water and storm beat equally; but that one which was founded on the solid rock felt no harm at all from the violence of the shock, while that which was built on the shifting and moving sand collapsed at once. It fell, not because it was struck by the rush of the storms and torrents. but because it was imprudently built on the sand. A saint does not differ from a sinner in this; he is tempted in the same way; but he is not beaten even by a great assault, while the other is overcome even by a slight temptation. The fortitude of any good man would not be worthy of praise if his victory was gained without his being tempted; there is no room for victory where there is no struggle and conflict. ‘Blessed *is* the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him’ (James 1:12). Paul said, ‘My strength is made perfect’, not in ease and delights, but ‘in weakness’ (2 Corinthians 12:9). ‘For behold’, says He, ‘Behold, I have made you this day as a strong city, and as a brazen wall, strong *against* all the kings of Judah, and the princes thereof, and the people of the land. They shall fight against you; but they shall by no means prevail against you; because I am with you, to deliver you”’ (Jeremiah 1:18-19 LXX).

Cyprian of Carthage stated³⁷⁸ that those receiving the crown of life will not be just the martyrs, but also those who were willing to be martyred but weren’t selected for death.

“I wish that the circumstances would permit me to present myself at this time with the martyrs; promptly and gladly would I fulfill all the duties of love towards our most courageous brethren in my appointed ministry. Do all those things that ought to be done with respect to those whom the divine condescension has rendered illustrious by their faith and virtue. Let there be also a more zealous watchfulness and care bestowed on the bodies of all those who, although they were not tortured in prison, yet depart by the glorious exit of death. Neither their virtue nor their honor is too little for them also to be allied with the blessed martyrs. As far as they could, they bore whatever they were equipped to bear. He who under the eyes of God has offered himself to tortures and to death, has suffered whatever he was willing to suffer; for it was not that he missed the tortures, but the tortures missed him. ‘Whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven’ (Matthew 10:32), said the Lord. Those receiving the crown of life have confessed Him; ‘He who endures to the end will be saved’ (Matthew 10:22), said the Lord. They have endured and have carried the uncorrupted and unstained merits of their virtues through, even to

³⁷⁸ Cyprian of Carthage, Epistles, XXXVI, 1.

the end. It is written, ‘Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life’ (Revelation 2:10). They have persevered in their faithfulness, steadfastness and invincibility, even to death. When to the willingness and the confession of the Name in prison and in chains is added also the conclusion of dying, the glory of the martyr is consummated.”

Understanding Our Place with God

James said, “Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures” (James 1:16-18). Let us look at some of the details of this.

The Father of Lights

We might ask, Who is “The Father of Lights”? The Father of Lights would seem to refer to God the Father, where He brought us forth by the word of truth, which seems to refer to His teachings from the Scriptures.

John of Damascus stated³⁷⁹ that the fair garden of the Scriptures, illumined by the Holy Spirit, bear us up to Christ and brings us through Him to the Father of Lights.

“Let us knock at that fair garden of the Scriptures, so fragrant, sweet and blooming, with its varied sounds of spiritual and divinely-inspired birds ringing all round our ears. It lays hold of our hearts, comforts the mourner, pacifies the angry and fills him with joy everlasting. It sets our mind on the gold-gleaming, brilliant back of the divine dove, whose bright pinions bear up to the only-begotten Son and Heir of the Husbandman of that spiritual Vineyard and brings us through Him to the Father of Lights. Let us not knock carelessly but zealously and constantly, lest knocking we grow weary. Thus it will be opened to us. If we read once or twice and do not understand what we read, let us not grow weary, but let us persist, let us talk much, let us enquire. For ‘ask your Father, and He will show you; your elders and they will tell you. Every man does not have that knowledge. Let us draw of the fountain of the garden perennial and purest waters springing into life eternal.”

The Lord Jesus Christ is often referred to as “The Light”, where this “light” is sometimes referred to as the uncreated light. For example:

- “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. John the Baptist came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world” (John 1:4-9).
- “The light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light,

³⁷⁹ John of Damascus, Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, IV, 15.

lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God” (John 3:19).

- “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life” (John 8:12).
- “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world” (John 9:5).
- “A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light” (John 12:35-36).
- “I have come *as* a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness” (John 12:46).
- “He alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light” (1 Timothy 6:16).
- “God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:5, 7).

When Paul met the Risen Christ on the Road to Damascus, it was the uncreated light that overwhelmed Paul and his companions. “As I journeyed and came near Damascus at about noon, suddenly a great light from heaven shone around me”. “Those who were with me indeed saw the light and were afraid, but they did not hear the voice of Him who spoke to me”. “Since I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of those who were with me, I came into Damascus” (Acts 22:6, 9, 11).

After the Second Coming of Christ, it will be this uncreated light that illumines everything. “The sun shall no longer be your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you; but the Lord will be to you an everlasting light”. “Your sun shall no longer go down, nor shall your moon withdraw itself; For the Lord will be your everlasting light” (Isaiah 60:19-20). “The nations, of those who are saved, shall walk in its light. The kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honor into it” (Revelation 21:24). “There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever” (Revelation 22:5). As a preview of the Second Coming, Peter, James and John saw Jesus as He really is: “Jesus was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light” (Matthew 17:2).

The Word of Truth

James said, “Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures” (James 1:18). Of this “word of truth”, Paul wrote, “In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory” (Ephesians 1:13-14). So then the “word of truth” is the Scriptures! Paul also wrote to Timothy about this, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15); where “rightly dividing the word of truth” refers to correctly interpreting the Scriptures.

Polycarp of Smyrna noted³⁸⁰ that Paul, when he was at Philippi, taught the word of truth

to the Church there.

“Neither I, nor anyone else, can come up to the wisdom of the blessed Paul. When he was among you, he accurately and steadfastly taught the word of truth in the presence of those who were then alive. When absent from you, he wrote you a letter, which, if you carefully study, you will find it to be the means of building you up in that faith which has been given you. If this is followed by hope, and preceded by love towards God, Christ, and our neighbor, it ‘is the mother of us all’” (Galatians 4:26).

Ignatius of Antioch warned³⁸¹ the same Philippians to beware of workers of iniquity, since they corrupt the word of truth.

“Take care in the flesh, the soul, and the spirit, while you think of things perfect, and turn yourselves away from the workers of iniquity, who corrupt the word of truth. Be strengthened inwardly by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Athanasius of Alexandria stated³⁸² that it is important to consider what we are nourished with. The soul can feed on either virtue or vice. If it feeds on virtue and the word of truth, the fruits of the Spirit result; if it feeds on vice, deeds of darkness result.

“Virtues and vices are the food of the soul and it can eat either of these two foods, according to its own will. If it is bent toward virtue, it will be nourished by virtues, righteousness, temperance, meekness, and fortitude; as Paul said, ‘Being nourished by the word of truth’ (1 Timothy 4:6). Such was the case with our Lord who said, ‘My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work’ (John 4:34). But if it is not thus with the soul and it inclines downwards, it is then nourished by nothing but sin. Thus the Holy Spirit, describing sinners and their food, referred to the devil when He said, ‘You broke to pieces the heads of the dragon; You gave him *as* food to the Ethiopian nations’ (Psalm 74:14 LXX). This is the food of sinners. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, being heavenly bread, is the food of the saints; ‘Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you’ (John 6:53). So the devil is the food of the impure, and of those who do nothing which is of the light, but work the deeds of darkness. Therefore, in order to withdraw and turn them from vices, He commands them to be nourished with the food of virtue; namely, humbleness of mind, lowliness to endure humiliations, and the acknowledgment of God.”

Gregory of Nyssa noted³⁸³ that the word of truth would seem to be recommended even by the voice of its enemies.

Gregory the Great stated³⁸⁴ that Christians should not injure the word of truth by yielding anything or by compromising our character.

³⁸⁰ Polycarp of Smyrna, Epistle to the Philippians, 3.

³⁸¹ Ignatius of Antioch, Epistle to the Philippians, 15.

³⁸² Athanasius of Alexandria, Festal Letters, I, 5.

³⁸³ Gregory of Nyssa, Against Eunomius, III, 3.

³⁸⁴ Gregory Nazianzen, Oration on The Last Farewell, XLII, 13.

“We show that our warfare is in behalf of Christ by fighting as Christ, the peaceable and meek, Who has borne our infirmities, fought. Though peaceable, we do not injure the word of truth, by yielding anything, just to gain a reputation for reasonableness. We do not pursue that which is good by means of evil; and we are peaceable by the legitimate character of our warfare, confined as it is to our own limits, and the rules of the Spirit.”

Basil the Great cautioned us³⁸⁵ not to be distressed at slander and mockery so long as the word of truth is on our side.

“So long as the word of truth is on our side, never be in any way distressed at the slander of a lie. Let no imperial threats scare you; do not be grieved at the laughter and mockery of your intimates, nor at the condemnation of those who pretend to care for you, and who put forward, as their most attractive bait to deceive, a pretense of giving good advice. Against them all let sound reason do battle, invoking the championship and aid of our Lord Jesus Christ, the teacher of the true Faith, for Whom to suffer is sweet, and ‘to die is gain’” (Philippians 1:21).

First-Fruits of His Creatures

James said, “Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures” (James 1:18). What did he mean by “the first-fruits of His creatures”? “First-fruits” originally referred to a tithe that was given to the Lord and was used by the priests³⁸⁶. “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest to the priest’” (Leviticus 23:10).

One aspect of the first-fruits was the Feast of Pentecost, where two loaves of bread, made from the recent wheat harvest, were offered to the Lord (Exodus 34:22; Leviticus 23:17-20). Since Pentecost³⁸⁷ refers to the ordination of the work of the Church, the two loaves refer to Jew and Gentile together being offered to the Lord in the Church. God referred to Israel as His first-fruits: “I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the first-fruits on the fig tree in its first season” (Hosea 9:10). There was to be an additional aspect concerning first-fruits, which can refer both to the work of the Church in this age and to what happens at the Second Coming of Christ. “For on My holy mountain, on the mountain height of Israel”, says the Lord God, “there all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, shall serve Me; there I will accept them, and there I will require your offerings and the first-fruits of your sacrifices, together with all your holy things. I will accept you as a sweet aroma when I bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you have been scattered; and I will be hallowed in you before the Gentiles. Then you shall know that I *am* the Lord, when I bring you into the land of

³⁸⁵ Basil the Great, Letter to Macarius and John, XVIII.

³⁸⁶ From the Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, VIII, iv, 30, in the Early Church, the first-fruits were brought to the Bishop, the presbyters and deacons and were used for the maintenance of the clergy, the virgins and the widows just like the command under the Mosaic Law, where the Bishop replaced the High Priest.

³⁸⁷ For more details on the Feast of Pentecost, see Mark Kern, The Hebrew Feast Days, St Athanasius Press, 3rd Edition, 2009.

Israel, into the country *for* which I raised My hand in an oath to give to your fathers” (Ezekiel 20:40-42).

At the Resurrection, our Lord Jesus Christ became our first-fruits when He rose from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:20). He was first; we will be like Him at His Second Coming. Just like the first-fruits of the wheat harvest, the subsequent wheat harvested is very much like the wheat harvested for the first-fruits. To understand this, we need to understand more about the meaning of Pentecost.

What happened on that Feast of Pentecost in Jerusalem c. 30 AD was the beginning of a second (or a new) covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34, Hebrews 8:8-13, 1 John 2:27) between God and His people. In Caesarea a few years later God emphasized that this covenant had two parts (or loaves), Jew and Gentile (Acts 10). Up until that time and continuing a number of years later, there was a reluctance, if not outright refusal, of the Hebrew believers to accept the Gentile believers unless the Gentile believers began following every statute of the First Covenant (see e.g. Acts 10:28, 11:6-8, 18, 15:4-11; Galatians 2:1-3, 11-14). According to Paul (Romans 2-6, Galatians 2:15-16, Hebrews 9:1-17) this was not necessary because of the differences in the covenants.

But this Feast of Pentecost was not just the beginning of a New Covenant between God and His people. It was also a beginning of a harvest. The harvest is represented by the 120 believers who had known Jesus during His 3½ year ministry, and who were “together with one accord” on this Feast of Pentecost (Acts 1:14-15, 2:1). Seed had been sown in their hearts (see the Parable of the Sower: (Matthew 13:3, 8, 18, 23; Mark 4; Luke 8) and it had taken root, grown and was about to be taken and offered to God as a First-Fruit wave offering. Just as the First-Fruit wheat (that was made into loaves) was the staple of the Hebrew diet, so these people (among whom are the Twelve Apostles) are the foundation of the Church that is about to be ordained (Revelation 21:14, 1 John 1:1-5, Acts 2:42).

In contrast with the Day of First-Fruits seven weeks earlier, where a sheaf of individual grains was offered as a wave offering, here two loaves of grain that has been ground, sifted, and blended, is offered as the wave offering. So it was with the disciples. At their Lord’s resurrection seven weeks earlier, they were, in a sense, a sheaf of individual grains, held together by seemingly little more than common experiences. They were not of one accord by any means as they had difficulty even believing one another’s reports on having seen the Lord (cf. Matthew 28:17, Mark 16:8-14, Luke 24:9-13, 36-40, John 20:24-25). But things were different on that Feast of Pentecost. Now they were very closely knit together. The sifting that Satan had been allowed to do (Luke 22:31) had taken its toll on their unbelief. And three thousand people were converted as a result of their “wave offering” to the Lord (Acts 2:1-41).

Thus they became the first-fruits of His creatures as James writes!

Irenaeus of Lyons stated³⁸⁸ that the Holy Spirit brought distant tribes of the earth to unity as an offering to the Father of the first-fruits of all nations.

³⁸⁸ Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies, III, xvii, 2.

“David asked the Holy Spirit on behalf of the human race, ‘Establish me with Your directing Spirit’ (Psalm 51:12 LXX). Luke says that He descended at the day of Pentecost on the disciples after the Lord’s ascension, having power to admit all nations to the entrance of life, and to the opening of the new covenant (Acts 2:38-47). Consequently with one accord in all languages, they uttered praise to God, the Spirit bringing distant tribes to unity, and offering to the Father the first-fruits of all nations. Therefore the Lord promised to send the Comforter (John 16:7), who should join us to God. A compacted lump of dough cannot be formed of dry wheat without fluid matter, nor can a loaf possess unity; so in like manner neither could we, being many, be made one in Christ Jesus without the water from heaven.”

Irenaeus also stated that the Lord established the Eucharist as the first-fruits of His own created things and as the new oblation of the New Covenant. Malachi foretold that this would happen. As we offer the first-fruits of His creation, honor and affection are shown toward the King. In doing this, we need to be reconciled to our brother and we should not come into His presence empty-handed. The Church alone can offer this oblation. Jews cannot since they have not received the Word through whom it is offered. Heretics (such as Cerinthus and Nicolas of Antioch³⁸⁹) cannot, since they portray God as being jealous of another’s property.

“The Lord gave³⁹⁰ directions to His disciples to offer to God the first-fruits of His own created things -- not as if He stood in need of them, but that they might be themselves neither unfruitful nor ungrateful -- He took that created thing, bread, and gave thanks, and said, ‘This is My body’. And the cup likewise, which is part of that creation to which we belong, He confessed to be His blood, and taught the new oblation of the new covenant (Matthew 26:26-28). The Church received this from the Apostles and offers to God throughout the entire world, to Him who gives us as the means of subsistence the first-fruits of His own gifts in the New Testament. Malachi spoke of this: ‘I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord Almighty, and I will not accept a sacrifice at your hands. For from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same my name has been glorified among the Gentiles; and in every place incense is offered to My Name, and a pure offering: for My Name is great among the Gentiles, says the Lord Almighty’ (Malachi 1:10-11 LXX). This indicates in the plainest manner, by these words, that the former people [the Jews] shall indeed cease to make offerings to God, but that in every place sacrifice shall be offered to Him, and that a pure one; and His Name is glorified among the Gentiles.”

The oblation of the Church³⁹¹, therefore, which the Lord gave instructions to be offered throughout the entire world, is accounted with God a pure sacrifice, and is acceptable to Him. Not that He stands in need of a sacrifice from us, but that he who offers is himself glorified in what he does offer, if his gift be accepted. By the gift both honor and affection are shown forth towards the King. The Lord, wishing us to offer it in all simplicity and innocence, expressed Himself, ‘Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that

³⁸⁹ For more details on early heresies and their effect on the Church, see Mark Kern, Simon Magus the Heresiarch, St Athanasius Press, 2004.

³⁹⁰ Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies, IV, xvii, 5.

³⁹¹ Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies, IV, xviii, 1.

your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift' (Matthew 5:23-24). We are bound, therefore, to offer to God the first-fruits of His creation, as Moses also says, 'You shall not appear in the presence of the Lord your God empty-handed' (Deuteronomy 16:16 LXX). So that man, being accounted as grateful, by those things in which he has shown his gratitude, may receive that honor which flows from Him.

"The Church offers³⁹² with single-mindedness; her gift is justly reckoned a pure sacrifice with God. As Paul says, 'I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things *sent* from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God' (Philippians 4:18). For it behooves us to make an oblation to God, and in all things to be found grateful to God our Maker, in a pure mind, and in faith without hypocrisy, in well-grounded hope, in fervent love, offering the first-fruits of His own created things. The Church alone offers this pure oblation to the Creator, offering to Him, with giving of thanks, [the things taken] from His creation. But the Jews do not offer thus; for their hands are full of blood; for they have not received the Word, through whom it is offered to God. Nor do any of the gatherings of the heretics [offer this]. For some, by maintaining that the Father is different from the Creator, when they offer to Him what belongs to this creation of ours, set Him forth as being covetous of another's property, and desirous of what is not His own."

John of Damascus described³⁹³ the bread of the Lord's Table as the first-fruits of the future bread which is necessary for existence. The bread and wine are the deified body and blood of Christ. The bread is not plain bread, but bread united with divinity, thus having two natures. Melchizedek foreshadowed this and the Temple show-bread was an image. As a result, eating unworthily brings damnation down on oneself. We call this "communion" because through it we have communion with Christ and we all become one body of Christ.

"The bread and the wine are not merely figures of the body and blood of Christ (God forbid!) but the deified body of the Lord itself. The Lord has said, 'This is My body', not, this is a figure of My body; and 'My blood', not, a figure of My blood. On a previous occasion He had said to the Jews, 'Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed' (John 6:55); and again, 'He that eats Me, shall live'" (John 6:51).

"The bread of the communion is not plain bread but bread united with divinity. But a body which is united with divinity is not one nature, but has one nature belonging to the body and another belonging to the divinity that is united to it, so that the compound is not one nature but two."

"With bread and wine Melchizedek, the priest of the most high God, received Abraham on his return from the slaughter of the Gentiles (Genesis 14:18). That table pre-imaged this mystical table, just as that priest was a type and image of Christ, the true high-priest. 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek' (Psalm 110:4). Of this bread the show-bread was an

³⁹² Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies, IV, xviii, 4.

³⁹³ John of Damascus, Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, IV, 13.

image. This surely is that pure and bloodless sacrifice which the Lord said is offered to Him from the rising to the setting of the sun” (Malachi 1:11).

“The body and blood of Christ are making for the support of our soul and body, without being consumed or suffering corruption, but for our being and preservation, a protection against all kinds of injury, a purging from all uncleanness. They purify from diseases and all kinds of calamities; according to the words of the Apostles, ‘If we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world’ (1 Corinthians 11:31-32). This too is what he says, ‘He who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body’ (1 Corinthians 11:29). Being purified by this, we are united to the body of Christ and to His Spirit and become the body of Christ.”

“This bread is the first-fruits of the future bread which is necessary for existence (*epiousios*). The word *epiousios* signifies either the future, that is Him Who is for a future age, or else Him of Whom we partake for the preservation of our essence. Whether then it is in this sense or that, it is fitting to speak so of the Lord's body. For the Lord's flesh is life-giving spirit because it was conceived of the life-giving Spirit. For what is born of the Spirit is spirit. But I do not say this to take away the nature of the body, but I wish to make clear its life-giving and divine power” (John 6:63).

“But if some persons called the bread and the wine antitypes of the body and blood of the Lord, as did the divinely inspired Basil, they said so not after the consecration but before the consecration, so calling the offering itself.”

“Participation is spoken of; through it we partake of the divinity of Jesus. Communion, too, is spoken of, and it is an actual communion, because through it we have communion with Christ and share in His flesh and His divinity; we have communion and are united with one another through it. Since we partake of one bread, we all become one body of Christ and one blood, and members one of another, being of one body with Christ.”

What God Seeks of Us

James stated, “So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted Word, which is able to save your souls” (James 1:19-21).

There is a particular kind of meekness and humility that we need to adapt to in order to relate to an infinite God. Above all, we need to receive the Word which is implanted in us at Baptism. How do we do this, and what are some things to watch out for?

Slow to Speak

We might think of someone who is always talking – especially talking down to others – as being arrogant and rude. This would imply that someone of the opposite personality is more

polite and courteous. But is there more to it than that? How is being “slow to speak” connected to the “Righteousness of God”?

Gregory the Great, Pope of Rome, warned³⁹⁴ against idle words and excessive speaking; this can lead to all kinds of grief. Christ stated that we must give an account for every idle word at Judgment Day. Therefore James cautioned everyone to be quick to hear and slow to speak.

“The lazy mind for the most part lapses by degrees into downfall; as we neglect to guard against idle words we go on to hurtful ones. At first it pleases us to talk of other men’s affairs; afterwards the tongue gnaws at the lives of those of whom we talk; but at last we break out into open slander. As we do this, we sow prickling thorns, quarrels arise, the torches of enmities are kindled, and the peace of hearts is extinguished. Solomon well said, ‘the beginning of strife is like releasing water (Proverbs 17:14). To release water is to let loose the tongue to a flux of speech. On the other hand, in a good sense it is said, ‘The words of a man’s mouth are deep waters; the wellspring of wisdom is a flowing brook (Proverbs 18:4). He therefore who releases water is the wellspring of strife, because he who does not curb his tongue drives away concord. Anyone who gives himself to much speaking cannot keep the way of righteousness. Solomon says, ‘In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise’ (Proverbs 10:19). The righteousness of the mind is desolated when there is no limit to immoderate speaking. James says, ‘If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one’s religion is useless.’ (James 1:26). Again he says, ‘let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath’ (James 1:19). Again, defining the power of the tongue, James adds, ‘No man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison’ (James 3:8). The Truth in person admonishes us, ‘For every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the Day of Judgment’ (Matthew 12:36). Every word is idle that lacks either a reason of just necessity or an intention of pious usefulness. If then an account is required of idle discourse, let us weigh well what punishment results from much speaking, in which there is also the sin of hurtful words.”

John Cassian wrote³⁹⁵ that those who desire to become teachers need to become perfected by the excellence of their own actions. By overcoming the passions, they prepare a holy tabernacle in their heart for spiritual knowledge. This holy tabernacle gets prepared by our being “slow to speak”. Moving too quickly into teaching can cause an arrogance of vainglory; with this, it is impossible to obtain the gift of true knowledge.

“If you are anxious to attain to the light of spiritual knowledge, not wrongly for an idle boast but for the sake of being made better men, you are first inflamed with the longing for that blessedness, of which we read, ‘Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God’ (Matthew 5:8). You may also attain to that of which the angel said to Daniel, ‘Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever’ (Daniel 12:3). And in another prophet, ‘Sow for

³⁹⁴ Gregory the Great, Book of Pastoral Rule, III, 14.

³⁹⁵ John Cassian, 1st Conference of Abbot Nesteros, II, xiv, 9.

yourselves righteousness; gather in the fruit of life; light for yourselves the light of knowledge; seek the Lord till the fruits of righteousness come upon you (Hosea 10:12 LXX). Keep up that diligence in reading, and endeavor with all eagerness to gain in the first place a thorough grasp of practical, i.e., ethical knowledge. Without this, theoretical purity cannot be obtained. Only those, who are perfected not by the words of others who teach them, but by the excellence of their own actions, can after much expenditure of effort and toil attain as a reward for it. They gain their knowledge not from meditation on the law but from the fruit of their labor; they sing with the Psalmist, ‘I gain understanding by thy commandments; therefore I have hated every way of unrighteousness’ (Psalm 119:104 LXX). Having overcome all their passions, they say with confidence, ‘I will sing, and I will understand in the undefiled way’ (Psalm 101:1-2). He, who is striving in an undefiled way in the course of a pure heart, as he sings the Psalm, understands the words which are chanted. Therefore if you want to prepare in your heart a holy tabernacle of spiritual knowledge, purge yourselves from the stain of all sins, and rid yourselves of the cares of this world. It is an impossibility for the soul which is taken up even to a small extent with worldly troubles, to gain the gift of knowledge or to become an author of spiritual interpretation, and diligent in reading holy things. Be careful therefore in the first place, to impose absolute silence on your lips, in order that your zeal for reading and the efforts of your purpose may not be destroyed by vain pride. This is the first practical step towards learning, to receive the regulations and opinions of all the Elders with an earnest heart, and with lips that are dumb; and diligently to lay them up in your heart, and endeavor rather to perform than to teach them. From teaching comes the dangerous arrogance of vainglory; but from performing comes the fruit of spiritual knowledge. You should never venture to say anything in the conference of the Elders unless some ignorance that might be injurious or a matter which it is important to know leads you to ask a question. Some who are puffed up with vainglory, pretend that they ask, in order really to show off the knowledge which they possess. It is impossible for one, who takes to the pursuit of reading with the purpose of gaining the praise of men, to be rewarded with the gift of true knowledge. One, who is bound by the chain of this passion, is sure to be also in bondage to other faults, and especially to that of pride. If he is baffled by his encounter with practical and ethical knowledge, he will certainly not attain that spiritual knowledge which springs from it. Be then in all things ‘swift to hear, but slow to speak’ (James 1:19), lest there come upon you that which is noted by Solomon, ‘If you see a man who is quick to speak, know that there is more hope for a fool than for him’ (Proverbs 29:20). Do not presume to teach anyone in words what you have not already performed in deed.”

The Righteousness of God

What does “The Righteousness of God” mean? Paul stated, “But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. There is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:21-23). Paul continued, “He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the

righteousness of God in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:21). Regarding the Jewish leaders, Paul said, “For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God” (Romans 10:3). James summarized the situation: “The wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God” (James 1:20). Paul describes our rational response to God: “Do not present your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God” (Romans 6:13).

Thus the Righteousness of God comes by faith, but there is a responsibility on our part to show the fruit of our righteousness by our deeds. As a result of this Gift of God, we are His inheritance (Ephesians 1:18) and we are seated with Christ on the Throne of God (Ephesians 2:6). It is difficult for us to comprehend the enormity of what Christ has done for us, and the tendency is to just slough it off as unimportant. The Mosaic Law has not been discarded; it still serves a useful purpose, but not the purpose it used to serve. Those who try to live by the Mosaic Law exclusively never attain to the Righteousness of God, and will have problems at Judgment Day.

John Chrysostom outlined³⁹⁶ briefly the declaring of the Righteousness of God. It is like Christ declaring His riches, His life or His power. We shouldn’t doubt or shun it; just accept it.

What does it mean to demonstrate His righteousness? (Romans 3:25) Like the demonstrating of His riches, not only for Him to be rich Himself, but also to make others rich! Or like the demonstrating of life, not only that He is Himself living, but also that He makes the dead to live! Or like the demonstrating of His power, not only that He is Himself powerful, but also that He makes the feeble powerful. So also is the demonstrating of His righteousness; not only that He is Himself righteous, but that He also makes them that are filled with the putrefying sores of sin suddenly righteous. In explaining this ‘demonstrating’, Paul has added, ‘That He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus’ (Romans 3:26). Don’t doubt then; it is not of works, but of faith. Don’t shun the righteousness of God, for it is a blessing in two ways; because it is easy, and also open to all men. Don’t be bashful and shamefaced! If He Himself openly demonstrates Himself to do something, and He finds a delight and a pride in it, how can we be dejected and hide our face at what our Master glories in?

Chrysostom also described³⁹⁷ the enormity of what Christ did at the Cross and how great is the righteousness of God. Christ didn’t just die for our sin; He who knew no sin, who was righteousness itself, was made to be sin. He didn’t just die on the Cross; He was both cursed and disgraced also. The result of this is that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

“What has Christ done? ‘He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us’ (2 Corinthians 5:21). Had He achieved nothing but done only this, think how great a thing it were to give His Son for those that had outraged Him. He has not only achieved mighty things, but besides, He has allowed Him that did no wrong to be punished for those who had done wrong. But Paul did not say this; he mentioned something which is far greater than this. ‘Him that knew no sin’, he

³⁹⁶ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans, VII, vv. 24-25.

³⁹⁷ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Corinthians, XI, 5.

says, Him that was righteousness itself, ‘He made sin’; that is, He allowed Christ to be condemned as a sinner, as one cursed to die. ‘Cursed *is* everyone who hangs on a tree’ (Galatians 3:13). To die thus was far greater than just to die; and this he also implied, ‘He became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross’ (Philippians 2:8). This thing carried with it not only punishment, but also disgrace. Reflect therefore how great things He bestowed on us. A great thing indeed it was for even a sinner to die for anyone; but He who underwent this was both righteous and died for sinners. Not only did He die, but even as one cursed; and not as cursed only does He die, but thereby freely bestowing upon us those great goods which we never looked for. He says, that ‘we might become the righteousness of God in Him’ (2 Corinthians 5:21). What words, what thought shall be adequate to realize these things? ‘For the righteous’, ‘He made a sinner; that He might make the sinners righteous’. Rather, he didn’t say even this, but what was far greater; for the word he employed is not the habit, but the quality itself. He didn’t say ‘made’ Him a sinner, but ‘made Him sin’; not ‘Him that had not sinned’ only, but ‘that had not even known sin’. He did this that we ‘might become’, he did not say ‘righteous’, but, ‘righteousness’, and, ‘the righteousness of God’. This is the righteousness ‘of God’, when we are justified not by works, in which case it were necessary that not a spot even should be found, but by grace, in which case all sin is done away. At the same time it doesn’t allow us to be lifted up, seeing the whole is the free gift of God; this teaches us also the greatness of that which is given. That which was before was a righteousness of the Law and of works, but this is ‘the righteousness of God’”.

Irenaeus of Lyons stated³⁹⁸ that Jesus did not call the Mosaic Law “commandments of men”; that referred to the traditions of the Jewish leaders. As a result, they were ignorant of and did not submit themselves to the righteousness of God.

“Jesus said to His disciples, ‘The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay *them* on men’s shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers’ (Matthew 23:2-4). He therefore did not throw blame on the Law that was given by Moses, when He exhorted it to be observed, before Jerusalem was destroyed. But He *did* throw blame upon those persons, because they repeated indeed the words of the Law, yet were without love. For this reason were they held as being unrighteous as respects God, and as respects their neighbor. As Isaiah says, ‘These people draw near to me with their mouth, and they honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; but in vain do they worship me, teaching the commandments and doctrines of men’ (Isaiah 29:13 LXX). He does not call the Law given by Moses commandments of men, but the traditions of the elders themselves which they had invented; in upholding this they made the Law of God of no effect, and were on this account also not subject to His Word. This is what Paul says concerning these men, ‘For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. Christ *is* the end

³⁹⁸ Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies, IV, xii, 4.

of the Law for righteousness to everyone who believes' (Romans 10:3-4). How is Christ the end of the Law, if He is not also the final Cause of it? He who has brought in the end, has Himself also wrought the beginning. It is He who Himself said to Moses, 'I have surely seen the affliction of my people that is in Egypt, and I have come down to deliver them' (Exodus 3:7-8 LXX). It was customary from the beginning with the Word of God to ascend and descend for the purpose of saving those who were in affliction."

John Chrysostom stated³⁹⁹ that the Jewish leaders never achieved the righteousness of the Law; and since they did not submit themselves to the righteousness of God, they had nothing. This was their own fault, and happened due to pride, wickedness, and unkindness.

"How did the Gentiles surpass the Jews in godliness? And how did such blindness come upon the Jews? Listen to Paul explain it; he searched exactly into these things, and didn't cease until he had found the cause, and had declared it to all others. (1 Corinthians 9:17) 'They (the Jews), being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God' (Romans 10:3). Therefore they have suffered this. Again, explaining the same matter in other terms, he says, 'What shall we say then? The Gentiles, who didn't follow after righteousness, have attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the Law of righteousness, has not attained to the Law of righteousness. Why? Because they didn't seek it by faith! They stumbled at that stumbling stone' (Romans 9:32). His meaning is this: 'These men's unbelief has been the cause of their misfortunes, and their haughtiness was parent of their unbelief'. Having before enjoyed greater privileges than the heathen, through having received the Law, through knowing God, and the rest which Paul enumerates, the Jews after the coming of Christ saw the heathen and themselves called on equal terms through faith. After faith received one of the circumcision in nothing preferred to the Gentile, they came to envy and were stung by their haughtiness, and could not endure the unspeakable and exceeding loving-kindness of the Lord. This has happened to them from nothing else but pride, wickedness, and unkindness."

Tertullian stated⁴⁰⁰ that the Righteousness of God refers to the judgment that we will undergo as recompense for our deeds. Even the great Apostle Paul did not feel that he had yet arrived at the hope of righteousness.

"Concerning our expectation and hope Paul writes to the Galatians: 'We through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith' (Galatians 5:5). He says, 'we wait for it', not that we are in possession of it. By the righteousness of God, he means that judgment which we shall have to undergo as the recompense *of our deeds*. It is in expectation of this for himself that he writes, 'If by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected' (Philippians 3:11-12). He had believed, and had known all mysteries, as an elect vessel and the *great* teacher of the

³⁹⁹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, IX, 1.

⁴⁰⁰ Tertullian, On the Resurrection of the Flesh, II, vi, 23.

Gentiles. But for all that he goes on to say, ‘I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me’ (Philippians 3:12). Actually more: ‘Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended’” (Philippians 3:13)

What We Must Do

James said, “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect Law of liberty and continues *in it*, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.”

“If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion *is* useless. Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world.”

Doers, not just Hearers of the Word

Paul said the same thing as James: “not the hearers of the law *are* just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified” (Romans 2:13). We must actually do what we say we believe or we become hypocrites.

John Chrysostom pointed out⁴⁰¹ that knowing what to do isn't good enough; we must actually do it to become doers of the Word.

“If we know what to do, happy are we if we do them. But to know what to do is not enough. For Scripture says, ‘Not the hearers of the Law, but the doers of a Law will be justified’ (Romans 2:13). Knowledge itself condemns, when it is without action and deeds of virtue. Therefore that we may escape the condemnation, let us follow after the practice, that we may obtain those good things that are promised to us, by the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

John Cassian pointed out⁴⁰² that doers of the Word are promised admittance into the Kingdom of Heaven. However, there comes a time when one cannot do these things anymore, such as due to physical infirmity in old age. The reward for doing them does not go away however.

“The Lord Himself promises the reward of the kingdom of heaven to works, when He said, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink, etc.’ (Matthew 25:34-35). Will the effort of fasting, diligence in reading, works of mercy, justice, piety, and kindness be taken away from us, and not continue with the doers of them? If so how shall these works be taken away, when they admit the doers of them into the kingdom of heaven?”

⁴⁰¹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Philippians, V, v. 3.

⁴⁰² John Cassian, 1st Conference of Abbot Moses, I, I, 9-10.

“The reward for a good work will not be taken away, as the Lord Himself says: ‘Whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold *water* in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward’ (Matthew 10:42). But the doing of a thing, which either bodily necessity, or the onslaught of the flesh, or the inequalities of this world compel to be done, will be taken away. Diligence in reading and self-denial in fasting are usefully practiced for purifying the heart and chastening the flesh in this life only, as long as ‘the flesh lusts against the spirit’ (Galatians 5:17). Sometimes we see that even in this life they are taken away from those men who are worn out with excessive labor, bodily infirmity or old age, and cannot be practiced by them.”

John Chrysostom illustrated⁴⁰³ how Jesus convicted the Jewish leaders that they were not doers of the Word, but the Gentiles were. He used their own words to convict them.

“Jesus convicted the Jewish leaders by a parable, intimating both their unreasonable obstinacy, and the submissiveness of those who were utterly condemned by them (the Gentiles). These two children in the parable declare what came to pass with respect to the Gentiles and the Jews. The Gentiles did not undertake to obey, were not hearers of the Law, but showed their obedience in their works. The Jews said, ‘All things that God has spoken, we will do, and we will listen to’ (Exodus 19:8 LXX), but in their works were disobedient. For this reason, that they might not think the Law would benefit them, He shows that this same thing condemns them, like Paul also said, ‘Not the hearers of the Law *are* just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified’ (Romans 2:13). That He might make them self-condemned, He causes the judgment to be delivered by themselves, like He does also in the ensuing parable of the vineyard” (Matthew 21:33-44).

Cyprian of Carthage stated⁴⁰⁴ that what we do does not follow present glory but future glory. As we do good works, we need to be patient to allow the fruit of our works to develop, especially to the household of faith.

“If hope and faith may attain their result, there is need of patience. We are not following after present glory, but future, according to what Paul warns us, ‘We were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for *it* with perseverance’ (Romans 8:24-25). Therefore, waiting and patience are needful, that we may fulfill that which we have begun to be, and may receive that which we believe and hope for, according to God’s own showing. Moreover, Paul also instructs the righteous, the doers of good works, and those who lay up for themselves treasures in heaven, that they also should be patient. He teaches them, ‘Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith’” (Galatians 6:9-10).

⁴⁰³ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, LXVII, 2.

⁴⁰⁴ Cyprian of Carthage, Treatises, IX, 13.

John Cassian stated⁴⁰⁵ that as Judge, God considers the purpose and aim of what we do. He considers the inner goodness of the heart and the disposition of the doer. One man may be justified by telling a lie and another may be condemned for telling the truth. He lists examples from the Scriptures.

“God is not only the Judge and inspector of our words and actions, but He also looks into their purpose and aim. If He sees that anything has been done or promised by someone for the sake of eternal salvation and shows insight into Divine contemplation, He looks at the inner goodness of the heart and regards the desire of the will rather than the actual words spoken. He takes into account the aim of the work and the disposition of the doer. One man may be justified by means of a lie, while another may be guilty of a sin of everlasting death by telling the truth. The patriarch Jacob was not afraid to imitate the hairy appearance of his brother’s body by wrapping himself up in skins, and to his credit acquiesced in his mother’s instigation of a lie for this object. He saw that in this way there would be bestowed on him greater gains of blessing and righteousness than by keeping to the path of simplicity. He did not doubt that the stain of this lie would at once be washed away by the flood of the paternal blessing, and would speedily be dissolved like a little cloud by the breath of the Holy Spirit. Richer rewards of merit would be bestowed on him by means of this fraud which he put on than by means of the truth.”

“Doeg the Edomite told nothing but the truth, when he told Saul, ‘I saw the son of Jesse in Nob, with Ahimelech the son of Ahitub the priest, who consulted the Lord for him, gave him provisions, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine’ (1 Samuel 22:9-23). For this true story he was condemned. It is said of him by the prophet: ‘God shall destroy you forever, pluck you up and tear you out of your tabernacle, and your root from the land of the living’ (Psalm 52:1-5). He then for showing the truth is forever plucked and rooted up out of that land in which the harlot Rahab with her family is planted for her lie. We remember that Samson most injuriously betrayed to his wicked wife the truth which he had hidden for a long time by a lie; the truth so inconsiderately disclosed was the cause of his own deception, because he had neglected to keep the command of the prophet, ‘Guard the doors of your mouth from her who lies in your bosom’” (Micah 7:5).

The Law of Liberty

James said, “He who looks into the perfect Law of liberty and continues *in it*, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does” (James 1:22-25).

We are given considerable freedom in what we do. Thus the word of God that we received is called “The Law of Liberty”. But exactly what is meant by “The Law of Liberty”?

Irenaeus of Lyons referred⁴⁰⁶ to the Law of Liberty as the word of God that was preached

⁴⁰⁵ John Cassian, 2nd Conference of Abbot Joseph, II, xvii, 17 & 20.

⁴⁰⁶ Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies, IV, xxxiv, 4.

by the Apostles. This was the Law that went forth from Jerusalem that caused the Gentiles to beat their swords into plows and their spears into pruning hooks. The plows and pruning hooks are the Creation of man beginning with Adam. Christ joined the beginning to the end by fixing the iron to the wood in His Incarnation, joining man to God through the Cross.

“From the Lord’s advent, the new covenant which brings back peace, and the Law which gives life, has gone forth over the whole earth. As the prophets said, ‘Out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem; and He shall rebuke many people. They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore’ (Isaiah 2:4). If another Law and word, going forth from Jerusalem, brought in such a reign of peace among the Gentiles which received the Word, and convinced, through them, many a nation of its folly, then it appears that the prophets spoke of some other person. The Law of liberty, that is, the word of God, preached by the Apostles who went forth from Jerusalem throughout all the earth, caused such a change in the state of things, that these nations formed their swords and war-lances into ploughshares, and changed them into pruning-hooks for reaping grain. That is, they converted them into instruments used for peaceful purposes, and they are now unaccustomed to fighting; when struck, they offer also the other cheek (Matthew 5:39). The prophets have not spoken these things of any other person, but of Him who effected them. This person is our Lord, and in Him is that declaration borne out; since it is He Himself who has made the plough, and introduced the pruning-hook, that is, the first introduction of man, which was the creation exhibited in Adam, and the gathering in of the produce in the last times by the Word. For this reason, since He joined the beginning to the end, and is the Lord of both, He has finally displayed the plough, in that the wood has been joined on to the iron, and has thus cleansed His land. The Word has been firmly united to flesh, and in its mechanism fixed with pins; He has reclaimed the savage earth. In the beginning, He figured the pruning-hook by means of Abel, pointing out that there should be a gathering in of a righteous race of men. He said, ‘See how the just man has perished, and no one lays *it* to heart; and righteous men are taken away, and no one considers it’ (Isaiah 57:1 LXX). These things were acted beforehand in Abel; they were also previously declared by the prophets, but were accomplished in the Lord’s person. The same is still true with regard to us, the body following the example of the Head.”

John of Damascus stated⁴⁰⁷ that the Law of Liberty carries forward into eternity after bodily servitude comes to an end.

“We desire to cease from sin and devote ourselves to the service of God. But our body, like a beast of burden, hinders us; so we urge it forward. These are the things which the spiritual Law of Christ enjoins on us and those who observe that become superior to the Law of Moses. When that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When the covering of the Law, that is, the veil, is torn apart through the crucifixion of the Savior, and the Spirit shines forth with tongues of fire, the letter shall be done away with, bodily things shall

⁴⁰⁷ John of Damascus, Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, IV, 23.

come to an end, the Law of servitude shall be fulfilled, and the Law of liberty shall be bestowed on us. We shall celebrate the perfect rest of human nature the day after the resurrection, on which the Lord Jesus, the Author of Life and our Savior, shall lead us into the heritage promised to those who serve God in the spirit. The heritage into which He entered Himself as our forerunner, and where the gates of Heaven are opened to Him, He took His seat in bodily form at the right hand of the Father, where those who keep the spiritual Law shall also come.”

Irenaeus of Lyons stated⁴⁰⁸ that those who refused to come to the marriage supper cannot say that God is at fault. They have apostatized from the light and transgressed the Law of Liberty; their imperfection is their own fault.

“If we will not believe in Him, and flee from His hands, the cause of our imperfection shall be in us who didn’t obey, and not in Him who called us. He commissioned messengers to call people to the marriage, but those who did not obey Him deprived themselves of the royal supper. The skill of God is not defective; He has power over the stones to raise up children to Abraham. The man who does not obtain it is himself the cause of his own imperfection. In like manner, the light doesn’t fail because of those who have blinded themselves; while it remains the same as ever, those who are blinded are involved in darkness through their own fault. The light never enslaves anyone by necessity; God does not exert compulsion on anyone unwilling to accept the exercise of His skill. Those persons, who have apostatized from the light given by the Father, and transgressed the Law of liberty, have done so through their own fault; they have been created free agents, and possess power over themselves.”

How the Mosaic Law Fits

James said, “My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with partiality. For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, ‘You sit here in a good place’, and say to the poor man, ‘You stand there’, or, ‘Sit here at my footstool’, have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?”

“Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world *to be* rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? Do they not blaspheme that noble Name by which you are called?”

“If you really fulfill *the* royal Law according to the Scripture, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’, you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the Law as transgressors. For whoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is guilty of all. For He who said, ‘Do not commit adultery’, also said, ‘Do not murder’. Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the Law. So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the Law of liberty. Judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.”

⁴⁰⁸ Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies, IV, xxxix, 3.

While we live under the “Law of Liberty”, we have not completely abandoned the Mosaic Law, and the Mosaic Law is very useful to us, especially for young and weak Christians, as a guideline until he attains maturity. Some specific examples follow. As John Chrysostom stated⁴⁰⁹, the Mosaic and the Grace of God are not adversaries:

“The Law is not the adversary but the fellow worker of Grace. But if when Grace is come, the Law continues to hold us down, it becomes an adversary. For if it confines those who ought to go forward to Grace, then it is the destruction of our salvation. If a candle which gave light by night kept us, when it became day, from the sun, it would not only cease to benefit us, but would injure us. And so does the Law if it stands between the greater benefits of Grace and us. Just so a *pedagogue* or tutor makes a youth ridiculous, by retaining him with himself, when time calls for his departure”.

Partiality

James is merely reflecting the Mosaic Law regarding partiality. “You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor” (Leviticus 19:15). “You shall not show partiality to a poor man in his dispute” (Exodus 23:3). “You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous” (Deuteronomy 16:19).

This aspect of the Mosaic Law was incorporated into the Christian Faith by the Apostles. “Then Peter opened *his* mouth and said: ‘In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him’” (Acts 10:34). “I charge *you* before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality” (1 Timothy 5:21). “To those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness -- indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; but glory, honor and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God” (Romans 2:8-11).

John Chrysostom noted⁴¹⁰ how Paul charged Timothy to be completely impartial in ordaining Bishops in the Church. Paul called on God the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ and the angels as witnesses that things be done right.

“‘I charge *you* before God, the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality’ (1 Timothy 5:21). Thus Paul fearfully charges him. Though Timothy was his beloved son, he did not stand in awe of him. He was not ashamed to say of himself, ‘Lest when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified’ (1 Corinthians 9:27); much less would he be afraid or ashamed in the case of Timothy. He called the Father and the Son to witness. But why the elect Angels? From great moderation; as Moses said, ‘I call heaven and earth to witness’ (Deuteronomy 4:26); and again, ‘Hear, O you mountains, the Lord’s

⁴⁰⁹ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Galatians, Chapter 3

⁴¹⁰ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Timothy, XVI, vv. 21-23.

complaint, and you strong foundations of the earth; for the Lord has a complaint against His people' (Micah 6:2). He calls the Father and the Son to witness what he has said, making his appeal to Them against that future Day, that if anything should be done that ought not to be done, he was clear from the guilt of it."

"That you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality' (1 Timothy 5:21). That is, that you deal impartially and equally between those who are upon trial and are to be judged by you, that no one may pre-occupy your mind or gain you over to his side beforehand. But who are the elect Angels? It is because there are some not elect. Jacob calls to witness God and the heap (Genesis 31:45); so we often take at once superior and inferior persons to witness; so great a thing is testimony. Paul was thus saying, 'I call to witness God, His Son and His servants that I have charged you; so before them I charge you.'"

Vincent of Lerins cautioned⁴¹¹ that visitors other than prophets and bishops should remain impartial in the Church they are visiting.

"Unless a man is a prophet or a spiritual person, that is, a master in spiritual matters let him be as observant as possible of impartiality and unity. He should prefer neither his own opinions to those of everyone, nor to recede from the belief of the whole body."

Tertullian stated⁴¹² that God, in His impartiality, sends dreams to the just and to the unjust. As a result, most of mankind gets their knowledge of God from dreams.

"Dreams are inflicted on us mainly by demons, although they sometimes turn out true and favorable to us. When, however, with the deliberate aim after evil, they assume a flattering and captivating style, they show themselves proportionately vain, deceitful, obscure, wanton, and impure. No wonder! The images partake of the character of the realities. God has promised, 'to pour out the grace of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh, and has ordained that His servants and His handmaids should see visions as well as utter prophecies' (Joel 2:28). Therefore all those visions must be regarded as emanating from Him; this may be compared to the actual grace of God, as being honest, holy, prophetic, inspired, instructive, inviting to virtue, the bountiful nature of which causes them to overflow even to the profane. God, with grand impartiality, 'makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust' (Matthew 5:45). It was by an inspiration from God that Nebuchadnezzar dreamt his dreams; and almost the greater part of mankind gets their knowledge of God from dreams. As the mercy of God super-abounds to the heathen, so the temptation of the evil one encounters the saints, from whom he never withdraws his malignant efforts to steal over them as best he may in their very sleep, if unable to assault them when they are awake. Another class of dreams consists of those which the soul itself apparently creates for itself from an intense application of special circumstances."

⁴¹¹ Vincent of Lerins, Commonitory, XXVIII, 74.

⁴¹² Tertullian, A Treatise on the Soul, I, ix, 47.

John Chrysostom stated⁴¹³ that the man born blind maintained his impartiality when questioned by the Jewish leaders. He kept himself free from suspicion; his testimony was uncorrupted; and he did not speak from partiality, but bore witness according to the fact. As a result the Jewish leaders could neither upset nor remove what had been done.

The Whole Law

James stated, “For whoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is guilty of all. For He who said, ‘Do not commit adultery’, also said, ‘Do not murder’. Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the Law. So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the Law of liberty” (James 2:10-12).

Christ fulfilled the whole Law to free us from the curse of having to keep it, but being unable to do so. Our part today is to love our brethren, since this in effect fulfills the whole Law. Today the whole Law is summarized in the Creeds of the Church as a concise statement of the Faith.

John Chrysostom stated⁴¹⁴ that we were cursed for not continuing in or keeping the whole Law. Christ exchanged curses with us, since He had kept the whole Law; He became cursed by hanging on a tree so that we might not be cursed for our sins.

“Paul stated, ‘Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* everyone who hangs on a tree’ (Galatians 3:13, Deuteronomy 21:23). In reality, the people were subject to another curse, ‘Cursed *is* the one who does not confirm *all* the words of this law’ (Deuteronomy 27:26). To this curse people were subject, for no man had continued in, or was a keeper of the whole Law. But Christ exchanged this curse for the other, ‘Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree’. Both he who hangs on a tree and he who transgresses the Law is cursed. As it was necessary for him who is about to relieve from a curse himself to be free from it, but to receive another instead of it, therefore Christ took upon Him such another, and thereby relieved us from the curse. It was like an innocent man’s undertaking to die for another sentenced to death, and so rescuing him from punishment. Christ took upon Him not the curse of transgression, but the other curse, in order to remove that of others. For, ‘He had done no violence neither was any deceit in His mouth’ (Isaiah 53:9; 1 Peter 2:22). By dying He rescued from death those who were dying; so by taking upon Himself the curse, He delivered them from it.”

John Chrysostom outlined⁴¹⁵ the effects of the whole Law: God made promises to Abraham, but the transgression of the Law deprived us of the promises. Therefore Christ came to fulfill the whole Law, to free us from the curse of the transgression and to make us fit to receive the promises.

“There had been a promise made to Abraham, ‘To your descendants I will give this land, and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed’ (Genesis 12:7; 22:18). But after this, they of the seed of Abraham all became

⁴¹³ John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, LVIII, 2.

⁴¹⁴ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Galatians, Chapter 3, Verse 13.

⁴¹⁵ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans, XXVIII, v. 8.

subject to punishment. The Law brought wrath to them by being transgressed, and deprived them of that promise made to the fathers. Therefore the Son came in order that those promises might come true. Having fulfilled the whole Law, in which He also fulfilled the circumcision, He freed them from the curse of the transgression, and He didn't allow this promise to fall to the ground. When Paul calls Christ 'a servant to the circumcision' (Romans 15:8), he means that by having come, fulfilled the Law, been circumcised, and born of the seed of Abraham, He undid the curse, stayed the anger of God, and made those that were to receive the promises fit for them, as being once for all freed from their alienation. It was not that the Law might continue, but that He might put an end to it, free us from its curse, and set us entirely at liberty from the dominion of that Law. It was because we had transgressed the Law, that He fulfilled it. It was not that we might fulfill it, but that He might confirm to us the promises made to the fathers, which the Law had caused to be suspended, by showing us to have offended, and to be unworthy of the inheritance. So we are saved by grace, since we were cast off. Don't bicker or perversely cling to the Law at this unsuitable time, since it would have cast us out of the promise. Christ suffered so many things, not because we were deserving of salvation, but that God might be true."

Chrysostom also pointed out⁴¹⁶ Paul's words to the effect that love between members of the Body of Christ fulfills the whole Law. This is a debt that we always owe because we are members of one another. This is an intense love and it is equal to our love for God! As we love our brethren, we also love God.

"Paul said, 'Owe no one anything except to love one another' (Romans 13:8). This is the mother of good deeds, and the instructress of the things spoken of, and is also productive of every virtue. This is a debt also, not tribute or custom, but a continuous debt. This is the character of the debt that one keeps giving and owing always. Having said how we ought to love, he also shows the profit from it, saying, 'He that loves another has fulfilled the Law' (Romans 13:8). Do not consider this a favor; it is a debt. We owe love to our brother through our spiritual relationship. Not for this only, but also because 'we are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another' (Romans 12:5). If love leaves us, the whole body is torn to pieces. Therefore love our brothers! If from his friendship we gain so much as to fulfill the whole Law, we owe him love as being benefited by him."

"Paul does not seek any kind of love, but intense love. He does not say merely 'love our neighbor' but, 'as our self'. Christ said that 'the Law and the Prophets hang upon' it. Christ described two kinds of love! After saying that the first commandment is, 'You shall love the Lord your God', He added a second; and He added, 'like it; You shall love your neighbor as yourself' (Matthew 22:36-39). What can be equal to this love to man, or this gentleness? When we were at infinite distance from Him, He brings the love between men into comparison with that toward Himself, and says that 'it is like this'".

"Paul said, 'Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love *is* the fulfillment of the law' (Romans 13:10). Observe how it has both virtues,

⁴¹⁶ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans, XXIII, vv. 8-10.

abstinence from evils (for it ‘does no harm’, he says), and the working of good deeds. ‘It is the fulfilling (or filling up) of the Law’; not bringing before us instruction only on moral duties in a concise form, but making the accomplishment of them easy also. That we should become acquainted with things profitable to us was not all that Paul was careful about; the doing of them brought us great assistance. Love accomplished not some part of the commandments, but the whole sum of virtue in us. Let us then love one another, since in this way we shall also love God, Who loves us.”

John Cassian stated⁴¹⁷ that the Creeds of the Church are a collection in a few words of the Faith of the Church giving the force of the whole Law. These provide for the carelessness and ignorance of some of his children, that no mind however simple and ignorant might have any trouble over what could so easily be retained in the memory.

Without Mercy

James said, “For whoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is guilty of all. For He who said, ‘Do not commit adultery’, also said, ‘Do not murder’. Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the Law. So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the Law of liberty. Judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment!” (James 2:10-13)

There are two facets to judgment without mercy. One has to do with the negative: what happens if we despise the Law or trample underfoot the Son of God. Another has to do with how we can seek out the mercy of God by our compassion to others.

Trampling Underfoot the Son of God

There are many occasions in the Scriptures where someone was shown to be unworthy of the grace of God for some reason.

John Chrysostom pointed out⁴¹⁸ some of the details of different punishments for similar sins depending on who, when and how much the person knew. In some cases, the sinner died without mercy with the testimony of two or three witnesses. The severest penalties were given to a priest or a member of his family who sinned.

Not all sins incur the same punishments, but many and diverse, according to the times, according to the persons, according to their rank, according to their understanding, and according to other things besides. As an example, let one sin be set forth, fornication; note how many different punishments I find not from myself, but from the divine Scriptures. Did anyone commit fornication before the Law, he is differently punished; and this Paul shows, ‘As many as have sinned without Law will also perish without Law’. Did anyone commit fornication after the Law? He shall suffer more grievous things. ‘As many as have sinned in the Law will be judged by the Law’ (Romans 2:12). Did anyone commit fornication

⁴¹⁷ John Cassian, Seven Books on the Incarnation, VI, 3.

⁴¹⁸ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, LXXV, 5.

being a priest; he receives from his dignity a very great addition to his punishment. So for this case, whereas the other women were slain for fornication, the daughters of the priests were burned (Leviticus 21:9); the lawgiver showing more amply, how great punishment awaits the priest if he commits this sin. If on the daughter he inflicts a greater punishment, because of her being a priest's daughter, much more on the man himself who bears the priest's office. Was fornication committed with any violence? She is even freed from punishment (Deuteronomy 22:25-26). Did one play the harlot being rich, and another being poor? Here again also is a difference. This is evident concerning David; similarly anyone guilty of fornication after Christ's coming. Should he depart uninitiated⁴¹⁹, he will suffer a punishment worse than all those. Was any guilty of fornication after the laver? In this case not even a consolation is left for the sin any more. This same thing Paul declared when he said, 'Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?' (Hebrews 10:28-29) Has any been guilty of fornication, bearing the priest's office now? This above all is the crown of the evil deeds.

Do you see of one sin how many different forms of punishment? One punishment fits that before the Law, another after the Law, another for him who bears the priest's office. One punishment fits the rich woman; another fits the poor woman; another fits her that is a catechumen, or a believing woman; still another fits the daughter of the priest. From the knowledge again great is the difference; 'That servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare *himself* or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*' (Luke 12:47).

Chrysostom also pointed out⁴²⁰ how a man who despised the Law of Mercy died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses; and the same is true under the New Covenant if we trample the Son of God underfoot. Our sins are like worms that were killed and buried at Baptism; if we continue in the passions and breed more worms, we have no excuse.

"It is no advantage to a Christian to have faith, and the gift of baptism, and yet be open to all the passions. In that way the disgrace is greater, and the shame more. Someone who has the diadem and the purple is so far from gaining by this dress any honor to himself, that he disgraces the clothing by his own shame; so the believer also, who leads a corrupt life, is so far from becoming an object of respect, that he is only the more one of scorn. 'For as many', Paul says, 'as sinned without Law, will also perish without Law and as many as have sinned in the Law, will be judged by the Law' (Romans 2:12). Paul also says, 'Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot?' (Hebrews 10:28-29). This is reasonable also. I placed (God might say) all the passions in subjection to you by baptism. How then is it that you have disgraced so great a gift, and have

⁴¹⁹ Initiation referred to a sequence of instruction leading up to being deemed worthy of the Mysteries (the Lord's Table). The "laver" referred to the washing of Baptism.

⁴²⁰ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans, XI, v. 18.

become one thing instead of another? I have killed and buried your former transgressions, like worms; how is it that you have bred others? Sins are worse than worms, since worms harm to the body, sins harm the soul; and sins make the more offensive stench. Yet we don't notice it, and so we are in no hurry to purge them out. Thus the drunkard doesn't know how disgusting the stale wine is, but he that is not drunken has a distinct perception of it. So with sins also, he that lives soberly knows thoroughly that other mire. But he that gives himself up to wickedness, like a man made drowsy with drunkenness, does not even know the fact that he is sick."

Chrysostom further explained⁴²¹ why there was a threat of no mercy under certain conditions. If the Law of Moses was so severe for rejecting its commands, trampling the Son of God and insulting the Holy Spirit is worse. Chrysostom stated that these arguments are referring to the Lord's Table.

"'Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses' (Hebrews 10:28). 'Without mercy' means that there is no pardon, no pity although the Law is of Moses; for Moses ordained the most of it. What is 'on the testimony of two or three'? If two or three bore witness, he means, they immediately suffered punishment."

"If then under the Old Covenant, when the Law of Moses is rejected, there is so great punishment, 'Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?'" (Hebrews 10:29)

"How does a man 'trample the Son of God underfoot'? When partaking of Him in the mysteries and he has sinned, has he not trampled Him under foot? Has he not despised Him? Just as we make no account of those who are trampled under foot so also, they who sin have made no account of Christ; and so they have sinned. We have become the Body of Christ; if we give ourselves to the devil, so that he tramples us under foot, we sin."

"How do we count the blood of the covenant by which we are sanctified a common thing? What is 'common'? It is 'unclean', or the having nothing beyond other things, 'And insulted the Spirit of grace'. He that doesn't accept a benefit insults the benefactor. He made us a son; and we wish to become a slave. He came to dwell with us; and we bring in wicked imaginations to Him. Christ wished to stay with us; and we trample Him down by overeating, by drunkenness."

"Let us listen, whoever partakes of the mysteries unworthily; let us listen, whoever approaches that Table unworthily. 'Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample you under their feet' (Matthew 7:6); that is, lest they despise."

Seeking Out the Mercy of God

⁴²¹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Hebrews, XX, 3.

There is a reciprocal relationship between the mercy of God and what we do. The more merciful we are, the more mercy will be shown to us. Showing mercy to our brethren demonstrates our Faith, and we are rewarded for this by God as He shows mercy to us in our lives.

John Chrysostom noted⁴²² that there are things that we can do that attract the grace of God. If we make it a practice of showing mercy to our neighbor, God will make it a practice of showing mercy to us. This is similar to what we say in the Lord's Prayer: "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Matthew 6:12, Luke 11:2-4).

"It is great when we do things worthy of mercy, and do not render ourselves unworthy. When we go to the priest for confession of sins, and he says to us, 'The Lord will have mercy on you, my son', do not confide in the word only, but add also works. Do acts worthy of mercy; God will bless us, if we do things worthy of blessing. He will bless us, if we show mercy to our neighbor. For the things which we wish to obtain from God, of those we ought first to impart to our neighbors. But if we deprive our neighbors of them, how can we wish to obtain them? 'Blessed', He says, 'are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy' (Matthew 5:7). If men show mercy to such, much more will God; but to the unmerciful, by no means. 'Judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment!'" (James 2:13).

"An excellent thing is mercy! Why then have we not done it to one another? Do we wish to be pardoned, when we offend? Why then do we not yourself pardon him who has offended us? We come to God asking of Him the kingdom of heaven, and we ourselves do not give money when it is begged of us. For this cause we do not obtain mercy, because we do not show mercy. But why, we say; isn't it also a part of mercy, to show mercy to the unmerciful, like us? No! He that treated with the greatest kindness the hard-hearted cruel man, that had done numberless evils to his neighbor, how should He be merciful to him? What then, we say? Has not the Laver saved us, who had committed infinite evils? It has delivered us from them, not that we should commit them again, but that we may not commit them. For 'how shall we', Paul said, 'who died to sin live any longer in it?'" (Romans 6:2)

Chrysostom also spoke⁴²³ about the effects of delaying Baptism, and about falling into sin after Baptism; both have serious side effects. Delaying Baptism also delays the effects of any good works that we may do; we may end this life without ever having accepted God's grace or done anything good. Those who sin after Baptism are punished more severely than catechumens. We are exalted to the highest honor by the Gift of God; if we don't have the will to labor out of gratitude, what forgiveness can we deserve?

"We have spoken on purpose that having received Baptism, people may continue in temperance and much moderation, not that many might be deterred from receiving baptism. 'But I am afraid,' someone might say. If you were afraid, you would have received and guarded it. 'No,' he might say, 'but this is the reason why I do not receive it, that I am frightened.' Are you not afraid to

⁴²² John Chrysostom, Homilies on Philemon, III, Moral.

⁴²³ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, I, vv. 1-2.

depart this life in this condition? ‘God is merciful,’ one might say. Receive baptism then, because He is merciful and ready to help. We think of this only when we want to. This is especially the time to resort to God’s mercy; we shall be surest of obtaining it, when we do our part. He that has cast the whole matter on God, and sins after his baptism (as being man it is likely), and repents, shall obtain mercy. He that delays acceptance of God’s mercy, and departs this life with no portion in that grace, shall have his punishment without a word to be said for him. If someone delays Baptism, he may depart empty of all good works. It is impossible, in my opinion, that the man who had such hopes yet dallied with baptism should have done anything generous and good. Why do we presume upon the uncertain chance of the future? Why not convert this fear into labor and earnestness; we shall be great and admirable! Which is best, to fear or to labor? Suppose someone gave you a tottering house, saying, ‘Watch out for the decaying roof to fall on your head; perhaps it will fall, perhaps not. If you had rather it should not fall, then work and inhabit a more secure apartment. Which would you rather choose; that idle condition accompanied with fear or labor with confidence? The uncertain future is like a decayed house, ever threatening to fall; but this work, laborious though it is, ensures safety.’”

“God forbid that we should fall into so great difficulty as to sin after baptism. However, even if anything like this should happen, God is merciful, and has given us many ways for obtaining remission even after this. Just as those who sin after baptism are punished more severely than the Catechumens, so again, those who know that there are medicines in repentance, and yet will not make use of them, will undergo a more grievous chastisement. In proportion to how much the mercy of God is enlarged, by so much does the punishment increase, if we do not profit by that mercy. We were full of grievous evils and suddenly we became a friend of God, and were exalted to the highest honor, not by labors of our own, but by the gift of God. Suppose we again return to our former misconduct, and though we deserve to be severely punished, nevertheless, God gave unnumbered opportunities for salvation, whereby we may yet become a friend of God. If we don’t have the will to labor, what forgiveness can we deserve? Will not the Gentiles with good reason deride us as a worthless drone?”

The Life of the Apostle Luke

Including Most of the Seventy Apostles

And Including Key Excerpts from John Chrysostom's Commentary on Paul's Epistles

Distinguishing Characteristics about the City of Antioch

The city of Antioch acquired a special dignity due to the extended presence of Peter, Paul, Barnabas and others. This was the cradle of Christianity, which is why believers were first called "Christians" there.

John Chrysostom stated⁴²⁴ that the city of Antioch was very distinguished for three reasons: (1) Believers were first called Christians there. (2) Even while they were expecting a famine, they gave generously instead of hoarding for their own sustenance. (3) When the Jewish believers tried to lay Judaism on them, they didn't bear this in silence, but sent Barnabas and Paul to Jerusalem to resolve the issue.

"Do you wish to learn the dignity and ancestry of the city of Antioch? I will tell it exactly; not only that you may know, but that you may also emulate it. 'It came to pass, that the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch' (Acts 11:26). This dignity, none of the cities throughout the world possesses, not even the city of Rome herself! On account of that love toward Christ, that boldness and virtue, Antioch can look the whole world in the face."

"Do you wish farther to hear of a different dignity and commendation belonging to the city of Antioch? A really bad famine was approaching (Acts 11:28-30), and the inhabitants of Antioch determined, as far as each person had the means, to send relief to the Saints dwelling at Jerusalem. Notice this; charity in a time of famine! The times did not make them stingy; the expectation of the calamity did not make them backward in helping. When everyone is apt to be storing up what is not their own, then they distributed their own, not merely to those who were near, but also to those who were living afar off! Do you see here the faith towards God, and the love towards their neighbor?"

"Another dignity of the city of Antioch was displayed when certain men came down from Judaea to Antioch, defiling the doctrine preached, and introducing Jewish observances. The men of Antioch did not bear this novelty in silence. They came together, sent Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, and caused the Apostles to provide pure doctrines, cleared from all Jewish imperfection, distributed throughout all parts of the world! This is the dignity of Antioch! This is its precedence! This makes it a metropolis, not on earth, but in heaven. All other honors are corruptible, fleeting, perish with the present life, and often come to their end before the close of it! To me, a city that doesn't have pious citizens is inferior to any village, and less noble than any cave."

Barnabas and Paul Take Their 1st Missionary Journey

⁴²⁴ John Chrysostom, Homilies on the Statues, XVII, 10.

“When Barnabas and Paul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled *their* ministry of delivering the alms, they also took with them John whose surname was Mark” (Acts 12:25). Thus, they brought John Mark to Antioch, who was to begin accompanying them on their missionary journey. John Mark had been one of the original Seventy, along with Mark the Evangelist (who wrote the Gospel of Mark) and Mark the cousin of Barnabas⁴²⁵.

Barnabas and Paul’s First Missionary Journey lasted from about 46 AD to 48 AD. We note that the Apostle Peter is not mentioned as being in Antioch when they started (Acts 13:1-3), but he had been there earlier. Herod Agrippa had tried to kill Peter to please the Jews in 44 AD, after he had killed James the son of Zebedee (Acts 12:1-3). Peter escaped, took the Evangelist Mark with him, and headed first to Caesarea (Acts 12:19) then to Antioch of Syria.

After staying in Antioch for a short time, Peter left for Rome with the Evangelist Mark in late 44 AD or early 45 AD. At this time, the people of Rome asked the Evangelist Mark to write down the things that Peter was preaching so that they could read it over and over. Mark did this, drafting what we now know as his Gospel. Peter read what Mark wrote, and asked that this be read regularly in the Churches. Thus, the Gospel Readings in the Churches began according to a set schedule – now called the Orthodox Lectionary. In 45 AD, Peter also sent the Evangelist Mark⁴²⁶ to Alexandria to start the Church there.

During the time that Peter was in Antioch, Paul was there also, and the two became good friends for the rest of their lives. This was probably the time that Paul referred to when he criticized Peter for eating with the Jews only and not as he had done before the Jews arrived from Jerusalem (Galatians 2:11-13). Even Barnabas got carried away with what Peter did. More on this later!

After Peter left Antioch, “Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Paul. As they ministered⁴²⁷ to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Paul for the work to which I have called them’. Then, having fasted and prayed and laid hands on them, they sent *them* away (Acts 13:1-3). We might emphasize that this is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Thus, as Paul’s first journey starts, Barnabas, Paul and John Mark (of the Seventy) are traveling together while Rufus and Luke (also of the Seventy) are in Antioch. Not mentioned in Luke’s account in Acts, the Apostle Titus of the Seventy was also traveling⁴²⁸ with Barnabas and Paul on this 1st Missionary Journey. This makes sense, since later Paul wrote that Titus went up to Jerusalem with he and Barnabas as another witness to the events of the 1st Missionary Journey;

⁴²⁵ See Appendix A for a summary of the lives of these three men named Mark

⁴²⁶ For more details about the Evangelist Mark’s work in Egypt, see Mark Kern, The Feast Day of the Evangelist Mark, April 25th, at the web site <http://www.stathanasius.org/>. The work of the Evangelist Mark was quite different than that of John Mark and Mark the cousin of Barnabas; they were working in different parts of the world most of their lives.

⁴²⁷ The Greek word that is translated “ministered” is *leitourgouton*, which means to perform the Liturgy in the Church. Included then in their “ministering” is both worship and preaching.

⁴²⁸ Holy Apostles Convent, The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, Holy Apostles Convent, 2009, August 25, p . 935.

but the Apostles did not compel Titus to be circumcised (Galatians 2:3). If Titus had not accompanied Barnabas and Paul, there would have been no point of him going up to Jerusalem and risking offense from the brothers there.

In Figure 2 the route of Barnabas' and Paul's 1st Missionary Journey is shown. The numbers in red show the order of places visited. Not shown is the return trip back to Antioch where they retraced their steps, ordaining elders in each of the Churches that they had established.

Figure 2
Map of Paul's 1st Missionary Journey⁴²⁹



In Luke's account in Acts, we note that he used the third person (they) exclusively in the account of the 1st Missionary Journey. Later on, in Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey, Luke switches to the first person (we) since he was then traveling with Paul. John Mark returned to Jerusalem after they arrived in Pergia (in Pamphylia, Acts 13:13), apparently shrinking back from the long and dangerous journey up the mountains from Pergia to Antioch in Pisidia. Later (Acts 15:37-39), this became a sore point where Paul didn't want to take John Mark along on his 2nd Missionary Journey.

⁴²⁹ © Bible History Online <http://www.bible-history.com>. Other maps also available.

John Chrysostom noted⁴³⁰ the details that Luke mentions. Barnabas was the leader acknowledged by everyone. This makes sense since Barnabas was 20-25 years older than Paul. They were ordained to confer the authority of God to their work.

“Note that Luke still mentions Barnabas first; Paul was not yet famous, he had not yet done any miracles⁴³¹. What does ‘ministering’ mean? Preaching! What does ‘separate to Me Barnabas and Paul’ mean? For the work, for the Apostleship! See again by what persons he is ordained; by Lucius the Cyrenean and Manaen, or rather, by the Spirit. The fewer the persons, the more palpable the grace! Barnabas and Paul were ordained to the Apostleship, so as to preach with authority. Why then does Paul himself say that he is, ‘an Apostle, not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father?’ (Galatians 1:1) Because it was not man that called or brought him over to Christ; that is, that he was not sent by this man, but by the Spirit. Luke thus proceeds, ‘So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus’” (Acts 13:4).

Up to this point, the only (human) teacher that Paul had had was Ananias in Damascus for a short time and Barnabas for the year they spent teaching in Antioch. Since Paul didn’t have the benefit of spending three years with Jesus, he is still learning at this point, and those of the Seventy, who had spent three years with Jesus, were especially helpful. Paul had not performed any miracles yet, but those of the Seventy, which included Barnabas, had done so at least during the time that Jesus sent them out (Luke 10:1-11), and some of them subsequently.

Chrysostom noted⁴³² that there were prophets in Antioch also, and not just in Jerusalem. The Spirit saw that Barnabas and Paul were ready for this mission, and sent them out.

“If this wasn’t the Holy Spirit saying ‘Separate to Me’, what being would have dared to say this, if not of the same authority? But this is done, that they may not hide themselves together in Antioch. The Spirit saw that Barnabas and Paul had greater power, and were able to be sufficient for many. How did He speak to them? Probably by prophets (Acts 13:1); therefore, Luke says, that there were prophets in Antioch also. They were fasting and ministering, that we may learn that there was need of great sobriety. In Antioch Paul was ordained, where he preaches. Why did the Holy Spirit not say, ‘Separate for the Lord’, but, ‘For Me’? It shows that He is of one authority and power. Notice what a great thing fasting is! “So, they were sent forth by the Holy Spirit”; this shows that the Spirit did everything.”

Chrysostom also pointed out⁴³³ that Paul excelled the other Apostles chiefly in his immediate and implacable war with the Jews to overthrow the foundation of their error. His critics said that this had been entrusted to him by the Apostles, and thus by man. Yet the Apostleship was given to Barnabas and Paul by the Holy Spirit; it is only after this that Paul

⁴³⁰ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXVII, v. 25.

⁴³¹ While Paul had not done any miracles yet, Barnabas had done some as one of the Seventy (Like 10:9), although Barnabas was not renowned for this as Stephen had been (Acts 6:8).

⁴³² John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXVII, Recapitulation.

⁴³³ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Galatians, I, vv. 1-3.

starts to work miracles. Barnabas had been given that already when he was called for the work of the Seventy.

“Just as Peter, Andrew, James and John did not require a second call, but immediately left their nets and all that they had, and followed Him, so Paul at his call pressed vigorously forward, waging as soon as he was baptized, an implacable war with the Jews. In this respect he chiefly excelled the other Apostles, as he says, ‘I labored more abundantly than they all’ (1 Corinthians 15:10). As he began his missionary journeys, however, he makes no such claim, but is content to be placed on a level with them. His great object was not to establish any superiority for himself, but to overthrow the foundation of the Jewish error. The not being ‘from men’ applies to everyone, for the Gospel’s root and origin is divine; the not being ‘through man’ is peculiar to the Apostles; for He called them not by men’s agency, but by His own.”

“Why does Paul not speak of his calling rather than his apostolate, and say, ‘Paul’ called ‘not by man?’ Here lay the whole question; his critics said that the office of a teacher had been committed to him by men, namely by the Apostles, whom therefore he ought to obey. That it was not entrusted to him by men, Luke declares, ‘As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Separate to Me Barnabas and Saul’ (Acts 13:2). It is clear that the power of the Son and Spirit is one, for being commissioned by the Spirit, Paul says that he was commissioned by Christ.”

As Barnabas and Paul began their 1st Missionary Journey, they traveled very simply, just as Barnabas had done when he had traveled as part of the Seventy Apostles (Luke 10:1-11). That is, they traveled with no food, money bag, knapsack, and perhaps no sandals; they were entirely dependent on the kindness of those that they met along the way. In addition, both Barnabas and Paul worked at their trade to support themselves in the places that they went (1 Corinthians 9:6). Paul’s trade was a tentmaker; we’re not told what Barnabas’ trade was.

Barnabas and Paul at the Council of Jerusalem

When the question arose whether those converted from the Gentiles should accept circumcision, Barnabas and Paul went to Jerusalem. There they were warmly received by the Apostles and elders. The preachers related “what God had wrought with them and how He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles” (Acts 14:27).

“However certain *men* came down from Judea and taught the brethren, ‘Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved’. Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the Apostles and elders, about this question. So, being sent on their way by the Church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, describing the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy to all the brethren. And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were received by the Church, the Apostles and the elders; and they reported all things that God had done with them. But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, ‘It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the Law of Moses’. Now the Apostles and elders came together to consider this matter” (Acts 15:1-6).

John Chrysostom noted⁴³⁴ how twisted the situation was when Barnabas and Paul returned from their 1st Missionary Journey. Some thought that people couldn't be saved without circumcision, when the opposite was the case.

“The Apostles from Antioch, as being taught of God, spoke to everyone indifferently; this moved to jealousy those of the Jews who had believed. They did not merely speak of circumcision, but they said, ‘You cannot even be saved’. Whereas the opposite was the case, that receiving circumcision they could not be saved (Galatians 5:2-3). Note how closely the trials follow each other, from within, from without! It is well ordered too, that this happens when Paul is present, that he may answer them. ‘When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem to the Apostles and elders about this question’” (Acts 15:2).

Why was the issue of circumcision so important? This goes back to the Covenant that God had made with Abraham, where God had instituted a means of identifying His people from all the other nations of the earth. God had said to Abraham,

“‘As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This *is* My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant’” (Genesis 17:9-12).

Chrysostom looked⁴³⁵ carefully at Peter's words at the Council in Jerusalem; his words were aimed more at teaching the Jewish believers to abandon the details of the Mosaic Law than to apologize for the Gentiles. The real issue is faith: the Gentiles have it; the Judaizers don't.

“Everywhere Peter puts the Gentiles on a thorough equality. ‘And made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith’ (Acts 15:9). From faith alone, they obtained the same gifts. This is also meant as a lesson to those objectors; this is able to teach them that faith only is needed, not works or circumcision. They do not say all this only by way of apology for the Gentiles, but to teach the Jewish believers also to abandon the Law. However, at present this is not said. ‘Now therefore why do you tempt God, to put a yoke on the neck of the disciples?’ (Acts 15:10) What does he mean, ‘Tempt God?’ As if He had no power to save by faith! Consequently, this bringing in the Law proceeds from a lack of faith. Then Peter shows that they themselves were not benefited by it, and he turns the whole stress of his speech against the Law, not against the Judaizers, and so cuts short their accusation: ‘which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear. But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus we shall be saved, in the same manner as they’ (Acts 15:10-11). These are powerful

⁴³⁴ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXII, v. 1.

⁴³⁵ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXII, v. 8.

words! The same thing that Paul says, Peter says here. ‘If Abraham was justified by works, he has *something* to boast about, but not before God’ (Romans 4:2). Do you perceive that all this is more a lesson for the Jews than an apology for the Gentiles?”

Chrysostom also noted⁴³⁶ that the problem with those men that came down from Judea to Antioch teaching the necessity for circumcision was a lust for power⁴³⁷.

“Therefore, there came down certain men laboring under this disease of the love of power, and wishing to have those of the Gentiles attached to them. Though Paul was educated in the Law, he was not thus affected. ‘Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them’ (Acts 15:2). When Paul returned from Jerusalem, the doctrine also became more exact. For if they at Jerusalem enjoin no such thing, much more these men from Judea have no right to do so. Note that Barnabas and Paul ‘caused great joy to all the brethren as they proceeded to Jerusalem’ (Acts 15:3). Note also, as many as do not have a love of power, rejoiced in their believing (Galatians 6:12-13). It was no ambitious feeling that prompted their testimony about their 1st Missionary Journey, neither was it for display, but in justification of the preaching to the Gentiles. They said nothing of what had happened to the Jews on their 1st Missionary Journey. ‘But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up’ (Acts 15:4-5). Even if these Pharisees with a love of power did bring over the Gentiles to their side, they learned that the Apostles in Jerusalem can’t just overlook it.”

Chrysostom further noted⁴³⁸ how mild and gentle the Apostles were even in the face of rank insubordination on the part of the believing Pharisees. Barnabas and Paul don’t accuse them either, but just speak of the facts as they happened, and let the facts speak for themselves.

“As Peter spoke at the Council of Jerusalem, he said, ‘Why do you tempt God?’ He has become the God of the Gentiles; this was the tempting of God: denying that He is could save anyone apart from the Law. Notice what Peter does. He shows that those clinging to the Mosaic Law are in danger. What the Law could not do, faith had power to do. ‘We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus we shall be saved even as they’ (Galatians 2:16). But if faith falls away, notice that they themselves are headed for destruction. Peter did not say, ‘Why do you disbelieve?’ which was ‘harsher, but, ‘Why do you tempt God’. Great impudence is this of the Pharisees; even after faith they set up the Law as greater than faith, and will not obey the Apostles. But notice the Apostles, how mildly they speak, and not in the tone of authority; such words are amiable, and more apt to fix themselves in the mind. Observe, it is nowhere a display of words, but demonstration by facts, by the Spirit. Though they have such proofs, yet they still speak gently. Notice also that Barnabas and Paul do not come accusing those causing the trouble at Antioch, but ‘declaring all things that God had done with them’ (Acts 15:4). But again, these men seize upon the occasion to champion their own cause. ‘But there rose up’ etc. (Acts 15:5). Such were the

⁴³⁶ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXII, Recapitulation.

⁴³⁷ As we will see later, it is the lust for power by the political faction of the Zealots that is driving this adherence to circumcision as a way of focusing on Jewish national identity against the Romans.

⁴³⁸ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXII, Recapitulation.

pains they took in their love of power; it was not with the knowledge of the Apostles that Paul and Barnabas were blamed. But still Barnabas and Paul brought forward none of these charges. However, when the Apostles had proved the matter, then they wrote in stronger terms. For gentleness is everywhere a great good; gentleness, I say, not stupid indifference; gentleness, not flattery; for between these there is a vast difference.”

Clement of Alexandria quoted⁴³⁹ Barnabas as encouraging the fear of God as being the beginning of wisdom. This was the culture of the Church in Jerusalem, where everyone obeyed the Mosaic Law, but in a good way.

“Certain heresies appealed to Paul to say that the Law is not good, ‘For by the Law is the knowledge of sin?’ (Romans 3:20) To whom we say, ‘The Law did not cause, but showed sin’. Commanding what is to be done, it reprehended what ought not to be done. It is the part of the good to teach what is beneficial, and to point out what is harmful; to counsel the practice of the one, and to command to shun the other. Paul, whom they do not comprehend, said that by the Law the knowledge of sin was made clear, not that it derived its existence from the Law. How can the Law not be good, which is given as the instructor until Christ (Galatians 3:24), for the attainment of the perfection which is by Christ? He says, ‘I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but in his repentance’ (Ezekiel 33:11, 18:23, 32). Now the commandment works repentance; inasmuch as it deters from what ought not to be done, and commands good deeds. ‘A wise man in heart will receive the Commandments’ (Proverbs 10:8). Barnabas the Apostle said⁴⁴⁰, ‘Woe to those who are wise in their own conceit, clever in their own eyes’ (Isaiah 5:21 LXX), then added, ‘Let us be spiritually minded; let us be a perfect temple to God. As much as in us lies, let us meditate upon the fear of God, and let us keep His commandments, that we may rejoice in His ordinances’. Consequently ‘the fear of God’ is divinely said to be the beginning of wisdom.”

The Issues in Jerusalem, 48 AD

The real issues in Jerusalem had strong political overtones. In Jerusalem at that time was a small, but very vocal, group of zealots bent on expelling Roman rule. One of the Twelve Apostles, Simon the Zealot, was part of this group at one time, and Judas Iscariot may have been involved also. According to Josephus, the political party of the Zealots was ultimately responsible for the destruction of Jerusalem⁴⁴¹ as a result of their scheming and conspiring to achieve their goals. To them, circumcision represented Jewish national identity. They didn’t necessarily keep all the requirements of the Law, but they were very vocal about those aspects of the Law that spoke to their political agenda⁴⁴².

⁴³⁹ Clement of Alexandria, Stromata, II, 7. Early writers such as Clement, Origen et al, ascribed the Epistle of Barnabas (written anonymously) to the Apostle Barnabas, even though few do so today. Chapter 16 seems to refer to the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, even though this occurred after the traditional death of the Apostle Barnabas in 62 AD. Inclusion here of early statements attributed to the Apostle Barnabas is given to allow the early writers to speak in their own words. It may be that the Apostle Barnabas wrote these words but someone later added to and published them after the destruction of Jerusalem.

⁴⁴⁰ Barnabas, Epistle of Barnabas, 4.

⁴⁴¹ See Josephus, Wars of the Jews, IV, vi, 3.

This ideology spilled over to the Christians. The conflict among the Christians⁴⁴³ was between a small minority of Jewish Christian Zealots, who were zealous about keeping the Law (Acts 21:20) and a large majority of Jewish Christians with a weak faith, who also kept the Law, but were not involved with the political agenda of the Zealots. They knew Christ after the flesh, as the Jewish Messiah, and were very sincere about that. If Paul (and James) handled this situation wrong and offended either group, many people might revert back to Judaism and be lost in the destruction coming to Jerusalem in a few years.

Tertullian stated⁴⁴⁴ that circumcision was the only issue involved when Paul wrote to the Galatians. To the Jews, “circumcision” had their national identity associated with it, since this was part of the Covenant God made with Abraham, and the Law required anyone who rejected circumcision to be cut off from Israel (Genesis 17:9-14). Paul’s opponents still believed in God, but they perverted the Gospel by retaining an emphasis on the Law. If the Zealots had not brought in the spies to see what Paul was doing regarding Christian liberty, Paul may not have made it such an issue. For Paul, the major issue was the basis for his teaching; for his opponents, the major issue was Jewish national identity.

“When Paul said, that ‘neither was Titus compelled to be circumcised’ (Galatians 2:3), he for the first time shows us that circumcision was the only question connected with the maintenance of the Law, which had been agitated by those whom he called ‘false brethren secretly brought in’ (Galatians 2:4). While these persons went no further than to insist on a continuance of the Law, they retained unquestionably a sincere belief in God. They perverted the Gospel in their teaching, not by tampering with the Scripture to eliminate Christ, but by retaining the emphasis on the Law. Therefore, he said, ‘Because of false brethren secretly brought in, who came in secretly to spy out our liberty, which we have in Christ, that they might bring us into bondage, to whom we submitted not even for an hour’ (Galatians 2:4-5). Let us listen to the clear sense and to the reason for their actions, and the perversion of the Scripture will be apparent”.

“Paul first said that the Apostles did not compel Titus, a Greek, to be circumcised and added that false brethren were secretly brought in. He gives us an insight into his reason for acting in a clean contrary way, showing us why he did what he would neither have done nor shown to us, if the Zealots had not induced him to act as he did. But then would they have yielded to the subjection that the Zealots demanded, if these false brethren had not crept in to spy out their liberty? I apprehend not. They therefore gave way (in a partial concession), because there were persons whose weak faith required consideration. For their rudimentary belief, which was still in suspense about the observance of the Law, deserved this concessive treatment, when even Paul himself had some suspicion that he might have run, and be still running, in vain (Galatians 2:2). Accordingly,

⁴⁴² In a way, this is similar to the US today, where there are Christian zealots who have a very strong political agenda involving US national identity. Those aspects of Christianity that speak to their political agenda are very important to them. Yet out of kindness and mercy, we don’t want to offend them and cause them to abandon the Faith.

⁴⁴³ See Roberts and Donaldson, ed., Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 3, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1995, Footnote 22, p. 433.

⁴⁴⁴ Tertullian, The Five Books Against Marcion, II, ii, 5, 3.

the false brethren, who were the spies of their Christian liberty, must be thwarted in their efforts to bring it under the yoke of their own Judaism. Paul needed (1) to discover whether his labor had been in vain; (2) those who preceded him in the Apostolate to have the opportunity to give him the right hand of fellowship; and (3) to have an understanding before he entered on the office of preaching to the Gentiles, according to the Apostles' arrangement with him (Galatians 2:9-10). He therefore made some concession, as was necessary, for a time; and this was the reason why he had Timothy circumcised (Acts 16:3), and the Nazirites introduced into the temple (Acts 21:23-26). Their truth may be inferred from their agreement with Paul's own profession, how 'he became all things to all men, that he might gain all'".

John Cassian stated⁴⁴⁵ that Paul identified with those he wished to reach. "To the Jews, I became as a Jew that I might gain the Jews. To those who were under the Law I became as being under the Law, though not myself under the Law, that I might gain those who were under the Law. To those who were without law, I became as without law, though I was not without the Law of God but under the Law of Christ, that I might gain those who were without law; to the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak: I became all things to all men, that I might save all" (1 Corinthians 9:19-22). The Apostles in Jerusalem recognized that there would be a change in the Law as a result of the Coming of Christ (Hebrews 7:12), and they worked with the Apostle Paul in this regard.

"The Apostle James and all the chief princes of the primitive Church urged the Apostle Paul, in consequence of the weakness of feeble persons, to condescend to a fictitious arrangement and insisted on his purifying himself according to the requirements of the Law. By shaving his head and paying his vows (Acts 21:20-25), they thought that the present harm, which would come from this hypocrisy, was of no account, but had regard rather to the gain, which would result from his continued preaching. For the gain to the Apostle Paul from his strictness would not have counterbalanced the loss to all nations from his speedy death. And the whole Church would certainly have then incurred this unless this good and salutary hypocrisy had preserved him for the preaching of the Gospel".

"Someone may ask how we can prove that Paul suited himself to all men in all things. When did he to the Jews become as a Jew? He had said, 'Behold, I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing' (Galatians 5:2). Yet by circumcising Timothy (Acts 16:3), he adopted a shadow of Jewish superstition. And again, where did he become to those under the Law, as under the Law? James and all the Elders of the Church, fearing lest he might be attacked by the multitude of Jewish Christians, who had received the faith of Christ in such a way as still to be bound by the rites of legal ceremonies, came to his rescue in his difficulty with this counsel and advice" (Acts 21:20-24).

"And so, for the good of those who were under the Law, he trod under foot for a while the strict view which he had expressed. 'I through the Law am dead to the Law; that I may live to God' (Galatians 2:19). Contrary to this, he

⁴⁴⁵ John Cassian, The Second Conference of Abbot Joseph, II, xvii, 20.

was driven to shave his head, and be purified according to the Law and pay his vows after the Mosaic rites in the Temple” (Acts 21:20-24).

“For the good of those who were utterly ignorant of the Law of God, Paul himself became as if without law. In Athens, where heathen wickedness was flourishing, he stated, ‘as I passed by, I saw your idols and an altar on which was written: To the unknown God’ (Acts 17:23). When he began speaking to them, as if he himself also had been without law, he introduced the faith of Christ, saying, ‘The One whom you worship ignorantly, Him I proclaim to you’ (Acts 17:23). And after a little, as if he had known nothing whatever of the Divine Law, he chose to bring forward a verse of a heathen poet rather than a saying of Moses or Christ, saying, ‘As some of your own poets have said; for we are also His offspring’ (Acts 17:28). And when he had thus approached them with their own authorities, which they could not reject, thus confirming the truth by things false, he added, ‘Since then we are the offspring of God we ought not to think that the Godhead is like gold or silver or stone sculptured by the art and device of man’” (Acts 17:29).

“In this way he fulfilled what he had commanded the Corinthians to do when he said, ‘be without offense to Jews and Greeks and the Church of Christ, as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but that of the many, that they may be saved’ (1 Corinthians 10:32-33, Romans 14:3-13, 2 Corinthians 11:29). For it had certainly been profitable at other times not to circumcise Timothy, not to shave his head, not to undergo Jewish purification, not to practice going barefoot, not to pay legal vows. But he did all these things because he did not seek his own profit but that of the many”.

The Result of Barnabas’ and Paul’s Actions

At the Council of Jerusalem in 48 AD, Paul sought (1) clarification of his interpretation of the Gospel and (2) agreement with the other Apostles and elders in Jerusalem. This he received very clearly, and Paul was of one mind with the other Apostles and elders. Later Church Councils were patterned after Paul’s agreement with the Apostles and elders in Jerusalem, and this agreement came to be referred to as “The mind of the Church”.

There were four distinct steps in this first Church Council:

1. A great deal of disputing between the Pharisees who believed on the one side and Barnabas and Paul on the other side.
2. Peter spoke up about the giving of the Holy Spirit to Cornelius and the Gentiles in Caesarea. His point was that God Himself had treated the Gentiles exactly as He had treated the Jews at Pentecost. God had even warned Peter in a vision not to think otherwise (Acts 10).
3. After Peter spoke, everyone quieted down to listen intently to Barnabas and Paul⁴⁴⁶ speak about their recent 1st Missionary Journey, including the wondrous things they did,
4. After Barnabas and Paul spoke, James, the Lord’s brother and Bishop of Jerusalem gave the verdict of the Council. He said the following:

⁴⁴⁶ Since Luke lists Barnabas first, the implication is that Barnabas was the primary speaker at the Council. This makes sense since Paul had done most of the miracles; Barnabas emphasized Paul’s miracles so that Paul didn’t have to appear like he was boasting.

“Men *and* brethren, listen to me: Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written: 'After this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up; so that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles who are called by My Name, says the Lord who does all these things' (Amos 9:11-12 LXX). Known to God from eternity are all His works. Therefore, I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, *from* sexual immorality, *from* things strangled, and *from* blood” (Acts 15:13-20).

Following the Council of Jerusalem, James and the Apostles in Jerusalem wrote a letter to the Gentile Churches that stated that these men that came down from Judea had no permission to teach what they did from the Apostles in Jerusalem (Acts 15:24). Thus, they were acting as overzealous rogues in doing this.

While the Jewish Christian Zealots had to agree with the Council, because their disagreement would be an obvious gesture of countermanding God, they later opposed the decision of the Council. Paul ended up opposing them for the rest of his life. A similar pattern emerged following most of the later Councils of the Church, where the heretics often accepted the decisions of the Council initially, but later opposed these decisions⁴⁴⁷. In both cases, this showed the basic dishonesty of the heretics, and where their allegiance was really based.

John Chrysostom pointed out⁴⁴⁸ that a change in the Law was foreseen in the Mosaic Law as it referred to Christ:

“The Law itself has taught me no longer to obey itself; and therefore, if I do so, I shall be transgressing even its teaching. How, and in what way has it so taught? Moses says, speaking of Christ, ‘The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet from your midst of your brethren, like me; to Him shall you listen’ (Deuteronomy 18:15). Therefore, those who do not obey Him transgress the Law”.

John Chrysostom noted⁴⁴⁹ that all agreed that the doings in Antioch and on Barnabas and Paul’s 1st Missionary Journey were the hand of God. There was no dispute about this! What was lacking was that nothing had been written in the Scriptures concerning how to handle a mass conversion of the Gentiles. James made considerable condescension for the weakness of the believing Pharisees: even they need to observe no more than what the Gentiles are observing.

“The question is whether the Gentiles must be circumcised. What the objectors asserted, was not that the Gentiles must be rejected upon believing, but that it must be with the Law. Peter pleaded very well about this, since this above all others troubled the hearers; therefore, he sets this right. Observe, that which

⁴⁴⁷ For example, at the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, the Arian Bishops were so embarrassed by the clear teachings from the Scriptures by Athanasius of Alexandria and others that they signed the decrees of the Council in order to avoid being defrocked for countermanding God. Later they opposed the decrees of the Council, and it took about 65 years for the decrees of the Council to be finally upheld throughout Christendom.

⁴⁴⁸ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Galatians, Chapter 2, v 19.

⁴⁴⁹ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXIII, Recapitulation.

needed to be enacted as a rule, that it is not necessary to keep the Law, this Peter introduced. The milder part, James said, dwells upon that concerning which nothing is written. ‘Therefore’, he said, ‘I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God’ (Acts 15:19); that is, not to subvert. If God called them, and observing the Law subverts them, we fight against God. When James said, ‘My judgment is’, he was speaking not as from Moses but from the Apostles. The four commandments that James gave, although relating to the body, were necessary to be observed, because these things caused great evils. James’ words ‘For Moses has throughout many generations in every city’ (Acts 15:21), above all quieted the believing Pharisees. Why do we not write the same injunctions to Jews also? Moses speaks to them every Sabbath. Notice what condescension James makes to their weakness! Where it did no harm, he set Moses up as teacher, gratifying them, but which hindered nothing; he permitted Jews to hear Moses in regard of these matters, even while leading away from Moses those of the Gentiles. See what wisdom! He seems to honor Moses, and to set him up as the authority for his own people, and by this very thing he leads the Gentiles away from him! ‘Being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day’! Then why do the believing Pharisees not learn what is to be learned from Moses? Through their perversity! James shows that even these believing Pharisees need observe no more than these necessary things given to the Gentiles.”

In conveying the agreement of the Council to the Gentiles, John Chrysostom stated⁴⁵⁰ that the Apostles in Jerusalem did not send Judas Barsabas and Silas to slight Barnabas and Paul, but to confirm everything. Even in their letter they are not overly critical of the rashness and subversion of the believing Pharisees; but the letter does make it very clear that the believing Pharisees were wrong.

“Notice that the Apostles in Jerusalem did not merely enact these matters, and nothing more. They sent Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They also sent letters with them the more to authenticate the decree, that there may be no room for regarding Paul and his company with suspicion. Notice with what patience and with no harsh berating of those brethren they indict their epistle. ‘Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, you must be circumcised, and keep the Law, to whom we gave no such commandment’ (Acts 15:24). Sufficient was this charge against the rashness of those men, and worthy of the Apostles’ moderation, that they said nothing beyond this. Then to show that they do not act despotically, that all are agreed in this, that with deliberation they wrote this, ‘It seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send men of ours whom we have chosen’ (Acts 15:25). That it may not look like a belittling of Paul and Barnabas that those men are sent, observe the glowing praise passed on them. They spoke of ‘Our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas; who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to

⁴⁵⁰ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXIII, vv. 19-21.

us' -- it is not man's doing, it says -- 'to lay on you no greater burden' -- again it calls the Law a burden. Apologizing even for these injunctions, they added, 'Except these necessary things': 'That you abstain from meat offered to idols, from blood⁴⁵¹, from things strangled, and from fornication from which if you keep yourselves, you shall do well (Acts 15:26-29). These things the New Testament did not forbid; we nowhere find that Christ spoke about these matters; but these things they took from the Law.'

What is the Place of the Mosaic Law Today?

At this point, some clarification is needed regarding "the Law". The Lord referred to the Greatest Commandment, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37-39, Deuteronomy 6:5, Leviticus 19:18). On this, He said, hangs all the Law and the Prophets (Matthew 22:40); and this Greatest Commandment was part of a Creed⁴⁵² used in the 1st Century Synagogue worship. In addition, the Lord had said, "Assuredly I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one yod (smallest Hebrew letter) or one piece of a Hebrew letter will by no means pass from the Law till all⁴⁵³ is fulfilled" (Matthew 5:18). He also said that those who worship the Father must worship Him in spirit and truth (John 4:24).

All this is not contradictory. All the details of the Mosaic Law regarding sacrifices, uncleanness, Feast Days, avoiding certain foods, etc., had a purpose in leading the Lord's people toward holiness. Once Israel ceased to exist as a nation, these tenets of the Law changed. We no longer offer animal sacrifices, but we are urged to present our bodies as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1). We no longer follow the various washings prescribed by the Mosaic Law, but we are advised to avoid the defilement⁴⁵⁴ from unclean spirits, which can be really foul.

Clement of Alexandria quoted⁴⁵⁵ Barnabas in his teaching on what the dietary parts of the Mosaic Law really refer to. If our ears and heart are circumcised as Moses commands (Deuteronomy 10:16, 30:6), we see that the unclean animals refer to unclean men and what they do, and we are commanded to avoid this.

"Barbarian philosophy prophesied also obscurely and by symbols, like the injunctions of Moses, 'These common things, the sow, the eagle, the hawk and the raven, are not to be eaten' (Leviticus 11). The sow is the emblem of unclean lust of food, lecherousness and licentiousness, always craving, lying in the mire, and being fattened for slaughter. Some barbarians command a person to eat that which parts the hoof and ruminates. Barnabas says that this intimate 'that we ought to cling to those who fear the Lord, and meditate in their heart on that portion of the word which they have received. Those who speak and keep the Lord's statutes are those to whom meditation is a work of gladness, and who ruminate on the Word of the Lord. What is the parted hoof? This is the

⁴⁵¹ "From blood" implies a prohibition against murder (Genesis 9:5-6).

⁴⁵² Edersheim, *Sketches of Jewish Social Life*, p. 245, 101-104.

⁴⁵³ For more details, see the Gospel lesson for the 15th Sunday after Pentecost.

⁴⁵⁴ For more details regarding sacrifice, see the Epistle lesson for the 6th Sunday after Pentecost; for more details on uncleanness, see the Epistle lesson for the 17th Sunday after Pentecost.

⁴⁵⁵ Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, V, 8.

righteous, who walk in this world, and who expect the holy eternity to come'. Then he adds, 'See how well Moses enacted. We who have rightly understood speak the commandments as the Lord wished; therefore, He circumcised our ears and hearts, that we may comprehend these things. When He says, 'You shall not eat the eagle, the hawk and the raven', He says, 'You shall not adhere to or become like those men who don't know how to live by toil and sweat, but live by plunder and lawlessness'. For the eagle indicates robbery, the hawk injustice, and the raven greed. It is also written, 'With the holy you will be holy; and with the innocent man you will be innocent. With the excellent *man* you will be excellent; and with the perverse you will be perverse' (Psalm 18:25-26 LXX). 'We ought to join ourselves⁴⁵⁶ to those that fear the Lord, those who meditate in their heart on the commandment which they have received, those who both utter the judgments of the Lord and observe them, those who know that meditation is a work of gladness, and who ruminate upon the word of the Lord'''.

The usefulness of the Law is as a tutor to get us started in the right direction (Galatians 3:24, 25). As we grow in the Faith and can distinguish the Holy Spirit speaking to us, we don't need the Law anymore, because it is written on our hearts (Jeremiah 31:31-34, Hebrews 10:16-17). John Chrysostom stated⁴⁵⁷ that the Law and the Gospel work together:

"The Law is not the adversary but the fellow worker of Grace. But if when Grace is come, the Law continues to hold us down, it becomes an adversary. If it confines those who ought to go forward to Grace, it is the destruction of our salvation. If a candle which gave light by night kept us, when it became day, from the sun, it would not only cease to benefit us, but would injure us. And so does the Law if it stands between the greater benefits of Grace and us. Just so a tutor or pedagogue makes a youth ridiculous, by retaining him with himself, when time calls for his departure".

Clement of Alexandria also quoted⁴⁵⁸ Barnabas on what happens at conversion. Sinners imitate demons saying that our bodies are merely a human dwelling. At Baptism the demons are driven out, and God begins to dwell in us along with the Word, His calling, and the wisdom of His statutes and commandments.

"Vapors, which arise from the earth, and from marshes, gather into mists and cloudy masses; so, the vapors of fleshly lusts bring an evil condition on the soul, scattering about the idols of pleasure before the soul. They spread darkness over the light of intelligence, the spirit attracting the heat that arises from lust, and thickening the masses of the passions by persistence in pleasures. Gold is not taken from the earth as a lump, but is purified by smelting; then, when made pure it is called gold, the earth being purified out. 'Ask, and it shall be given you' (Mark 7:7), is said to those who are able of themselves to choose what is best. The powers of the devil, and the unclean spirits, sow into the sinner's soul. Barnabas speaks in these words, 'Before we believed⁴⁵⁹ in God, the habitation of our heart was corrupt and weak, being like a temple made with hands. It was full

⁴⁵⁶ Barnabas, Epistle of Barnabas, 10.

⁴⁵⁷ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Galatians, Chapter 3, vv 25-26.

⁴⁵⁸ Clement of Alexandria, Stromata, II, 20.

⁴⁵⁹ Barnabas, Epistle of Barnabas, 16.

of idolatry, and was a habitation of demons, through our doing such things as were opposed to the will of God”.

“Sinners exercise activities appropriate to demons; but he does not say that the spirits themselves dwell in the soul of the unbeliever. He also adds⁴⁶⁰, ‘The temple of the Lord shall be built in the name of the Lord, in order that it may be built in glory. How? Having received the forgiveness of sins, and placing our trust in the name of the Lord, we have become new creatures, formed again from the beginning’. What Barnabas says is not that demons are driven out of us, but that the sins, which like them we commit before believing, are remitted. Rightly thus he puts in opposition what follows: ‘Therefore in our habitation God truly dwells. How? His word of faith; His calling of promise; the wisdom of the statutes; the commandments of the doctrine dwell in us; He himself prophesying in us; He himself dwelling in us; opening to us the doors of the temple, we who were enslaved by death’”.

Clement quotes⁴⁶¹ Barnabas as really understanding the Mosaic Law in its intents, and he gives examples of the humaneness of the Law, and how wisdom based on the Law is piety. Those who really get this, Barnabas calls them “Children of love and peace”.

“Moses wrote, ‘If anyone who has newly built a house, and has not previously inhabited it; or cultivated a newly-planted vine, and not yet partaken of the fruit; or betrothed a virgin, and not yet married her’ (Deuteronomy 20:5-7); these people the humane Law orders to be relieved from military service. They were exempted in the first place, lest, bent on their desires, they turn out sluggish in war; it is those who are untangled by passion that boldly encounter perils. From motives of humanity, in view of the uncertainties of war, the Law reckoned it right that one should enjoy his own labors, and not another, who without any labor, should receive what belonged to those who had labored. The Law seems also to point out manliness of soul, by enacting that he who had planted should reap the fruit, and he that built should inhabit, and he that had betrothed should marry. It is not vain hopes that the Law provides for those who labor. ‘For the hope of a good man dead or living does not perish’ (Proverbs 11:7 LXX); also ‘I love those that love Me; and they that seek Me shall find Me’ (Proverbs 8:17 LXX). The women of Midian, by their beauty, seduced the Hebrews from wisdom into impiety, through licentiousness, when making war against them. Having seduced them from a serious mode of life, and by their beauty ensnared them in wanton delights; they made them insane about idol sacrifices and strange women. Overcome by women and by pleasure at once, they revolted from God, and revolted from the Law. The whole people were about to fall under the power of the enemy through female stratagem, until fear by its admonitions pulled them back (Numbers 25:1-9). ‘The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the counsel of saints is understanding. To know the Law is the character of a sound mind’ (Proverbs 9:10 LXX). Those who suppose that the Law agitates fear are neither good at understanding the Law, nor have they in reality comprehended it. ‘The fear of the Lord is life to a man; he shall lodge without fear in places

⁴⁶⁰ Barnabas, Epistle of Barnabas, 16.

⁴⁶¹ Clement of Alexandria, Stromata, II, 18.

where knowledge is not seen' (Proverbs 19:23 LXX). Accordingly, Barnabas says mystically⁴⁶², 'May God, who rules over the entire world, give to you wisdom, intelligence, understanding, knowledge of His judgments, with patience. Be therefore God-taught, inquiring diligently what the Lord asks from you; and do it that you may be safe in the Day of Judgment'. Barnabas calls those who do this, 'Children of love and peace'".

Chrysostom stated⁴⁶³ that Paul's accusers thought that he had run in vain; so Paul went up to Jerusalem to prove that this was not the case. He met privately with the Apostles, not to reform doctrines, but to cut off the grounds of the deceivers. The Apostles permitted the use and the details of the Law in Judea due to the weakness of the people there. If Paul had announced that he was going to forbid the practice of the Law in Judea, he would have been attacked by those who practiced the Law. So, he did this privately with the Apostles.

"Paul's accusers thought that Peter and John, of whom they thought more highly than Paul, differed from him in that he omitted circumcision in his preaching, while the former allowed it; and they believed that in this he acted unlawfully, and was running in vain. Paul went up and communicated to them his Gospel, not that he might learn anything himself, as appears more clearly further on, but that he might convince these suspicious persons that he did not run in vain. The Spirit foreseeing this contention had provided that he should go up and make this communication."

"Therefore, Paul said that he went up by revelation, taking Barnabas and Titus as witnesses of his preaching, and communicated to them the Gospel which he preached to the Gentiles; that is, with the omission of circumcision. 'But privately before them who were of repute'. What does 'privately' mean? He who wishes to reform doctrines held in common, proposes them, not privately, but before all in common; but Paul did this privately, for his object was not to learn or reform anything, but to cut off the grounds of those who would deceive. All at Jerusalem would be offended if the Law was transgressed, or the use of circumcision forbidden; as James says, 'You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law; but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise *their* children nor to walk according to the customs' (Acts 21:20-21). To avoid offense, Paul did not condescend to come forward publicly and declare what his preaching was, but he conferred privately with those who were of reputation before Barnabas and Titus, that they might credibly testify to his accusers, that the Apostles found no discrepancy in his preaching, but confirmed it. The expression, 'those that were of repute', does not impugn the reality of their greatness; here the phrase implies his own assent to the common opinion."

"Here arises a very important question: Who were these false brethren? If the Apostles permitted circumcision at Jerusalem, why are those who championed it, in accordance with the Apostolic sentence, to be called false brethren? First; because there is a difference between commanding an act to be done, and

⁴⁶² Barnabas, Epistle of Barnabas, 21.

⁴⁶³ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Galatians, Chapter 2, v. 2.

allowing it after it is done. He, who commands an act, does it with zeal as necessary, and of primary importance; but he who, without himself commanding it, allows another to do it who wishes yields not from a sense of its being necessary but in order to serve some purpose. And so here, the Apostles made this concession, not as vindicating the Law, but as condescending to the infirmities of Judaism. Had they been vindicating the Law, they would not have preached to the Jews in one way, and to the Gentiles in another. Had the observance been necessary for unbelievers, it would plainly have likewise been necessary for all the faithful. But by their decision not to harass the Gentiles on this point, they showed that they permitted it by way of condescension to the Jews. Whereas the purpose of the false brethren was to cast them out of grace, and place them under the yoke of slavery again. This is the first difference, and a very wide one. The second is that the Apostles so acted in Judaea, where the Law was in force, but the false brethren, everywhere, for all the Galatians were influenced by them. Their intention was, not to build up, but entirely to pull down the Gospel, and that the thing was permitted by the Apostles on one ground and zealously practiced by the false brethren on another.

Peter and Paul's Ruse; Barnabas Gets Carried Away

Paul stated, "When Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite⁴⁶⁴ with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy" (Galatians 2:11-13).

Something is going on here that is not readily apparent! Peter had been absolutely fearless in facing up to the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem (Acts 4:8-22). Peter had been the one who had stepped forward before the others, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). He was bolder than the others, and willing to come forward in spite of danger. When Christ was seen on the beach, and the others were pushing the boat in, he was too impatient to wait for its coming to land (John 21:7). After the Resurrection, when the murderous Jews sought to tear the Apostles in pieces, he first dared to come forward and to declare that the Crucified was taken up into heaven (Acts 2:14, 36). But there was no danger here in Antioch; is it reasonable to suggest that Peter was fearful of the believing Jews?

John Chrysostom pointed out⁴⁶⁵ what was really happening. Peter withdrew to eat with the Jews such that Paul would notice this and rebuke him in front of everyone. If this were not part of a ruse, Paul would have rebuked Peter privately, not publicly⁴⁶⁶. The point of the rebuke

⁴⁶⁴ The Greek words *sunupekrithesan* (translated "play the hypocrite") and *upokrisei* (translated "hypocrisy") come from a root meaning of an actor playing out a role on the stage. Thus they can mean hypocrisy, but there is a more basic implication in their meaning: an actor.

⁴⁶⁵ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Galatians, Chapter 2, vv. 11-12.

⁴⁶⁶ Chrysostom stated that Paul's words are, 'When Cephas came to Antioch, I resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned' (Galatians 2:11); that is, not by me but by others. Had he himself condemned him, he would not have shrunk from saying so. And the words, 'I resisted him to the face', imply a scheme, for had their discussion been real, they would not have rebuked each other in the presence of the disciples, for it

was for the effect it would have on the Jewish disciples who had come up from Jerusalem.

“Many, on a superficial reading of Galatians, suppose that Paul accused Peter of hypocrisy. But this is not so, indeed it is not, far from it; we shall discover great wisdom, both of Paul and Peter, concealed in their words for the benefit of their hearers.”

“The Apostles permitted circumcision at Jerusalem, an abrupt severance from the Law not being practicable. But when they came to Antioch, they no longer continued this observance, but lived indiscriminately with the believing Gentiles, which thing Peter also was doing at that time. But when some came from Jerusalem, who had heard the doctrine he delivered there, he no longer did so fearing to perplex them. Peter changed his course, with two objects secretly in view, both to avoid offending those Jews, and to give Paul a reasonable pretext for rebuking him. Having allowed circumcision when preaching at Jerusalem, had he changed his course at Antioch, his conduct would have appeared to those Jews to proceed from fear of Paul, and his disciples would have condemned his lack of consistency. This would have created no small offense. But to Paul, who was well acquainted with all the facts, Peter’s withdrawal would have raised no such suspicion, as knowing the intention with which he acted. Therefore, Paul rebukes, and Peter submits, that when the master is blamed, yet keeps silence, the disciples may more readily come over from the Law to faith. Without this occurrence Paul’s exhortation would have had little effect; but the occasion gave an opportunity to deliver a severe reproof, and impressed Peter’s disciples with a livelier fear. Had Peter disputed Paul’s sentence, he might justly have been blamed as upsetting the plan; but now that the one reproves and the other keeps silence, the Jewish party is filled with serious alarm. This is why Paul spoke to Peter so severely. Observe also Paul’s careful choice of expressions, whereby he points out to the discerning, that he uses them in pursuance of the plan, and not from anger.”

“The cause of Paul’s censure is this, ‘Before that certain men came from James’, who was the teacher at Jerusalem, ‘and Peter ate with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing those that were of the Circumcision’. His cause of fear was not his own danger, but their defection. If he didn’t fear in the beginning, much less would he do so now. As Paul himself says to the Galatians, ‘I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain’ (Galatians 4:11); and again, ‘I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ’ (2 Corinthians 11:3). Thus, they didn’t know the fear of death; but the fear that their disciples should perish, agitated their inmost soul.”

Chrysostom noted⁴⁶⁷ that the ruse was so well done that even Barnabas was carried away with their ruse. They just weren’t walking uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel (Galatians 2:13-14).

“Don’t be surprised at Paul giving this proceeding the name of a ruse, for he was unwilling to disclose the true state of the case, in order for the correction

would have been a great stumbling block to them. But now this apparent contest was much to their advantage; as Paul had yielded to the Apostles at Jerusalem, so in turn they yield to him at Antioch.

⁴⁶⁷ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Galatians, Chapter 2, vv. 13-14.

of his disciples. On account of their vehement attachment to the Law, he calls the present proceeding “ruse,” and severely rebukes it, in order effectually to eradicate their prejudice. And Peter also hearing this, joins in the feint, as if he had erred, that they might be corrected by means of the rebuke administered to him. Had Paul reprovved these Jews, they would have spurned it with indignation, for they held Paul in slight esteem; but now, when they saw their Teacher silent under rebuke, they were unable to despise or resist Paul’s sentence.”

“Don’t let the phrase, ‘They didn’t walk uprightly’, disturb you, for in using it Paul does not condemn Peter, but so expresses himself for the benefit of those who were to be reformed by the reproof of Peter.”

Chrysostom also noted that it is completely illogical that Peter had erred in Antioch. Peter had been the moving force behind the Council of Jerusalem and its decrees.

“Why did Paul address this to Peter, who is more intimately acquainted with it than anyone? Has not God declared to him, that an uncircumcised man ought not to be judged by circumcision; and did he not in his discussion with the Jews at the Council in Jerusalem rest his bold opposition on the vision which he saw? Did he not send from Jerusalem unequivocal decrees on this subject? Paul’s object is not therefore to correct Peter, but his criticism needed to be addressed to him, though it was pointed at the disciples; and not only at the Galatians, but also at others who labor under the same error with them.”

Chrysostom continued⁴⁶⁸ to say that the impact of Peter’s conduct in Antioch was to marginalize the death of Christ. That is, one is not justified by circumcision or by Jewish rituals, but by faith. Because of the circumstances, Paul had to do something!

“Christ’s death is a plain proof of the inability of the Law to justify us; and if the Law does justify, then His death is superfluous. Yet how could it be reasonable to say Christ’s death has been done heedlessly and in vain, when it is so awesome, so surpassing human reason, a mystery so ineffable, with which Patriarchs travailed, which Prophets foretold, which angels gazed on with consternation, which all men confess as the summit of Divine tenderness? How utterly out of place it would be if they should say that so great and high a deed had been done superfluously, for this is what their conduct (i.e. the conduct of Peter and the Jews in Antioch) came to”.

Barnabas Goes Back to the Church on Cyprus

“Now Judas and Silas, themselves being prophets also, exhorted and strengthened the brethren with many words. And after they had stayed *there* for a time, they were sent back with greetings from the brethren to the Apostles. However, it seemed good to Silas to remain there. Paul and Barnabas also remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also. Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, ‘Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, *and see* how they are doing’. Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark. But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had

⁴⁶⁸ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Galatians, Chapter 2, v. 21.

not gone with them to the work. Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took John Mark and sailed to Cyprus; but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches” (Acts 15:32-41).

John Chrysostom described⁴⁶⁹ how the splitting up of Barnabas and Paul was the work of God. The immediate issue was Paul’s reluctance to take with them John Mark, who had deserted them earlier. Barnabas wanted to rescue his cousin⁴⁷⁰ back into Apostolic work, but Paul didn’t have the patience to do this.

“Luke has described to us the character of the Apostles that Barnabas was more tender and indulgent, but Paul was stricter and more austere. In the Prophets too, we find this: diverse minds, diverse characters. For instance, Elijah was austere; Moses was meek. So here Paul is more vehement. Observe how gentle Barnabas is. Paul ‘insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work’ (Acts 15:39). There seems indeed to be exasperation, but in fact the whole matter is a plan of the Divine Providence, that each should receive his proper place. Barnabas and Paul both needed to be on a par; Barnabas should lead, and John Mark should be led. ‘And so Barnabas took John Mark, and sailed to Cyprus; and Paul chose Silas, and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches’” (Acts 15:39-41). This also is a work of Providence.

Chrysostom pointed out⁴⁷¹ that neither Barnabas nor Paul did something wrong. Both honored the other very much. However, Cyprus needed Barnabas while the Churches of Asia Minor needed Paul.

“The Cyprians had exhibited nothing of the sort as they at Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium and the rest; the Cyprians needed the softer character, but the others needed such a character as Paul’s. Which then would you say did well; he that took Silas, or he that left with John Mark? A general would not choose to have an untrustworthy person always to be his baggage-bearer, so neither did Paul. This corrected and instructed John Mark himself. Then did Barnabas do something wrong? In the first place, no evil came of it; they were divided the one from the other, but for a great good. They would not readily have chosen to leave each other. But admire the writer, how he does not conceal this either. The contention cannot be said to be evil, when each person disputes for such objects and with just reason. If the exasperation were in seeking his own way, and contending for his own honor, this might well be reprov’d. But if wishing, both the one and the other, to instruct and teach, the one took this way and the other that, what is there to find fault with? Observe how Paul impeaches John Mark, and gives the reason. In his exceeding humility, Paul revered Barnabas, as having been partner with him in so great works; but still he did not so reverence him, as to overlook what was necessary. Now which of them advised best, it is not for us to pronounce; but thus far we can say that it was a great arrangement of

⁴⁶⁹ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXIV, v. 35.

⁴⁷⁰ The same word can mean “cousin” or “nephew”.

⁴⁷¹ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXIV, v. 39-41.

Providence. If they stayed together, Antioch, Iconium, etc. would be granted a second visitation, but Cyprus would not be visited even once.”

Chrysostom further pointed out⁴⁷² that while there was a sharp contention, there was also an admirable mutual respect. They did not part on a bad note at all. The chief beneficiary of this contention was John Mark, who was brought back due to both Paul’s rebuke and Barnabas’ kindness.

“The point to be considered is not that they differed in their opinions, but that they accommodated themselves the one to the other, seeing that it was for a greater good. Did they withdraw in enmity? God forbid! In fact, after this Barnabas received great praises from Paul in the Epistles. There was ‘sharp contention’, not enmity or quarrelling. The contention happened to part them. What each supposed to be profitable, he did not abandon because of the fellowship with the other. It seems to me that they said one to another, ‘As I wish not, and you wish, therefore that we may not fight, let us distribute the places’. They did this, each yielding to the other. Barnabas wished Paul’s plan to stand, therefore he withdrew; on the other hand, Paul wished Barnabas’ plan to stand, therefore he withdrew. Would to God we too made such separations, as to go forth for preaching. A wonderful man this is; and exceedingly great! To John Mark this contest was exceedingly beneficial. The awe inspired by Paul converted him, while the kindness of Barnabas caused that he was not left behind. Seeing Paul choosing to leave him, he would be exceedingly awed, and would condemn himself; and seeing Barnabas taking his part, he would love him exceedingly. So, the disciple was corrected by the contention of the teachers; so far was he from being offended.”

Paul’s 2nd Missionary Journey with Silas

After the 1st Church Council in Jerusalem in c. 48 AD, the Apostle Silas (along with the Apostle Justus Barsabas) was sent by Bishop James to Antioch with the letter to the Gentiles drafted by the Jerusalem Church. Justus returned to Jerusalem, but Silas remained in Antioch (Acts 15:35).

At this point in Paul’s life, he had really caught the attention of the Christian world as a result of his 1st Missionary Journey. This was thoroughly ratified by the Council of Jerusalem as demonstrated by the letter of Bishop James to all the Gentile Churches throughout the world. The Apostle Silas, who was present at the Council of Jerusalem, saw all this first hand. Being a prophet in the Church of Jerusalem (Acts 15:32), Silas understood the significance of what Paul was doing and the work of the Holy Spirit in Paul. And Silas greatly desired to be part of this work.

The Churches of Syria and Cilicia

When Barnabas took John Mark and sailed to Cyprus, “Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia,

⁴⁷² John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXIV, v. 37-40.

strengthening the Churches” (Acts 15:40-41). See Figure 3 for a map of this region. The numbers in green on the map are the stopping places on Paul’s and Silas’ 2nd Missionary Journey.

Thus, Paul and Silas, instead of traveling by ship from Antioch to Derbe and Lystra, took the overland route back to Derbe and Lystra; that is through Syria and Cilicia. None of these churches were on the route of Paul’s and Barnabas’ 1st Missionary Journey. They must have been raised up by Apostles coming from Antioch, perhaps even with the help of Peter. One major city along that route that they had to pass through was Tarsus, Paul’s hometown.

The last time Paul had been to Tarsus was about 3 years earlier in c. 45 AD, when Barnabas came to get him and bring him to Antioch (Acts 11:25-26). During those 8 years in Tarsus, Paul had his famous vision of the 3rd heaven in c. 41 AD. In this vision Paul was caught up into Paradise and heard things that he couldn’t even speak about (2 Corinthians 12:2-4). This vision prepared Paul for his role as an Apostle since the Churches on earth are modeled after the Assembly of the Saints in heaven just as the Tabernacle in the wilderness was modeled after the Tabernacle in heaven (Exodus 25:9, 20; 26:30, Acts 7:44, Hebrews 8:5).

Paul Probably Wrote to the Galatians at this Time

Knowing what happened on Paul’s 2nd Missionary Journey, we can infer that Paul wrote to the Galatians – all the Churches that he and Barnabas had established – before he visited them on his 2nd Missionary Journey. On the 1st Missionary Journey, Paul and Barnabas had ordained Sosipater as presbyter of Iconium, Gaius as presbyter of Derbe and Timothy as presbyter of Lystra, where each of these men was a member of the original Seventy Apostles. As Paul passed through these cities again, things were peaceful enough that Paul could leave someone else in these cities as Bishop and have Sosipater, Gaius and Timothy join him as he departed for further missionary work. This could only happen if things in Galatia were in order.

Thus, what most likely happened is that Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians had already had a tremendous effect on the Churches there by the time Paul arrived on the 2nd Missionary Journey. Let us examine some key points that Paul made in his Epistle to the Galatians in the light of what happened later.

Figure 3
Map of Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey⁴⁷³



Paul stated in his Epistle that the Council in Jerusalem had already occurred, at which the Gospel that Paul preached had been ratified authoritatively by the Apostles in Jerusalem. A letter had also been drafted by the Church in Jerusalem that specifically stated that some people had been pushing circumcision, which the Apostles in Jerusalem had definitely not authorized (Acts 15:24). This letter is not mentioned in Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, but it was something that he carried with him everywhere he went. Paul stated:

“Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me. And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain. Yet not even Titus who *was* with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. And *this occurred* because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the

⁴⁷³ © Bible History Online <http://www.bible-history.com>. Other maps also available..

truth of the Gospel might continue with you. But from those who seemed to be something, they added nothing to me. But on the contrary, when they saw that the Gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as *the Gospel* for the circumcised *was* to Peter (for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles), and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we *should go* to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised” (Galatians 2:1-9).

The Apostle of the Seventy, Silas had been sent by the Church in Jerusalem as far as Antioch to confirm the effect of the letter drafted by the Church (Acts 15:27). As Paul left on his 2nd Missionary Journey, Silas was now traveling with Paul and further confirmed this letter everywhere Paul went. The result of Paul’s Epistle followed by the visit of Paul and Silas with the letter from the Church in Jerusalem was an authoritative rebuke for everyone who had been trying to push circumcision on the Galatians. Paul’s words in his Epistle to the Galatians confirm this:

Paul further stated that the Galatians had been subverted to a different gospel and that those who are troubling them are “accursed”. These are extremely strong words!

“I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different Gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the Gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other Gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:6-9).

We note that James, the Bishop of Jerusalem, in his letter to all the Gentile Churches used similar words to describe the Jewish Zealots⁴⁷⁴ who were “troubling” the Gentile Churches.

“Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, ‘*You must* be circumcised and keep the law’ -- to whom we gave no *such* commandment – ‘it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who will also report the same things by word of mouth’” (Acts 15:24-27).

Having just come from the Church Council in Jerusalem, and now being accompanied by Silas, one of the leading men in Jerusalem, and also a prophet (Acts 15:22, 32), Paul laid out things in no uncertain terms, knowing that he can back up everything he wrote when he arrives. Paul classified the Jewish Zealots as sorcerers (Who has bewitched you?). He referred to miracles done in their midst, which the Jewish Zealots can’t do. And Paul summarized matters

⁴⁷⁴ For more information on the impact of the Jewish Zealots, see the Sections titled:
“Ordaining Elders and the Report Back to Antioch of Syria”
“The Issues in Jerusalem, 48 AD”
“History of the Jewish Zealot Party”

by saying that true sons of Abraham live by Faith, not by the letter of the Law as promoted by the Zealots.

“O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? Have you suffered so many things in vain -- if indeed *it was* in vain? Therefore, He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, *does He do it* by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? -- just as Abraham ‘believed God’⁴⁷⁵, and it was accounted to him for righteousness’. Therefore, know that *only* those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, ‘In you’⁴⁷⁶ all the nations shall be blessed’” (Galatians 3:1-8).

Paul continued to describe the situation as one where the Jewish Zealots portrayed Paul as the enemy of the Galatians. Yet Paul was on his way to Galatia to face these apostates. They know that Paul works miracles⁴⁷⁷ all the time; they may have been reluctant to go toe-to-toe with him! They also knew the Scriptures very well, such as how Korah, Dathan and Abiram didn’t fare very well against Moses when they challenged him (Numbers 16). The Jewish Zealots may very well have understood that the best thing that they can do for themselves is to get out of Dodge and get out now!

“Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth? They zealously court you, *but* for no good; yes, they want to exclude you, that you may be zealous for them. But it is good to be zealous in a good thing always, and not only when I am present with you. My little children (for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you), I would like to be present with you now and to change my tone; for I have doubts about you. Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar -- for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children -- but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written: ‘Rejoice’⁴⁷⁸, O barren, *you* who do not bear! Break forth and shout, you who are not in labor! For the desolate has many more children than she who has a husband’” (Galatians 4:16-27).

⁴⁷⁵ Genesis 15:6.

⁴⁷⁶ Genesis 12:3, 18:18, 22:18, 26:4, 28:14.

⁴⁷⁷ Paul stated that when he returned to Corinth, he will see what power is associated with those who were puffed up. “But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills, and I will know, not the word of those who are puffed up, but the power” (1 Corinthians 4:19).

⁴⁷⁸ Quote from Isaiah 54:1.

Paul's words get stronger as he proceeds! Not only does getting circumcised by the Jewish Zealots profit the Galatians nothing, but doing so estranges them from Christ and causes them to fall from Grace!

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. You have become estranged from Christ, you who *attempt to* be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love” (Galatians 5:1-6).

Apparently, there were problems among the Galatian Churches as a result of the visits of the Jewish Zealots. Paul noted that they “bite and devour one another”, and that the activity of the Zealots was “works of the flesh”. Paul also associated many notorious sins with the Zealots, like adultery, idolatry, sorcery, heresies, murder, etc. These are also characteristics of what Jerusalem was like when the Zealots ruled just prior to 70 AD.

“And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased. I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off! For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’. But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another! I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:11-21).

What were the real motivations of the Jewish Zealots? The ones in Galatia were apparently Christians, at least nominally, but their real agenda seems to be Jewish national identity. Paul stated:

“As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these *would* compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast⁴⁷⁹ in your flesh” (Galatians 6:12-13).

Some of the Seventy Accompanied Paul and Silas from the Beginning

⁴⁷⁹ “Boast in your flesh”; that is, boast that they have the Galatians firmly under the Jewish national umbrella.

By examining the Scriptures carefully and piecing them together with early Christian tradition, we find that there were other Apostles traveling with Paul and Silas on the 2nd Missionary Journey, just like there were others involved on the 1st Missionary Journey. These other Apostles will be mentioned as we go along. A summary of the Apostles that Paul worked with on the 2nd Missionary Journey is included in Table 2.

One of the other Apostles traveling with Paul and Silas in c. 48 AD was Andronicus of the Seventy (Luke 10:1-20) and his wife Junia. To understand this, we need to look forward to c. 55 AD when Paul wrote to the Church of Rome from Corinth. There he addressed two of his “countrymen”, Andronicus⁴⁸⁰ and Herodion⁴⁸¹ (Romans 16:7, 11), who were both members of the Seventy. Paul there referred to Andronicus (and his wife Junia) as his “fellow prisoner” (Romans 16:7). However, the only recorded prison time Paul spent between 48 and 55 AD was in Philippi (Acts 16:19-34), about 51 AD. Andronicus thus must have accompanied Paul and Silas as they headed for Macedonia (and Philippi) after Paul had visited Andronicus in Tarsus⁴⁸². Andronicus must have been imprisoned along with Paul and Silas in Philippi, but not mentioned in Luke’s account of Acts. No mention is made whether Herodion also accompanied Paul at this time. As on the 1st Missionary Journey, Rufus of the Seventy was probably still in Antioch when Paul left. Rufus was sent to Rome (Romans 16:13) about 54 AD, and may have been traveling with Paul during the first part of the 3rd Missionary Journey.

We note that Andronicus is mentioned with Junia (Romans 16:7). They were one of several husband-wife⁴⁸³ teams of Apostles such as Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:2, 18, 26; Romans 16:3; 1 Corinthians 16:19; 2 Timothy 4:19). John Chrysostom noted⁴⁸⁴ how Paul heaped praise on others, especially Andronicus, exalting them above himself and even calling Junia an Apostle.

“Paul praises Andronicus and Junia saying, ‘They are of note among the Apostles’ (Romans 16:7). To be apostles at all is a great thing. But to be even among these of note, just consider what an accolade this is! They were of note owing to their works, to their achievements. How great is the devotion of Junia that she should be even counted worthy of being called an Apostle! But even here Paul does not stop, but adds another accolade besides, ‘Who were also in Christ before me’”.

⁴⁸⁰ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, May 17. See:

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for May 17](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20May%2017).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2005, March 28, 2002, November 10.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁴⁸¹ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 8, November 10. See:

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for April 8, November 10](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20April%208,%20November%2010).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2006, May 17.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁴⁸² Andronicus and Junia were native to Tarsus and were related to Paul. See Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, May 17, July 30. See also:

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp>.

⁴⁸³ See also for example Philologus and Julia, Aquila and Priscilla.

⁴⁸⁴ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans, XXXI, v. 5.

Table 2
Those of the Seventy with Paul on the 2nd Missionary Journey
For More Details, see Appendix A

Member of Seventy	Native To	Journey	Later Bishop of	Comments
Amplias		2, 3	Lydda	Andrew sent to Rome
Andronicus	Tarsus	1, 2	Pannonia in Illyricum	Prisoner with Paul
Apelles	Smyrna	2, 3	Smyrna	Acquaintance of Paul
Aquila & Priscilla	Pontus	2, 3, 4, 5	Ephesus before Timothy	
Aristarchus	Thessalonica	2, 3, 4, 5	Apamea	Joined at end of 2 nd
Aristobulus	Cyprus	1, 2, 3	Sent to Britain	Barnabas' brother
Artemas		2, 5	Lystra	
Asyncritus		3	Hyrcania (Persia)	Acquaintance of Paul
Carpus		2, 3, 5	Berea, Troas	
Cephas		2, 3, 4	Iconium after Tertius	
Crispus	Corinth	2, 3	Island of Aegina	Synagogue ruler
Dionysius	Athens	2, 3, 5	Athens	
Epaenetus	Achaia	2, 3	Carthage, Spain	
Epaphroditus	Philippi	2, 3, 4	Colophon in Pamphylia	
Gaius	Derbe	1, 2, 3	Ephesus after Timothy	
Hermas		2, 3	Philippi	Wrote "Shepherd"
Herodion	Tarsus	1, 2, 3	Neoparthia, Patras	
James, Lord's Brother	Bethlehem	2, 4	Jerusalem	Council of Jerusalem
Jason	Tarsus	1, 2, 3	Tarsus, Thessalonica, Corfu	
Justus	Nazareth	2, 4	Eleutheropolis	Antioch, start 2 nd
Linus		2, 3, 4, 5	Rome	
Luke	Antioch	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Roving Apostle	
Narcissus		2, 3	Athens after Dionysius	Acquaintance of Paul
Olympas		5	--	Beheaded with Paul
Onesiphorus	Iconium	1, 2, 3, 5	Colophon near Ephesus	
Philologus & Julia		3	Sinope	
Phlegon		2, 3	Marathon (Thrace)	Worked with Luke
Rufus	Cyrene	1, 2, 3	Thebes in Greece	
Silas		2, 3	Corinth	
Silvanus		2	Thessalonica	An older man
Sosipater	Berea	1, 2, 3	Iconium, Corfu	Presbyter in Iconium
Sosthenes	Corinth	2, 3	Caesarea	
Stachys		2, 3	Byzantium	Met Paul at Troas
Tertius		2, 3	Iconium after Sosipater	
Timothy	Lystra	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Ephesus	
Titus	Crete	1, 2, 3, 5	Crete	
Urbanus	Tarsus	2, 3	Tarsus, Macedonia	

“This too is a very great praise that they came before others. But let me draw your attention to their holy soul, how untainted it is by vanity. After glory such as his in kind and degree, Paul sets others before himself, and does not hide

from us the fact of his having come after them, nor is ashamed of confessing this.”

Tradition states⁴⁸⁵ that Andronicus and Junia traveled extensively outside their city of Pannonia in Illyricum, and were eventually martyred in Byzantium, which was later called Constantinople in the 4th century.

“Andronicus was made Bishop of Pannonia, but his preaching also took him and Junia to other lands, far from the boundaries of his diocese. Through the efforts of Andronicus and Junia the Church of Christ was strengthened, pagans were converted to the knowledge of God, many pagan temples closed, and in their place Christian churches were built.”

Passing from Tarsus to Derbe and Lystra, Paul, Silas and Andronicus picked up Timothy at Lystra, where Timothy was later added to the ranks of the Seventy⁴⁸⁶. Since Paul had been to Lystra on his 1st Missionary Journey (Acts 14:6-18), and had ordained presbyters there, Timothy was probably the one he ordained for Lystra, since Timothy becomes so prominent later, and since Timothy was so well-spoken of when Paul arrived on the 2nd Missionary Journey (Acts 16:2). Timothy would probably be in his mid-20’s at this time.

Before Paul, Silas, etc. traveled to Philippi, Luke joined the Apostolic party, which we see from the Scriptures. The author of the Book of Acts, Luke, switches from “they” to “we” (Acts 16:7, 10), indicating that Luke was now there himself. Luke did not start out traveling with Paul and Silas since he refers to “they” and “them” when Paul started the 2nd Missionary Journey (Acts 16:4-7). Since Luke was a native of Antioch⁴⁸⁷, he would have known where they were going and what they were doing.

Visiting the Churches from the 1st Missionary Journey

Most authors show Paul’s 2nd Missionary Journey going from Derbe and Lystra through Iconium and Antioch in Pisidia on the way to Troas even though this isn’t mentioned in Luke’s account in Acts. This is undoubtedly the route taken as it is the most direct route between Lystra and Troas. See Figure 3 for a map of the region. Thus, Paul would have seen Sosipater and Onesiphorus (both members of the original Seventy Apostles) again in Iconium, where Paul stayed at the house of Onesiphorus⁴⁸⁸ on his 1st and 2nd Missionary Journeys. Sosipater was the presbyter of Iconium that Barnabas and Paul ordained on their 1st Missionary Journey⁴⁸⁹. Paul

⁴⁸⁵ [http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for May 17](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20May%2017), July 30.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2006, May 17; 2008, July 30.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, May 17, July 30.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

⁴⁸⁶ Just as Matthias was added to the ranks of the Twelve after the apostasy of Judas Iscariot, so four others were added to the ranks of the Seventy after some of the Seventy apostatized. For details, see Mark Kern, Simon Magus the Heresiarch, St. Athanasius Press, 2004.

⁴⁸⁷ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 18.

⁴⁸⁸ Holy Apostles Convent, The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, Holy Apostles Convent, 2002, September 24, pp. 589-593.

⁴⁸⁹ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, November 10, April 28. See: [http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for October 30, November 10](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20October%2030,%20November%2010).

would also have seen Gaius, the first presbyter appointed for Derbe (Acts 20:4) and Timothy the first presbyter appointed for Lystra (2 Timothy 3:11). As we will see shortly, Artemas of the Seventy was also traveling with Paul and Silas at the beginning of the 2nd Missionary Journey and he would be ordained as Bishop of Lystra to replace Timothy.

Timothy had been doing a very good job in his role as presbyter (Acts 16:2) over the last several years and Paul asked Timothy to begin traveling with them. We note that Timothy's regard spread to the neighboring city of Iconium 20 miles away.

“Then Paul and Silas came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, *the* son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father *was* Greek. He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted to have him go on with him. Paul took *him* and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek” (Acts 16:1-3).

Why would Paul circumcise Timothy here, when he didn't bother to circumcise Titus earlier (Galatians 2:1-3) when he and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem for the Council of Jerusalem? Now that the Apostles in Jerusalem have decreed that circumcision is not necessary for the Gentiles, Paul goes and circumcises Timothy! This is completely backwards!

John Chrysostom commented⁴⁹⁰ on this in amazement at the wisdom of Paul. Paul came through the area carrying the decrees of the Council of Jerusalem which stated that circumcision is not required for the Gentiles; yet Paul goes ahead and circumcises Timothy. And the result is that the Churches “were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily” (Acts 16:5).

“It is indeed amazing, the wisdom of Paul! He had so many battles about circumcision; he moved all things to this end, and did not give over until he had carried his point; now that the decree is made sure, he circumcises Timothy. Paul states emphatically that circumcision is not required (Galatians 5:2). The wonder is that he even did the circumcision himself. He did it because the Jews, which were in that area, would not endure to hear the word from someone who was uncircumcised. Nothing could be wiser! In all things Paul looked to what was profitable; he did nothing from his own preference. Note the success: he circumcised, that he might take away circumcision; for he preached the decrees of the Apostles. ‘As they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the Apostles and Elders at Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily’ (Acts 16:4-5). Note that by fighting, Paul obtains edification! They were not warred upon by others, but themselves did contrary things; so they edified the Church! They introduced a decree not to circumcise, and yet Paul circumcises!”

When Paul and Silas came through Iconium on the 2nd Missionary Journey, Thekla, who had been converted on the 1st Missionary Journey, was probably not there anymore. By this time she had probably gone off to live a simple life of prayer and fasting in a cave near Seleucia

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, November 10.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁴⁹⁰ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXIV, vv. 1-5.

(northwest of Antioch). After living in that cave for about 70 years, she was martyred by the local physicians who were seeing all their patients healed by Thekla. Thekla came to be called “Equal to the Apostles” as a result of this ministry⁴⁹¹. In the vast majority of the lives of the saints, it is this devotion to the Lord through prayer and fasting that is rewarded with various spiritual gifts.

With Timothy gone from Lystra, Paul had to ordain someone else in his place. This would have had to have been Artemas⁴⁹², of the Seventy, who was later regarded as the Bishop of Lystra. Paul later sent Artemas as a courier to Titus on Crete (Titus 3:12) c. 14 years later. Little is known about Artemas after the death of Peter and Paul in c. 67 AD except that he stayed in Lystra and he died in peace.

The 2nd Missionary Journey Moves to Macedonia

After visiting the Churches of Asia Minor that Barnabas and Paul had established, Paul, Silas and those traveling with them tried to go to Phrygia, Galatia and Bithynia, but the Holy Spirit forbid them from doing that.

“As they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the Apostles and elders at Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily. Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the Word in Asia. After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them. So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, ‘Come over to Macedonia and help us’. Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the Gospel to them” (Acts 16:4-10).

Why would the Holy Spirit forbid Paul from preaching the Word in Asia? We note that Paul did not come back to Asia much at all after this. He spent two years in Ephesus on the 3rd Missionary Journey (Acts 19), and during that time, he probably visited the cities around Ephesus also. But his focus seems to be elsewhere.

One possible reason for Paul being called elsewhere has to do with the Apostle John. After Pentecost, and before the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:57-60), the Twelve Apostles divided up the world into different regions, and then they drew lots to determine who would go where. For example, Thomas’ lot was India and Matthew’s lot was Ethiopia. John’s lot was Asia Minor, but John was not able to go there immediately because he had also been given the

⁴⁹¹ Nickolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, September 24.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for September 24](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20September%2024).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, September 24.

⁴⁹² Nickolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 30.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for October 30](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20October%2030).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 30.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

command to care for the Virgin Mary by the Lord (John 19:26-27). After the Virgin Mary died in the mid 50's AD, John was now free to go to the territory that he had been given. Prior to that, Paul (and Barnabas, Silas and others) had been helping out by filling in for John. Once John was able to go to Asia Minor, he proceeded to deal with the people there very effectively and very authoritatively (Revelation 2-3). The "Angel of the Church" that John referred to is probably the Bishop of that Church. Timothy was Bishop in Ephesus after Paul ordained him, well before John arrived. Timothy traveled around a lot with Paul when Paul was alive, and served under John after that. Timothy was martyred in Ephesus just before John returned from exile on Patmos, and he was replaced by Gaius, also one of the Seventy.

The Church in Philippi

Philippi was a city in Macedonia that was originally founded by Philip II⁴⁹³, king of Macedon, in 356 BC. The city had a long prosperous history due largely to gold mines nearby. The city had a relatively small urban area, with villages surrounding it, but it had a very privileged position due to the wealth coming from the mines. Philippi was located on the Via Egnatia, the main trade route constructed by Rome in the 2nd century BC, which connected Italy with Asia Minor. Cities along this trade route (from East to West) are Neapolis (Acts 16:11), Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia (Acts 17:1), Thessalonica and Dyrrhachium on the western coast of Greece.

From the account of the founding of the Church in Philippi (Acts 16), there are a number of insights into the workings of the Early Church. We will explore a number of these⁴⁹⁴.

The first city Paul, Silas, Luke, Timothy and Andronicus visited in Macedonia was Philippi, called the foremost (i.e. capital city) in Macedonia. Paul seems to have skipped the smaller cities such as Neapolis, Amphipolis and Apollonia in order to concentrate on the larger cities. The idea seems to be that the smaller cities would benefit as people came there from the larger cities. While the only people Paul is recorded as meeting in Philippi are Lydia and the Philippian jailer, there were definitely others (Acts 16:40).

When Paul, Silas, etc., first arrived in Philippi, they met with the righteous women of Philippi who met for prayers outside the city by the riverside (Acts 16:13). These women were very receptive, were baptized and Lydia invited Paul to stay with her (Acts 16:15). On the way to prayers again, a fortune-telling slave girl began announcing Paul as "servant of the Most High God who proclaims to us the way of salvation" (Acts 16:17). At first, Paul tolerated this; after all, it was true. But as days went by, the slave girl began turning things into a circus, distracting the serious matters of prayer that Paul was focusing on. [Does this ever happen today??] So, Paul cast the demon out of the girl. The girl's eyes were opened as to what she was really doing: disrupting the prayer of the faithful.

A Major Learning Experience for Luke and the Others

These events in Philippi represented a major learning experience for Luke. Some of the things he learned first-hand were⁴⁹⁵ how the demons operate, how they interact with Christians and why they might pretend to go along with Paul. Paul demonstrated that the Way of Salvation

⁴⁹³ Philip II was the father of Alexander the Great.

⁴⁹⁴ For further study into the Church in Philippi, see the Study for the 6th Sunday of Pascha.

⁴⁹⁵ For details, see [Mark Kern, *The Life of the Apostle Paul*, St Athanasius Press, e-Books, 2018.](#)

(Acts 16:17) starts with learning and doing what the Lord taught; that is, keeping the Commandments. A more advanced learning experience for Luke and the others followed with Paul and Silas engaging in “Night Watches”. What they did was sing some of the Psalms later incorporated into Orthodox “Midnight Prayers”, which speak of earthquakes and the wrath of God. The other prisoners were listening to this; and then all of a sudden, a major earthquake happened.

While the other prisoners were listening intently and expectantly. The jailor was listening also. Paul and Silas were bleeding all over from being beaten with rods, where they could have undergone over a hundred strokes with an iron rod⁴⁹⁶. A beating with rods was applied to both the back and the chest, and left the subject very weak and usually with a few broken bones. Paul’s and Silas’ behavior was very unusual; people beaten with rods generally moaned all night from their wounds and bruises, murmuring against God and reviling whoever gave them the beating. But Paul and Silas were singing praises to God!

In Jewish society, a beating would have been limited to forty strokes; but in this case Gentiles, not Jews, administered it. For sure, Paul and Silas were in considerable pain and their backs were raw and bleeding.

When the “great earthquake” struck, (Acts 16:26) and the doors were opened, and it came as an answer to Paul’s and Silas’ prayer and singing. Normally, an earthquake wouldn’t unfasten leg irons. But it may pull the building down on top of them. This earthquake had some intelligence to it and the prisoners had their eyes opened quite clearly to see this.

Earthquakes occur in that part of the world more than in California. The jailor, who would answer with his life if any prisoners escaped, figured they were all gone when he saw the damage and the doors open. Paul had to restrain him from suicide by telling him that everyone was still there. Chrysostom said⁴⁹⁷ that the jailor was more amazed that all the prisoners were still there than he was at the earthquake. The other prisoners didn’t leave either since they knew this was no ordinary jailbreak. For most people, if they were in the prisoners’ place, heard some people keeping an all-night vigil and praying for an earthquake – and then it happened – they’d be wondering what else these guys could do! There’s more with them than any army Rome can muster!

The jailor realized that Paul saved his life by not escaping and his eyes were opened too; so, he asked Paul what he must do to be saved. Paul responded by speaking the word of the Lord to the jailor, the other prisoners and the jailor’s household. The jailor then washed and dressed Paul’s and Silas’ wounds and Paul and Silas held a midnight baptism followed by feasting and rejoicing.

When the Lord sent the Twelve Apostles out two by two, He told them to first “Inquire who is worthy, and stay there” (Matthew 10:11). The person that they stayed with received a significant blessing from the Lord. This is exactly what Paul did in Philippi. “On the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met *there*. Now a certain woman named Lydia heard *us*. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. And when she and her household were baptized, she begged *us*, saying, ‘If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay’. So, she persuaded us” (Acts 16:13-15).

⁴⁹⁶ Paul Copan, “The Ancient Near East Was No Picnic” suggests that ancient Egyptian law permitted beating criminals for perjury with between 100 and 200 strokes. According to the Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt, a 100-stroke beating was the mildest form of punishment.

⁴⁹⁷ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Acts, XXXVI, v. 25.

Traditionally, the next thing that the Church established is prayer in the city that they came to. This had already been started with Lydia and the other women. Today, if the Bishop or priest comes to a city, he may begin praying all by himself at first; that is OK. The prayer life forms the foundation for the Lord's work as He answers the prayers of the faithful. This is what happened in Philippi also, and the demon in the slave girl "Pythoness" was trying to disrupt this prayer life.

Paul and Silas Took a Beating for the Philippian Christians

The next day (Acts 16:35), the magistrates ordered Paul and Silas released quietly. Paul and Silas had been beaten and jailed just to satisfy the mob that was aroused by the slave girl's owner. And Paul took the beating without saying anything. [Paul and the Twelve were beaten a number of times during their missionary journeys.] Why would they not speak up for their rights? In this case, the answer is that Paul was looking out for the new Philippians converts who might incur the same treatment.

When the magistrates beat Paul without a trial, they violated Roman law and could be severely punished – and they knew it. All Paul had to do was appeal to Rome (Acts 25:11) and their heads would roll. Roman citizens were not allowed (1) to be beaten without a trial, and (2) to be incarcerated without a trial. As in Paul's case later, if the Roman citizen was not satisfied with the outcome of the trial, he could appeal to the Emperor himself.

At first the magistrates sent officers to release Paul and Silas (Acts 16:35). Undoubtedly, they had discovered overnight what actually happened, and that the masters of the slave girl "Pythoness" were just mad at losing their profitable business. However, Paul told the officers that the magistrates had just beaten and incarcerated Roman citizens; they need to come themselves and bring us out of prison! Thus, the magistrates had to come crawling on their knees to Paul to beg him not to prosecute them for this injustice.

With this hanging over the heads of the magistrates, they were very unlikely to harass Lydia, the jailor, the prisoners, etc., in response to the owners of the slave girl or any others who sought to persecute the new Church.

John Chrysostom pointed out⁴⁹⁸ another aspect of this situation. If Paul and Silas just left when the magistrates allowed them to, they would be leaving as if they were already condemned. Paul wanted to turn this around so that the magistrates would be the ones condemned.

"The magistrates said, 'depart, and go in peace' (Acts 16:36); that is, go in safety, fearing no man. But Paul said to them, that he did not want to seem to be receiving his liberty as one condemned, and as one that has done wrong. Therefore, he said, 'Having openly beaten us innocent Roman citizens' (Acts 16:37), that it may not be a matter of grace on the part of the magistrates. Besides, they wanted the jailor himself to be out of danger, that he may not be called to account for this afterwards. They do not say, 'Having beaten us', who have worked miracles; for the magistrates did not even pay attention to these.

⁴⁹⁸ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXV, Recapitulation.

Instead they said that which was most effective to shake their minds, ‘innocent Roman citizens’. Observe how diversely grace manages things: how Peter went out of prison, how Paul was released, though both were Apostles. ‘The magistrates feared’ because the men were Romans (Acts 16:38), not because they had unjustly thrown them into prison. ‘The magistrates asked Paul and Silas to leave the city’ (Acts 16:39), begging them as a favor.”

The Evangelist Luke Remained Behind in Philippi

Following this incident, Paul and Silas left Philippi, but Luke evidently stayed behind in Philippi. We can see this by looking closely at Luke’s words; when they arrived in Philippi, Luke said, “As we went to prayer” (Acts 16:16). When it comes to the departure from Philippi, Luke switches to “they departed” (Acts 16:40) and “they passed through Amphipolis” (Acts 17:1). The third person “they” continues for about five years until Paul came to Macedonia again on his 3rd Missionary Journey, at which time Luke again resumes the first person “We sailed away from Philippi” (Acts 20:6). In addition, from Paul’s Epistles to the Thessalonians, written from Corinth on Paul’s 2nd Missionary Journey, Silas and Timothy were with Paul but not Luke (1 Thessalonians 1:1, 2 Thessalonians 1:1).

As Paul and Silas left Philippi on the 2nd Missionary Journey, the only Christians that are mentioned are Lydia from Thyatira in Asia Minor and the jailor and the other prisoners along with their families. Others are also implied (Acts 16:40), however, such as those that met for prayer at the river side. When Paul returned to Macedonia five years later, he took up a significant collection in alms for the impoverished Jerusalem Church⁴⁹⁹. By then, the Church in Philippi had grown considerably and was able to contribute to these alms. Luke’s efforts in this regard may not have been limited to Philippi, but may have included Berea, Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-15) and even Illyricum (Romans 15:19).

Others of the Seventy Worked with Luke in Macedonia

Since Andronicus and his wife Junia were also traveling with Paul’s company, they probably also stayed behind with Luke, since Andronicus has traditionally been referred to as the Bishop of Pannonia in Illyricum. During these five years, Luke got around to the whole area. Paul left Luke in Philippi c. 49-50 AD. By 55 AD when Paul wrote to the Romans, he said, “From Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ” (Romans 15:19). Paul is never recorded as going to Illyricum himself; but Luke could easily have been there during the five years that he was in Philippi.

In addition, according to tradition⁵⁰⁰, Andronicus is regarded as the first Bishop of Pannonia in Illyricum. According to these accounts, Andronicus and Junia traveled widely around the area of Illyricum, evangelizing the whole area, perhaps with Luke, perhaps

⁴⁹⁹ See Acts 24:17, 1 Corinthians 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8:1-4; Romans 15:25-27.

⁵⁰⁰ Nickolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, May 17.
<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for May 17>.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2006, May 17; 2008, July 30.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

separately. Paul refers to the work of Andronicus and Junia when they were in Rome in c. 55 AD:

“Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me” (Romans 16:7).

Since Andronicus and Junia are referred to as Paul’s “countrymen”, Paul can say that he went to Illyricum because his kin went there with his instructions. Junia is sometimes referred to⁵⁰¹ as being “Equal to the Apostles” for her work with Paul and with her husband.

Urbanus is remembered as the Bishop of Macedonia who was ordained by the Apostle Andrew⁵⁰². He served for a long time there and was eventually tortured to death by the Jews and the pagans for his zeal in preaching the Gospel. In the Scriptures, we see Urbanus only in Rome in c. 55 AD (Romans 16:9). If Luke had been left behind in charge in Macedonia⁵⁰³ during the middle of Paul’s 2nd Missionary Journey (c. 50 AD), and this continued until the 3rd Missionary Journey (c. 55 AD); and if Urbanus was in Rome in 55 AD, he had to have been sent there along with the other 17 of the Seventy Apostles who had been sent there (Table 6). Most likely Urbanus was in Macedonia with Luke from 50 to 55 AD and had proven himself in the work there with his zeal for the Faith. When Paul came through Macedonia on the 3rd Missionary Journey, Paul sent Urbanus to Rome to help the others with dealing with the Heresiarch Simon Magus⁵⁰⁴. A few years later Urbanus returned to Macedonia.

Others helping out in Macedonia were Epaphroditus and Hermas. Epaphroditus was one of the original Seventy Apostles. He was probably from Philippi and Paul calls him an Apostle and a Liturgist to Philippi as well as his fellow-worker and fellow-soldier (Philippians 2:25). We first see him in Paul’s letters in c. 62 AD when Paul sent him to Philippi from Rome. Epaphroditus had been longing for the Philippians and was distressed because they were worried about him when he was very sick (Philippians 2:26-30). This implies that he had been working with Paul for quite a while already. Earlier in c. 49-50 AD, when Paul passed through Philippi on his 2nd Missionary Journey, Epaphroditus was probably there also. On Paul’s 3rd Missionary Journey, Luke started traveling with Paul again⁵⁰⁵, and probably Epaphroditus did so also, while Hermas of the original Seventy was left behind in Philippi. Hermas thus became known as the first Bishop of Philippi⁵⁰⁶. Hermas is best known for an instructive book he wrote called “The

⁵⁰¹ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, May 17.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for May 17](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20May%2017).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2006, May 17.

⁵⁰² Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 31.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 31.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for October 31](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20October%2031).

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

⁵⁰³ For more details regarding this, see the section of the 2nd Missionary Journey titled “The Evangelist Luke Remained Behind in Philippi”.

⁵⁰⁴ For more details regarding Simon Magus, see Mark Kern, Simon Magus the Heresiarch, St. Athanasius Press, 2004. See <http://www.stathanasius.org/resources/e-books/>.

⁵⁰⁵ See the Section, “The Evangelist Luke Remained Behind in Philippi”.

Shepherd”, which was very popular in the first few centuries, and was treated as Scripture by many until the canon of the Scripture was settled.

Silas Remains in Corinth as Bishop

Following Paul’s year and a half in Corinth, we do not hear about Silas any more. Since tradition ascribes the role of the first Bishop of Corinth to Silas⁵⁰⁷, he must have remained there all the way through the crisis Paul addressed in 1 Corinthians. Silas certainly must have had his hands full in Corinth.

Paul’s Return to Antioch

Paul Leaves Aquila and Priscilla in Charge in Ephesus

John Chrysostom pointed out⁵⁰⁸ that while Paul was everywhere working with the Gentiles, for the year and a half that he spent in Corinth, he was living in the same house as Aquila and Priscilla, who were Jews. The seeds of the war against the Jews by the Romans were beginning already then. Paul was not ashamed to live with lowly tentmakers rather than in a luxury condo. Even though Paul had been sent to the Gentiles, he was living with Jews without trying to get them to give up their Jewish traditions.

“Paul was led by the Spirit to Corinth, in which city he was to stay. ‘Having found a certain Jew named Aquila, of Pontus by birth, lately come from Italy, for the greater part of his life had been passed there — and Priscilla his wife, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome’ (Acts 18:2). Though it was in the reign of Nero that the war against the Jews was consummated, yet from the time of Claudius and it was fanning up, at a distance, so that they might come to their senses; from Rome they were now driven as common pests. This is why it was so ordered by Providence that Paul was led there as a prisoner, that he might not as a Jew be driven away, but as acting under military custody might even be guarded there. Having found these, ‘Paul came to them; and because he was of the same craft, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tent-makers’ (Acts 18:3). What a justification he found for dwelling in the same house with them! For because here, of all places, it was necessary for Paul to stay, ‘That I may cut off the opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the things of which they boast’ (2 Corinthians 11:12), it is providentially ordered that he stays there.”

“After leaving Athens, Paul ‘found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because

⁵⁰⁶ There were two cities not too far apart: Philippi and Philippopolis. Philippi was on the coast of the Aegean Sea while Philippopolis was inland about 100 miles almost due North. Both cities were named after Philip II of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great. Philippopolis today is named Plovdiv, Bulgaria.

⁵⁰⁷ Hippolytus, On the Seventy Apostles, 16.

Nikolai Velimirovic, The Prologue from Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, July 30.

Paul Hetherington, tr., The Painter’s Manual of Dionysius of Fournia, Oakwood Publications, 1974.

Demetrius of Rostov, The Great Collection of the Lives of the Saints, January 4, tr. by Fr. Thomas Marretta, Chrysostom Press, House Springs, MO, 2002

Dorotheus of Tyre, The Choosing of the Seventy Holy Apostles.

⁵⁰⁸ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XXXIX, vv. 2-3, Recapitulation.

Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them.³ So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers' (Acts 18:1-3). Notice how, not in Jerusalem, nor near it the crisis was hastening to come, but at a greater distance. Paul stayed with Aquila, and is not ashamed to stay there; for this very reason he stays, as having a suitable lodging-place, for to him it was much more suitable than any king's palace. Don't smile, beloved, to hear of Paul's occupation. It was good for him just as to the athlete the gymnasium is more useful than delicate carpets; so to the warrior the iron sword is more useful than a golden sword. Paul worked, even though he preached. Let us be ashamed, who though we have no preaching to occupy us, we live in idleness."

Luke wrote, "So Paul still remained a good while. Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila *were* with him. He had *his* hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow" (Acts 18:18). John Chrysostom noted⁵⁰⁹ that Paul was keeping the Mosaic Law fairly strictly at this time, and so were the Jews he was staying with. But the keeping of the Law was fading; this was a time of transition. Paul stayed just a short time in Ephesus; he left behind the Jews Priscilla and Aquila to teach the new converts, while he himself went to Jerusalem to keep the Feast (probably of Pentecost⁵¹⁰).

"Notice how the Law was breaking up; notice how they were bound by conscience. This was a Jewish custom, to shear their heads agreeably with a vow. The Law also required a sacrifice (Acts 21:26), which was not the case here. It was necessary that Paul should stay, and comfort the Ephesians concerning these things. Paul then sailed for Syria since it was there that 'the disciples were ordered to be called Christians' (Acts 11:26); there Paul had been 'commended to the grace of God' (Acts 14:26); there Paul had effected such things concerning the doctrine. Priscilla and Aquila were with him up until Ephesus. But these he left at Ephesus; and with good reason, namely, that they should teach. For having been with him so long time, they were learning many things, and yet he did not at present withdraw them from their custom as Jews. Paul came to Ephesus, and left Priscilla and Aquila there; but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. When they desired him to stay longer with them, he did not consent; but bid them farewell, saying, 'I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem'. Therefore, it was that he was hindered from coming into Asia, being impelled to what was of pressing moment. Thus, we observe him here, entreated by the Ephesians to stay, but because he could not comply, being in haste to depart, 'he took leave of them'. However, he did not leave them without help, but with a promise to return, 'But I will return again to you, God willing. And he sailed from Ephesus'" (Acts 18:21).

⁵⁰⁹ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XL, vv. 18-21.

⁵¹⁰ Paul stated, "I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem" (Acts 18:21). Sailing season on the Mediterranean is from April to October, and sailors usually spent the winter (November to March) in a sheltered harbor to avoid shipwreck from unpredictable storms. The Feast that Paul referred to was unlikely to be Passover, since Passover was likely over before the sailing season began. It is possible that Paul could have been referring to the Feast of Tabernacles in October, but more likely is the Feast of Pentecost. See also Acts 20:16.

John Chrysostom stated⁵¹¹ that Paul intentionally left Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus so that they would be available to help Apollos. They all did everything by listening to the Holy Spirit. Thanks to Aquila and Priscilla, Apollos was able to come to Corinth with greater force in refuting the Jews from the Scriptures.

“‘And Paul came to Ephesus, and left Aquila and Priscilla there’ (Acts 18:19); for he did not wish to take them about with him, but left them at Ephesus. They subsequently dwelt at Corinth, and he bears high testimony to them, and writing to the Romans, greets them (Romans 16:3). It seems to me that they afterwards went back to Rome, in the time of Nero, as having an attachment for those parts where they had been expelled from in the time of Claudius. ‘But Paul himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews’. It seems to me that the faithful still assembled there, for they did not immediately withdraw them. ‘When they asked *him* to stay a longer time with them, he did not consent’ (Acts 18:20), for he was hastening to Caesarea. ‘When he had landed at Caesarea, and had gone up and greeted the Church, he went down to Antioch. After he had spent some time *there*, he departed and went over the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples’ (Acts 18:22-23). Through these regions also he merely passes again, just enough to establish them by his presence. Then Apollos arrived in Ephesus (Acts 18:24). Now Apollos was an awakened man, traveling in foreign parts for this very purpose. Writing of him Paul said, ‘Now concerning Apollos our brother’ (1 Corinthians 16:12). When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately’ (Acts 18:26). It was not for nothing that Paul left them at Ephesus, but for Apollos’ sake, the Spirit so ordered it, that Apollos might come with greater force to the attack at Corinth. What may be the reason that they did not assault Apollos, but Paul they did? They knew that Paul was the leader, and great was the name of the man. ‘When Apollos desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace’ (Acts 18:27). That is, in faith; he did everything by faith; nowhere is there envy, nowhere is there an evil eye. Aquila teaches, or rather Apollos lets himself be taught. Apollos intended to depart, and they send letters ahead. ‘For he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ’ (Acts 18:28). Now by this, that he ‘publicly’ convinced them, his boldness was shown; by the clearness of his arguing, his power was declared; by his convicting them out of the Scriptures, his skill of learning was demonstrated. Neither boldness by itself contributes anything, where there is not power; nor power where there is not boldness.”

We note that Paul picked up two more members of his missionary band as he left Ephesus. Tychicus and Trophimus, both of the Seventy, have now joined Paul’s entourage (Acts 20:4). Trophimus was an Ephesian (Acts 21:29); Tychicus may have been from the Ephesus area also.

Paul Takes a Vow

⁵¹¹ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XL, vv. 19-28.

After leaving Corinth, Paul sailed for Ephesus, then home to Caesarea, Jerusalem and Antioch. He left Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus (Acts 18:19-21) -- eventually Aquila became Bishop of Ephesus.

Of note on Paul's return to Antioch is that "he had shorn his head in Cenchrea⁵¹², for he had taken a vow" (Acts 18:18). Thus, Paul took this vow after he left Corinth but before he arrived in Ephesus. Why? Taking vows was an Old Testament custom, and they were binding. The Lord had said, "It is better to not vow than to vow and not pay" (Ecclesiastes 5:5). But if Paul was proclaiming to the Gentiles that they don't need to keep the Mosaic Laws (with a few exceptions as decreed by the Church in Jerusalem), why was Paul being so open about keeping the Mosaic Law himself? Paul used the Mosaic Law to his advantage. Prior to stopping in Ephesus, Paul followed the rules of the Mosaic Law for taking a vow (Acts 18:18-22, Numbers 6:1-21); when he stopped in Ephesus to reason with the Jews at the synagogue, this was very obvious to them due to Paul's shaved head. Then Paul departed early in order to keep a Feast in Jerusalem -- also part of the Mosaic Law. He left behind Priscilla and Aquila -- also Jews -- in order to teach the Jews in Ephesus additional things. These things Paul did in order to set up his return to Ephesus on his 3rd Missionary Journey with spectacular results.

John Chrysostom noted⁵¹³ that the practice of the Mosaic Law was still widespread, but it was breaking up. At this point Paul was on his way back to Antioch to report the results of his 2nd Missionary Journey.

"Notice how the Law was breaking up; notice how they were bound by conscience. This was a Jewish custom, to shear their heads agreeably with a vow. There ought to have been a sacrifice also (Acts 21:26), which was not the case here. Paul desired to come to Syria because it was there that 'the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch' (Acts 11:26); and because it was there that he had been 'commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed' (Acts 14:26). Paul also had had a major effect on the Doctrine there."

"After taking this vow, Paul went to Ephesus and reasoned with the Jews in the synagogue. 'Priscilla and Aquila *were* with him' (Acts 18:18) -- notice, a woman also. These he left at Ephesus, with good reason; namely, that they should teach. Having been with him so long, they had learned many things. Yet he did not at present withdraw them from their custom as Jews."

"When the Ephesians desired him to stay longer with them, he didn't consent; but said farewell, saying, 'I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem; but I will return again to you, God willing' (Acts 18:21). He was hindered from coming into Asia, being impelled to what was of pressing moment. Even though Paul was entreated by the Jews of Ephesus to stay, he could not comply, being in haste to depart due to his vow and the Feast Day in Jerusalem. However, he did not leave them without help, and promised to return."

In summarizing Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey, he started with Silas, picked up Andronicus in Tarsus, Timothy in Lystra, Luke in Troas and Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth.

⁵¹² Corinth is located on a peninsula. Cenchrea was the port for Corinth on the eastern side of the peninsula.

⁵¹³ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XL, v. 18.

Urbanus was left behind in Tarsus, Luke, Andronicus and Junia in Macedonia, Olympas in Philippi, Jason in Thessalonica, Silas in Corinth and Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus.

When Paul returned to Antioch, Evodius was still the Bishop of Antioch. Since Evodius had been involved as Bishop in sending off Paul and Silas, it was common courtesy that Paul report back to him what he had accomplished. Evodius may have sent others back to the new Churches Paul had started to help them out.

Paul's 3rd Missionary Journey

Members of the Seventy Accompanying Paul

Table 3
Those of the Seventy Who Served with Paul on the 3rd Missionary Journey

For More Details, see Appendix A

Member of Seventy	Native To	Journey	Later Bishop of	Comments	Rome 55AD
Amplias		2, 3	Lydda, Odessus		Yes
Andronicus & Junia	Tarsus	1, 2, 3	Pannonia in Illyricum	Prisoner with Paul	Yes
Apelles	Smyrna	2, 3	Smyrna	Acquaintance of Paul	Yes
Aquila & Priscilla	Pontus	2, 3, 4, 5	Ephesus before Timothy	Acts 18:19	Yes
Aristarchus	Thessalonica	3, 4, 5	Apamea	Joined at end of 2 nd	
Aristobulus	Cyprus	1, 2, 3	Sent to Britain	Barnabas' brother	Yes
Asyncritus		3	Hyrkania (Persia)	Acquaintance of Paul	Yes
Carpus		2, 3, 5	Berea, Troas		
Cephas		2, 3, 4	Iconium after Tertius		
Crispus	Corinth	2, 3	Island of Aegina	Synagogue ruler	
Dionysius	Athens	2, 3, 5	Athens		
Epaenetus	Achaia	2, 3	Carthage, Spain		Yes
Epaphras		3, 4, 5	Colossae area	Colossians 1:7, 4:12	
Epaphroditus	Philippi	2, 3, 4	Colophon in Pamphylia		
Erastus		3, 5	--	Expert at finances	
Gaius	Derbe	1, 2, 3	Ephesus after Timothy	Presbyter in Derbe	
Hermas		2, 3	Philippi	Wrote "Shepherd"	Yes
Hermes		3	Dalmatia		Yes
Herodion	Tarsus	1, 2, 3, 5	Neoparthia, Patras		Yes
James, Lord's Brother	Bethlehem	2, 4	Jerusalem	Council of Jerusalem	
Jason	Tarsus	1, 2, 3	Tarsus, Thessalonica	Sent to Corfu	
Linus		2, 3, 4, 5	Rome		No
Lucius		3, 5	Laodicea in Syria	Paul's kinsman	
Luke	Antioch	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Roving Apostle		
Narcissus		2, 3	Athens after Dionysius	Acquaintance of Paul	Yes
Olympas		5	--	Beheaded with Paul	Yes
Onesiphorus	Iconium	1, 2, 3, 5	Colophon near Ephesus		
Patrobus		3	Naples, Puteoli		Yes
Philologus & Julia		3	Sinope		Yes
Phlegon		2, 3	Marathon (Thrace)	Worked with Luke	Yes
Rufus	Cyrene	1, 2, 3	Thebes in Greece		Yes

Silas		2, 3	Corinth		
Sosipater	Berea	1, 2, 3	Iconium, Corfu	Presbyter in Iconium	
Sosthenes	Corinth	2, 3	Caesarea		
Stachys		2, 3	Byzantium	Met Paul at Troas	Yes
Tertius		2, 3	Iconium after Sosipater		
Timothy	Lystra	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Ephesus		
Titus	Crete	1, 2, 3, 5	Crete		
Trophimus		3, 4, 5	--	Beheaded with Paul	
Tychicus	Asia Minor	3, 4, 5	Caesarea after Philip		
Urbanus	Tarsus	2, 3	Tarsus, Macedonia		Yes

Table 3 shows the members of the Seventy Apostles who worked with Paul at some point on the 3rd Missionary Journey.

Visiting the Churches Already Established

Paul began his 3rd Missionary Journey in a similar fashion to his 2nd Missionary Journey; that is, visiting the Churches he had already established, starting with Tarsus, Derbe, Lystra, Iconium and Antioch of Pisidia.

“After Paul had spent some time in Antioch, he departed and went over the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples” (Acts 18:23).

Figure 4 shows the route of Paul’s 3rd Missionary Journey by following the numbers in bold green text. Most maps of Paul’s 3rd Missionary Journey show him following a similar path as the 2nd Missionary Journey for the first part of the Journey. If he “strengthened all the disciples” (Acts 18:23), then he moved overland from Antioch through Tarsus, Derbe, Lystra, Iconium and Antioch of Pisidia to Ephesus. Along the way, he greeted (and strengthened) the presbyters and Bishops that he had ordained previously.

A Change in the Bishops of the Churches

As Paul passed through various towns, he changed Bishops in some of them. This was something he deliberated about as he saw a need for the talents of some of these men in what he was heading for.

Starting his 3rd Missionary Journey, Paul began the same as his 2nd Journey: that is, through Tarsus, Derbe, Lystra, Iconium and Antioch of Pisidia.

As Paul began his 3rd Missionary Journey, very little is mentioned of what he did in Galatia and Phrygia (Tarsus, Derbe, Lystra, Iconium and Antioch of Pisidia). Cephas and Onesiphorus, two of the Seventy, were mentioned on the 1st and 2nd Missionary Journeys, in Iconium, where Cephas was Bishop of Iconium according to tradition⁵¹⁴. Therefore, the first part

⁵¹⁴ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, December 8.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, January 4.

Note that <http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for December 8 states that Cephas was Bishop of Colophon in Pamphylia.

of Paul's 3rd Journey was probably spent deliberately strengthening each Church from his 1st Missionary Journey with the help of Timothy, Titus, Gaius, Aristarchus and Erastus.

Table 4
Bishops of Asia Minor

	Tarsus	Derbe	Lystra	Iconium	Antioch Pisidia
1 st Missionary Journey	Jason	Gaius	Timothy	Sosipater	No record
2 nd Missionary Journey	Urbanus	Not Gaius	Artemas	Not Sosipater	No record
3 rd Missionary Journey	Not Urbanus	Not Gaius		Tertius	No record
Later				Cephas	

Table 5
Bishops of Macedonia and Achaia

	Macedonia	Philippi	Thessalonica	Berea	Corinth	Ephesus
1 st Missionary Journey	--	--	--	--	--	--
2 nd Missionary Journey	Luke, Andronicus , Junia	Olympas	Jason	Carpus	Silas	Aquila, Priscilla
3 rd Missionary Journey			Silvanus		Silas	
Later						Timothy

Prior to Paul's arrival in Ephesus on the 3rd Missionary Journey, Apollos, one of the Seventy, came through Ephesus and vigorously refuted the Jews publicly showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ. When he arrived⁵¹⁵, he "knew only the baptism of John". Aquila, the presbyter, and his wife Priscilla took Apollos aside and brought him up to date on what had happened since John the Baptist. Apollos received their word gratefully and then left for Achaia (and Corinth) to do the same for the Jews there. When Paul arrived at Ephesus, one of the things he had to address (in writing 1 Corinthians) was the factions in the Corinthian Church: some of Apollos, some of Peter, etc. Perhaps Silas -- whom Paul left in charge -- wasn't as gifted a speaker as the others and was having difficulty holding everything together.

Apollos did not intend to create a personality cult in Corinth. There was some contact between Paul and Apollos (1 Corinthians 16:12) and Apollos didn't want to go back to Corinth for fear of amplifying the personality cult he inadvertently created. Later in about 65 AD, when Titus was the Bishop of Crete, Paul encouraged Titus to receive Apollos (and Zenas) as they came through (Titus 3:13).

⁵¹⁵ Apollos must have left Jerusalem for Alexandria, his home town, shortly after the Lord sent the Seventy out two by two (Luke 10:1-20). He seems to have missed Pentecost and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Figure 4
Map of Paul's 3rd Missionary Journey⁵¹⁶



Since Apollos traveled so extensively, he may not have had the time to become established as Bishop anywhere. We know that he was in Ephesus (Acts 18:24), Corinth (Acts 19:1), Crete (Titus 3:13), and back in Corinth (1 Corinthians 16:12). Other accounts say that he was Bishop of Smyrna⁵¹⁷, Caesarea in Bithynia⁵¹⁸, Colophon⁵¹⁹, Caesarea⁵²⁰ and Corinth⁵²¹.

⁵¹⁶ © Bible History Online <http://www.bible-history.com>. Other maps also available.

⁵¹⁷ Nickolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, September 10.

⁵¹⁸ <http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for March 30.

⁵¹⁹ <http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for January 4.

⁵²⁰ *The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church*, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, December 8.

⁵²¹ *The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church*, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, December 8.

⁵²² Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, Moody Press, Chicago, 1967, p. 72.

Paul's Epistles to Corinth

Paul founded the Church in Corinth about 51 AD toward the end of his 2nd Missionary Journey and stayed there a year and a half (Acts 18:11). Silas was traveling with Paul at the time along with Luke, Timothy and Andronicus, where all but Paul were of the original Seventy. Luke was left behind⁵²² to oversee the Macedonian Churches. Silas was left behind⁵²³ in Corinth and was later Bishop of Corinth.

Before Paul arrived in Corinth for an extended stay again in late 55 AD, he wrote four letters to Corinth (two of which are lost) and paid the Church one brief visit. In the interval from 52 to 55 AD, the Apostles Apollos and Peter visited Corinth. Apollos was one of the original Seventy, but must have been back home in Alexandria at the time of Pentecost. He knew only the baptism of John in 53 AD when he came to Ephesus (Acts 18:24-28). Aquila and Priscilla, the overseers Paul left in Ephesus (Acts 18:18-19), straightened Apollos out and also wrote to the Churches in Achaia (Athens and Corinth) to receive Apollos when he arrived (Acts 18:27). Apollos proceeded to help out by vigorously refuting the Jews publicly; showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ (Acts 18:28). In his earlier letter, (1 Corinthians 3:8), Paul said that he and Apollos are one; that is, of one mind in the work of establishing the Churches.

The Church in Colossae

At the time that Paul spent two years in Ephesus (c. 53 to 55 AD), the Church in Colossae was getting started, probably at the hands of Archippus. We can only see this in the Scriptures by looking at what Paul wrote later. When Paul wrote, "Say to Archippus, 'Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it'" (Colossians 4:17), Paul was probably saying that because Archippus was so instrumental in starting the Church there.

Paul Leaves for Macedonia

After the uproar had ceased (in Ephesus), Paul called the disciples to *himself*, embraced *them*, and departed to go to Macedonia. Now when he had gone over that region and encouraged them with many words, he came to Greece and stayed three months. When the Jews plotted against him as he was about to sail to Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia. Sosipater of Berea accompanied him to Asia -- also Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, Gaius of Derbe, Timothy, Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia. These men, going ahead, waited for us at Troas. But we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days joined them at Troas, where we stayed seven days. Now on the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight" (Acts 20:1-7).

From this account, we notice that Sosipater of Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus of Thessalonica, Gaius of Derbe, Timothy and Tychicus & Trophimus of Asia went on ahead to Troas while Paul and Luke stayed in Philippi for five days longer. Since Luke had been in this

⁵²² Note the switch in tenses from "we" to "they" and back to "we" in Acts 16:16, 17:1, 20:6.

⁵²³ Note that we never hear from Silas again traveling with Paul after he arrived in Corinth, Acts 18:5.

area for about five years, Luke may have had time to take Paul on a tour of the area, or at least introduce him to some of the saints that Luke had worked with over this time period.

John Chrysostom noted⁵²⁴ that Aristarchus – dressed like John the Baptist – was one of the Apostles who went ahead of Paul to Troas to prepare the way for Paul as he was coming from Philippi.

“There was need of much comforting after that uproar. Accordingly, having done this, Paul went into Macedonia, and then into Greece. ‘When Paul had gone over that region and encouraged them with many words, he came to Greece and stayed three months. When the Jews plotted against him as he was about to sail to Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia’ (Acts 20:2-3). Again he is persecuted by the Jews, and goes into Macedonia.”

One purpose of Paul’s swing through Macedonia and Achaia was to take up a collection for the now-poverty-stricken Churches of Judea. As persecution developed in Judea, first at the hand of Saul (Acts 8:3), later at the hands of the Jewish leaders, they would raid houses occupied by Christians, drag people off to prison, and plunder the house of food and clothing. Then they would sell the house and pocket the proceeds. In Jerusalem and vicinity the long-term effect of the persecutions was the impoverishment of the Jerusalem church. By 57 AD, it was so bad that the Apostle Paul took up a major collection among the Gentile churches in Macedonia (Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea), Achaia (Corinth, Athens) and Galatia (Iconium, Lystra, Derbe), to bring relief to the Jerusalem church (Romans 15:25-27, 1 Corinthians 16:1-4, 2 Corinthians 8:1-4, Acts 24:17).

Paul may have traveled more widely in Macedonia than on his 2nd Missionary Journey, going all the way to Illyricum in Dalmatia (Romans 15:19). This may also be a reference to Luke the Evangelist taking Paul on a tour of what he had done in the five years since Paul had been there. (Luke traveled extensively as an evangelist after Paul’s death).

Paul Picks Up Luke in Macedonia

We notice also that as Paul traveled through Macedonia, he picked up Luke, who had been there for about 5 years. We can see this in Luke’s text of Acts. Before Paul reached Macedonia, Luke says, “When he had gone over that region” and, “As he was about to sail” (Acts 20:2-3). But when Paul reached Macedonia, Luke says, “These men, going ahead, waited for us at Troas” (Acts 20:5); and “We sailed away from Philippi” (Acts 20:6).

According to tradition, about this time, the Apostle Andrew ordained Urbanus⁵²⁵ of the original Seventy as Bishop of all Macedonia. We don’t hear much from Urbanus after this, except that he was later tortured and killed by the Jews and pagans. Thus, we can conclude with

⁵²⁴ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLIII, vv. 2-6.

⁵²⁵ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 31.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for October 31.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 31.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

a fair degree of certainty, that it was Urbanus who replaced Luke at this time. Most likely, Urbanus joined Luke in Macedonia a little before Luke left.

Epaphroditus Also Joins Paul in Philippi

Epaphroditus was⁵²⁶ one of the original Seventy Apostles. He was probably from Philippi and Paul calls him an Apostle and a Liturgist to Philippi as well as his fellow-worker and fellow-soldier (Philippians 2:25). We first see him in Paul's letters in c. 62 AD when Paul sent him to Philippi from Rome. Epaphroditus had been longing for the Philippians and was distressed because they were worried about him when he was sick (Philippians 2:26-30). This implies that he had been working with Paul for quite a while already. Earlier in c. 49-50 AD, when Paul passed through Philippi on his 2nd Missionary Journey, Epaphroditus was probably there. On the 2nd Missionary Journey, Paul left Luke behind in Macedonia⁵²⁷ and Luke worked with several others of the Seventy in Macedonia. On Paul's 3rd Missionary Journey, as he passed through Philippi again, Luke started traveling with Paul again. Probably Epaphroditus did so also and Hermas of the original Seventy was left behind in Philippi. Hermas thus became known⁵²⁸ as the first Bishop of Philippi. There are conflicting accounts of where Epaphroditus finished his life; some say he was Bishop of Colophon in Pamphylia; others say he was Bishop of Andriace in Lycia, near Myra.

John Chrysostom noted⁵²⁹ that Paul continued to celebrate the Jewish Feast Days to help the preaching even though he was not required to do so.

“It seems to me that Paul made a point of keeping the feasts in the large cities. ‘He sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread’, where Philippi was the place Paul had been imprisoned. This was Paul's third coming into Macedonia, and it is a high testimony that Luke points out the day of the week. When the disciples came together to eat dinner, Paul preached to them, ready to depart the next day. This was the season between Pascha and Pentecost. See how everything was subordinate to the preaching. Paul also did this because of stillness of the night.”

Chrysostom also noted⁵³⁰ how everywhere Paul accomplished things by preaching and not by miracles. He was hastening to get to Antioch and Jerusalem, but he restrained himself to set things right in these parts also.

⁵²⁶ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, December 8.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for December 8, March 30, January 4.](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20December%208,%20March%2030,%20January%204)

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2003, December 8.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

⁵²⁷ See the section of “Paul” on the 2nd Missionary Journey titled “The Evangelist Luke Remained Behind in Philippi”.

⁵²⁸ Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, November 5.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, May 31.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for March 8, May 31.](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20March%208,%20May%2031)

Note: The Prologue and the OCA web site refer to Hermas as Bishop of Philippoupolis, a city near Philippi.

⁵²⁹ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLIII, vv. 1-8.

⁵³⁰ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLIII, Recapitulation.

“Paul refreshed the disciples by embracing them before leaving for Macedonia, giving them much consolation. He encouraged the Macedonians with many words; then he came to Greece and stayed three months (Acts 20:2). Notice how we find him accomplishing everything by means of preaching, not by miracles. Luke constantly shows Paul to us as hastening to get to Syria; the reason for it was the Church, and Jerusalem. But still he restrained his desire, so as to set everything right in those parts also. Troas is not a large place; why then do they spend seven days there? Perhaps it was large because of the number of believers. And after he had passed seven days there, on the following day he spent the night in teaching; so hard did he find it to tear himself away from them, and they from him.”

Thus, on the return trip to Troas on the 3rd Missionary Journey (Acts 20:4-5) and the brief stop in Ephesus at the end of the 3rd Missionary Journey (Acts 20:16-38), Luke was added to the group. However, Erastus and Sosthenes, who had accompanied Paul earlier, are missing (Acts 20:4). Erastus was at Ephesus at the beginning of the 3rd Missionary Journey when Paul wrote to the Romans from Ephesus (Romans 16:21-24), and was also there when Paul sent him from Ephesus to Macedonia with Timothy (Acts 19:22). This was before Paul went to Macedonia to get Luke, so Erastus may have stayed in Macedonia for a while. Erastus was in Rome just before Paul’s death and Paul had just sent him to Corinth (2 Timothy 4:20).

Sosthenes was the synagogue ruler who got beaten up on Paul’s behalf in Corinth on the 2nd Missionary Journey (Acts 18:17). He was also with Paul when Paul wrote to Corinth from Ephesus on the 3rd Missionary Journey (1 Corinthians 1:1). Sosthenes had probably come to Ephesus at the direction of Silas to seek Paul out with a report on what was going on in Corinth. Following Paul’s letter-writing (i.e. after Paul’s 4th letter to Corinth), Sosthenes probably traveled back to Corinth with Paul. Sosthenes went on to become Bishop of Colophon in Asia Minor, between Ephesus and Smyrna, perhaps after Onesiphorus was martyred there.

Paul Heads for Antioch

“Then we went ahead to the ship and sailed to Assos, there intending to take Paul on board; for so he had given orders, intending himself to go on foot. And when he met us at Assos⁵³¹, we took him on board and came to Mitylene. We sailed from there, and the next *day* came opposite Chios. The following *day* we arrived at Samos and stayed at Trogyllium. The next *day* we came to Miletus. For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost” (Acts 20:13-16).

John Chrysostom noted⁵³² that a number of the original members of the Seventy Apostles accompanied Paul and went ahead to cities on their route to prepare the way for Paul. This appeared to allow Paul to keep the Jewish Feast Days in the large cities, which also allowed Paul a teaching opportunity to instruct everyone on the true meaning of the Feast Days.

“‘When the Jews laid wait for Paul, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia’ (Acts 20:2-3). Again, he is persecuted by

⁵³¹ It was about a 20-mile walk from Troas to Assos.

⁵³² John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLIII, vv. 2-6.

the Jews, and goes into Macedonia. ‘Sosipater of Berea accompanied him to Asia -- also Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia. These men, going ahead, waited for us at Troas’ (Acts 20:4-5). These, he says, went before him to Troas, preparing the way for him. ‘We sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days joined them at Troas, where we stayed seven days’ (Acts 20:6). For it seems to me that Paul made a point of keeping the feasts in the large cities.”

The ship Paul traveled on stopped on successive days at Mitylene on the Island of Lesbos (20 miles away), the Island of Chios (20 miles away), the Island of Samos (50 miles away), but stayed at Trogyllium (in a sheltered inlet on a rocky peninsula just onshore from Samos) and Miletus (15 miles away). We note that the ship during this time is hugging the coast, passing between islands and the mainland, which may mean that it was still the winter season, when sailing on the Mediterranean was treacherous. The sailing season usually begins in April; if Paul was hurrying to get to Jerusalem by Pentecost (Acts 20:16), it is quite reasonable that he started heading for Antioch before April, and that he was inching his way down the coast to get closer.

John Chrysostom noted⁵³³ that Paul was training his followers to do without him, since he may not ever be back to this region again.

“We often find Paul parting from the disciples. He went on foot, both that he might arrange many matters, and by way of training them to bear with parting from him. He gave them the easier way, going about 20 miles by ship.

Chrysostom also noted⁵³⁴ that Luke described Paul’s travel differently here than in other places. Here Luke gives a lot of details that he omits elsewhere. This indicates that Paul was traveling more leisurely at this time, trying hard not to offend anyone who really desired his attention.

“Why does Luke say where they came, and where they went to? To show in the first place that Paul was making the voyage more leisurely, sailing past some and making a stay at others, ‘that he might not have to spend the time in Asia’ (Acts 20:16). Since had he come there, he did not want to sail by; he did not like to pain those who would have begged him to remain. ‘He hastened, if it were possible for him to keep the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem’; this was not possible if he stayed. Notice how Paul is also moved like other men. Therefore, he does all this, that we may not think that he was above human nature. We see him desiring something, hastening, and in many instances not obtaining his object; for those great and holy men were partakers of the same nature with us. It was in the will and purpose that they differed; as a result, they attracted upon themselves the great grace they did. Notice how many things they order by an economy of their own. ‘That we give not offense’ to those who wish to take offense, and, ‘That our ministry be not blamed’ (2 Corinthians 6:3). Notice both an irreproachable life and on the other hand condescension. Paul went beyond the commandments of Christ, and was on the other hand humbler than all. ‘I have

⁵³³ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLIII, vv. 13-16.

⁵³⁴ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLIII, Recapitulation.

become all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some” (1 Corinthians 9:22).

The Emotional Meeting with the Presbyters of Ephesus

“Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost. From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church” (Acts 20:16-17.)

On the return leg of his 3rd Missionary Journey, Paul was hurrying to get to Jerusalem for Pentecost. Therefore, he had a brief, but emotional meeting with the presbyters from Ephesus (Acts 20:16-38). Notably missing of the presbyters from Ephesus was Aquila and his wife Priscilla who were in Rome (Rom 16:3-5) with the church that was now meeting in their house. The Apostle John, who referred to himself as “the elder” or presbyter (3 John 1) was not there yet. Included among the presbyters from Ephesus were bishops (i.e. Greek *episcopous* Acts 20:28) and perhaps representatives from all the churches nearby such as Colossae, Laodicea, Hierapolis, Philadelphia, Sardis, Smyrna, Thyatira, etc.

John Chrysostom noted⁵³⁵ that Paul’s hurry to be in Jerusalem at Pentecost was threefold: (1) because of the multitude that would be there. (2) As an example, to the Jews; and (3) as an opportunity to deliver the Word.

“Why was Paul in a hurry about Pentecost? Not for the sake of the feast, but of the multitude. At the same time, by this he conciliated the Jews, as being one that honored the feasts, wishing to gain even his adversaries. At the same time, he delivers the Word. Accordingly, notice what great gain accrued, from all being present. But that the interests of the people of Ephesus might not be neglected on that account, he managed for this in a different way. But let us look over again what has been said.”

Chrysostom also looked closely⁵³⁶ at what Paul did as he passed by Ephesus. Just like Samuel, David and Moses, Paul was very humble about everything and solicited the opinions of those he was speaking to as a testimony to what he was saying.

“Notice Paul, hastening to sail by Ephesus, and yet not overlooking them. He sent for the rulers, and through those he speaks to the Ephesians. It is worthy of admiration, how finding himself under a necessity of saying certain great things about himself, he tries to make the least he can of it. ‘You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you’ (Acts 20:18). Just as Samuel, when about to deliver up the government to Saul says in their presence, ‘Have I taken aught of your hands? You are witnesses, and God also’ (1 Samuel 12:3-5); so, Paul here. David also, when disbelieved, says, ‘Your servant used to keep his father's sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, I went out after it and struck it, and delivered *the lamb* from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught *it* by its beard, and struck and killed it’ (1 Samuel 17:33-36). Paul himself also says to the Corinthians, ‘I have become a fool in boasting; you have compelled me’ (2 Corinthians 12:11). God

⁵³⁵ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLIII, vv. 13-16.

⁵³⁶ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLIV, vv. 17-21.

Himself also does the same, not speaking of himself upon any and every occasion; only when He is disbelieved, then He brings up His benefits. Accordingly, notice what Paul does here: first he offers as an example their own testimony; that you may not imagine his words to be mere boasting, he calls the hearers themselves as witnesses of the things he says, since he was not likely to speak lies in their presence. This is the excellence of a teacher, to have for witnesses of his merits those who are his disciples. What is wonderful is that Paul continued doing this not for one day or for two. He wishes to cheer them for the future, that they may bravely bear all things, both the parting from him, and the trials about to take place — just as it was in the case of Moses and Joshua. Moses had been with the Lord the whole time, serving the Lord with all humility of mind. Notice what makes the best rulers: ‘hating pride’. This is especially a problem for rulers, because to them there is almost a necessity of becoming arrogant. Humility is the groundwork of all that is good, as in fact Christ said, ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit’” (Matthew 5:3).

Paul Arrives in Judea

“Now it came to pass, that when we had departed from them and set sail, running a straight course we came to Cos, the following *day* to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. And finding a ship sailing over to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. When we had sighted Cyprus, we passed it on the left, sailed to Syria, and landed at Tyre; for there the ship was to unload her cargo. And finding disciples, we stayed there seven days. They told Paul through the Spirit not to go up to Jerusalem. When we had come to the end of those days, we departed and went on our way; and they all accompanied us, with wives and children, till *we were* out of the city. And we knelt down on the shore and prayed. When we had taken our leave of one another, we boarded the ship, and they returned home. And when we had finished *our* voyage from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, greeted the brethren, and stayed with them one day” (Acts 21:1-7).

We note that everyone really likes Paul! The whole town went out to the shore where Paul was to sail from Tyre to Ptolemais to see him off, even the women and children. They had a very emotional farewell just like Paul had at Ephesus.

We also note that the disciples at Tyre prophesied just like Agabus did a few days later about chains awaiting Paul in Jerusalem.

Paul and His Companions Stay with Deacon Philip

“On the next *day* we who were Paul's companions departed and came to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was *one* of the seven, and stayed with him. Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied” (Acts 21:8-9)

We note here that it was not the four virgin daughters of Philip who prophesied of Paul's coming difficulties in Jerusalem, but Agabus. Agabus had previously prophesied of the famine that was to come in the days of Claudius (Acts 11:28).

Agabus Prophesies of Paul's Imprisonment

“And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his *own* hands and feet, and said, ‘Thus says the Holy Spirit, ‘So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver *him* into the hands of the Gentiles’”. Now when we heard these things, both we and those from that place pleaded with him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, ‘What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus’. So, when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, ‘The will of the Lord be done’” (Acts 21:10-14).

John Chrysostom noted⁵³⁷ that Agabus prophesied just like the prophets of old used to do, by representing future events in physical pictures. Everyone grasped that the Jews would attempt to do to Paul what they had done to Christ. Paul grieved, not at his own future, but at the distress it was causing the people there.

“Agabus, who formerly had declared about the famine, says, ‘So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt’. This is what the prophets used to do, representing events to the sight, when they spoke about the captivity — as did Ezekiel. The grievous part of the business, is that the Jews would ‘deliver Paul into the hands of the Gentiles’ (Acts 21:11), which is what they had done with Christ (Matthew 20:18-19). Everyone recognized these words and they begged Paul not to go up to Jerusalem’. Paul answered, ‘What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart?’” (Acts 21:13) We should note that Paul said, ‘I go bound in the Spirit to Jerusalem’ (Acts 20:22); this was a matter of necessity for him. Paul did not fall into these things ignorantly; therefore, these things are foretold. But they wept, and he comforted them, grieving at their tears. Nothing could be more affectionate; because he saw them weeping, he grieved, he that felt no pain at his own trials.”

John Chrysostom also noted⁵³⁸ that at other times, Paul obeyed the words of his disciples, such as at Ephesus and at Damascus, and escaped from dangers. But here, even though warned by the Spirit, he goes to face the dangers head on. He knew the Spirit was leading him to do that.

“The disciples at Tyre ‘said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem’ (Acts 21:4). Notice: when the Spirit does not forbid, Paul complies. They said, ‘Do not venture into the theater’ (Acts 19:31) and Paul complied. Often, they bore him off from dangers, and he complied. At Damascus he escaped by a window (Acts 9:25). Now, though numberless persons beg him, both those at Tyre and those at Caesarea, weeping and predicting numberless dangers, he refuses to comply. It is not merely that they predicted the dangers, but ‘by the Spirit’. If then the Spirit spoke, why did Paul contradict? They knew ‘by the Spirit’ what would be the consequences, and they spoke to Paul; of course, this does not mean that the command they made was by the Spirit. They did not simply foretell to him the dangers through the Spirit, but added of themselves that he ought not to go up to Jerusalem — thus sparing him. Their entreaty was great! When Paul had heard that he will have to suffer numberless perils, then he is in

⁵³⁷ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLV, vv. 11-13.

⁵³⁸ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XLV, Recapitulation.

haste, not flinging himself upon the dangers but accounting it to be the command of the Spirit. But when they could not persuade him — this was why they wept — then they kept silent. Notice the resignation! Notice the affection! The Lord, they say, Himself will do that which is pleasing in his sight. They perceived that it was the will of God. Otherwise Paul would not be so bent upon going to Jerusalem — he that on all other occasions delivers himself out of dangers.”

Paul Arrives in Jerusalem

“And after those days we packed and went up to Jerusalem. Also, some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us and brought with them a certain Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we were to lodge” (Acts 21:15-16).

With everyone prophesying what Paul is headed toward why would Paul head right into trouble? It seems that Paul was on a mission! There were things coming out of Jerusalem, but not from James, regarding what needed to be done in keeping the Mosaic Law (Acts 21:20-22). Paul felt he needed to address this even if it meant risking his life.

But there were larger issues involved also. Paul arrived in Jerusalem in c. 58 AD. Eight years later in 66 AD, Vespasian and the Roman armies began the siege of Jerusalem. We might ask what happened in those eight years to bring down the wrath of God so strongly at this time. Certainly, we can say that part of this is a result of the Crucifixion of Christ in c. 30 AD. But why did the Lord wait this long? Usually His delay of punishment is to give people an opportunity for repentance. Two major events that seemed to have sealed the fate of Jerusalem and demonstrated that no further repentance would be forthcoming are the persecution of Paul from 58 to 60 AD and the murder of Bishop James in c. 62 AD. Both of these events came out of a rage against obvious godliness such as was demonstrated at the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:54-60). However, many people repented after the stoning of Stephen, especially due to the work of Bishop James. With the arrival of Paul in Jerusalem, there is another attitude that came forward: the political fervor of the Jewish Zealots.

Two to three years earlier Paul had written the following to the Romans, which indicates his feelings on the subject of his countrymen.

“I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom *pertain* the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the Law, the service *of God*, and the promises; of whom *are* the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ *came*, who is over all, *the* eternally blessed God. Amen” (Romans 9:1-5)

History of the Jewish Zealot Party

The Party of the Zealots was very prominent during the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans and Josephus goes into great detail in describing their actions. It seems that their attitude was “better dead than Roman”, and it was an extreme form of Jewish nationalism. To them, circumcision was Jewish national identity, since it represented God’s covenant with

Abraham (Genesis 17:1-13). Gentiles were not part of their world at all. Some milestones from the Scriptures are:

1. Paul returned from the 1st Missionary Journey in c. 48 AD to a furor about circumcision (Acts 15:1-2).
2. Bishop James and the Apostles in Jerusalem decreed that the Gentiles didn't need to be circumcised (Acts 15:24-29).
3. Yet Jews from Jerusalem still insisted that the Gentiles needed to be circumcised (Galatians 6:12-14).
4. Jews from Asia Minor hounded Paul from city to city during his 1st, 2nd and 3rd Missionary Journeys. Their big burning issue was circumcision. (Acts 14:19, 17:13-14, 18:12-15, 20:3)
5. When Paul arrived in Jerusalem after the 3rd Missionary Journey in c. 58 AD, the Jews from Asia Minor accused him of bringing Trophimus the Ephesian (a Gentile member of the Seventy Apostles) into the Temple, thus defiling the Temple (Acts 21:29).
6. A mob scene resulted and the Zealots tried to kill Paul several times (Acts 21:31, 22:21-23, 23:12-14, 25:2-3).
7. If the chief priests had not been involved with the Zealots earlier, they became involved out of a common desire to kill Paul (Acts 23:14-15).
8. After Paul was sent to Rome, comfortably out of their reach, they took out their anger and frustration on Bishop James and murdered him right in front of the Temple.

According to Josephus' account⁵³⁹ of the Jewish rebellion that resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem in c. 70 AD, the Party of the Zealots used murder as a technique for accomplishing their goals. Political opponents were quietly and systematically assassinated when they least expected it. This created a reign of terror, since no one knew who the Zealots were or who they would strike next. Thus, we can see a buildup of power by the Zealots. Before and during the time of Christ's public ministry, there were scattered outbreaks by the Zealots, such as Judas and Theudas (Acts 5:36-37) and probably also Barabbas (Mark 15:7). As the Zealots got more control, there were more frequent incidents that clashed with Jewish nationalism. Finally, during the siege of Jerusalem, the Zealots obtained control of Jerusalem and drove the holy city into the ground.

Luke Drafts His Gospel, and Later Acts

During this time that Paul spent 2 years in captivity in Judea, Luke probably wrote his Gospel. To do so, Luke needed access to the genealogy records kept in the Temple in Jerusalem in order to draft his genealogy of Jesus (Luke 3:23-38). After the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem in 66 AD, no one was able to get in or out of the city. After the siege of Jerusalem in 70 AD, the city was burned and everything was destroyed.

It is possible that Luke could have drafted his Gospel during the 2 years that Paul was under house-arrest in Rome. But that would mean that Luke would have traveled to Jerusalem during that time to get the genealogy records. Thus it is most probable that Luke drafted his Gospel during Paul's captivity in Judea and that he then drafted his account in Acts during Paul's 2 years of captivity in Rome. Since Acts 28 ends with Paul still under house-arrest in Rome, we

⁵³⁹ Josephus, Wars of the Jews, IV, vi, 1.

can comfortably date Acts to about 62 AD. Following the completion of Acts, Paul was released and embarked on his 5th Missionary Journey.

Paul's 4th Missionary Journey – As Prisoner to Rome

Two years earlier, Paul had heard from the Lord while he was in prison during the night, “The Lord stood by him and said, ‘Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome’” (Acts 23:11). During these two years, Paul has been doing just that, and he has been growing bolder and bolder, not just defending himself, but actually teaching as he did so. He knew that he was going to go to Rome, and he wasn’t very concerned about when or how he got there. These two years were just the warm-up; in Rome he would be testifying before Emperor Nero. When Agrippa said to Festus, “This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar” (Acts 26:32), this was not a disappointment to Paul; this was the Hand of God directing his way forward.

By “Paul’s 4th Missionary Journey”, we are covering the time period of his leaving Judea until he was released from house-arrest in Rome, or from c. 60 AD to c. 62 AD. There are two major parts to this “Missionary Journey”. The first part involves the trip itself, during which the entire crew of the ship and the entire population of Malta came to know the Lord. The second part of this “Missionary Journey” involves Paul’s stay in Rome under house-arrest, where many people came to see him, and where he wrote some of his Epistles.

The Beginning of the Journey to Rome

“And when it was decided that we should sail to Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to *one* named Julius, a centurion of the Augustan Regiment. So, entering a ship of Adramyttium⁵⁴⁰, we put to sea, meaning to sail along the coasts of Asia. Aristarchus⁵⁴¹, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, was with us⁵⁴². And the next *day* we landed at Sidon. And Julius treated Paul kindly and gave *him* liberty to go to his friends and receive care. When we had put to sea from there, we sailed under *the shelter of* Cyprus, because the winds were contrary. And when we had sailed over the sea which is off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, *a city of* Lycia. There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing to Italy, and he put us on board. When we had sailed slowly many days, and arrived with difficulty off Cnidus, the wind not permitting us to proceed, we sailed under *the shelter of* Crete off Salmone. Passing it with difficulty, we came to a place called Fair Havens, near the city of Lasea. Now when much time had been spent, and sailing was now dangerous because the Fast was already over, Paul advised them, saying, ‘Men, I perceive that this voyage will end with disaster and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also our lives’. Nevertheless, the centurion was more persuaded by the helmsman and the owner of the ship than by the things spoken by Paul” (Acts 27:1-11).

⁵⁴⁰ Adramyttium was a seaport of Mysia in Asia Minor. This ship had come from Adramyttium and was heading back in that direction.

⁵⁴¹ Aristarchus lived very much like John the Baptist, wearing a garment of animal skin, a leather belt and eating locusts and wild honey (Matthew 3:4, Mark 1:6). Thus Aristarchus was a very visible companion for Paul. See The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2005, April 14. The term “locusts” refers not to an insect, but to the bean of the “locust tree”, which was ground into flour. The “locust tree” is similar in nature to a carob tree. See http://www.sierrapotomac.org/W_Needham/BlackLocust_060515.htm.

⁵⁴² Luke’s use of the 1st person plural “us” indicates that Luke himself was present on the ship.

Storms and bad weather in the Mediterranean are not understood well in other parts of the world. On the Mediterranean, there is a “sailing season” typically from April to October and there is a “no sail season” typically from December to February during the winter. During the summer the weather is generally pleasant, where it rarely rains and the seas are free from violent storms; during the winter the opposite is the case⁵⁴³. Paul’s Journey to Rome took place during the winter when violent storms can appear suddenly and unexpectedly. Figure 5 shows the route taken by the ships that Paul was on.

Table 8
Those of the Seventy Who Served with Paul on the 4th Missionary Journey to Rome

For More Details, see Appendix A

Member of Seventy	Native To	Journey	Later Bishop of	Comments
Aristarchus	Thessalonica	3, 4, 5	Apamea	Joined at end of 2 nd
Luke	Antioch	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Roving Apostle	
Timothy ⁵⁴⁴	Lystra	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Ephesus	
Erastus ⁵⁴⁵		3, 5	--	Expert at finances

John Chrysostom pointed out⁵⁴⁵ that Aristarchus and Luke were present on the journey to Rome, and that the journey was very wearing on Paul because of his chains. God allowed the sailors to do their own thing, sailing in mid-winter, in order that the miracle of their survival would be greater.

“Notice how far Aristarchus⁵⁴⁶ accompanied Paul. To good and useful purpose is Aristarchus present, as he would take back the report of all to Macedonia. Julius ‘treated Paul kindly and gave *him* liberty to go to his friends and receive care’ (Acts 27:3). It was but natural that he should be much the worse from his chains and the fear, and being dragged here and there. Notice how Luke does not hide this either, that Paul wished to refresh himself. We note again trials, again contrary winds. Notice how the life of the saints is thus interwoven throughout; Paul escaped from the court of justice, only to fall in with shipwreck and storm. It is likely that both those in the former ship would carry to Asia the report of what had happened to Paul, and that these would do the same in Lycia. Notice how God does not innovate or change the order of nature, but allows them

⁵⁴³ For example, in December 2010, the 90,000-Ton cruise liner “Brilliance of the Seas”, was carrying over 2000 passengers and a crew of over 800, experienced huge waves from a Mediterranean storm. Witnesses said that waves crashed over the 10th floor windows of the 12-deck ship. The ship listed violently and many people were injured as they were tossed around like rag dolls. By contrast, the wood-hulled ship that Paul was on carried 276 including crew and passengers (Acts 27:23) crowded onto a ship about 60 feet long. Most of these 276 people were probably oarsmen (usually slaves) who rowed from the hold of the ship; many ships had both a galley of rowers and a sail. All the cargo was kept above deck, some at the bow, and some at the stern.

⁵⁴⁴ According to the Chronicles of Edessa, Timothy, Erastus and Menaëus accompanied Paul until his house-arrest in Rome following the 3rd Missionary Journey. See Roberts and Donaldson, ed., “The Teaching of the Apostles”, 10, in *Memoirs of Edessa and Other Ancient Syriac Documents*, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1995.

⁵⁴⁵ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LIII, vv. 1-11.

⁵⁴⁶ We note that the author Luke uses the first person “we” and “us” often at this point (Acts 27:1-7), indicating that Luke was on the ship also.

to sail into the unfavorable winds. But even so the miracle is accomplished. By 'the fast' here, Luke means that of the Jews. They departed a long time after the Pentecost (and after the Day of Atonement), so that it was about midwinter that they arrived at the coasts of Crete. And this too was no slight miracle that they also should be saved on Paul's account."

Figure 5
Map of Paul's 4th Missionary Journey to Rome⁵⁴⁷



Chrysostom also said some nice things about Aristarchus in that he desired to travel with Paul as a prisoner to Rome. Even the prophets only referred to themselves as strangers and foreigners, not as prisoners. Paul was treated much worse than most prisoners are treated.

“When Paul said, ‘Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner greets you’ (Colossians 4:10), nothing can surpass⁵⁴⁸ this praise. This is he that traveled from Jerusalem with Paul to Rome as a prisoner. Paul said a greater thing than the prophets; for they felt like strangers and foreigners, but Paul calls himself even a prisoner. Just like a prisoner of war he was dragged up and down, and lay at everyone’s whim to suffer evil from them, which is rather worse than most prisoners. Their enemies, after taking them prisoner, generally treat them with much attention, and care for them as their own property. Paul, as though an enemy, was dragged up and down, beaten, scourged, insulted and maligned. This was a consolation to

⁵⁴⁷ © Bible History Online <http://www.bible-history.com>. Other maps also available.

⁵⁴⁸ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Colossians, XI, v. 10.

those also that Paul was writing to, when even their master was in such circumstances.”

Captives have⁵⁴⁹ no further foe after they are led away, but they even experience great care from those who have captured them. But Paul was continually in the midst of enemies, and saw spears on every side, sharpened swords, arrays, and battles. Since Paul and Aristarchus likely shared many dangers, Paul calls them fellow-captives, as in, ‘Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner’ (Colossians 4:10).

Notice how far Aristarchus goes⁵⁵⁰ to accompany Paul (Acts 27:1-3). It was good and useful that Aristarchus was present, since he would take back the report of all to Macedonia.

Paul Lost at Sea in a Storm

“Because the harbor was not suitable to winter in, the majority advised to set sail from there also, if by any means they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete opening toward the southwest and northwest, *and* winter *there*. When the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained *their* desire, putting out to sea, they sailed close by Crete. But not long after, a tempestuous head wind arose, called Euroclydon⁵⁵¹. So, when the ship was caught, and could not head into the wind, we let *her* drive. And running under *the shelter* of an island called Clauda, we secured the skiff with difficulty. When they had taken it on board, they used cables to undergird the ship⁵⁵²; and fearing lest they should run aground on the Syrtis Sands⁵⁵³, they struck sail and so were driven. And because we were exceedingly tempest-tossed, the next *day* they lightened the ship. On the third *day* we threw the ship's tackle overboard with our own hands. Now when neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest beat on *us*, all hope that we would be saved was finally given up. But after long abstinence from food⁵⁵⁴, then Paul stood in the midst of them and said, ‘Men, you should have listened to me, and not have sailed from Crete and incurred this disaster and loss. And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, saying, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed, God has granted you all those who sail with you. Therefore, take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me. However, we must run aground on a certain island’” (Acts 27:12-26).

⁵⁴⁹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans, XXXI, v. 5.

⁵⁵⁰ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LIII, vv. 1-3.

⁵⁵¹ From <http://www.keyway.ca/htm2005/20050506.htm>, a Euroclydon, also known as a gregale (i.e. a "Greece gale") is a strong wind system that blows down from Europe into [The Mediterranean Sea](#), mostly in autumn and winter.

⁵⁵² Cables to undergird the ship were used to hold the ship together in very rough weather so that planks did not come off and cause the ship to sink.

⁵⁵³ The Syrtis Sands are on the North coast of Africa. “The Syrtis Sands were greatly feared by sailors because of their shifting sandbars and treacherous shallows. They had a horrible reputation as a sailors’ graveyard and saying the name alone struck terror in those who heard it. For more information, see <http://sampilmentel.wordpress.com/2011/09/05/the-syrtis-sands/> If the wind was blowing from the North or Northeast, it would blow them South onto the African coast. Having a compass on board, they wanted to head west to avoid crashing onto the African coast.

⁵⁵⁴ This two-week abstinence from food may not have been entirely voluntary due to mass seasickness and mass vomiting. If the ship was so tossed about that no one had any hope of being saved, everyone was likely so seasick that they couldn’t eat anything and keep it down even if they wanted to.

John Chrysostom pointed out⁵⁵⁵ that Paul continued his boldness in speaking to the ship's crew. At first, they didn't listen; then when they were in really bad straits Paul emphasized that he was right on when he warned them earlier. Then he tells them exactly what was going to happen next, and they are receptive to him this time.

"Paul advised them to remain at Fair Haven on Crete (Acts 27:10), and he foretold the disaster that would come of it if they didn't listen; but they, being in a hurry, and not liking the place, wished to winter at Phoenix⁵⁵⁶. Note the providential ordering of the events: first, 'When the south wind blew softly⁵⁵⁷, supposing that they had obtained their desire', they hoisted anchor, and came out of the harbor; then when the wind bore down upon them, they gave way to it driving them⁵⁵⁸, and were with difficulty saved."

"After so great a storm Paul does not speak insultingly to the crew, but as wishing that at any rate he might be believed for the future. He states what had taken place for a testimony to the truth of what was about to be said by him. He foretells two things; both that they must be cast upon an island, and that though the ship would be lost, those who were in it should be saved — which thing he spoke not of conjecture, but of prophecy — and that he 'must be brought before Caesar' (Acts 27:24). What he says, 'God hath given you all', is not spoken boastfully, but in the wish to win those who were sailing in the ship. Paul spoke thus not that they might feel themselves bound to him, but that they might believe what he was saying. This is as much as to say that they are worthy indeed of death, since they would not listen to Paul; however, this is done out of favor to Paul."

Paul's Shipwreck on Malta

"Now when the fourteenth night had come, as we were driven up and down in the Adriatic *Sea*, about midnight the sailors sensed that they were drawing near some land. And they took soundings and found *it* to be twenty fathoms; and when they had gone a little farther, they took soundings again and found *it* to be fifteen fathoms. Then, fearing lest we should run aground on the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern, and prayed for day to come. And as the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship, when they had let down the skiff into the sea, under pretense of putting out anchors from the prow, Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, 'Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved'. Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the skiff and let it fall off. And as day was about to dawn, Paul implored *them* all to take food, saying, 'Today is the fourteenth day you have waited and continued without food, and eaten nothing. Therefore, I urge you to take nourishment, for this is for your survival, since not a hair will fall from the head of any of you'. And when he had said these things, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all; and when he had broken *it* he began to eat. Then

⁵⁵⁵ John Chrysostom, *Commentary on Acts*, LIII, vv. 12-26.

⁵⁵⁶ Phoenix was a sheltered harbor on the other side of Crete from where they were. In trying to get there, they were blown out to sea by the storm.

⁵⁵⁷ A gentle wind out of the South would have kept them close to the Southern shore of Crete, where Phoenix was located. However, once they were out of port, the wind changed direction suddenly and the storm came up.

⁵⁵⁸ That is, they let the wind drive them wherever it would to ride out the storm. This usually meant hoisting a smaller sail to maintain better control and to avoid having the main sail torn to shreds.

they were all encouraged, and also took food themselves. And in all we were 276 persons on the ship. So, when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship and threw out the wheat⁵⁵⁹ into the sea. When it was day, they did not recognize the land; but they observed a bay with a beach, onto which they planned to run the ship if possible. And they let go the anchors and left *them* in the sea, meanwhile loosening the rudder ropes; and they hoisted the mainsail to the wind and made for shore. But striking a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the prow stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern was being broken up by the violence of the waves. And the soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim away and escape. But the centurion, wanting to save Paul, kept them from *their* purpose, and commanded that those who could swim should jump *overboard* first and get to land, and the rest, some on boards and some on *parts* of the ship. And so, it was that they all escaped safely to land” (Acts 27:27-44).

John Chrysostom noted⁵⁶⁰ that while the centurion believed Paul, the sailors did not and tried to escape in the lifeboat. Paul spoke up to the centurion since the sailors were needed in order to maneuver the ship onto the beachhead. The rest of the crew was sufficiently impressed with what Paul said that they began eating when he did.

“The sailors were about to escape in the lifeboat, having no faith in what Paul said. But the centurion did believe Paul, for Paul said, if these flee, ‘you cannot be saved’. Paul said this, not for his own benefit, but that he might restrain them, and the prophecy might not fall to the ground. Notice how as in a church they are instructed by the calmness of Paul’s behavior, and how he saved them out of the midst of the dangers. It is of providential ordering that Paul is disbelieved, that after proof of the facts, he might be believed, which accordingly was the case. Paul exhorted them again to take some food, and they do as he asks them; he takes some first, to persuade them not by word, but also by act, that the storm did them no harm, but rather was a benefit to their souls.”

Chrysostom wondered⁵⁶¹ how the crew of the ship could go without food for 14 days; he concluded that they were so consumed by fear of dying that they couldn’t eat. Seasickness may have been involved also. The result is a great wonder that all hands were saved in spite of the rough conditions on the Adriatic.

“How did the ship’s crew go without food for fourteen days, having taken nothing? How did they bear it? Their fear possessed them, and did not let them fall into a desire of food, being, as they were, at the point of extreme jeopardy, so that they had no care for food.”

“They made towards shore having given the rudder-handles to the wind; often they don’t do it in this way. They were carried along, having loosened the rigging, i.e. the sails. ‘Falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the bow stuck fast, and remained unmovable, but the stern was broken with the violence of the waves’ (Acts 27:40-41); for when there is a strong wind, this is the consequence; the stern bearing the brunt of the storm. The soldiers wanted to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape

⁵⁵⁹ This ship had come from Alexandria heading for Rome, where Egypt is the breadbasket for Rome. At various times, Rome became desperate for wheat shipments from Egypt and had no other ready source.

⁵⁶⁰ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LIII, vv. 27-33.

⁵⁶¹ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LIII, vv. 27-44.

(Acts 27:42). Again the devil tries to hinder the prophecy; the soldiers wanted to kill some, but the centurion didn't allow them that he might save Paul, so much was the centurion attached to him."

"Notice what good came of the storm! The storm did not come upon them because they were forsaken by God. This happened because of the season of the year; but the wonder is greater, that at such a season they were saved from the midst of the dangers, both Paul, and for his sake the rest, and this too in the Adriatic Sea. There were 276 souls in all; this is no small matter, if indeed they believed. The voyage was at a bad time of year. It is natural to suppose they would ask the reason why they were sailing at this time of year, and would learn why. The voyage was so protracted in that it afforded Paul an opportunity for teaching."

Chrysostom also noted⁵⁶² how circumstances contributed to Paul being believed by all on board. It took a while, and everyone had to first experience the consequences of not doing what Paul recommended. Then they all were ready to accept what he said.

"Paul had said, 'I perceive that this voyage will end with disaster and much loss' (Acts 27:10). Notice how unassuming the expression is. Paul did not want to be perceived as prophesying, but speaking as of conjecture; so, he said, 'I perceive'. They would not have received it, had he prophesied at the outset. In fact, he does prophesy, as he does afterward, when he said, 'The God whom I serve', leading them to believe. Why did none of them lose their lives as Paul had said? (Acts 27:10) It would have been so, but God brought them safe through it. As far as depended on the nature of the thing, they were dead meat, but God prevented it. Then, to show that it was not from conjecture that Paul had spoken, the master of the ship said the opposite of what Paul said, and he was a man of experience in the matter; so far was it from being the case that Paul's advice was given from conjecture. Moreover, the place suggested what the shipmaster said, 'the harbor was not suitable to winter in'; and it was from conjecture that 'the majority advised to set sail' (Acts 27:12) as they did, rather than Paul. After the severe storm and the deep darkness that ensued, that they may not forget what had been said, the vessel goes to pieces, the grain is flung out and all besides, that they may experience the full shame of what they did. This is why the vessel goes to pieces, and their souls are tightly braced. Moreover, both the storm and the darkness contributed not a little to Paul's obtaining the hearing he did. Notice how the centurion does what Paul asks him; he even let the life boat go, and destroyed it. The sailors did not comply with Paul's request at first, yet afterwards they do so; for in fact this is a reckless sort of people. When Paul said, 'Men, you should have listened to me' (Acts 27:21) he was not likely to get a good reception, when he chides in the midst of calamity. But when he tells them what more there is to come of the calamity, and then predicts the good, then he is acceptable. Therefore, he attacked them first, when 'all hope that we would be saved was finally given up' (Acts 27:20), that none may say, 'Nothing has come of it'".

⁵⁶² John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LIII, Recapitulation.

“This part of the Mediterranean was a trying one, for it was in the Adriatic, and then they had had a long abstinence. They were in the midst of death. It was now the fourteenth day that they had gone without food, having taken nothing. Therefore, Paul said, ‘I urge you to take nourishment, for this is for your survival, since not a hair will fall from the head of any of you’ (Acts 27:34). Notice Paul giving thanks after all that had happened strengthened them. This showed an assured mind that they would be saved. ‘Then they were all encouraged, and also took food themselves (Acts 27:36). Not only so, but after this, they so cast all their care upon Paul, such that they even cast the wheat overboard.’”

Chrysostom drew⁵⁶³ an analogy between Paul on board the ship and a holy man in a house. By not listening to what Paul says, we fall into numberless evils that are worse than what Paul encountered on the Adriatic. By obeying Paul, we will be freed from our dangers, though we are being tested severely. We can think of the whole world as a ship, in which are evildoers and those who have numberless vices, some rulers, others guards, others just men, as Paul was, others prisoners, bound by their sins. If we do as Paul asks us, we won’t perish in our bonds, but are released from them.

“Notice that the soldiers were also given to Paul! It was for his sake that the centurion did not allow them to be slain. So confessedly wicked do those men seem to me to have been: insomuch that they would have chosen even to slay their own benefactor. But they all were thus saved, and the prophecy received accomplishment, for they were beyond the reach of hope. So, it was through being saved that they learned who Paul was. But someone may say: why did Paul not save the ship? That they might perceive how great a danger they had escaped; and that the whole matter depended, not on the help of man, but on God’s hand saving them independently of a ship. Righteous men, though they are in a tempest, or on the sea, or in the deep, suffer nothing dreadful, but even save others together with themselves. If here was a ship in danger and suffering wreck, and prisoners were saved for Paul’s sake, consider what a thing it is to have a holy man in a house. Many are the tempests which attack us also, tempests far more grievous than these natural ones; but He can also allow us to be delivered, if only we obey holy men as those in the ship did, if we do what they ask. They are not simply saved, but themselves also contributed to other men’s believing. Though the holy man is in chains, he does greater works than those who are free. The free centurion stood in need of his bound prisoner; the skillful pilot needed him who was not a pilot — rather, of him who was the true pilot. Paul steered as pilot not a vessel of this earthly kind, but the Church of the whole world, having learned of Him Who is Lord also of the sea, by the wisdom of the Spirit. Look at our whole life; it is just like this voyage. At one time we meet with kindness, at another with a tempest; sometimes from our own lack of counsel, sometimes from our idleness, we fall into numberless evils; from our not listening to Paul, when we are eager to go somewhere where he does not direct us. Paul is sailing even now with us, only not chained as he was then; he admonishes us even now, and says to those who are sailing on this sea, ‘take heed to yourselves: after my departure savage wolves

⁵⁶³ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LIII, Recapitulation.

will come in among you, not sparing the flock' (Acts 20:28-29). And again, 'In the last days perilous times will come; and men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters' (2 Timothy 3:1-2). This is worse than all storms. Let us therefore dwell where he directs us — in faith, in the safe haven; let us listen to him rather than to the pilot that is within us, that is, our own reason. Let us not immediately do just what reason may suggest; not what the owner of the ship says. No, but what Paul suggests; he has passed through many such tempests. Let us not learn to our loss by experience, but before the experience let us avoid both harm and losses. Hear what he says: 'those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and *into* many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition' (1 Timothy 6:9). Let us therefore obey him; otherwise, see what they suffered, because they did not take his advice. Again he tells us in another place what causes shipwrecks. 'Who having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck' (1 Timothy 1:19). But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them' (2 Timothy 3:14). Let us obey Paul, though we are in the midst of a tempest. We shall surely be freed from the dangers, though we remain without food fourteen days, though hope of safety may have left us, though we are in darkness and mist, by doing what he suggests, we shall be freed from the dangers. Let us think that the whole world is a ship; in this ship are evildoers and those who have numberless vices, some rulers, others guards, others just men, as Paul was, others prisoners, those bound by their sins. If we do as Paul asks us, we won't perish in our bonds, but are released from them; God will give us also to him. Do we doubt that sins and passions are grievous bonds? It is not the hands only that are bound, but the whole man. Tell me, when anyone possessed of much money doesn't use it, or spend it, but keeps it close, is he not bound by his miserliness more grievously than any prisoner?"

The Maltese Receive Paul with Kindness

"Now when they had escaped, they then found out that the island was called Malta. And the natives showed us unusual kindness; for they kindled a fire and made us all welcome, because of the rain that was falling and because of the cold" (Acts 28:1-2).

The time of year when the shipwreck occurred was probably late December. Everyone left Malta three months after they had arrived on an Alexandrian ship that had spent the winter in a Maltese harbor (Acts 28:11). Since the sailing season starts in early April, this suggests that the shipwreck occurred in late December or early January.

Late December and early January on Malta can be cold and wet, since most of the annual rainfall occurs during the winter, spurred by the polar jet stream⁵⁶⁴. About half the days of December and January are rainy days, while little rain falls in the summer. Malta has a steady, predictable climate due to its proximity to the ocean. Temperatures in December and January average in the low 60's during the day and in the high 40's at night. Since the shipwreck

⁵⁶⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mediterranean_climate

occurred at daybreak (Acts 27:39-43), the temperature was probably in the high 40's and it was raining (Acts 28:2). Since everyone coming out of the water was soaking wet, keeping warm was difficult with the weather in the high 40's. They were very grateful for the hospitality shown by the people of Malta.

In order to dry the clothes of 276 people who came off the shipwreck, there was probably a large fire, or several fires for people to crowd around to get warm and to let their clothes dry. So, it was natural for everyone to help gather wood to burn. In the 1st century, Malta was considerably more forested than it is today, so plenty of brushwood was available.

Paul Gets Bitten by a Snake

But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid *them* on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand. So, when the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, 'No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the sea, yet justice does not allow him to live'. But he shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. However, they were expecting that he would swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had looked for a long time and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god" (Acts 28:3-6).

As Paul did his part to help with the fire, a poisonous snake that had been hiding in a pile of sticks came out⁵⁶⁵ because of the heat of the fire and fastened onto Paul's hand. The Greek word *echidna* does not define the exact species of snake, only that it was an adder or a viper. Today there are no vipers on Malta; but there are many more people living on Malta now than there were in the 1st century and the people could easily have displaced a snake population over 2000 years. One local snake sometimes identified with the one that bit Paul is called the Leopard Snake⁵⁶⁶. However, the Leopard Snake is not venomous; so, this could not be the one involved. A more likely candidate is the European viper (*vipera berus*, known by a number of different names) or the European asp (*vipera aspis*), where both of these are widespread throughout Southern Europe. Of these two, the European asp⁵⁶⁷ has much stronger venom, and the reaction of people to bites from the European Asp is very much like what the Maltese were expecting to happen to Paul (Acts 28:5).

John Chrysostom stated⁵⁶⁸ that Paul was allowed to be bitten by the snake for the benefit of the Malta natives, so that they would recognize who he really was. All they could see is Paul wearing chains; they couldn't recognize that Paul was a man of God until they saw this.

“Well also was this permitted, that they should both see the thing and utter the thought that he must have been a murderer, in order that, when the result ensued, there might be no disbelieving the miracle. Notice their good feeling

⁵⁶⁵ Many snakes hide from the cold weather in the winter.

⁵⁶⁶ See <http://www.shadowservices.com/nature/Maltese/biology/snakes.htm>.

⁵⁶⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vipera_aspis. The venom of the European Asp causes rapidly spreading acute pain, followed by edema (swelling) and discoloration at the site of the bite. Severe hemorrhagic necrosis (dead tissue) may occur within a few hours. Vision may be severely impaired, most likely due to degradation of blood and blood vessels in the eyes. Also the European Asp is rather short (about 2 feet long); therefore the Maltese natives saw the (short) snake hanging from Paul's hand (Acts 28:4).

⁵⁶⁸ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LIV, vv. 3-6.

towards the distress of Paul and the others, in saying what they did (not aloud, but) among themselves. Notice also the natural judgment clearly expressed even among barbarians, and how they do not condemn without assigning a reason. They watch Paul carefully, that they may wonder the more. But Paul just calmly shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm. They expected him to fall down dead; having seen that nothing of the kind happened to him, they said, He is a god. Again, just as earlier (Acts 14:11), another excess on the part of these men.”

Chrysostom compared⁵⁶⁹ the Jews that Paul left behind in Judea with the barbarians on Malta. The Jews had seen many miracles by the Apostles, yet they persecuted them. The Maltese had seen none of this, yet they were kind to them. The Maltese also had some sense of Providence, more so even than the philosophers, for they believed that God was present everywhere. The Maltese were kind simply because the people from the ship were unfortunate. Then the Maltese were greatly stunned that Paul didn’t die from the snake bite.

“The Jews beheld all the many miracles the Apostles did, yet they persecuted and harassed Paul; but the barbarians, who had seen none of these, merely on the ground of his misfortune, were kind to him. ‘No doubt’, they say, ‘this man is a murderer’ (Acts 28:4). They do not simply pronounce their judgment, but say, ‘No doubt’, i.e. as anyone may see ‘and vengeance’, they say, ‘does not allow him to live’. Notice that they held the doctrine of Providence, and these barbarians were far more philosophic than the philosophers, who don’t allow the benefit of Providence to extend to things ‘below the moon’. By contrast these barbarians suppose God to be present everywhere, and that although a guilty man may escape many a danger, he will not escape in the end. They do not attack Paul immediately, but for a time respect him on account of his misfortune. They do not openly proclaim what they think, but speak it ‘among themselves: a murderer’; for the chains led them to suspect this. ‘They showed no small kindnesses, and yet some of them were prisoners. Let those be ashamed that say, ‘Do not do good to those in prison’; let these barbarians shame us; for they didn’t know who these men were, but simply because they were in misfortune, they were kind. This much they perceived: that they were human beings, and therefore they considered them to have a claim upon their humanity. ‘For a great while, they expected that Paul would die from the snake bite’ (Acts 28:6). But when he shook his hand, and flung off the snake into the fire, then they saw and were astonished. The miracle did not take place suddenly, but the men watched Paul a long length of time; so plainly was there no deceit, no haste here.”

The Chief Citizen of Malta Receives Paul Kindly

In that region there was an estate of the leading citizen of the island, whose name was Publius, who received us and entertained us courteously for three days. And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him. So, when this was done, the rest of those on the island who

⁵⁶⁹ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LIV, Recapitulation.

had diseases also came and were healed. They also honored us in many ways; and when we departed, they provided such things as were necessary” (Acts 28:7-10)

John Chrysostom pointed out⁵⁷⁰ how Publius received the shipwreck victims with compassion; in doing so he brought down the grace of God upon himself at the hand of Paul. All 276 victims of the shipwreck received great kindness because of Paul. Everyone on Malta believed in God as a result of this shipwreck.

“Notice another hospitable man, Publius, who was both rich and of great possessions; he had seen nothing, but purely out of compassion for their misfortune, he received them, and took care of them. So that he was worthy to receive kindness; therefore, Paul as a payment for his receiving them healed him. Notice how when they were free from the storm, they did not become more negligent; but what a liberal entertainment was given to them for Paul’s sake. Three months they were on Malta; all of them were provided with sustenance. Notice how all this is done for the sake of Paul, to the end that the prisoners should believe, and the soldiers, and the centurion. Even if they had hearts of stone, yet from the advice they heard him giving, from the prediction they had heard him making, from the miracles they knew him to have done, and from the sustenance they by his means enjoyed, they must have got a very high notion of him. Notice that when the judgment is right, and not preoccupied by some passion, it immediately gets the right judgment, and gives sound verdicts.”

If Paul had visited Malta on one of his missionary journeys, he could not have done a better job of leading the people of Malta – and the crew of the ship and the soldiers – to faith in Christ. As we will see, this provided a major impetus to Paul’s life in Rome for the next two years as word of Paul as a benefactor to everyone spread throughout Rome.

Chrysostom noted⁵⁷¹ that Publius willingly lodged all 276 people; Paul recognized his good will and repaid him by healing his father. After the others were healed, it is apparent that Paul was able to invest time in teaching everyone on the island for three months. All the new converts responded by supplying the ship with everything that was needed.

“Publius lodged all 276 persons courteously for three days (Acts 28:7). Consider how great the gain of his hospitality: not as of necessity, not as unwilling, but as reckoning it a gain he lodged them for three days. When Paul repaid him by healing his father, he naturally honored Paul much more, when the others also received healing. It was not that Paul received wages for doing what he did, God forbid; but as it is written, ‘The worker is worthy of his food’ (Matthew 10:10). ‘When we departed, they loaded us with such things as were necessary’ (Acts 28:10). It is plain that having thus received them, they also received the word of the preaching. It is not to be supposed, that during an entire three months they would have had all this kindness shown them, if these persons hadn’t believed strongly, and thus exhibited the fruits of their conversion. From this we may see a strong proof of the great number there was of those that believed. This was enough to establish Paul’s credit with his fellow voyagers. Notice how in this whole voyage they

⁵⁷⁰ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LIV, vv. 7-10.

⁵⁷¹ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LIV, Recapitulation.

nowhere touched at a city, but were cast on an island, and spent the entire winter there. Paul's fellow-voyagers were under training for their faith. 'And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor⁵⁷² and Pollux' (Acts 28:11). Probably this was painted on the ship; so addicted were they to their idols.

Paul Arrives in Rome

"After three months we sailed in an Alexandrian ship whose figurehead was the Twin Brothers, which had wintered at the island. And landing at Syracuse, we stayed three days. From there we circled round and reached Rhegium. And after one day the south wind⁵⁷³ blew; and the next day we came to Puteoli, where we found brethren, and were invited to stay with them seven days. And so, we went toward Rome. And from there, when the brethren heard about us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum and Three Inns⁵⁷⁴. When Paul saw them⁵⁷⁵, he thanked God and took courage. Now when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard; but Paul was permitted to dwell by himself with the soldier who guarded him" (Acts 28:11-16).

John Chrysostom noted⁵⁷⁶ how word of what Paul had done preceded him like a royal ovation. From the brethren who came to meet him Paul took courage. Once in Rome, the fact that Paul was allowed to live by himself is proof that he was held in great admiration, even though he still wore chains.

"Already the preaching has reached Sicily! Notice how it has progressed even to those lands. At Puteoli they found some brethren; others also came to meet them. Such was the eagerness of the brethren; it didn't bother them at all, that Paul was in chains. But notice also how Paul himself was affected after the manner of men. For it says, 'When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage' (Acts 28:15). Although he had worked so many miracles, nevertheless even from sight he received a wave of confidence. From this we learn, that he was comforted after the manner of men. And when we came to Rome, 'Paul was permitted to dwell by himself with the soldier who guarded him' (Acts 28:16). Permission was given to a prisoner to dwell by himself! This is no slight proof that Paul was held in much admiration; it is clear they did not number him among the rest."

Chrysostom also pointed out⁵⁷⁷ that when the travelers got to Puteoli in Italy, brethren met

⁵⁷² Castor and Pollux are known in Greek and Roman mythology as the Twin Brothers, who were supposedly conceived when Zeus raped Leda, the wife of Tyndareus.

⁵⁷³ The "south wind", that is, the wind out of the South, means that it was now springtime, and the sailing season had arrived along with good weather that would last all summer.

⁵⁷⁴ The Appii Forum is almost 50 miles South of Rome, so this was quite a hike.

⁵⁷⁵ The implication is that Paul knew these brethren, even though he had never been to Rome before. From his Epistle to Rome, written about 5 years earlier, Paul addressed eighteen of the Seventy Apostles plus Mary Magdalene (Romans 16). Paul and Peter had sent these brethren to Rome to help out with problems they faced regarding heresy. For details, see Mark Kern, Simon Magus the Heresiarch, St Athanasius Press, 2004.

⁵⁷⁶ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LIV, vv. 11-16.

⁵⁷⁷ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LIV, Recapitulation.

them there and they stayed seven days. The centurion in charge, now probably a Christian, felt comfortable doing this. When they got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself; the soldier stationed with him was there to prevent plots by the Jews from developing.

“Notice them staying a while, before they hurried onwards. ‘When the brethren heard about us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum and Three Inns’ (Acts 28:15); they did not fear any danger. Paul therefore was now so much respected, that he was even permitted to stay by himself; for if even before this they used him kindly, much more would they now. ‘The soldier that kept him’ (Acts 28:16) was there that it might not be possible for any plot to be laid against him there either, for there could be no raising of a riot now like there was in Jerusalem. So that in fact they were not keeping Paul in custody, but guarding him, so that nothing unpleasant should happen. It was not possible now, in so great a city, and with the Emperor there, and with Paul’s appeal, for anything to be done contrary to order. So surely it is the case, that always through the things which seem to be against us, all things turn out for us.”

Paul Speaks to the Jewish Leaders in Rome

“And it came to pass after three days that Paul called the leaders of the Jews together. So, when they had come together, he said to them, ‘Men *and* brethren, though I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans, who, when they had examined me, wanted to let *me* go, because there was no cause for putting me to death. But when the Jews spoke against *it*, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar, not that I had anything of which to accuse my nation. For this reason, therefore, I have called for you, to see *you* and speak with *you*, because for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain’. Then they said to him, ‘We neither received letters from Judea concerning you, nor have any of the brethren who came reported or spoken any evil of you. But we desire to hear from you what you think; for concerning this sect, we know that it is spoken against everywhere’. So, when they had appointed him a day, many came to him at *his* lodging, to whom he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening. And some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved. So, when they did not agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had said one word: ‘The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers, saying, ‘Go to this people and say: “Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand; and seeing you will see, and not perceive; for the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears, lest they should understand with *their* hearts and turn, so that I should heal them”’. Therefore, let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!’ And when he had said these words, the Jews departed and had a great dispute among themselves (Acts 28:17-29).

John Chrysostom noted⁵⁷⁸ a complete turnaround of the Apostle Paul in Rome. Here the Jews don’t dare start a riot. When Paul spoke to them, he taunted them by saying that the Gentiles will receive what they rejected. We need to consider the examples of Moses, Aaron,

⁵⁷⁸ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LIV, Recapitulation.

Cain, Abel, the Three Youths in the fire, Daniel, Adam and Judas. Nothing anyone does to us will hurt us; the only thing we need to be concerned about is what we do to ourselves.

“When Paul called the Jews together (Acts 28:17) and spoke to them; they departed contradicting each other. They are even taunted by Paul, yet they dare not say anything, for it was not permitted them to deal with his matter any way they wanted like at Jerusalem. This is a marvelous thing; not by the things which seem to be for our security, but by their very opposites, all comes together for us. We need to understand this! Consider how Pharaoh commanded the infants to be thrown into the river (Exodus 1:22). Unless this had happened, Moses would not have been saved, and he would not have been brought up in the palace. When he was safe with his parents, he was not honored; when he was exposed to the river, then he was honored. God did this to show His riches of resource. The Jews threatened Moses, saying, ‘Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?’ (Exodus 2:14); this too was profitable to Moses. It was God’s providence, in order that he should see that vision in the desert, in order that the proper time should be completed, that he should learn philosophy in the desert, and there live in security. In all the plotting of the Jews against him the same thing happened; then he became more illustrious. In the case of Aaron; Korah rose up against him, and thereby made him more illustrious (Numbers 16:1-19). This happened that his ordination should be unquestionable and that he might be held in admiration for the future also from the plates of brass (Numbers 16:37-40). Let us go over the same examples from the beginning. Cain slew his brother, but in this he rather benefited him. Listen to the Scripture, ‘The voice of your brother’s blood cries out to Me from the ground’ (Genesis 4:10); and again, in another place, ‘To the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than *that of* Abel’ (Hebrews 12:24). God freed Abel from the uncertainty of the future; He increased his reward; we have all learned by this what love God had for him. How was he injured? Not at all; he just received his end sooner. What do they gain who live longer? Nothing; having good days does not depend on living many years or few years, but in using life properly. The Three Children were thrown into the furnace, and through this they became more illustrious (Daniel 3); Daniel was thrown into the lions’ den, and because of this he was made more renowned (Daniel 6). Trials in every case bring forth great good even in this life, much more in the life to come. Regarding malice, however, the case is the same as if a man should try to fight a fire having nothing more than a stick; the stick may beat the fire, but it only makes the fire brighter, and the stick gets consumed. The malice of the wicked becomes food and an occasion to make virtue more splendid. God turns the unrighteousness to good account, and our character shines forth all the more. When the devil works anything of this kind, he makes those more illustrious that endure. How then was this not the case with Adam, but, on the contrary, he became more disgraced? In this case of all others God turned the malice of that wicked one to good account. If Adam was the worse for it, it was he that injured himself. It is the wrongs that are done to us by others that become the means of great good to us, not so the wrongs which are done by ourselves. When we are hurt by others, we grieve; but not so when we hurt ourselves. Therefore, God shows that he who suffers unjustly at the hands of another gets renowned, but he who injures himself, receives hurt. Besides, the

whole thing there was Adam's own doing. Why did he do what the woman said? (Genesis 3:6) When she counseled him contrary to God, why didn't he repel her? He was assuredly himself the cause. Otherwise if the devil was the cause, at this rate all that are tempted ought to perish; but if all do not perish, the cause of our destruction rests with ourselves. 'But', you will say, 'all that are tempted ought at that rate to succeed'. No; for the cause is in ourselves. 'At that rate it ought to follow that some perish without the devil having anything to do with it'. Yes; and in fact, many do perish without the devil's being concerned in it. Surely the devil does not bring about all our evil doings. Much comes also from our own sluggishness by itself; and if the devil is anywhere concerned as a cause, it is from our offering the occasion. When did the devil prevail in Judas' case? When 'Satan entered him' (John 13:27), you will say. Yes, but listen to the cause; it was because 'he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it' (John 12:6). It was he that himself gave the devil a wide room for entering into him; so, then it is not the devil that begins our downfall, it is we that receive and invite him. 'But', you will say, 'if there were no devil, the evils would not have become great'. True, but then our punishment would be more severe; as it is, beloved, our punishment is milder; whereas if we had done the evils of ourselves, the chastisements would be intolerable. If Adam, without any counsel, had committed the sin he did, who would have snatched him out of the dangers? 'But he would not have sinned', you will say. We can't really say this! Adam had so little solidity, that he was ready for foolishness, receiving such advice as he did; much more would he without any counsel have become what he did become. What devil incited the brethren of Joseph to envy? If we are watchful brethren, the devil becomes to us the cause even of renown."

Chrysostom pointed out⁵⁷⁹ that Paul's words to the Jews in Rome were of a forgiving nature. He only did what he did to escape the danger in Jerusalem, and he was bound with his chains for their sake. The Roman Jews apologized for their counterparts in Jerusalem, and wanted to hear directly from Paul, since Christianity was spoken against everywhere. Many of the Roman Jews were convinced and Paul brought forward Isaiah's words to help confirm them in the Faith.

"Notice how Paul, in speaking with the Jews in Rome, details the charges of the Jews in Jerusalem against him. Thus, he explained that he 'was constrained to appeal to Caesar', so that his whole speech is of a forgiving nature. Paul didn't accuse them of anything; he only did this that he might escape the danger. He explained that it is for your sakes 'that I am bound with this chain' (Acts 28:20). So far am I, he says, from any hostile feeling towards you. Then the Jews in Rome were so subdued by his speech that they too apologized for those of their own nation (Acts 28:21). But they wanted to hear from Paul himself, 'We desire to hear from you what you think; for concerning this sect, we know that it is spoken against everywhere' (Acts 28:22). Paul spoke to them for an entire day and 'some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved' (Acts 28:24). They didn't say, we speak against it, but 'it is spoken against'. When they didn't agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had

⁵⁷⁹ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LV, vv. 18-27.

spoken one word from the Prophet Isaiah regarding the Gentiles (Acts 28:25-27). When they departed, opposed to each other, then Paul reproached them, in order to confirm those that believed. No wonder then if the unbelieving Jews contradicted; this was foretold from the first.”

Chrysostom noted⁵⁸⁰ that the Jews in Rome were different than those in Jerusalem. They actually wanted to hear what Paul had to say! However, they still tried to exonerate the Jews in Jerusalem, even though they knew that they were very much in the wrong. Paul does not try to impress them with miracles, but he speaks to them entirely from the Law and the Prophets, and he puts them to silence. He even shows them from the Prophets that God foretold that they wouldn’t believe. It was the Providence of God that Paul should go to Jerusalem and speak to them as a Jew to his fellow Jews. When Paul finished speaking to the Jews in Rome (c. 60 AD), this was the beginning of his two years in Rome under house-arrest. It was just six years until the Judgment of God would fall on Judea for their apostasy.

“Notice the Jews in Rome speaking more mildly to Paul. ‘We desire to hear from you what you think’ (Acts 28:22), they said, and wish to exonerate those at Jerusalem. Whereas they ought to accuse them, they plead for them; by the very fact of their exonerating them, they do in fact accuse them. This was a proof that they knew themselves exceedingly in the wrong. Had they been confident, they would not have done this, so that Paul should not be able to make out his story in his own way; and besides they shrank from coming. They knew about Christianity (this sect) ‘that it is spoken against everywhere’ (Acts 28:22). True! But people are also everywhere persuaded (as, in fact, here), ‘some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved’ (Acts 28:24). Notice again how not by miracles but by the Law and the Prophets Paul puts them to silence, and how we always find him doing this. Paul could have done signs; but then it would no longer have been a matter of faith. In fact, this itself was a great sign, his speaking from the Law and the Prophets. That we may not think it strange that they didn’t believe, Paul introduced the prophecy which said ‘Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand’, more now than then; ‘and seeing you will see, and not perceive’ (Acts 28:26), more now than then. This is not spoken for the believers, but for the unbelievers. Was it contrary to the prophecy that those believed? No! The prophecy was addressed to the unbelieving people. Paul did not say this to insult them, but to remove the offense. ‘Therefore, let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!’ (Acts 28:28). Why did Paul bother to speak to them? Didn’t Paul know this? Yes, but that they might be persuaded, and that he might exonerate himself, and give no one a handle against him. The unbelieving was those that withdrew. Notice how they do not now form plots against him. In Judea they had a sort of tyranny. Then why did the Providence of God order that Paul should go there, when the Lord had said, ‘Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me?’ (Acts 22:18) That both the wickedness of the Jews in Jerusalem might be shown and Christ’s prophecy made good. They would not endure to hear Paul! All might learn that Paul was ready to suffer all things, and that the event might be for the consolation of those in

⁵⁸⁰ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LV, Recapitulation.

Judea; for there also the brethren were suffering many grievous evils. If while preaching the Jewish doctrines, Paul suffered thus, had he preached the doctrines of the glory of Christ, how would they have endured him? While ‘purifying himself’ (Acts 21:26) he was intolerable to them; how should he have been tolerable to them while preaching what he taught elsewhere? First Paul called the Jews; then having shown them the facts he goes to the Gentiles (Acts 13:42-48, 18:6-7). Notice that it is not Paul that they disbelieve, but God. But God foreknew this from the beginning.”

Members of the Seventy Apostles in Rome with Paul

Table 9
Those of the Seventy Working with Paul on the 4th Missionary Journey
 For More Details, see Appendix A

Member of Seventy	Native To	Journey	Later Bishop of	Comments
Aristarchus	Thessalonica	2, 3, 4, 5	Apamea	Joined at end of 2 nd
Clement of Sardis		4	Sardis	Philippians 4:3
Demas		3, 4, 5	Priest for idols	Colossians 4:14, 2 Timothy 4:10
Epaphras		3, 4, 5	Colossae area	Colossians 1:7, 4:12
Epaphroditus	Philippi	2, 3, 4	Colophon in Pamphylia	Philippians 2:25, 4:18
Justus	Nazareth	2, 4	Eleutheropolis	Colossians 4:11
Linus		2, 3, 4, 5	Rome	
Luke	Antioch	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Roving Apostle	Colossians 4:14
Mark, Barnabas' Cousin	Cyprus	4, 5	Appolonia,	Colossians 4:10
Onesimus		4	Berea	Colossians 4:9
Philemon		3, 4, 5	Colossae area	Philemon 1:1-23
Timothy	Lystra	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Ephesus	Colossians 1:1
Tychicus	Asia Minor	3, 4, 5	Caesarea after Philip	Colossians 4:7

Paul Wrote a Number of Epistles from Rome

“Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him” (Acts 28:30-31).

During Paul’s two years in Rome under house-arrest, he wrote Epistles to the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians, Philemon, and his treatise to the Hebrews. Thus, this was a very productive time in his life, and this period of his life has had an enormous impact on Christianity over the last 2000 years.

The probable sequence of Paul’s letters can be seen from who was with him at the time. In the Epistles to Philemon, the Colossians and the Philippians, the Epistles are from Paul and

Timothy. In the treatise to the Hebrews, Paul mentioned that Timothy had just been released. In the Epistle to the Ephesians, Timothy was no longer in Rome and was probably in Ephesus. Therefore, we can say that the probable sequence was:

1. Paul met & converted Onesimus.
2. Paul wrote to Philemon with Timothy still in Rome (Philemon 1:1)
3. Paul wrote to the Colossians with Timothy still in Rome (Colossians 1:1).
4. Paul wrote to the Philippians with Timothy still in Rome (Philippians 1:1).
5. Paul wrote to the Hebrews with Timothy just released from prison (Hebrews 13:23).
6. Paul wrote to the Ephesians with Timothy no longer in Rome (Ephesians 1:1).

Paul Wrote to Philemon in Colossae

In John Chrysostom's introduction to his homilies on Philemon, he noted⁵⁸¹ that Philemon was a man of admirable and noble character. Some in the 4th century didn't think that Paul's Epistle to Philemon should be included in Scripture due to its dealing with small matters. However, Chrysostom argues that all the details of the history of the Apostles are important, and most people have no idea of the benefit that would result. These are the general instructors of the world; their spiritual life, their habits, their walk, their words and actions, in short, all that relates to them, profits the hearers, and nothing is a hindrance or impediment.

"First, it is necessary to state the argument of the Epistle to Philemon, then also the matters that are questioned respecting it. Philemon was a man of admirable and noble character. That he was an admirable man is evident from the fact that his whole household was of believers, and of such believers as even to be called a Church. Therefore, Paul says in this Epistle 'And to the Church in your house' (Philemon 1:2). Paul bears witness also to Philemon's great obedience and that 'the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother' (Philemon 1:7). In this Epistle Paul commanded Philemon to prepare him a guest room (Philemon 1:22). It seems to me therefore that Philemon's house was altogether 'a guest room for the Saints'. This excellent man, then, had a certain slave named Onesimus. This Onesimus, having stolen something from his master, had run away. For that he had stolen, hear what Paul says, 'If he has wronged you or owes anything, put that on my account. I will repay' (Philemon 1:18-19). Coming therefore to Paul at Rome, and having found him in prison, and having enjoyed the benefit of his teaching, Onesimus there also received Baptism. That Onesimus obtained there the gift of Baptism is clear from Paul's saying, 'Whom I have begotten *while* in my chains' (Philemon 1:10). Paul therefore writes, recommending him to his master, that on every account he should forgive him, and receive him as one now regenerated. Some say, that it was superfluous that this Epistle should be included in the Canon of Scripture, since Paul is making a request about a small matter in behalf of one man; let them, who make these objections, learn that they are themselves deserving of very many censures. It was not only proper that these small Epistles, in behalf of things so necessary, should have been inscribed, but I wish that it were possible to meet with one who could deliver to us the history of the Apostles. It is important not only all they wrote and spoke of, but of the rest of their conversation, even what they ate, when

⁵⁸¹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Philemon, Argument.

they ate, when they walked, where they sat, what they did every day, in what parts they were, into what house they entered, and where they lodged. So replete with advantage is all that was done by them that we should relate everything with minute exactness. But most people, not knowing the benefit that would result from this, proceed to censure it.”

“If we could only see those places where they sat or where they were imprisoned, mere lifeless spots, we often transport our minds there, imagine their virtue, are excited by it, and become more zealous. Much more would this be the case, if we heard their words and their other actions. Concerning a friend, a man inquires where he lives, what he is doing, where he is going; should we not make these inquiries about these the general instructors of the world? When a man leads a spiritual life, the habit, the walk, the words and the actions of such a one, in short, all that relates to him, profits the hearers, and nothing is a hindrance or impediment.”

Chrysostom also pointed out⁵⁸² that Paul’s prison Epistles, such as the one to Philemon, have some advantages over the others in that it is like a champion writing in the midst of carnage and victory. Paul had begotten Onesimus while in prison, and he wrote to Philemon, an eminent citizen and later a traveling Bishop, concerning Onesimus.

“Holy indeed are all the Epistles of Paul, but those which he sent after he was in bonds have some advantage, such as the one to Philemon. The one to the Romans he wrote before he had seen them, but the one to the Colossians, after; and near the close of his preaching. In the Epistle to Philemon Paul says, ‘Being such a one as Paul, the aged’ (Philemon 1:9), and makes request for Onesimus; but in the Epistle to the Colossians he sends Onesimus himself, as he says, ‘With Onesimus a faithful and beloved brother’ (Colossians 4:9), calling him faithful, beloved, and brother. Therefore, Paul says, ‘from the hope of the Gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven’ (Colossians 1:23). By then it had been preached for a long time. The Epistle to Timothy was written after this. When Paul had come to the very end of his life, he says, ‘I am already being poured out as a drink offering’ (2 Timothy 4:6); this is later than that to the Philippians, for in that Epistle he was just entering his final imprisonment at Rome.”

“But why do I say that these Epistles have some advantage over the rest in this respect, because Paul writes while in bonds? As if a champion were to write in the midst of carnage and victory; so also, in truth did Paul. Paul was aware that this was a great thing, for writing to Philemon he said regarding Onesimus, ‘Whom I have begotten *while* in my chains’ (Philemon 1:10). Paul said that we should not be dispirited when in adversity, but even rejoice. At this place was Philemon with the Colossians. In the Epistle to Philemon Paul said, ‘And to Archippus our fellow-soldier’ (Philemon 1:2); and in the Epistle to the Colossians, ‘Say to Archippus’ (Colossians 4:17). Philemon seems to me to have been charged with some office in the Church.”

⁵⁸² John Chrysostom, Homilies on Colossians, I, vv. 1-2.

Chrysostom also noted⁵⁸³ how Paul addressed Philemon, who was a great man. He could have commanded Philemon from his authority as an Apostle, but instead he beseeches him out of love.

“Paul wrote, ‘Therefore, though I might be very bold in Christ to command you what is fitting’ (Philemon 1:8). Notice how cautious Paul is, lest any of the things which were spoken even from exceeding love should so strike the hearer, that he should be hurt. For this reason, before Paul says, ‘to enjoin you’, since it was offensive, although, as spoken out of love, it was more proper to soothe him. Nevertheless, from an excess of delicacy, Paul as it were corrects it by saying, ‘Having confidence’ (Philemon 1:21), by which he implies that Philemon was a great man; that is, ‘You have given confidence to us’. Not only that, but adding the expression ‘in Christ’, by which he shows that it was not that Philemon was more illustrious in the world, not that he was more powerful, but it was on account of his faith in Christ. Paul also adds, ‘to enjoin you’, and ‘that which is convenient’; that is, a reasonable action. Notice out of how many things Paul brings proof for this. You do good to others, Paul says, and to me, and for Christ’s sake, and that the thing is reasonable, and that love gives; so, Paul adds, ‘Yet for love’s sake I rather appeal *to you*’” (Philemon 1:9).

“It was as if Paul had said, ‘I know that I can affect it by commanding with much authority, from things which have already taken place’. But because I am very solicitous about this matter, ‘I beseech you’. Paul shows both these things at once; that he has confidence in him for he commands him; and that he is exceedingly concerned about the matter, wherefore he beseeches him.”

Paul Wrote to the Colossians

Colossae⁵⁸⁴ is located in Phrygia of Asia Minor on the Lycus River, which is a tributary of the Maeander River. Colossae is about 100 miles East of Ephesus and about 12 miles Southeast of Laodicea. In earlier times, Colossae was an important merchant place, but by the 1st century AD, it had dwindled greatly in size and significance.

Paul wrote to the Church in Colossae while he was under house-arrest in Rome, living in a rented house (Acts 28:16, 30-31). Timothy was still with Paul in Rome at that time (Colossians 1:1) and so was Justus (Colossians 4:11), Jesus’ step-brother and one of the Seventy Apostles. Colossae was the home of Philemon, a member of the original Seventy, and also the home of Epaphras.

We are not told directly about the founding of the Church in Colossae; all we are told is that during Paul’s 3rd Missionary Journey, “all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks” (Acts 19:10). Paul said, “For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and *for* as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and *attaining* to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”

⁵⁸³ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Philemon, II, vv. 8-9.

⁵⁸⁴ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colossae>.

(Colossians 2:1-3). If many people had never seen Paul, he may have been to Colossae only briefly or not at all. It often assumed that Epaphras founded the Church in Colossae with the help of others during Paul's two years in Ephesus (Colossians 1:7, 4:12). Paul wrote to Philemon in Colossae of his intended visit, which implies he had either never been there or was there only briefly,

“Meanwhile, also prepare a guest room for me, for I trust that through your prayers I shall be granted to *visit* you. Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, *as do* Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow laborers” (Philemon 1:22-24).

Since the same members of the original Seventy Apostles⁵⁸⁵ were with Paul when he wrote to the Church in Colossae, Paul's Epistle to Philemon was probably written at about the same time.

But what is the “great conflict” (Colossians 2:1) that Paul had for Colossae and Laodicea? Paul got word of what was happening in Colossae from Epaphras, who had journeyed to Rome to seek Paul's help. Demetrius of Rostov stated⁵⁸⁶ that Epaphras was later the Bishop of Colossae, Laodicea and Hierapolis⁵⁸⁷. Epaphras brought word to Paul about the inroads that the heresies of Simon Magus had been making in Colossae.

“You have the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, which has come to you, as *it is* also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth. You learned this from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, who also declared to us your love in the Spirit. For this reason, we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding” (Colossians 1:5-9).

Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear witness to him that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis” (Colossians 4:12-13).

The situation at Colossae was somewhat complicated by the fact that Demas, one of the original Seventy Apostles, was with Paul when he wrote to the Colossians, but Demas later apostatized to become a priest for the idols⁵⁸⁸. Paul wrote,

“Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you. Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the church that *is* in his house” (Colossians 4:14-15).

⁵⁸⁵ That is, John Mark (Colossians 4:10, Philemon 1:24), Aristarchus (Colossians 4:10, Philemon 1:24), Demas (Colossians 4:14, Philemon 1:24), Luke (Colossians 4:14, Philemon 1:24) and Epaphras (Colossians 4:12, Philemon 1:23).

⁵⁸⁶ Demetri of Rostov, “The Great Collection of the Lives of the Saints”, tr. Fr. Thomas Marretta, Chrysostom Press, House Springs, MO, 2002

⁵⁸⁷ Hierapolis was about 15 miles North of Laodicea.

⁵⁸⁸ Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

About five years later, Paul wrote to Timothy that Demas had abandoned his work as an Apostle saying, Demas “has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica” (2 Timothy 4:10).

Throughout Paul’s Epistle to the Colossians, Paul refers to heretical teachings, but he doesn’t identify where these teachings came from. However, early Christian writers have given us quite a bit of information on what Paul was referring to.

Simon Magus was a renowned and charismatic heretic⁵⁸⁹ in the 1st century, and he and his followers taught that Jesus was merely one of the angels sent by the Supreme God to create man and the universe. And therefore, worship of angels was common among the heretic groups⁵⁹⁰. To address this, Paul stated:

“Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in *false* humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind” (Colossians 2:18).

Prior to that, Paul had said, “This I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words. Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ” (Colossians 2:4, 8).

In contrast to the Ebionites, who advocated a return to circumcision and the Mosaic Law, Paul stated that the Colossians had a greater “circumcision”. “In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ” (Colossians 2:11).

The Early Church spoke out⁵⁹¹ very strongly against Simon and his followers regarding Who Jesus really is. Eusebius stated⁵⁹² that there were “a great many members of the Church who were fighting for the truth and defending apostolic and ecclesiastical doctrine with uncommon eloquence” in the face of these heresies. To address the heretics’ claim that Jesus was a lesser God and not equal to the Father, Paul wrote:

“Christ is the image of the invisible God and the firstborn over all creation; He created all things, is before all things and in Him all things consist. All the fullness of God dwells in Him” (Colossians 1:15-19).

Part of the teachings of the heretics was either an indifference to or a concentration on certain foods and behavior, such as taught by the Ebionites⁵⁹³. Eating of meat offered to idols and the renunciation of the faith in times of persecution were matters of indifference to Simon⁵⁹⁴,

⁵⁸⁹ For more details, see Mark Kern, Simon Magus the Heresiarch, St. Athanasius Press, 2004.

⁵⁹⁰ Irenaeus, Against Heresies, I, xxiii, 4-5.

Tertullian, Against All Heresies, II, ix, 3.

Tertullian, Against All Heresies, II, ix Appendix, 1.

Tertullian, A Treatise on the Soul, I, ix, 23.

Eusebius, Church History, III, 26.

⁵⁹¹ Ignatius, “To the Philadelphians”, 6, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 1.

Irenaeus, Against Heresies, I, xxiii, 4-5. See also Irenaeus, Against Heresies, II, xxxii, 5.

⁵⁹² Eusebius, Church History, IV, 7.

⁵⁹³ Eusebius, Church History, III, 28.

since, he said, salvation has not been promised to *bodies*. Since bodies didn't matter, some, like the Nicolaitans, were grossly immoral⁵⁹⁵. On the other hand, others of these heretics⁵⁹⁶ abhorred certain kinds of food. Timothy had to address a similar problem in Ephesus a few years later (1 Timothy 4:3). Paul addressed the Colossians regarding the ascetic, food-abhorring group of heretics:

“Let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths⁵⁹⁷, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as *though* living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations -- ‘Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle’, which all concern things which perish with the using -- according to the commandments and doctrines of men? These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, *false* humility, and neglect of the body, *but are* of no value against the indulgence of the flesh” (Colossians 2:16-17, 20-23).

Toward the end of the Epistle to the Colossians, Paul referred to another epistle that was circulating,

“Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the Church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea” (Colossians 4:16)

Modern commentators speculate that the “Epistle from Laodicea” is the one we know as the Epistle to the Ephesians. However, John Chrysostom stated⁵⁹⁸ that it was a letter from Laodicea, perhaps to Paul.

“Some say that this is not Paul’s to them, but theirs to Paul, for Paul didn’t say that it was written to the Laodiceans, but that it was written ‘from Laodicea’”.

Thus, things were changing in Colossae and there were a number of heresies present that Epaphras brought to Paul’s attention. Paul answered many of them in his Epistle. When Paul was released from house-arrest in Rome, two of his stops on his 5th Missionary Journey were Miletus (2 Timothy 4:20) and Troas (2 Timothy 4:13), both of which are near Colossae. Paul could have easily gotten to Colossae, and stayed in the guest room, that he asked Philemon to prepare for him (Philemon 1:22).

Paul Addresses Archippus of the Seventy in Colossae

In his letter to the Colossians in c. 62 AD, Paul addressed several Churches and he addressed Archippus directly, “When this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the Church of Laodicea, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea. And say to Archippus, ‘Pay attention to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it’” (Colossians 4:16-17).

⁵⁹⁴ Eusebius, Church History, IV, 7.

⁵⁹⁵ Tertullian, Against All Heresies, II, ix Appendix, 1

⁵⁹⁶ Roberts and Donaldson, “Constitutions of the Holy Apostles”, VI, ii, 8, Ante-Nicean Fathers, v. 7.

⁵⁹⁷ These were some of the major observances of 1st Century Judaism.

⁵⁹⁸ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Colossians, XII, v. 14.

John Chrysostom stated⁵⁹⁹ that Paul was very emphatic when he wrote to Archippus. The Apostle Archippus apparently heeded Paul's words since he was martyred for the Faith not too long afterward.

“Paul wrote thus to the Colossians, ‘Say to Archippus, pay attention’. Everywhere Paul uses this word, he uses it to alarm them; as when he said, ‘Pay attention to⁶⁰⁰ dogs’ (Philippians 3:2). ‘Pay attention lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men’ (Colossians 2:8). ‘Pay attention lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak’ (1 Corinthians 8:9). Paul always expresses himself like this when he means to terrify. Paul does not allow Archippus the option of choosing, as he said himself, ‘If I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship’ (1 Corinthians 9:17). ‘That you may fulfill it’, continually using diligence, ‘which you have received in the Lord’ (Colossians 4:17), where the word ‘in’ means ‘through the Lord’. He gave it to you, Paul said, not we. Paul shows that they had been committed to his hands by God.”

Chrysostom also referred⁶⁰¹ to Paul's reference to Archippus in his letter to Philemon, written about the same time as his letter to Colossae, where he gave Archippus the same encouragement. Others were also encouraging Archippus to continue the ministry he had been given. Archippus may have been having so many problems with local heretics that he was considering quitting.

“When Paul referred to Archippus as ‘our fellow-soldier’, he did not wish to accomplish such things by command, but he begs Archippus to do what a stranger might have done to aid his request. Not only was Archippus being asked by many, but the petition was urged by many; this contributed to its being granted. On this account Paul said, ‘Archippus our fellow-soldier’. If Archippus was a fellow-soldier, he ought to be concerned about these things. This is the Archippus, about whom Paul said, ‘Say to Archippus, pay attention to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it’ (Colossians 4:16-17). It seems to me, that Archippus, whom he joins with him in this request, was also one of the Clergy. Paul calls him his fellow soldier that he may by all means cooperate with him.”

The Mission of Epaphroditus to Paul in Rome

Paul wrote, “Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. Indeed, I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things *sent* from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:17-19).

From Rome, Paul sent the Apostle of the Seventy Epaphroditus to Philippi⁶⁰² to give the

⁵⁹⁹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Colossians, XII, vv. 16-17.

⁶⁰⁰ The term “dog” referred to an impure and profane person (Matthew 15:26, Revelation 22:15), just as a dog is an unclean animal. See Merrill F. Unger, Unger's Bible Dictionary, Moody Press, Chicago, 1967.

⁶⁰¹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Philemon, I, vv. 1-3.

⁶⁰² For more details, see the Section “Epaphroditus Also Joins Paul in Philippi”.

Philippians some news on what was going on in Rome, since they were very worried about Paul and since Epaphroditus was likely a native of Philippi. Also, the Philippians had heard that Epaphroditus had been very sick and had almost died. Epaphroditus, on the other hand was very concerned about the Philippians (Philippians 2:25-30). When Epaphroditus returned to Rome from Philippi, he brought a contribution from Philippi to Paul to help out with the work there (Philippians 4:18-19).

Another of the Seventy helping out in Macedonia was Hermas. Epaphroditus was probably from Philippi and Paul calls him an Apostle and a Liturgist to Philippi as well as his fellow-worker and fellow-soldier (Philippians 2:25). We first see him in Paul's letters in c. 62 AD when Paul sent him to Philippi from Rome. Epaphroditus had been longing for the Philippians and was distressed because they were worried about him when he was very sick (Philippians 2:26-30). This implies that he had been working with Paul for quite a while already. Earlier in c. 49-50 AD, when Paul passed through Philippi on his 2nd Missionary Journey, Epaphroditus was probably there also. On Paul's 3rd Missionary Journey, as he passed through Philippi again, Luke started traveling with Paul again⁶⁰³. Probably Epaphroditus did so also and Hermas of the original Seventy was left behind in Philippi. Hermas thus became known as the first Bishop of Philippi⁶⁰⁴.

John Chrysostom pointed out⁶⁰⁵ that the Philippians had sent Epaphroditus to Paul with alms. They were very concerned about Paul's imprisonment (house-arrest) in Rome and about Epaphroditus' illness. Paul reassured them about Epaphroditus, by having him carry the Epistle to them, that he had recovered and that Paul's arrest had resulted in progress for the Gospel.

“The Philippians had sent Epaphroditus to Paul, to carry him money, and to know the things concerning him, for they were most lovingly concerned about him. Paul replied saying, ‘I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things *sent* from you’ (Philippians 4:18). Paul reassured them about their concerns saying, ‘But I want you to know, brethren, that the things *which happened* to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the Gospel’ (Philippians 1:12). And again, ‘I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state’ (Philippians 2:19). Paul was thus saying, ‘Just as you for full assurance sent to know the things concerning me, so I also, that I may be of good comfort when I know the things concerning you’. It had been a long time since they communicated with Paul, and Paul acknowledged this, ‘Now at length you have revived your thought for me’ (Philippians 4:10). Then they heard that Paul was in prison (Philippians 2:26); they also heard about Epaphroditus, that he was gravely sick; it was reasonable that they should be disturbed. Therefore, Paul offers them much consolation about his bonds, showing that they should not be disturbed, but even rejoice.”

Chrysostom also stated⁶⁰⁶ that just as Paul was very concerned about what was happening

⁶⁰³ See the Section, “The Evangelist Luke Remained Behind in Philippi”.

⁶⁰⁴ There were two cities not too far apart: Philippi and Philippopolis. Philippi was on the coast of the Aegean Sea while Philippopolis was inland about 100 miles almost due North. Both cities were named after Philip II of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great. Philippopolis today is named Plovdiv, Bulgaria.

⁶⁰⁵ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Philippians, Introductory Discourse, 2.

⁶⁰⁶ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Philippians, IX, v. 19.

in Philippi, so the Philippians were very concerned about what was happening to Paul. Paul was under house-arrest in Rome, but the Philippians didn't know if he was about to be executed. The Apostle Epaphroditus, whom they knew well, had been gravely sick and they didn't know if he was now OK.

“Paul had said, ‘the things *which happened* to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard’ (Philippians 1:12, 13). Again, ‘Yes, and if I am being poured out *as a drink offering* on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all’ (Philippians 2:17). By these words Paul strengthened the Philippians. Perhaps they might suspect that his former words were spoken just to comfort them. ‘I will send Timothy to you’, Paul said; for the Philippians desired to hear everything that concerned him. Why didn't Paul say, ‘that you may know my state’, but instead said, ‘that I may know yours’? Epaphroditus would have reported Paul's state before the arrival of Timothy. Why further on did Paul say, ‘I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother’ (Philippians 2:25); but I wish to learn of your affairs? It is likely that Epaphroditus had remained with Paul a long time because of his bodily weakness. Therefore, Paul said, ‘I wish to know your state’. Notice how Paul refers everything to Christ, even the mission of Timothy, saying, ‘I hope in the Lord Jesus’; that is, I am confident that God will facilitate this for me that I too may be of good courage, when I know your state. I refreshed you when you heard the things about me which you had prayed for: (1) that the Gospel had advanced, (2) that its enemies were put to shame, (3) that the means by which they thought to injure, rather made me rejoice. Now I want to learn of your affairs, that I too may be of good courage when I know your state. Paul shows that they ought to rejoice for his bonds, and to be compliant in them, for they gave him great pleasure.”

Chrysostom also noted⁶⁰⁷ exactly what Epaphroditus had dared to do and how much Paul loved and respected him for doing it. Paul had sent Epaphroditus to Philippi because he was really concerned about the Philippians; Epaphroditus returned with alms he collected there. When Epaphroditus returned to Rome, he found Paul in imminent danger. Instead of backing off, Epaphroditus ignored the danger and did what he could to help Paul.

“Paul showed how much he esteemed Epaphroditus, by saying that his preservation was so useful to himself that the mercy which had been shown to Epaphroditus reached him also. When Paul said, ‘Lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow’ (Philippians 2:27), he meant sorrow from the death of Epaphroditus in addition to that which sprung from his sickness. By this Paul showed how much he prized Epaphroditus.”

“Why did Paul send Epaphroditus diligently to Philippi? (Philippians 2:28) Paul sent Epaphroditus without procrastination, without delay, with much speed, having asked him to drop everything and to go to Philippi, that Paul might be freed from heaviness. We rejoice not on hearing of the health of those we love, so much as when we see them, and chiefly so when this happens contrary to hope, as it was in the case of Epaphroditus.”

⁶⁰⁷ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Philippians, IX, v. 26-29.

“Paul sent Epaphroditus to Philippi the ‘more diligently’, that when they saw him, they may rejoice, and that Paul may be less sorrowful’ (Philippians 2:28). How was Paul ‘less sorrowful?’ If they rejoice, he too rejoices. Paul didn’t say that he would be without sorrow, but ‘less sorrowful’, to show that his soul never was free from sorrow. He who said, ‘Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I don’t burn with indignation?’ (2 Corinthians 11:29) When could such a person as Paul be free from sorrow? What he means, ‘this despondency I now cast off’”.

“Epaphroditus had been publicly sent by the city of the Philippians, and had come as minister to Paul, bringing him some contribution. Toward the end of the Epistle Paul shows that Epaphroditus brought him money, ‘Having received of Epaphroditus the things sent by you’” (Philippians 4:18).

“It is probable then, that on his arrival at the city of Rome, he found Paul in great and urgent peril, so that those who were accustomed to resort to him were unable safely to do so, but were themselves in peril by hanging around. This tends to happen chiefly in very great dangers, due to the exceeding wrath of kings; when anyone has offended the king, is cast into prison, and is strictly guarded, then even his servants are barred from access. This probably happened to Paul; Epaphroditus, being of a noble nature, despised all danger, that he might go in to Paul, minister to him, and do everything which need required. He therefore sets forth two facts, by which he gains their respect for Epaphroditus; (1) that he was in jeopardy well near death, for Paul’s sake; (2) that in so suffering he was representing their city, so that the recompense for his peril would be accounted to those who sent him. It is as if the city had sent him as their ambassador, so that a kind reception of him and approval of what he had done may rather be called a participation in the things that he had dared.”

Chrysostom concluded, “Dejection and care⁶⁰⁸, whenever they strain the soul beyond due measure; bereave it of its native force. Therefore, Paul relieves the Philippians, who were in great despondency because they did not know how matters were with Paul. They thought that it was already over with Paul, because of the preaching, and they were grieved because of Epaphroditus’ sickness. In giving them assurance on all these points, he introduces the words, ‘Finally, my brethren, rejoice’ (Philippians 3:1). You no longer have cause for despondency. You have Epaphroditus, for whose sake you were grieved; you have Timothy; I am myself coming to you; the Gospel is gaining ground. What more could you want? Rejoice!”

Cyprian of Carthage pointed out⁶⁰⁹ how we lend to God when we have pity on the poor in giving alms. The Philippians did this when they sent alms to Paul by the hand of Epaphroditus.

“Paul, when aided in the necessity of affliction by his brethren, said that good works which are performed are sacrifices to God. ‘I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things *sent* from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God’ (Philippians 4:18). For when one has

⁶⁰⁸ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Philippians, X, vv. 1-3.

⁶⁰⁹ Cyprian of Carthage, Treatises, IV, 33.

pity on the poor, he lends to God; and he who gives to the least gives to God — sacrifices spiritually to God an odor of a sweet smell.”

John Chrysostom praised⁶¹⁰ the alms given by the Philippians, which was carried to Paul by Epaphroditus, for the great benefit that it had on the Philippians.

“I have often said that almsgiving has been introduced not for the sake of the receivers, but for the sake of the givers, for the givers make the greatest gain. Paul shows this here. The Philippians had sent him some alms, after a long time, and had committed it to Epaphroditus. When Paul is about to send Epaphroditus as the bearer of this Epistle, he praises them, and shows that this action was for the need, not of the receiver, but of the givers. This he does, both that they who gave the gift may not be lifted up with arrogance, and that they may become more zealous in well-doing, since they rather benefit themselves. He also did this that they who receive may not fearlessly rush forward to receive more, lest they meet with condemnation. Because ‘it is more blessed to give than to receive’” (Acts 20:35).

Chrysostom also noted⁶¹¹ that with respect to Epaphroditus’ illness, even those who guard the baggage share in the victory and often have an equal portion of the spoils.

“Paul, speaking of Epaphroditus, said ‘For the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me’ (Philippians 2:30). In the service of kings, not only those who fight the battle, but also those who guard the baggage, share in the honor. Frequently even these have an equal portion of the spoils, though they have not gotten their hands bloody, nor stood in array, nor even seen the ranks of the enemy. He who relieves the combatant, when wasted with hunger, who stands by him, encouraging him by words, and rendering him every service, he is not inferior to the combatant.”

Chrysostom also stated⁶¹² that there was a purpose that Epaphroditus was sick – as there is a purpose for our sicknesses. If our bodies were not weak, we would ascribe all glory to them and not to God.

“Listen to Paul, saying, ‘lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me’ (2 Corinthians 12:7). But this, you might say, was an expression of humility. Far from it! The thorn was not sent to Paul that he might be humble and he does not say this only out of humility. There are other causes besides to be assigned for it. Observe therefore how God, accounting for it, says, ‘My grace is sufficient for you’; not ‘that you may not be exalted above measure’, but ‘For my strength is made perfect in weakness’ (2 Corinthians 12:9). Two ends therefore were answered at once: what God was doing was clearly revealed, and the whole was ascribed to God. For this cause, Paul said elsewhere, ‘We carry this treasure in earthen vessels’ (2 Corinthians 4:7); that is, in bodies weak and liable to suffering. Why? God set it up this way so that the excellence of the power may be of Him, and not of us’! If

⁶¹⁰ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Philippians, XV, vv. 10-14.

⁶¹¹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Timothy, III, vv. 13-18.

⁶¹² John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Timothy, X, v. 20.

our bodies were not subject to infirmity, all would be ascribed to our bodies. Elsewhere we see Paul grieving at the infirmity of Epaphroditus, concerning whom he writes, ‘He was sick near unto death, but God had mercy on him’” (Philippians 2:27).

Chrysostom also noted⁶¹³ that Paul only wrote Epistles to Timothy and Titus, even though the others – Silas, Luke, and Clement – were good men also. The difference is that Timothy and Titus had already been assigned archdioceses by that time, while Luke and Clement were with Paul in Rome.

“If it should be asked why Paul addresses Epistles to Titus and Timothy alone, though Silas was approved, as also was Luke, for he writes, ‘Only Luke is with me’ (2 Timothy 4:11), and Clement was one of his associates, of whom he says, ‘with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers’ (Philippians 4:3). For what reason then does Paul write only to Titus and Timothy? It is because he had already committed the care of Churches to them, and certain archdioceses had been assigned to them, but the others were traveling with him. So preeminent in virtue was Timothy, that his youth was no impediment to his promotion; therefore, Paul writes, ‘Let no one despise your youth’” (1 Timothy 4:12)

Paul Wrote to the Philippians

Philippi was a city in Macedonia that was originally founded by Philip II⁶¹⁴, king of Macedon, in 356 BC. The city had a long prosperous history due largely to gold mines nearby. The city had a relatively small urban area, with villages surrounding it, but it had a very privileged position due to the wealth coming from the mines. Philippi was located on the Via Egnatia, the main trade route constructed by Rome in the 2nd century BC, which connected Italy with Asia Minor. Cities along this trade route (from East to West) are Neapolis (Acts 16:11), Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia (Acts 17:1), Thessalonica and Dyrrhachium on the western coast of Greece.

Paul wrote to the Church in Philippi while he was under house-arrest in Rome and Timothy was still with Paul in Rome at that time (Philippians 1:1). As part of his Epistle to Philippi, he mentioned some of the effects of his 2-year stay in Rome:

“But I want you to know, brethren, that the things *which happened* to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear” (Philippians 1:12-14).

“Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen” (Philippians 4:21-23).

Just as during Paul's captivity in Caesarea for two years, he was now having a major effect on those of the emperor's household. In Caesarea, the result of Paul's speaking was that

⁶¹³ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Timothy, Argument, 2

⁶¹⁴ Philip II was the father of Alexander the Great.

every ruler in the area pronounced sentence against the Jews and they openly made a show and a parade of it. The evil design and plotting of the Jews were exposed for what it was. The whole thing was so dramatic that everyone wanted to listen to Paul. Paul turned from being the defendant to being the Teacher. He even exhorted King Agrippa to repent! Paul spoke both to the soldiers (the small) and to the rulers (the great). From Paul's words to the Philippians, the same thing was happening in Rome with everyone at Nero's Palace wanting to listen to him.

We note that Paul addressed his Epistle to the Philippians "To all the saints with the Bishops and the Deacons" (Philippians 1:1). Thus, at this time of writing, there was an established clergy in Philippi and several Bishops. Olympas had been there as Bishop earlier and Hermas was probably there at this time. Other Bishops in that area from the ranks of the original Seventy Apostles were: Amplias (Odessos in Macedonia), Andronicus & Junia (Illyricum), Apelles (Heraclea in Thrace), Hermes (Dalmatia), Phlegon (Marathon in Thrace) and Urbanus (Macedonia).

Paul mentioned to the Philippians that he planned to send Timothy to them shortly, "that I also may be encouraged when I know your state; for I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. But you know his proven character, that as a son with *his* father he served with me in the gospel" (Philippians 2:19-22).

Paul was confident that he would get through this time of "house-arrest" in Rome for their sake. For Paul, to die would be gain (Philippians 1:21); but Paul felt that he still had some things to do with the Philippians.

"For me to remain in the flesh *is* more needful for you. And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again. Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit. With one mind strive together for the faith of the gospel, and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God" (Philippians 1:24-28).

There were some heretical ideas that the Philippians were exposed to that Paul needed to warn them about. Prior to the founding of the Church in Philippi, Nicolas of Antioch, one of the first deacons (Acts 6:5), and one of the Seventy, had joined Simon's heresy. Since Simon taught⁶¹⁵ that only the spirit was resurrected (and that at baptism), it did not matter what one did with the body. The Nicolaitans therefore engaged in grossly immoral practices in keeping with the teachings of Simon⁶¹⁶, who said that to enter fully into their mysteries, they needed to practice all the worst kinds of wickedness in order to escape the cosmic powers⁶¹⁷.

⁶¹⁵ For more details about Simon Magus and his heresies, see Mark Kern, Simon Magus the Heresiarch, St. Athanasius Press, 2004.

⁶¹⁶ Tertullian, Against All Heresies, II, ix Appendix, 1.

⁶¹⁷ Eusebius, Church History, IV, 7.

The influence of the Nicolaitans and others in Philippi is evident from Paul's Epistle, where Paul warned the Philippians to beware of the sensuality and depravity of the Nicolaitans and other followers of Simon. Paul said,

“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end *is* destruction, whose god *is their* belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame -- who set their mind on earthly things” (Philippians 3:18-19).

Prior to saying this, Paul had warned the Philippians to beware of those who follow the practices of the Nicolaitans, “Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation! For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit” (Philippians 3:2-3). The term “dog” was used in the Mosaic Law to refer to a Sodomite, where the Law stated:

“There shall be no temple prostitute of the daughters of Israel, or a perverted one of the sons of Israel. You shall not bring the wages of a prostitute or the price of a dog to the house of the Lord your God for any vowed offering, for both of these *are* an abomination to the Lord your God” (Deuteronomy 23:17-18).

Paul contrasted the term⁶¹⁸ “mutilation” with the term “circumcision”, again referring to some of the practices of the Nicolaitans and Ebionites that some of the Church Fathers⁶¹⁹ thought were so gross that they were embarrassed to even mention their practices in detail. By saying that the Philippians were the “circumcision who worships God in the Spirit”, Paul was referring to the Mosaic Law. The Law had taught that true worshippers of God were circumcised in heart (Deuteronomy 10:14-17, 30:5-6), and that the flesh was just an outward sign of something greater within.

Paul went on to contrast himself to the Ebionites. While they advocated a return to the Mosaic Law, Paul stated that if anyone should advocate such, it should be Paul himself (Philippians 3:4-6). Even though he was a Pharisee along with his father (Acts 23:6), he found the excellence in Christ to be far greater than anything else.

Paul Sent Tychicus to Ephesus and Colossae

Tychicus, one of the original Seventy Apostles, was native to Asia Minor and was used as a courier by Paul on several occasions. For example:

- In c. 62 AD, Paul sent Tychicus to Ephesus⁶²⁰ (Ephesians 6:21).

⁶¹⁸ Jesus had said, “There are eunuchs who were born thus from *their* mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake” (Matthew 19:12). Those who were born eunuchs are the people who are comfortable remaining celibate. Those who were made so by men are the “mutilation”, also known in medieval times as the “Castrati”, or singers who were castrated as a boy to preserve a soprano voice. Those who made themselves eunuchs are the Twelve Apostles and others, who voluntarily gave up the pleasures of the flesh, along with other things of this world.

⁶¹⁹ Tertullian, Against All Heresies, II, ix Appendix, 1.

Jerome, Letter to Ctesiphon, CXXXIII, 4.

Jerome, “Dialogue Against the Luciferians”, 23, Treatises, Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, v. 6.

Ignatius, “To the Trallians”, 10-11, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 1.

Roberts and Donaldson, “Constitutions of the Holy Apostles”, VI, ii, 8, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 7.

- About the same time, Paul sent Tychicus to Colossae (Colossians 4:7).
- In c. 65 AD, Paul sent either Artemas or Tychicus to Crete to fill in for Titus, so that Titus could come to Nicopolis to meet with Paul (Titus 3:12).
- In c. 67 AD, Paul sent Tychicus back to Ephesus again (2 Timothy 4:12).

In his mission to Ephesus in c. 62 AD, Tychicus was probably carrying Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians. He may have also been carrying Paul's Epistle to Philemon and Paul's Epistle to the Colossians. As he traveled to Colossae, Onesimus was with him (Colossians 4:7-8).

But Tychicus was more than just a courier. Paul sent him to Colossae "that he may know your circumstances and comfort your hearts" (Colossians 4:8). Tychicus had the same mission at Ephesus "to comfort your hearts" (Ephesians 6:21). Some theological understanding was needed on the part of Tychicus to do this since Colossae was under attack by a number of heretics⁶²¹ who followed the teachings of Simon Magus.

In addition to being a teacher and an authority against the heretics, Tychicus was also sent to discern what the needs are in Colossae and at Ephesus (Colossians 4:8). In other words, Tychicus needed to do a lot of listening.

Tychicus' mission was also to convey how Paul was doing (Ephesians 6:21, Colossians 4:7). Paul may have still been wearing chains, but the Gospel was being heard by many, many people. And this is a very comforting thing to know.

Paul Probably Wrote to the Hebrews at This Time

As Paul wrote to the Hebrews, the time was getting much closer to the end for Jerusalem and Judea as they knew it. In just four years, the Roman army would come and methodically annihilate every town in Judea until they finally laid siege to Jerusalem. Things are about to get really, really gruesome in Judea. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews is his final plea for them to repent. There were some in Judea, like the political party of the Zealots, who were incorrigible, and they will be taken to task by the events that unfold. But this Epistle was addressed to those who still had a soft heart, but who may be strongly influenced by the Zealots.

We note the date of the Epistle as being before the advance of the Roman army in 66 AD to destroy Jerusalem, since there is no mention anywhere in the text of Hebrews of these events. Paul stated, "You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin" (Hebrews 12:4). That was about to change! Yet Paul was writing the Epistle from Italy (Hebrews 13:24), meaning that he wrote it during his time of "house-arrest" in Rome. At the time that Paul wrote, Timothy had just been released from imprisonment with Paul (Hebrews 13:23).

Arguments:

1. Paul stated that he had received his apostleship and his knowledge of the truth was "not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father" (Galatians 1:1). Yet the author of Hebrews ranks himself among those who had received through the medium of

⁶²⁰ Ephesus is in Asia Minor.

⁶²¹ See the Section "Paul Wrote to the Colossians".

others that Gospel “which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him” (Hebrews 2:3).

2. In favor of the authorship of St. Paul so far as the ideas and essential argument of the Epistle are concerned, Origen urges the beauty of the thoughts, and there must be some force in this argument, or the Epistle could hardly have been so long and so widely attributed to him. Perhaps it may be summed up in the words of an eminent and now departed divine, “If the Epistle were not written by St. Paul, then we have the remarkable phenomenon that there were two men among the Christians of that age who were capable of writing it.”
3. Everyone must be struck with the marked difference in the construction of the Epistle to the Hebrews from any of Paul’s Epistles. The omission of his name at the beginning has been more or less satisfactorily accounted for from ancient times, but the reasons for this do not apply to the absence of any sort of salutation, “any heading or introductory thanksgiving,” by which St. Paul always takes pains to conciliate his readers, and of which there was especial need if he were writing to Hebrews disposed to prejudice against him.

Table 10
Opinions Concerning Who Was the Author of Hebrews

Author	Who Wrote Hebrews?	Comments
Tertullian	Barnabas	
Pantaenus	Paul	Teacher of Clement A
Clement of Alexandria	Paul, trans by Luke	
Eusebius	Paul, trans by Luke	
Origen	Luke, Clement Rome??	Didn't really know
Augustine	Paul	hesitantly
Jerome	Paul	Expresses Origen's doubts
John Chrysostom	Paul	
West, before 4 th century	?	Hebrews was Not Scripture
East, before 4 th century	?	Hebrews was Scripture
Reformation-era writers	Many Opinions	

4. Another striking feature of difference is that Paul always keeps close to his argument until it is completed, and then adds practical exhortations founded upon it, while in the Epistle to the Hebrews each short division of the argument is separated from that which follows by its appropriate practical application. This indicates quite a different habit of mind, and it is difficult to fancy someone who reasons in such a severely logical manner as Paul thus pausing in the flow of his argument. The style of the Epistle is so markedly different from that of Paul's other Epistles that attention has been drawn to this point from the time of Origen down. The "rounded oratorical periods" of the Epistle to the Hebrews are very unlike the "unstudied, broken, abrupt phraseology" of Paul's other Epistles. This difference might, in part at least, be accounted for as the work of the translator; only in that case, the translator could have been neither St. Luke, whose style is clear and smooth enough, but not at all oratorical, nor Clement, whose style is very unlike the Epistle to the Hebrews.
5. Some parts of the Epistle to the Hebrews favor a Pauline authorship. There is a quotation in Hebrews 10:30, which agrees precisely with the same quotation in Romans 12:19, but differs from either the Hebrew or the Greek of Deuteronomy 32:35. The Greek text for Hebrews and Romans is the same: "'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay', says the Lord". Now the LXX reads, "I will repay on the day of vengeance"; the Hebrew reads, "To Me belongs vengeance and retribution". The clause "says the Lord" is not present in the text of Hebrews, but is present in Romans, thus constituting a slight difference between them. It is still true, however, that they both differ in the same way from the Hebrew and the LXX text. This might be a difficulty were it not that the quotation as it is in the Epistle is found exactly in the Targum⁶²², and from that had probably passed into familiar use. Everywhere else the author of Hebrews quotes very closely from the LXX, and from that in what is known as its Alexandrine form, while Paul in his other Epistles uses the Vatican form, quotes far more loosely, and often follows the Hebrew rather than the Greek.
6. Some have interpreted the following to be at variance with the Pauline authorship. "Know that *our* brother Timothy has been set free, with whom I shall see you if he comes shortly" (Hebrews 12:23). The argument goes that the Scripture doesn't say that Timothy was

⁶²² The "Targum" or Targumim were spoken paraphrases, explanations or expansions of the Hebrew Scriptures that a Rabbi would give in the language of the people, usually in Aramaic, since most people didn't understand Hebrew.

imprisoned, at Rome or elsewhere, when St. Paul was with him; but as far as we know the history of the two, it seems unlikely. The passage might quite as well have been written by almost any of the companions of St. Paul who were also associated with Timothy. However, this assumes that Hebrews was written relatively late. If Hebrews was written during Paul's house-arrest in Rome, Timothy was with him for most of that time (Philippians 1:1, Colossians 1:1, Philemon 1:1) and could easily have been detained under house-arrest also.

Paul Refers to the Heretics in Israel

Paul began by reviewing events from the history of Israel as a nation and how heretics of the past never got away with anything.

"Therefore, we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?" (Hebrews 2:1-4)

Paul then says that similar rebellion is going on in their midst and that those who are involved with it will not enter His rest.

"Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: 'Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness, where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, and saw My works forty years. Therefore, I was angry with that generation, and said, "They always go astray in *their* heart, and they have not known My ways". So, I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest'" (Hebrews 3:7-11)

"Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the Gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it" (Hebrews 4:1-2)

The Hebrews Christians that Paul was writing to have some problems, and more problems are coming when the Roman army arrives.

"We have much to say to you, and this is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need *someone* to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes *only* of milk *is* unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, *that is*, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:11-14).

The Mosaic Law Sacrifices Continue in Jerusalem, but the Saints Are Struggling

We note from the text of Paul's Epistle that the sacrificial offerings in Jerusalem are continuing as they had been for the previous 1000 years. This confirms the date for the Epistle as being just before the destruction of Jerusalem.

"For such a High Priest (as Jesus) was fitting for us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself" (Hebrews 7:26-27).

"The Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. It *was* symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience -- *concerned* only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation" (Hebrews 9:8-10).

"For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those *sacrifices there is* a reminder of sins every year. For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins" (Hebrews 10:1-4).

Yet the Christians in Jerusalem were suffering. This began with the treatment of the Apostles by the Sanhedrin (Acts 5:40-42; 12:1-3), and had continued at the time Paul wrote. The normal mode of operation was the raiding of houses where Christians lived. The Christians would be hauled off to prison and their property would be confiscated. This led to the impoverishment of the Jerusalem Church; Paul took up collections for the brethren in Judea on at least two occasions (Acts 11:27-30; See Acts 24:17, 1 Corinthians 16:1-4). Of this persecution, part was brought on because the Hebrew Christians had compassion on Paul when he was imprisoned in Caesarea (Acts 21:26-26:32); Paul said,

"Recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven. Therefore, do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise" (Hebrews 10:32-36)

Paul Wrote to the Ephesians

Ephesus⁶²³ was an [ancient Greek](#) city on the coast of [Ionia](#). It was built in the 10th century BC on the site of the former [Arzawan](#) capital by [Attic](#) and [Ionian](#) Greek colonists. During the [Classical Greek](#) era it was one of the twelve cities of the [Ionian League](#). The city flourished after it came under the control of the [Roman Republic](#) in 129 BC. According to estimates Ephesus

⁶²³ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ephesus>

had a population of 33,600 to 56,000 people in the Roman period, making it the third largest city of Roman [Asia Minor](#) after [Sardis](#) and [Alexandria Troas](#).

The city was famed for the [Temple of Artemis](#) (completed around 550 BC), one of the [Seven Wonders of the Ancient World](#). In 268 AD, the Temple was destroyed or damaged in a raid by the [Goths](#). It may have been rebuilt or repaired but this is uncertain, as its later history is not clear. Emperor [Constantine I](#) rebuilt much of the city and erected new public baths. What remained of the temple was destroyed in 401 AD.

Paul had spoken to the presbyters and Bishops of the Ephesus area at the end of his 3rd Missionary Journey, warning them that savage wolves would arise from within their midst.

“Therefore, take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the Church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also, from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified” (Acts 20:28-32).

Paul wrote his Epistle to the Ephesians in the early 60’s AD from the rented house where he was staying in Rome under house-arrest (Acts 28:16, 30-31), and this Epistle may have been meant to be circulated among several other Churches. The “savage wolves” had not become prominent in Ephesus yet. In this Epistle Paul did not include specific details about the heresies that he mentioned in other Epistles. He did give some general warnings:

- Referring generally to the followers of Simon Magus. Paul wrote, “Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience” (Ephesians 5:6).
- And Paul described the general characteristics of the followers of Simon “But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God” (Ephesians 5:3-5).
- And Paul referred to the general practices of the followers of Simon, “It is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret” (Ephesians 5:12). But Paul didn’t say that the Ephesians had run headlong into the followers of Simon Magus yet. This situation would change five years later.

Paul wrote to the Ephesians in very glowing terms concerning the Kingdom of God (Ephesians 1:15-2:10), perhaps more so than Paul’s other Epistles. The Christians in Ephesus and vicinity were probably in pretty good shape, but a little warning about the problems that others were experiencing is always helpful. A few years later when Paul wrote to Timothy, Timothy was Bishop of Ephesus, and serious matters had developed in Ephesus. This will be covered later in the Section titled “Paul Wrote to Timothy Again”

The 5th Missionary Journey – After Release from House-Arrest

Below is a list of eight places Paul visited after his house-arrest in Rome, which ended in c. 62 AD. If Paul was finally martyred in Rome in 67 AD after a short imprisonment, this leaves about four years of travel after his release in c. 62 AD. We don't have much information as to what sequence this travel occurred, but there are some hints. Table 11 lists these places.

Table 11
Places Paul Visited after Release from House-Arrest

Spain	Crete (Titus 1:5)
Asia (Ephesus 1 Timothy 1:3)	Macedonia (1 Timothy 1:3)
Troas (2 Timothy 4:13)	Miletus (2 Timothy 4:20)
Corinth, Nicopolis (2 Timothy 4:20, Titus 3:12)	Rome

Paul Visits Spain

Paul had been meaning to visit Spain at least since 55 AD (Romans 15:24). At that time, Paul said,

“Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit,
I shall go by way of you (Rome) to Spain” (Romans 15:28)

Paul didn't mention anything about going to Spain or having been to Spain in his writings after his release in c. 62 AD. But most agree that he probably went there. Therefore, we might conclude that he went there first after his release from house-arrest. Luke most likely went with Paul along with Aristarchus. Both were of the Seventy and were with Paul toward the end of his house-arrest in Rome (Colossians 4:14, Philemon 1:24), but they were the only ones⁶²⁴ still with Paul just before Paul was executed (2 Timothy 4:11).

Spain had been evangelized⁶²⁵ by James the son of Zebedee shortly after Pentecost 30 AD. This James is the one who had just returned from Spain when he was beheaded by Herod to please the Jews (Acts 12:1-3). The body of James was returned⁶²⁶ to Spain and buried there with great honor. According to tradition, Mary the wife of Cleopas went⁶²⁷ with James to Spain to help out and was also buried there.

Paul Visited Titus on Crete

⁶²⁴ Aristarchus was beheaded at the same time as Paul in 67 AD. See The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, April 14.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 15, September 27.
<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp>, April 15, September 27

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁶²⁵ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 30.

Isaac Lambertsen, The Lives of the Holy Apostles, Holy Apostles Convent Press, Buena Vista, CO, 1990, pp. 73-77. This is a translation from the following:

The Lives of the Saints in the Russian Language, According to the Menology of St. Dimitri of Rostov, Moscow, Synodal Press, 1908, v. 8, (April) pp. 473-477.

⁶²⁶ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 30.

⁶²⁷

Paul had left Titus on Crete as a Bishop (Titus 1:5-7). Later Paul asked Titus to come to him in Nicopolis in Greece, and possibly not directly from Crete (Titus 3:12).

When Paul went to Macedonia, he left Timothy in Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3) and Timothy was still there when Paul summoned him to Rome just before his (Paul's) martyrdom (2 Timothy 4:21). Thus, Paul went to Ephesus before going to Nicopolis on the West Coast of Greece.

Paul also mentioned that he left Trophimus in Miletus (near Ephesus) to recover from some illness. The implication is that Trophimus may not be better yet, which implies that Paul had been there recently, perhaps the last place he visited. Paul also went to Troas (2 Timothy 4:13) and Corinth (2 Timothy 4:20). Figure 6 shows a possible route for Paul's fifth journey taking these things into account.

John Chrysostom stated⁶²⁸ that Paul was released from captivity in Rome following his house arrest in Rome, but this happened after Luke closed his account in the Book of Acts. Paul then went to Spain, among other places, and was later brought to Rome a second time, where he ended his life. The rest of Paul's journeys were like those recorded in Acts: chains, tortures, fighting, prison, etc.

“Of Paul's affairs after the two years in Rome, what shall we say? The writer (Luke) leaves the reader thirsty for more; heathen authors do the same in their writings, for to know everything makes the reader dull and jaded. Notice the order of God's Providence, ‘I also have been much hindered from coming to you’. And also ‘having a great desire these many years to come to you’ (Romans 15:22-23). But Paul fed them with hope. ‘Whenever I journey to Spain, I shall come to you’, and ‘I hope to see you on my journey, and to be helped on my way there by you, if first I may enjoy your *company* for a while’ (Romans 15:24). Of this he says, ‘I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ’ (Romans 15:29). Paul had said, ‘now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints’ (Romans 15:25); this is the same that he has said here, ‘after many years I came to bring alms and offerings to my nation’ (Acts 24:17). Notice how Paul did not foresee everything? Rome received him bound coming up from the sea, saved from a shipwreck — and Rome was saved from the shipwreck of error. Like an emperor that has fought a naval battle and overcome, he entered into that most imperial city. He was closer now to his crown. Rome received him bound, and saw him crowned and proclaimed conqueror. There he had said, ‘I may enjoy your *company* for a while’ (Romans 15:24); but this was the beginning of a course once more, and he added trophies to trophies, a man not to be overcome.

⁶²⁸ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LV, Recapitulation.

Figure 6
Approximate Route of Paul's 5th Missionary Journey⁶²⁹



Probable Sequence:

1. Rome	2. Spain
3. Crete	4. Ephesus, Miletus, Troas
5. Corinth, Nicopolis	6. Rome (for execution)

Corinth kept him two years, and Asia three, and Rome two for this time. A second time Paul again entered Rome, when he was martyred (that is, in c. 67 AD). Thus, he escaped this time, and having filled the whole world, he so brought his life to a close. Why do we wish to learn what happened after these two years? Those years too are such as these: bonds, tortures, fighting, imprisonments, lying in wait, false accusations, and death, day by day. We have seen a small part of it! However much we have seen, such is Paul for all the rest. As in the case of the sky, if we have seen one part of it, go wherever we will and we shall see it such as this. As it is with the sun, though we have seen its rays but in part, we may conjecture the rest; so is it with Paul. His Acts we have seen in part; such are they all throughout, teeming with dangers.”

Paul Wrote to Timothy the First Time

When Paul wrote to Timothy, he had already been released from house-arrest in Rome. Paul doesn't say where he was when he wrote, but he planned to come to Ephesus soon.

⁶²⁹ http://www.bible-history.com/maps/maps/map_new_testament_world.html.

“These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; but if I am delayed, *I write* so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the Church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:14-15).

Members of the Seventy who worked with Paul during this fifth journey are shown in Table 12 including the reference to them in the Scripture.

Table 12
Those of the Seventy Working with Paul on the 5th Missionary Journey

Member of Seventy	Native To	Journey	Later Bishop of	Comments
Aquila & Priscilla	Pontus	2, 3, 4, 5	Ephesus before Timothy	Acts 18:18-19, 2 Timothy 4:19
Aristarchus	Thessalonica	2, 3, 4, 5	Apamea	Beheaded with Paul
Carpus		2, 3, 5	Berea, Troas	2 Timothy 4:13
Crescens		5	Carthage, Galatia	2 Timothy 4:10
Demas		3, 4, 5	Priest for idols	Colossians 4:14, 2 Timothy 4:10
Dionysius	Athens	2, 3, 5	Athens	
Erastus		3, 5	Expert at finances	2 Timothy 4:20
Epaphras		3, 4, 5	Colossae area	Colossians 1:7, 4:12
Herodion	Tarsus	1, 2, 3, 5	Neoparthia, Patras	Martyred with Paul
Linus		2, 3, 4, 5	Rome	2 Timothy 4:21
Luke	Antioch	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Roving Apostle	2 Timothy 4:11
Mark, Barnabas' Cousin	Cyprus	4, 5	Appolonia	2 Timothy 4:11
Olympas		5	--	Beheaded with Paul
Onesiphorus	Iconium	1, 2, 3, 5	Colophon near Ephesus	2 Timothy 4:19
Pudens		5	Martyred with Paul	2 Timothy 4:21
Timothy	Lystra	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Ephesus	
Titus	Crete	1, 2, 3, 5	Crete	2 Timothy 4:10
Trophimus		3, 5	--	2 Timothy 4:20
Tychicus	Asia Minor	3, 4, 5	Caesarea	2 Timothy 4:13

When Paul wrote to Timothy the first time, Timothy had already been serving as the Bishop of Ephesus. Paul states,

“As I urged you when I went into Macedonia -- remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith” (1 Timothy 1:3-4).

When Paul said that he went into Macedonia (1 Timothy 1:3), he was referring to the time after he was released from house-arrest in Rome. Timothy had already been in Ephesus and Paul asked him to remain there – rather than travel with him, as Timothy was accustomed to do.

Table 13
Chronology of Paul's Missionary Journeys

Journey	Acts References	Dates	Cities Visited
		[AD]	
1	13:1-14:28	46-48	Cyprus, Perga, Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Lycaonia
	15:1-35	48	Council in Jerusalem
2	15:36-18:22	49-52	Syria, Celicia, Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Mysia, Troas, Samothrace, Neapolis, Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth (1 ½ years), Ephesus, Caesarea
3	18:23-21:17	53-57	Galatia (Derbe, Lystra, Iconium), Phrygia, Antioch of Pisidia, Ephesus (2 years), Macedonia (Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia, Thessalonica, Berea), Troas, Assos, Mitylene, Chios, Samos, Trogyllium, Miletus, Cos, Rhodes, Patara, Tyre, Ptolemais, Caesarea
	21:18-26:32	57-59	Jerusalem arrest, Caesarea
4	27:1-28:15	59-60	Sidon, Myra, Fair Havens (Crete), Malta, Syracuse, Rhegium, Puteoli, Appii Forum, Three Inns, Rome
	28:16-31	61-62	Rome, under house-arrest
5	After Acts 28	63-67	Rome, Spain, Crete (Titus 1:5), Asia (Ephesus 1 Timothy 1:3), Macedonia (Nicopolis Titus 3:12), Troas (2 Timothy 4:13), Miletus (2 Timothy 4:20), Corinth (2 Timothy 4:20), Rome

Timothy had a very important mission in Ephesus and the cities nearby. The Apostle John was probably now in the area of Asia Minor, and he had not yet been exiled to Patmos (Revelation 1:9). Timothy's mission was more local; John's mission was more global.

“These things command and teach. Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership” (1 Timothy 4:11-14).

“O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane *and* idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge --by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. Grace *be* with you” (1 Timothy 6:20-21).

One of the difficulties that Timothy faced was teachers who wanted everyone to return to a strict keeping of the Mosaic Law. On the surface, this may have appeared to be what Paul himself did⁶³⁰ when he was in Ephesus.

“Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, *from* a good conscience, and *from* sincere faith, from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, desiring to be teachers of the Law, understanding neither

⁶³⁰ For example, see the Section titled: “Paul Takes a Vow”, where Paul was very diligent in keeping the Mosaic Law, especially in his visits to Ephesus.

what they say nor the things which they affirm. But we know that the Law is good if one uses it lawfully; knowing this: that the Law is not made for a righteous person, but for *the* lawless and insubordinate, for *the* ungodly and for sinners, for *the* unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers” (1 Timothy 1:5-9).

Two local heretics that Paul had to deal with were Hymenaeus and Alexander, where Paul had to deliver them over to Satan for the destruction of their flesh in the hope that they may be saved later (1 Corinthians 5:5). Alexander responded by betraying Paul to the Roman authorities, which led to Paul’s death (2 Timothy 4:14-15). We will cover more on this under the Section “Paul Wrote to Timothy Again”.

“This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme” (1 Timothy 1:18-20).

We can see the methods used by the heretics in Ephesus by the words of instruction Paul gave to Timothy. They embraced doctrines of demons, forbid to marry⁶³¹, and abstained from certain foods⁶³². Each of these things they did may have an appearance of godliness and may look like what the Apostles did, but it was twisted. Of this Paul said,

“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. Every creature of God *is* good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer⁶³³. If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed” (1 Timothy 4:1-6).

Timothy’s practice of prayer and fasting was evidently fairly rigorous and resulted in some stomach problems, perhaps due to brackish water supplies. Therefore, Paul asked him to back off a little and drink a little table wine.

“No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities” (1 Timothy 5:23).

Having settled the case between Philemon (the master) and Onesimus (the slave), Paul asked Timothy to do the same thing⁶³⁴ in Ephesus. The issue between Philemon and Onesimus

⁶³¹ All the Apostles lived a celibate life after Pentecost. When Jesus said that the Apostles had left their wives and children (Matthew 19:29), this did not mean that they abandoned their families. They just lived as brother and sister, and their family traveled with them wherever they went. The heretics twisted the practice of the Apostles into a legalistic approach.

⁶³² All the Apostles lived a life of prayer and fasting (Matthew 17:21), sometimes going a few days without eating anything. The fasting, which resulted in bodily discipline, was twisted by the heretics into a fleshly legalism.

⁶³³ The food being “sanctified by the word of God and with prayer” refers to the practice of prayers before meals.

was that both were members of the Church, and Paul wanted to be sure that they both respected each other as such so that the Name of God was not blasphemed. Paul said:

“Let as many slaves as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and *His* doctrine may not be blasphemed. And those who have believing masters, let them not despise *them* because they are brethren, but rather serve *them* because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things. If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wrangling of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a *means of* gain. From such withdraw yourself. Now godliness with contentment is great gain” (1 Timothy 6:1-6).

“Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. *Let them* do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life” (1 Timothy 6:17-19)

From these excerpts, we can see that Timothy had a battle on his hands, and that there were now some of the wolves in Ephesus that Paul had warned them about (Acts 20:29-30) at the end of the 3rd Missionary Journey six years ago.

Hippolytus referred to Phygelus as the Bishop of Ephesus⁶³⁵, yet this is not recorded in any of Paul’s letters. Since Phygelus had already apostatized before Paul was beheaded, Phygelus’ time as Bishop of Ephesus must have been short-lived. When Paul spent two years in Ephesus (c. 56-58 AD), only the idolaters were prominent in Ephesus⁶³⁶, not the heretics; similarly when Paul wrote his Epistle to the Ephesians⁶³⁷ (c. 62 AD). When Paul wrote his first Epistle to Timothy⁶³⁸ (c. 64 AD), Paul asked Timothy to remain in Ephesus as Bishop, probably to counteract the teachings of Phygelus⁶³⁹ who was Bishop there, and Hermogenes, another original member of the Seventy who had also apostatized. Paul stated,

“As I urged you when I went into Macedonia -- remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach⁶⁴⁰ no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables

⁶³⁴ For more details about Philemon and Onesimus, see the Section titled: “Paul Met Onesimus in Rome” and “Paul Wrote to Philemon in Colossae”.

⁶³⁵ Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

⁶³⁶ See the sections titled:

“Paul’s Return to Ephesus”

“The Jewish Exorcists and the Magicians”

“The Controversy over the Temple of Diana”

“The Widespread Renown of the Apostle Paul”

“The Riot over the Temple of Diana”

“Onesiphorus Was Very Helpful to Paul in Ephesus”

⁶³⁷ At this time Paul warned the Ephesians about the heresies of the followers of Simon Magus. Earlier Paul had warned the Ephesians that “savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock” (Acts 20:29).

⁶³⁸ Phygelus was apparently one of these wolves, and he appears to have been Bishop of Ephesus at this time.

⁶³⁹ Phygelus was probably in league with Hermogenes, another member of the original Seventy Apostles who apostatized also. Alexander and Philetus, who were not Apostles, helped Phygelus also.

⁶⁴⁰ Those charged with “teaching” were usually the Bishops.

and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith” (1 Timothy 1:3-4).

This was a formidable task for Timothy, since Phygellus and Hermogenes were members of the original Seventy Apostles, but Timothy was not; besides, Timothy was probably much younger. Timothy’s task was something akin to coming to Ephesus and defrocking two archbishops (using today’s terminology). Siding with Phygellus and against Timothy and Paul were Hermogenes⁶⁴¹, Alexander, Hymenaeus and Philetus. Alexander and Hymenaeus were so bad that Paul felt it necessary to deliver them over to Satan for the destruction of their flesh in hope that they might be saved (1 Timothy 1:20). Paul stated to Timothy very strongly that he (Timothy) was involved in warfare against these heretics

“This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare” (1 Timothy 1:18).

Paul quoted Hymenaeus and Philetus as “straying concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some” (2 Timothy 2:18). Their concept was that our resurrection occurs as we come up out of the waters of baptism. As with many heresies, there was some insight into the importance and power of baptism, but with a twisted understanding.

Helping Timothy out in Ephesus⁶⁴² were Aquila and Priscilla, who were both well-versed in the Scriptures, and who Paul had earlier left in Ephesus after his 2nd Missionary Journey to teach the Church⁶⁴³.

Tertullian lumped together⁶⁴⁴ Hymenaeus, Philetus, Hermogenes and Phygellus in speaking of those who deserted Paul and the things of God, and he compared them to Judas Iscariot.

“The Scripture says, ‘Your eyes are upon the ways of the children of men’ (Jeremiah 32:19 LXX). ‘Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart’ (1 Samuel 16:7 LXX). ‘The Lord knows those who are His’ (2 Timothy 2:19); and ‘Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted’ (Matthew 15:13); and ‘So the last will be first, and the first last’ (Matthew 20:16); and He carries ‘His winnowing fan *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor’ (Matthew 3:12). Let the chaff of a fickle faith fly off as much as it will at every blast of temptation, all the purer will be that heap of grain which shall be laid up in the granary of the Lord. Did not certain of the disciples turn back from the Lord Himself, when they were offended? Yet the rest did not therefore think that they must turn away from

⁶⁴¹ Hermogenes was also one of the original Seventy Apostles who apostatized.

⁶⁴² We can see that Aquila and Priscilla were in Ephesus at this time because they were not in Rome in 62 AD (Colossians 4:7-18) when Paul was under house-arrest there, and they were in Ephesus in c. 66 AD working with Timothy (2 Timothy 4:19) in his battle against Phygellus and Hermogenes of the Seventy Apostles who had apostatized.

⁶⁴³ For more details about Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus after the 2nd Missionary Journey, see the section titled: “Paul Leaves Aquila and Priscilla in Charge in Ephesus”.

⁶⁴⁴ Tertullian, The Prescription Against Heretics, II, I, 3.

following Him, but because they knew that He was the Word of Life, and had come from God, they continued in His company to the very last, after He had gently inquired of them whether they also would go away (John 6:66-67). It is a comparatively small thing, that certain men, like Phygellus, Hermogenes, Philetus, and Hymenaeus, deserted Paul (2 Timothy 1:15, 2:17; 1 Timothy 1:20); the betrayer of Christ was himself one of the apostles. We are surprised at seeing His churches forsaken by some men, although the things which we suffer after the example of Christ Himself, show us to be Christians. ‘They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us’” (1 John 2:19).

Paul Wrote to Titus

When Paul wrote to Titus, he was Bishop of Crete, and had been so for a while. Paul planned on sending Titus some help in the coming months, and he wanted Titus to join him in Nicopolis⁶⁴⁵ soon. Artemas or Tychicus may have been intended to fill in for Titus while he went to Nicopolis to meet Paul, since they didn’t stay on Crete.

“To Titus, a true son in *our* common faith: Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior. For this reason I left you on Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you” (Titus 1:4-5).

“When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. Send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey with haste, that they may lack nothing” (Titus 3:12-13).

The problems that Titus was having on Crete were not nearly as severe as the problems that Timothy was having in Ephesus. Just like in Ephesus, there were those of the circumcision who wanted to return to a strict keeping of the Mosaic Law in a fleshly way.

“For there are many insubordinates, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain” (Titus 1:10-11).

We note that Paul sent two Apostles to help out on Crete with questions over the Mosaic Law: Zenas the lawyer and Apollos. Zenas was an expert on the Mosaic Law, not civil law; Apollos was very good at showing from the (Old Testament) Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ (Acts 18:24-28). Apollos by himself had a tremendous impact in Corinth; combined with Zenas, these two Apostles had to have had the effect of “stopping the mouths of the circumcision” (Titus 1:11).

Titus’ main job on Crete was to appoint presbyters (i.e. priests) in every city. Paul reviewed for Titus some of the things to look for in candidates for presbyter.

“For this reason, I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you -- if a man

⁶⁴⁵ Nicopolis is on the West Coast of Greece.

is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination” (Titus 1:5-6).

Titus’ job as the Bishop, was not as being one of the boys as their good buddy. His job was to be a good example for everyone to follow.

“For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict” (Titus 1:7-9).

Titus was encouraged by Paul to seek to inspire everyone to maintain good works. This is part of being “fruitful”. Those who just talk the talk, but don’t walk the walk are unprofitable, useless, warped and sinning.

“The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself *His* own special people, zealous for good works. Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you” (Titus 2:11-15).

“This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men. But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless. Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned” (Titus 3:8-11).

“And let our *people* also learn to maintain good works, to *meet* urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful” (Titus 3:14).

The Apostle Paul’s Preparation for His Own Death

During the years after Paul was released from house-arrest (c. 62 AD), but before he was beheaded in c. 67 AD, he seems to be preparing for his own death that was to occur soon. During this time, he sent a number of the Seventy on various missions that were more permanent in nature than these missions had been before. In the following pages, we will go into detail about these missions. During this time when Paul was in prison, Linus was still Bishop of Rome, but he was about to be martyred soon also and will be replaced by Clement of Rome. Clement was more immune to persecution than others, since he was a blood-relative of the emperors.

Paul Wrote to Timothy Again

When Paul wrote to Timothy the second time, he was back in Rome and in prison, not just in house-arrest, and he is chained up in prison. Paul’s tone is now more urgent, and he gives Timothy some final instructions. Onesiphorus (of the Seventy) was now in Rome with Paul.

“Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed to

you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. This you know, that all those in Asia⁶⁴⁶ have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes⁶⁴⁷. May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; but when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very zealously and found me. The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that Day -- and you know very well how many ways he ministered *to me* at Ephesus” (2 Timothy 1:13-18).

One of the things that Paul especially asked Timothy to do was to commit to faithful men the things he had heard from Paul such that they can teach others and pass on the Faith to others after them. This was very important, since the band of heretics could easily silence Timothy by murdering him.

“You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Timothy 2:1-3).

“Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel, for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, *even* to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained. Therefore, I endure all things for the sake of the elect that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2 Timothy 2:8-10).

As Paul’s martyrdom was approaching, many heretics were rising up to pervert the Truth, just as Paul had warned about almost ten years earlier (Acts 20:29-31).

“But shun profane *and* idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past⁶⁴⁸; and they overthrow the faith of some” (2 Timothy 2:16-18).

“Demas⁶⁴⁹ has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica” (2 Timothy 4:10).

“Alexander the coppersmith⁶⁵⁰ did me much harm. May the Lord repay

⁶⁴⁶ That is, Asia Minor, where Ephesus is one of the cities of Asia Minor. Phygellus, Hermogenes, Hymenaeus, Philetus and Alexander had evidently been very effective in their war against Timothy and the Church.

⁶⁴⁷ Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 5 stated that Phygellus and Hermogenes had been two of the Seventy Apostles, but they apostatized to follow the teachings of Simon Magus. They were subsequently deleted from the Seventy and replaced with others.

⁶⁴⁸ Their concept was that our resurrection occurs as we come up out of the waters of baptism. As with many heresies, there was some insight into the importance and power of baptism, but with a twisted understanding.

⁶⁴⁹ Demas was one of the original Seventy Apostles, and he had traveled with Paul extensively. Demas was with Paul as Paul drafted his Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon (Colossians 4:14, Philemon 1:24). However, Demas began following the teachings of Simon Magus shortly afterward, and within 5 years, Paul stated that Demas “had forsaken me, having loved this present world” (2 Timothy 4:10). Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 5 states that Demas became “a priest of idols”.

⁶⁵⁰ Alexander was the son of Simon of Cyrene, who helped to carry Jesus’ Cross (Mark 15:21). Together with his father and brother Rufus, who was one of the Seventy, Alexander helped to found the Church in Antioch (Acts 11:20). By the mid 60’s AD, Alexander had become a follower of Simon Magus, and Paul delivered him over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh on account of his blasphemy (1 Timothy 1:20). A year or two later, Alexander was instrumental in affecting Paul’s martyrdom (2 Timothy 4:14-15). Regarding

him according to his works. You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words” (2 Timothy 4:14-15).

Paul began his final words to Timothy by reminding him that this will be a long struggle against an array of the forces of evil. Yet we do not have a spirit of fear but of power, of love and of a sound mind⁶⁵¹. We do not need to be ashamed of the testimony⁶⁵² of the Lord, or of Paul’s imprisonment, but Timothy can share in Paul’s sufferings. Paul was suffering because he had faithfully followed the leading of the Holy Spirit.

“I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as *my* forefathers *did*, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day, greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy, when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also. Therefore, I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called *us* with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, *who* has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For this reason, I also suffer these things; nevertheless, I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day” (2 Timothy 1:3-12).

Paul stated that “all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes” (2 Timothy 1:15); these were two of the original Seventy Apostles, along with Demas (2 Timothy 4:10), where Demas had been traveling with Paul until just recently (Philemon 1:24, Colossians 4:14). It is interesting that these three members of the original Seventy Apostles all apostatized at about the same time, but in different places, during the persecutions of Nero.

By contrast, Onesiphorus, another of the original Seventy Apostles, was not ashamed of Paul’s imprisonment, but diligently sought him out in Rome. This may have been difficult if Paul was moved from one prison to another without any notice. For Onesiphorus, this was doubly hazardous since he had a wife and some children to be concerned about⁶⁵³. Onesiphorus must have stayed in Rome with Paul only briefly, since he was back in Ephesus with Timothy and with his family when Paul wrote this Epistle (2 Timothy 4:19). Onesiphorus’ mission may have been to find out what Paul needed and how he could help. Paul said:

delivering him over to Satan, Compare 1 Corinthians 5:4-5. The intent was the eventual salvation of the individual through a greater recognition of whom it is that he’s in league with.

⁶⁵¹ By contrast, those heretics who are resisting Timothy do not have a sound mind.

⁶⁵² Greek: *marturion*, from which we get the English word “martyr”

⁶⁵³ The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, September 24.

“The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; but when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very zealously and found me. The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that Day -- and you know very well how many ways he ministered *to me* at Ephesus” (2 Timothy 1:16-18).

Paul’s message to Timothy takes on a more urgent tone in his second Epistle since Paul realized that the time for his execution is approaching (2 Timothy 4:6-7). Besides giving Timothy written instructions, Paul also asked Timothy to come from Ephesus to Rome quickly before he gets beheaded (2 Timothy 4:9). Paul’s instructions were:

“You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. And also, if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules” (2 Timothy 2:1-5).

“This is a faithful saying: For if we died with *Him*, we shall also live with Him. If we endure, we shall also reign with *Him*. If we deny *Him*, He also will deny us. If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself. Remind *them* of these things, charging *them* before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers” (2 Timothy 2:11-14).

In describing the heretics, Paul makes a very clear analogy to Simon Magus and those associated with him. Paul referred to Jannes and Jambres, the Egyptian magicians who resisted Moses in Egypt, saying that the heretics are just like them. In Egypt, the “magicians” were the sacred scribes or priests who were very skilled in the hidden or secret arts. Simon Magus and some of his followers learned these secret arts in Egypt in the early days of the 1st century, and they were masters of these secret arts during the time of the Apostle Paul. Paul said:

“Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was” (2 Timothy 3:8-9).

The folly of Jannes and Jambres was clear to everyone after the disaster for Egypt at the Red Sea (Exodus 14:22-28). Egypt lost its entire army, which Josephus described⁶⁵⁴ as comprising 600 select chariots, 50,000 cavalry and 200,000-foot soldiers. This left Egypt as a nation almost defenseless and at the mercy of other nations; they could easily be conquered and made slaves themselves. Jannes and Jambres saw this coming! When they could not duplicate the third of the ten plagues with their secret arts, they admitted to Pharaoh that “This was the finger of God” (Exodus 8:19). But because they had a corrupt mind, they were unwilling to act on this observation.

As a magician, Simon was very much like Jannes and Jambres. Just as Jannes and Jambres were able to duplicate some of Moses’ miracles (Exodus 7:12, 7:22, 8:8), so Simon was

⁶⁵⁴ Josephus, Antiquities, II, xv, 3

very powerful in magic, and Simon learned the black arts from similar sources in Egypt as Jannes and Jambres. The Clementine Homilies describe⁶⁵⁵ Simon as follows:

“Simon disciplined himself greatly in Alexandria, and being very powerful in magic, and being ambitious, wished to be accounted a certain supreme power, greater even than the God who created the world. And sometimes intimating that he is Christ, he styles himself ‘The Standing One’. This epithet he employs, intimating that he shall always stand, and have no cause of corruption that would cause his body to fall. He says that the God who created the world is not supreme, and he does not believe that the dead will be raised. He rejects Jerusalem, and substitutes Mount Gerizim for it (Compare John 4:20-23). Instead of our Christ, he proclaims himself”.

Clement of Rome described⁶⁵⁶ some of Simon’s “miracles” as follows: Clement quoted the Apostle Peter as saying that Simon’s “signs” are useless and self-centered.

“He makes statues walk, and he rolls himself on the fire, and is not burned; and sometimes he flies. He makes loaves of bread out of stones; he becomes a serpent; he transforms himself into a goat; he becomes two-faced. He changes himself into gold; he opens locked gates; he melts iron. At banquets he produces images of all manner of forms. In his house he makes dishes to be seen as borne of themselves to wait upon him, no bearers being seen. I wondered when I heard them speak thus; but many bore witness that they had been present, and had seen such things”.

“The Apostle Peter stated, ‘Those are useless signs, which you say that Simon did. But I say that the making statues walk, and rolling himself on burning coals, and becoming a dragon, and being changed into a goat, and flying in the air, and all such things, not being for the healing of man, are of a nature to deceive many. But the miracles of compassionate truth are philanthropic, such as you have heard that the Lord did, such as being freed from all kinds of diseases, and from demons, some having their hands restored, and some their feet, some recovering their eyesight, and some their hearing’”.

Paul described the result of the work of these heretics as being all kinds of evil; and these wolves tried to bring it into the Church. The antidote to the teachings of these heretics is the Holy Scriptures, which make the man of God complete, equipped for every good work.

“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Timothy 3:1-7).

⁶⁵⁵ Roberts and Donaldson, “The Clementine Homilies”, II, 22, PseudoClementine Literature, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

⁶⁵⁶ Roberts and Donaldson, “The Clementine Homilies”, II, 32-34, PseudoClementine Literature, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

“But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture⁶⁵⁷ is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:13-17).

As Timothy does this, the heretics will not endure his sound teaching, but will turn their ears away from the truth in favor of fables, like Jannes and Jambres did. This is exactly the way the followers of Simon Magus reacted.

“The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will pile up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (2 Timothy 4:3-5).

The State of Things in Ephesus c. 67 AD

Paul had sent Timothy various places (1 Thessalonians 3:1-3) to counter the advances of the heretics. By the mid 60's AD, Paul had been released from house-arrest in Rome (Acts 28:16, 30-31), and was in Macedonia. Timothy was in Ephesus when Paul wrote his first Epistle to him (1 Timothy 1:3). Timothy remained in the vicinity of Ephesus until his martyrdom in the mid 90's, after which ordained Gaius was ordained as Bishop of Ephesus in Timothy's place⁶⁵⁸.

Paul's first instruction to Timothy in Ephesus was to correct some of the teachers in Ephesus, who were paying attention to the web of lies and the endless genealogies⁶⁵⁹ (1 Timothy 1:4) of Simon and his followers. The teachers simply did not understand the difference between what the Apostles had taught and what the heretics were teaching (1 Timothy 1:7). The key point that Timothy needed to make was an emphasis on the Mosaic Law, which was not made for righteous people, but exposes the lawless and insubordinate very clearly (1 Timothy 1:9-10).

There were three things that Timothy needed to emphasize (1 Timothy 4:13):

1. The Reading, that is from the Scriptures and the memoirs of the Apostles⁶⁶⁰.
2. The Exhortation, which was a homily or commentary appropriate for the time.

⁶⁵⁷ When Paul referred to the “Scriptures”, this meant the Old Testament, since the New Testament wasn't agreed upon until about 300 years later. Paul's Old Testament included some writings that are now called “apocryphal”, such as the Wisdom of Solomon.

⁶⁵⁸ Nickolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, November 5.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for October 30, November 5](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20October%2030,%20November%205).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, November 5.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

⁶⁵⁹ The genealogies had to do with the seemingly endless lineage of the gods promoted by the heretics.

⁶⁶⁰ The canon of the New Testament was not established until c. 300 years later. The “memoirs of the Apostles” refers to the Gospels, and later to the writings of Paul.

3. The Teaching or Doctrine, where the heretics cloaked their falsehoods in familiar sounding terms.

About these heretics, Paul stated, “If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words. From which come envy, strife and reviling, evil suspicions, useless wrangling of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a *means of* gain. From such withdraw yourself” (1 Timothy 4:3-5).

Some people, Paul said, will not endure good teaching because their heart is not right with God. Simon and his followers simply tell these people what they want to hear.

“The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will pile up for themselves teachers. They will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (2 Timothy 4:3-5).

Some of these heretics that Timothy had to deal with had been pillars of the Church, like Hymenaeus, Philetus and Alexander (1 Timothy 1:18-20, 2 Timothy 2:17, 4:14), where Paul had to deliver two of them over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme. Others that Paul warned Timothy about were Phygellus, Hermogenes and Demas, three of the original Seventy, who had recently left Paul to follow the teachings of Simon Magus (2 Timothy 1:15, 4:10). These heretics taught that the Resurrection was already past (2 Timothy 2:18), which was a common element in Simon’s teaching⁶⁶¹. They taught that by being baptized in the name of Simon, they would be immortal and not need a resurrection⁶⁶². Paul warned Timothy to beware of these heretics when he encounters them.

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane *and* idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer” (2 Timothy 2:15-18).

“But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom (plural) you have learned them” (2 Timothy 3:13-14).

“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron” (1 Timothy 4:1-2).

Paul gave Timothy a standard by which he could recognize the heretics, and a summary of their character, where he compared them with the magicians who opposed Moses in Egypt⁶⁶³.

⁶⁶¹ Their concept was that our resurrection occurs as we come up out of the waters of baptism. As with many heresies, there was some insight into the importance and power of baptism, but with a twisted understanding.

⁶⁶² Irenaeus, Against Heresies, I, xxiii, 4-5. See also Irenaeus, Against Heresies, II, xxxii, 5.
Tertullian, Against All Heresies, II, ix Appendix, 1.

This agrees with descriptions of later writers⁶⁶⁴, who described Simon and his followers. Jerome wrote⁶⁶⁵ that it was common for Simon and the heretics that followed him to have bands of women that they would use for fornication and other purposes

“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith” (2 Timothy 3:1-8).

Part of the teachings of the heretics was either an indifference to or a concentration on certain foods and behavior, such as taught by the Ebionites⁶⁶⁶. Eating of meat offered to idols and the renunciation of the faith in times of persecution were matters of indifference to Simon⁶⁶⁷, since, he said, salvation has not been promised to *bodies*. Since bodies didn’t matter, some, like the Nicolaitans, were grossly immoral⁶⁶⁸. On the other hand, others of these heretics⁶⁶⁹ abhorred certain kinds of food. Paul addressed the Colossians regarding the ascetic, food-abhorring group of heretics:

“Let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths⁶⁷⁰, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as *though* living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations -- ‘Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle’, which all concern things which perish with the using -- according to the commandments and doctrines of men? These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, *false* humility, and neglect of the body, *but are* of no value against the indulgence of the flesh” (Colossians 2:16-17, 20-23)

Just before his death, Paul said to Timothy, “Greet Priscilla and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus” (2 Timothy 4:19). Timothy was Bishop of Ephesus, and Priscilla and

⁶⁶³ That is, Jannes and Jambres, who were able to duplicate Moses’ sign with his staff (Exodus 7:8-13) and the first two of the Ten Plagues on Egypt (Exodus 7:17-22, 8:1-7). With the Third Plague, they recognized the hand of God (Exodus 8:16-19), just as Simon recognized a power greater than his in the giving of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:13, 18-21)

⁶⁶⁴ Tertullian, “On Idolatry”, I, ii, 9, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v.3.

Roberts and Donaldson, “The Clementine Homilies”, II, 22, PseudoClementine Literature, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

⁶⁶⁵ Jerome, Letter to Ctesiphon, CXXXIII, 4.

⁶⁶⁶ Eusebius, Church History, III, 28.

⁶⁶⁷ Eusebius, Church History, IV, 7.

⁶⁶⁸ Tertullian, Against All Heresies, II, ix Appendix, 1

⁶⁶⁹ Roberts and Donaldson, “Constitutions of the Holy Apostles”, VI, ii, 8, Ante-Nicean Fathers, v. 7.

⁶⁷⁰ These were some of the major observances of 1st Century Judaism.

Aquila had now returned to Ephesus. John Chrysostom noted⁶⁷¹ that Paul greeted Priscilla first more than half of the time.

“Paul was then in Rome; to Onesiphorus he said, ‘The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that Day’ (2 Timothy 1:18). By this naming of him, he makes those of his household also more zealous in such good actions.”

“‘Greet Priscilla and Aquila’ (2 Timothy 4:19). These are the ones that Paul makes continual mention of, with whom too he had lodged, and who had taken Apollos into confidence with them. Paul names the woman first⁶⁷², as being I suppose more zealous, and more faithful, for she had then received Apollos. It was to them no slight consolation to be thus greeted. It conveyed a demonstration of esteem and love, and a participation in much grace. For the bare greeting of that holy and blessed man was sufficient to fill with grace him who received it.”

Chrysostom also stated⁶⁷³ that the “cloak” that Paul left in Troas with Carpus (2 Timothy 4:13) may be a mistranslation. Paul may have been referring to a “bag” to hold copies of the Scriptures and not an outer garment.

“The word here translated ‘cloak’ is not the same word as the outer garment referred to elsewhere (Matthew 5:40). This word may mean a garment, but more likely means a bag in which the books were contained. What did Paul have to do with books, when he was about to depart this life and go to God? He needed them a lot, that he might deposit them in the hands of the faithful, who would retain them in place of his own teaching. All the faithful would suffer a great blow, but particularly those who were present at his death.”

The State of the Church in Other Places

The Memoirs of Edessa state⁶⁷⁴ that Luke placed his record of the Acts of the Apostles in the hands of Priscilla and Aquila for safekeeping, and that they accompanied him after the death of Paul.

“Luke the evangelist had such diligence that he wrote the exploits of the Acts of the Apostles, and the ordinances and laws of the ministry of their priesthood, and where each one of them went. By his diligence, Luke wrote these things, and he placed them in the hand of Priscilla and Aquila, his disciples. They accompanied Luke up to the day of his death, just as Timothy and Erastus of Lystra, and Menaëus, the first disciples of the Apostles, accompanied Paul until he was taken up to the city of Rome because he had withstood Tertullus the orator” (Acts 24:1-21).

Before his death, Paul sent others of the Seventy on missions to various places. Crescens⁶⁷⁵ spent the rest of his life in Galatia and died there of old age. Titus was only in

⁶⁷¹ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on 2 Timothy*, X, v.19.

⁶⁷² Acts 18:18, Romans 16:3, 2 Timothy 4:19, compare Acts 18:26, 1 Corinthians 16:19.

⁶⁷³ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on 2 Timothy*, X, v. 13.

⁶⁷⁴ Roberts and Donaldson, ed., “The Teaching of the Apostles”, 8-10, in *Memoirs of Edessa*, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1995.

⁶⁷⁵ *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, VII, 46.

Eusebius of Caesarea, *Church History*, III, 4

Dalmatia (Macedonia) for a short time and spent the rest of his life as Bishop of Crete. Timothy finished his life in Ephesus just before the Apostle John was freed from exile on Patmos; John ordained Gaius as Bishop of Ephesus when he returned from Patmos. From Paul's words, the implication is that he sent Tychicus to Ephesus to fill in for Timothy so that Timothy could come to Rome for some final discussions with Paul before Paul was beheaded.

"Be diligent to come to me quickly; for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica -- Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Get Mark⁶⁷⁶ and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry. And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. Bring the "cloak" that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come -- and the books, especially the parchments" (2 Timothy 4:9-13).

John Chrysostom noted⁶⁷⁷ that the saints in the Early Church were bound together very tightly. Phoebe was very zealous on Paul's behalf and Aquila and Priscilla risked their lives for Paul's sake. Paul's take-away was that scholars and their teachers should have a great loyalty and affection to each other.

The disciples were bound together perfectly with Paul; and not men only but women also. Listen to what Paul says about Phoebe, I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also' (Romans 16:1-2). In this instance Paul bore witness to her of her zeal; but Priscilla and Aquila went as far even as death for Paul's sake; and about them he thus writes, 'Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles' (Romans 16:3-4). They risked death clearly. Paul said, about Aquila and Priscilla, that they went as far as death, not considering their own life, in order that they might supply your deficiency in your service towards me'. Notice how they loved their teacher? Notice how they regarded his rest before their own life? (Compare 2 Corinthians 7:5). On this account no one surpassed them then. Now this I say: not that we may hear only, but that we may also imitate. Not to the ruled only, but also to those who rule is what we say addressed. Scholars should display anxiety about their teachers, and teachers should have the same loving affection as Paul toward those placed under them; not those present only, but also those who are far off. Paul, dwelling in the whole world just as in one house, thus continually took thought for the salvation of all. He dismissed everything of his own: bonds, troubles, stripes and straits; he watched over and inquired each day into what state the affairs of the disciples were. Often for this very purpose alone he sent, now Timothy, and now Tychicus; about Timothy he says, 'That you may know our affairs, and *that* he may comfort your hearts' (Ephesians 6:22). Again, about Timothy; I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain' (1 Thessalonians 3:5). Paul sent Titus again elsewhere and another to another place. Since Paul himself, by the compulsion of his bonds, was

⁶⁷⁶ This Mark is probably Barnabas' cousin Mark.

⁶⁷⁷ John Chrysostom, Homily on Lowliness of Mind, 6.

often detained in one place, he was unable to meet those he needed to; so, he met them through the disciples.

Paul's "Thorn in the Flesh"

John Chrysostom points out⁶⁷⁸ that Paul was caught up into Paradise – at the beginning of his apostleship – so that he might not be inferior to the rest of the Apostles, or might not seem to be. They had accompanied Christ but Paul had not.

The third heaven, which Paul and John saw in their visions, is a term used by 1st century Jews to describe heavenly realms. For example, the sun is described as stopping in mid-heaven, or the second heaven, for Joshua (Joshua 10:13). Birds also fly in mid-heaven (Revelation 8:13, 19:17); the boundaries between these three heavens are somewhat blurred.

In order that Paul might not get too conceited concerning his visions, the Lord also gave him a "thorn in the flesh", "a messenger of Satan" to beat him up. (Greek: *kolaphizo* = to strike with the fist). Much speculation has been made concerning whether this was some physical problem or whether it refers to some people that Paul fought against. We may imply a physical weakness from Paul's words; however, John Chrysostom states⁶⁷⁹ that the thorn in the flesh was actually Alexander the Coppersmith and those with him.

"We will explain what is meant by the 'thorn', and who this 'messenger of Satan' is. There are some who have said that Paul means a kind of pain in the head which was inflicted by the devil; but God forbid! The body of Paul never could have been given over to the hands of the devil, seeing that the devil himself submitted to the same Paul at his mere bidding. Paul set him laws and bounds, when he delivered over the fornicator for the destruction of the flesh, and the devil dared not to transgress them. What then is the meaning of what is said? An adversary is called, in the Hebrew, Satan; the Scripture has used this word to refer to adversaries⁶⁸⁰. Speaking of Solomon, it says, 'Now the Lord raised up an adversary against Solomon, Hadad the Edomite' (1 Kings 11:14). What he says then is this: God would not permit the Preaching to progress at times, in order to check our conceit; but he permitted the adversaries to set upon us. This was enough to pluck down Paul's conceit; pains in the head would not do that. By the 'messenger of Satan', he means Alexander the coppersmith, the party of Hymenaeus and Philetus, all the adversaries of the word; those who contended with and fought against him, those that cast him into a prison, those that beat him, that led him away to death; for they did Satan's business. Just as he calls those Jews children of the devil, who were imitating his deeds, so also, he calls a 'messenger of Satan' everyone that opposes God. Paul says therefore, 'A thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to punch me' (2 Corinthians 12:7); not as if God puts arms into such men's hands, God forbid! Not that He chastises or punishes, but for the time allows and permits them."

⁶⁷⁸ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Corinthians, XXVI, vv. 2-6.

⁶⁷⁹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Corinthians, XXVI, v. 7.

⁶⁸⁰ For other uses of the Hebrew word "*satan*" to refer to "adversaries", see also Numbers 22:22, 32; 1 Samuel 29:4; 2 Samuel 19:22.

Alexander was most likely the son of Simon of Cyrene, who had been pressed into service to carry Jesus' cross at the crucifixion (Mark 15:21). Simon and his sons, Alexander and Rufus, were probably among those men from Cyprus and Cyrene (Acts 11:20) who had started the Church in Antioch.

Rufus was in Antioch when Paul and Barnabas were sent off on their 1st Missionary Journey and when Paul and Silas were sent off on the 2nd. After the 2nd Missionary Journey, Rufus was sent to Rome by Peter and Paul and was there when Paul wrote Romans (Romans 16:13). Later Rufus was ordained Bishop of Thebes in Greece.

Alexander chose a different path for himself, however. He was associated with the craftsmen such as Demetrius the silversmith in Ephesus (Acts 19:24) who built small idols; he opposed Paul in about 54 AD (Acts 19:33). Later Paul referred to Alexander as a coppersmith (2 Timothy 4:14). Yet Alexander rejected the Faith. Along with Hymenaeus, Paul felt it necessary to deliver them to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme (1 Timothy 1:19-20). They were part of a Gnostic heresy that claimed that the resurrection was already past (2 Timothy 2:16-18); this overthrew the faith of some people. Finally, it was Alexander that was primarily responsible for Paul's martyrdom in about 67 AD (2 Timothy 4:14). Paul warned Timothy to beware of Alexander because he greatly resisted Paul's words (2 Timothy 4:15). The implication is that he went out of his way to have Paul hunted down, arrested and accused before the Roman authorities, and he may have even testified against Paul before Emperor Nero.

Whether the "thorn in the flesh" was Alexander or some physical weakness, Paul asked the Lord three times to remove it (2 Corinthians 12:8). But each time, the Lord said, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in (your) weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Paul's example is a good lesson for us today. Whether we have had visions of the Lord in glory or not, the Lord will put limits on us so that we don't get too exalted above measure (2 Corinthians 12:7). That way the Lord gets the glory for the achievements and His strength is made perfect in our weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9). Paul took pleasure in infirmities, reproaches, needs, persecutions and distresses for Christ's sake (2 Corinthians 12:10). For being weak, then he was strong.

Simon Magus' Last Dealings with Peter and Paul in Rome

Toward the end⁶⁸¹ of Nero's reign, about 67 AD, Simon had a major confrontation with the Apostles Peter and Paul. This would be the 4th time that the Apostle Peter was in Rome. The Church Historian Eusebius summarized⁶⁸² the need for this as follows.

"Because Christianity was becoming so widespread, Satan used Simon Magus to try to seize Rome for himself. Aided by his deceitful arts, Simon led

⁶⁸¹ One source states that the attempt of Simon to ascend back to his father in heaven – which resulted in his death – took place early in Nero's reign before Paul arrived in Rome. The other sources all state that Paul was present, which places the time in the mid 60's. These other sources are: Eusebius, Arnobius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Severus, as well as The Constitutions of the Holy Apostles and The Acts of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul. We are following the pattern here of the vast majority of the accounts of the death of Simon.

⁶⁸² Eusebius, Church History, II, 13-14.

many of the inhabitants of Rome astray, and thus brought them into his own power. Justin in his First Apology⁶⁸³, which he addressed to Antoninus (emperor 138-161 AD) in behalf of the Christians, states this. Irenaeus also agrees with him in the first book of his work, *Against Heresies*⁶⁸⁴, where he gives an account of the man and of his profane and impure teaching. We have understood that Simon was the author of all heresy from his time down to the present⁶⁸⁵. Modest men even refrain to utter with the lips those matters, which they keep secret, on account of their excessive baseness and lewdness. This most abominable sect makes a sport of those miserable females that are literally overwhelmed with all kinds of vices”.

“The evil power, who hates all that is good and plots against the salvation of men, constituted Simon at that time the father and author of such wickedness, as a mighty antagonist of the great, inspired Apostles of our Savior. But neither the conspiracy of Simon nor that of any of the others who arose at that period could accomplish anything in those Apostolic times. For everything was conquered and subdued by the splendors of the truth and by the divine word itself which had begun to shine from heaven upon men, and which was then flourishing upon earth, and dwelling in the Apostles themselves. Coming to the city of Rome, Simon was in a short time so successful in his undertaking that those who dwelt there honored him as a god by the erection of a statue. But this did not last long. Immediately, during the reign of Claudius, the all-good and gracious Providence led Peter to Rome against this great corrupter of life. He, like a noble commander of God, carried the costly merchandise of the light of the understanding from the East to those who dwelt in the West, proclaiming the light itself, and preaching the kingdom of heaven”.

While many of the Church Fathers and Church historians give an account of Simon’s encounter with Peter and Paul in Rome, we are given the most details of this encounter from one of the New Testament Apocryphal works⁶⁸⁶. Following this account, we will look at accounts of these same events from other sources.

“After Paul appealed to Caesar (Acts 25:8-12) and headed for Rome, the Jews in Rome heard that he was coming. These Jews informed Emperor Nero that Paul was a magician and that he was coming to Rome to destroy them as he had destroyed their brethren in Judea; they persuaded Nero, with many gifts, to ban Paul from Rome. Christians in Rome sent word to Paul warning him of this and Paul landed at Syracuse⁶⁸⁷ on Sicily instead (Acts 28:12). The Jews in Puteoli beheaded the shipmaster, who resembled Paul in appearance, and then sent his head to Caesar. Nero then rejoiced that the enemy of the Jews was dead”.

⁶⁸³ Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, XXVI.

⁶⁸⁴ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, I, xxiii.

⁶⁸⁵ Eusebius wrote in the 4th Century.

⁶⁸⁶ Roberts and Donaldson, “Acts of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul”, *Apocrypha of the New Testament*, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

⁶⁸⁷ While this is the same route that Paul took as he was being led to Rome as a result of his appeal to Caesar (Acts 25:8-12), the circumstances appear different from those described in Acts 28. This account probably represents Paul’s return to Rome in c. 67 AD after his release from house arrest (Acts 28:30).

“When Paul arrived in Rome in c. 60 AD, great fear fell upon the Jewish leaders. When they met, the Jewish leaders, allied with Simon, tried to pit Paul against Peter, saying that while Paul was a Hebrew of Hebrews (Philippians 3:5), Peter was bringing in new teachings to the Gentiles⁶⁸⁸. Similarly, they tried to pit the Jewish Christians against the Gentile Christians, and an angry mob of both Jewish and Gentile Christians met Paul outside the door of his house the next day. Paul spoke to them saying that they ought not to make attacks upon each other, but that they should rather give heed to this, that God had fulfilled His promises which He swore to Abraham our father, that in his seed he should inherit all the (Gentile) nations (Genesis 12:3, 17:5). For God is not a respecter of persons. ‘As many as have sinned in the Law shall be judged according to the Law, and as many as have sinned without the Law shall perish without the Law’ (Romans 2:11-12). But we, brethren, ought to thank God that, according to His mercy, He has chosen us to be a holy people to Himself. We ought to boast only in this, whether Jews or Greeks, that we are all one in the belief of His Name” (Ephesians 2:11-22). “And Paul having thus spoken, the Jewish and the Gentile Christians were reconciled”.

“As a result of Peter’s preaching in Rome, Nero’s wife, Octavia (also called Libia), and Agrippina⁶⁸⁹, the wife of Agrippa the Prefect, felt that they could no longer live with their husbands because of their idolatry⁶⁹⁰. Others were no longer willing to return to the army or to serve in the palace. Simon Magus used this occasion to say many evil things about Peter, saying that he was a wizard and a cheat. And they believed Simon, wondering at his miracles; for he made a brazen serpent move itself, and stone statues to laugh and move themselves, and himself to run and suddenly to be raised into the air”.

“This reached the ears of Nero, and Simon was summoned to appear before the Emperor. Using his magic, Simon changed himself both in face and stature into different forms, and was in frenzy, having the devil as his servant. When Nero saw this, he supposed Simon to be truly the son of god”.

“Prior to Paul’s arrival, Simon had “proved” to Nero that he was not a magician. Simon had said to Nero, ‘Order me to be beheaded in a dark place, and there to be left slain; and if I do not rise on the third day, know that I am a magician; but if I rise again, know that I am the Son of God’. And Nero having ordered this, in the dark, by his magic art Simon managed that a ram should be beheaded. The ram appeared to be Simon until he was beheaded. And when he had been beheaded in the dark, he that had beheaded him, taking the head, found it to be that of a ram; but he would not say anything to the emperor, lest he should scourge him, having ordered this to be done in secret. Thereafter, accordingly Simon said that he had risen on the third day, because he took away the head of the ram and the limbs — but the blood had been there congealed. And on the third day he showed himself to Nero, and said, ‘Order that my blood, that has been poured out, be wiped away; for behold, having been beheaded as I promised,

⁶⁸⁸ We note that this is exactly the opposite of what Peter and Paul had agreed on. Peter was responsible for the Jews and Paul for the Gentiles. Apparently they didn’t like what Peter said to them.

⁶⁸⁹ This Agrippina may not be the same person as Nero’s mother.

⁶⁹⁰ Later, in 62 AD, Nero divorced Octavia, and then later had her killed.

I have risen again on the third day'. Thus, Nero had developed a liking for Simon".

"Speaking to Nero, Simon said, 'O good emperor: I am the son of god come down from heaven. Until now I have endured Peter only calling himself an Apostle; but now he has doubled the evil. For Paul also teaches the same things, and having his mind turned against me, is said to preach along with him. If you do not plan their destruction, it is very plain that your kingdom cannot stand. Then Nero, filled with concern, ordered to bring Peter and Paul speedily before him'".

"Before Nero, Simon began attacking Peter and Paul. Nero replied to Simon that they were from a race of men that teach us to love every man. Why then was he persecuting them? Simon replied that they had turned all Judea away from believing that Simon was the Christ. Peter injected that Simon had been deceiving many people about who was the Christ. If Nero wished to know the truth about what happened to the Christ, he could read the letter written by Pontius Pilate to Claudius. Nero ordered that this letter be brought and read publicly. In the letter, Pilate documented the deceit of the Jewish leaders in plotting the death of an innocent man (the Christ), and after He rose from the dead, they bribed the soldiers to continue their lies. Pilate warned Claudius against trusting anything the Jewish leaders say".

"Turning to Peter, Nero asked Peter if all the things stated by Pilate were true. Peter replied that they were, and that Simon is full of lies and deceit. Simon replied that he wonders that the Emperor would consider trusting the words of a poor, uneducated fisherman. To prove who he is, Simon promised to send his angels against Peter. Peter scoffed at Simon's angels".

"To demonstrate that Simon was not a god, Peter challenged Simon to disclose what Peter was thinking, for God can search the hidden things of the heart. As a test of this, Peter asked Nero to have a barley loaf brought to Peter secretly; Nero ordered this to be done. Peter blessed the loaf, broke it and then stuffed the two halves up his sleeves".

"Simon then turned the challenge around and demanded that Peter disclose what he was thinking. Peter replied that he would do this by deeds and not just by words. Simon said, 'No one knows the thoughts of men, but God alone. Is not, therefore, Peter lying?' Peter said, 'You say that you are the Son of God; tell what I have in my mind; disclose, if you can, what I have just done in secret!'"

"Then Simon, enraged that he was not able to tell the secret of the Apostle, cried out, saying, 'Let great dogs come forth, and eat him up before Caesar'. And suddenly there appeared great dogs, and rushed at Peter. But Peter, stretching forth his hands to pray, showed to the dogs the loaf, which he had blessed; when the dogs saw the blessed bread, they disappeared. Then Peter said to Nero, 'Behold, I have shown you that I knew what Simon was thinking of, not by words, but by deeds. For he, having promised that he would bring angels against me, has brought dogs, in order that he might show that he had not God-like but dog-like angels'".

"And Peter said to Simon, 'Certainly you pretend to be a god; why, then, don't you reveal the thoughts of every man?' Nero said, 'And now, why do you delay, and not show yourself to be a god, in order that these men may be

punished?’ Simon changed the subject again and said, ‘Give orders to build for me a lofty tower of wood, and I will go up on it, call my angels, and order them to take me, in the sight of all, to my father in heaven. And these men, not being able to do this, will be put to shame as uneducated men’”.

“And Nero said to Peter, ‘From this will appear how much power either he or your God has’. Peter said, ‘O most mighty emperor, if you were willing, you might perceive that he is full of demons’. Nero was unwilling to perceive that Simon was dodging all the tough questions and said to Peter, ‘Why do you talk in circles? Tomorrow will prove you’”.

Simon Tries to Return to “His Father in Heaven”

In the face of Peter and Paul’s constant debunking of his tricks, Simon wanted to get away from the contest. He claimed that he would ascend back to his father in heaven; but in trying to do so, the events led to his death. Continuing⁶⁹¹ with the above account:

“Simon said, ‘Listen, O Caesar Nero, that you may know that these men are liars, and that I have been sent from the heavens, tomorrow I will go up into the heavens, that I may make those who believe in me blessed, and show my wrath upon those who have denied me’. Peter and Paul said, ‘You are called by the devil and hasten to punishment’. Simon said, ‘Caesar Nero, listen to me. Separate these madmen from you, in order that when I go into heaven to my father, I may be very merciful to you. Nero said, ‘And when shall we prove this, that you go away into heaven? Simon said, ‘Order a lofty tower to be made of wood, and of great beams, that I may go up upon it, and that my angels may find me in the air; for they cannot come to me upon earth among the sinners’. Nero said, ‘I will see whether you will fulfill what you say’. Then Nero ordered a lofty tower to be made in the Campus Martins, and all the people and the dignities to be present at the spectacle”.

“And on the following day, the entire multitude having come together, Nero ordered Peter and Paul to be present. Simon said, ‘In order that you may know, O emperor, that these are deceivers, as soon as I ascend into heaven, I will send my angels to you, and will make you come to me’”.

Simon then addressed⁶⁹² the Roman people wrathfully from the top of the tower, saying, “Romans, since you have remained in your ignorance and abandoned me to follow Peter, I am leaving you. I will no longer protect this city, but will command my angels to take me up in their arms as you watch. I will ascend to my father in heaven, from which I shall send down upon you great punishments for not having heeded my words and believed in my deeds.”

⁶⁹¹ Roberts and Donaldson, “Acts of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul”, Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

⁶⁹² Isaac Lambertsen, The Lives of the Holy Apostles, Holy Apostles Convent Press, Buena Vista, CO, 1990, p. 17.

This is a translation from the following:

The Lives of the Saints in the Russian Language, According to the Menology of St. Dimitri of Rostov, Synodal Press, Moscow, 1908, v. 10, (June) pp. 631-651.

Holy Apostles Convent, tr., The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, Archimandrite Matthew Lagges, 5th Ed., 1979, Volume VI, pp. 428-439.

Having said this, he clapped his hands together and launched himself into the air; borne up by demons, he flew through the air, soaring aloft.

As Simon lifted off, he was dressed in fine clothes and crowned with laurels to better give himself the appearance of a god. Some details⁶⁹³ of the reaction to this are:

“When Nero saw him flying, he said to Peter, ‘This Simon is true; but you and Paul are deceivers’. Peter replied, ‘Immediately shall you know that we are the true Disciples of Christ; but that he is not Christ, but a magician, and a malefactor’. Nero said, ‘Do you still persist? Behold, you see him going up into heaven’. Then Peter, looking steadfastly at Paul, said, ‘Paul, look up and see’. And Paul, having looked up, full of tears, and seeing Simon flying, said, ‘Peter, finish what you have begun; for already our Lord Jesus Christ is calling us’. And Nero hearing them smiled a little, and said, ‘These men see themselves beaten already, and are gone mad’. Peter said, ‘Now you shall know that we are not mad’. Paul said to Peter, ‘Do it at once’”.

“And Peter, looking steadfastly against Simon, said, ‘I command you, angels of Satan who are carrying him into the air to deceive the hearts of the unbelievers, by the God that created all things, and by Jesus Christ, whom on the third day He raised from the dead, no longer from this hour to keep him up, but to let him go’. And immediately, he fell into a place called Sacra Via, that is, Holy Way, and was divided into four parts, having perished by an evil fate”.

The crowd that was watching began⁶⁹⁴ to exclaim, “Great is the God preached by Peter! There is truly no other God than He!” From an elevated location, Peter then began to teach the people to acknowledge the true God. By his discourse, he converted many to the Christian Faith.

There are many accounts of Simon’s death as a result of his encounter with Peter and Paul. All agree that Simon died from trying to ascend to his father in heaven, but the manner of his actual death differs.

In Arnobius’ description⁶⁹⁵ of Simon’s attempt to ascend to heaven, Arnobius refers to some man-made device that carried Simon aloft, where there were flames associated with the man-made device. It is possible that Simon used hot air balloon techniques for his flying. Arnobius implies that Simon might have committed suicide after this embarrassing incident.

“In Rome herself, the mistress of the world, where men are busied with the practices introduced by king Numa⁶⁹⁶, and the superstitious observances of antiquity, they have nevertheless hastened to give up their fathers’ mode of life, and attach themselves to Christian truth. They had seen the chariot of Simon

⁶⁹³ Roberts and Donaldson, “Acts of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul”, Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

⁶⁹⁴ Isaac Lambertsen, The Lives of the Holy Apostles, Holy Apostles Convent Press, Buena Vista, CO, 1990, p. 17.

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Holy Apostles Convent, tr., The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, Archimandrite Matthew Lagges, 5th Ed., 1979, Volume VI, pp. 428-439.

⁶⁹⁵ Roberts and Donaldson, “The Seven Books of Arnobius Against the Heathen”, II, 12, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 6.

⁶⁹⁶ That is, Numa Pompilius, the legendary second king of Rome, 715-675 BC.

Magus, and his fiery car, blown into pieces by the mouth of Peter, and vanish when Christ was named. They had seen him trusting in false gods, and abandoned by them in their terror, borne down headlong by his own weight, lying prostrate with his legs broken. And then, when he had been carried to Brunda, worn out with anguish and shame, again cast himself down from the roof of a very lofty house”.

Other early Christian tradition also refers⁶⁹⁷ to Simon’s fall as he was trying to ascend to heaven. In this account, Peter’s prayer was to restrain the demons that carried Simon, to let him fall, but not to allow him to be killed by his injuries.

“Now when Simon was in Rome, he mightily disturbed the Church, and subverted many, and brought them over to himself; he astonished the Gentiles with his skill in magic. Once, in the middle of the day, he went into their theater, and commanded the people that they should bring Peter also by force into the theater, and promised he would fly in the air. And when all the people were in suspense at this, Peter prayed by himself. And indeed, Simon was carried up into the air by demons, and did fly on high in the air, saying that he was returning into heaven, and that he would supply them with good things from there. As the people made acclamations to him, as to a god, Peter stretched out his hands to heaven, and sought God through the Lord Jesus to throw down this pestilent fellow, to dash him against the ground, and bruise him, but not to kill him. Fixing his eyes on Simon, Peter said to him, ‘If I be a man of God, and a real Apostle of Jesus Christ, I command the wicked powers, by whom Simon the magician is carried, to let go their hold, that he may be exposed to the laughter of those that have been seduced by him’. When Peter had said these words, Simon was deprived of his powers, and fell down headlong with a great noise, and was violently dashed against the ground, and had his hip and anklebones broken. And the people cried out, saying, ‘There is only one God, whom Peter rightly preaches’. And many left him; but some that were worthy of perdition continued in his wicked doctrine. And after this manner the most atheistic heresy of the Simonians was first established in Rome”.

Another early traditional account also states⁶⁹⁸ that Simon did not die immediately, but experienced great suffering for about a day before dying.

“The fallen sorcerer, although his body was broken, yet in accordance with God’s providence, remained alive long enough (1) to realize the impotence of the demons and his own lack of power, (2) to be filled with shame and (3) to understand the power of the Almighty God. As he lay on the ground, his limbs shattered, he experienced intense suffering. The next day, he vomited out his

⁶⁹⁷ Roberts and Donaldson, “Constitutions of the Holy Apostles”, VI, ii, 9, Ante-Nicean Fathers, v. 7.

⁶⁹⁸ Isaac Lambertsen, The Lives of the Holy Apostles, Holy Apostles Convent Press, Buena Vista, CO, 1990, p. 18.

This is a translation from the following:

The Lives of the Saints in the Russian Language, According to the Menology of St. Dimitri of Rostov, Synodal Press, Moscow, 1908, v. 10, (June) pp. 631-651.

Holy Apostles Convent, tr., The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, Archimandrite Matthew Lagges, 5th Ed., 1979, Volume VI, pp. 428-439.

impure soul in pain, surrendering it to the hands of the demons, to be dragged down to their father, Satan, in hell”.

John Cassian stated⁶⁹⁹ that the encounter with Simon in Rome was such an ordeal for the Apostle Peter that he fasted the day before in accordance with the Lord’s teaching, “This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting” (Matthew 17:21).

“Some people in some countries of the West think that fasting should be allowed on the Sabbath, because they say that on this day the Apostle Peter fasted before his encounter with Simon. But from this it is quite clear that he did this not in accordance with a canonical rule, but rather through the needs of his impending struggle. For the same purpose, Peter seems to have imposed on his disciples not a general but a special fast, which he certainly would not have done if he had known that it was to be observed by canonical rule. Similarly, he would surely have been ready to appoint it even on Sunday, if the occasion of his struggle had fallen upon it. But no canonical rule of fasting would have been made general from this, because it was no general observance that led to it, but a matter of necessity, which forced it to be observed on a single occasion”.

Cyril of Jerusalem also referred⁷⁰⁰ to Simon’s claim to deity in Rome, and the statue that honored him as such. Cyril also mentioned that Simon’s death resulted from his attempt to ascend to heaven, which was thwarted by Peter and Paul.

“As the delusion was extending, Peter and Paul, chief rulers of the Church, arrived and set the error right. And when the supposed god Simon wished to show himself off, they subsequently showed him as a corpse. Simon promised to rise aloft to heaven, and came riding in a demons’ chariot on the air. But the servants of God fell on their knees, and having shown that agreement of which Jesus spoke, that if two of you shall agree concerning anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them (Matthew 18:19). They launched the weapon of their concord in prayer against Magus, and struck him down to the earth”.

“And marvelous though it was, yet this was not a marvel. These brought the supposed god down from the sky to earth, thence to be taken down to the regions below the earth. In this man first the serpent of wickedness appeared; but when one head had been cut off, the root of wickedness was found again with many heads in his followers”.

The Church Historian, Severus, also referred⁷⁰¹ to the encounter of Peter and Paul with Simon Magus in Rome, which resulted in the death of Simon. Severus places this encounter in c. 62 AD at Paul’s first visit to Rome instead of in c. 67 AD when Paul was executed.

“At that time, our divine religion had obtained a wide prevalence in the city. Peter was there executing the office of bishop, and Paul, too, after he had been brought to Rome, on appealing to Caesar from the unjust judgment of the governor (Acts 25:8-12, 28:19). Multitudes then came together to hear Paul (Acts 28:30-31), and these, influenced by the truth, which they were given to know, and by the miracles of the Apostles, which they then so frequently performed, turned

⁶⁹⁹ John Cassian, *The Institutes of the Coenobia*, III, 10.

⁷⁰⁰ Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures*, VI, 14-15.

⁷⁰¹ Philip Schaff, “The Sacred History of Sulpitius Severus”, II, 28-29, *Post-Nicene Fathers Second Series*, v. 11.

to the worship of God. After that the well-known and celebrated encounter of Peter and Paul with Simon took place. After he had flown up into the air by his magical arts, he was supported by two demons (with the view of proving that he was a god). The demons were put to flight by the prayers of the Apostles, and he fell to the earth in the sight of all the people, and was dashed to pieces”.

Hippolytus gives a different account⁷⁰² of Simon’s death. In his account, Simon told his disciples to bury him alive, saying that he would rise on the third day, but never did. Since Hippolytus doesn’t mention Simon’s attempt to ascend to heaven, the “burial” could be connected with Simon’s injuries after his fall to give Simon a chance to escape and save face.

“This Simon, deceiving many in Samaria by his sorcery, was reproved by the Apostles, and was laid under a curse, as it has been written in the Acts (Acts 8:20-23). But he afterwards solemnly rejected the faith, and attempted this practice of sorcery. Journeying as far as Rome, he fell in with the Apostles. Peter offered repeated opposition to him since he was deceiving many by his sorcery. At last, when conviction was imminent, he stated that, if he were buried alive, he would rise the third day. And accordingly, having ordered a trench to be dug by his disciples, he directed himself to be interred there. They executed the injunction given; whereas he remained in that grave until this day, for he was not the Christ. This constitutes the legendary system advanced by Simon, and from this Valentinus derived a starting-point for his own doctrine”.

Nero’s Reaction to Simon’s Death: the Martyrdom of Peter and Paul

Nero was angry with Peter and Paul for their part in the death of his friend Simon. He ordered⁷⁰³ Peter to die by crucifixion, and Paul, since he was a Roman citizen, to be beheaded.

“Then Nero ordered Peter and Paul to be put in irons, and the body of Simon to be carefully kept three days, thinking that he would rise on the third day. To whom Peter said, ‘He will no longer rise, since he is truly dead, being condemned to everlasting punishment’. And Nero said to him, ‘Who commanded you to do such a dreadful deed?’ Peter said, ‘His blasphemy against my Lord Jesus Christ has brought him into this gulf of destruction’. Nero said, ‘I will destroy you by an evil death’. Peter said, ‘This is not in your power, even if it should seem good to you to destroy us; but it is necessary that what our Master promised to us should be fulfilled’”.

“Then Nero, having summoned Agrippa, said to him, ‘It is necessary that men introducing mischievous religious observances should die. Therefore, I order them to take iron clubs, and to be killed in the sea-fight⁷⁰⁴. Agrippa said, ‘Most sacred emperor, what you have ordered is not fitting for these men, since Paul

⁷⁰² Hippolytus, *The Refutation of All Heresies*, VI, 15.

⁷⁰³ Isaac Lambertsen, *The Lives of the Holy Apostles*, Holy Apostles Convent Press, Buena Vista, CO, 1990, p. 18.

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The Lives of the Saints in the Russian Language, According to the Menology of St. Dimitri of Rostov, Synodal Press, Moscow, 1908, v. 10, (June) pp. 631-651.

Holy Apostles Convent, tr., *The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church*, Archimandrite Matthew Lagges, 5th Ed., 1979, Volume VI, pp. 428-439.

⁷⁰⁴ The sea-fights were a favorite spectacle of the Roman emperors, where the combatants were persons condemned to death.

seems innocent beside Peter'. Nero said, 'By what fate, then, shall they die?' Agrippa answered and said, 'As seems to me, Paul's head should be cut off, and Peter should be raised on a cross as the cause of the murder'. Nero said, 'You have most excellently judged'. Then both Peter and Paul were led away from the presence of Nero. And Paul was beheaded on the Ostesian road".

Ambrose of Milan mentioned⁷⁰⁵ that there was a short gap between the death of Simon Magus and the arrest and martyrdom of Peter. Peter could have escaped, but he was told by Christ not to do so.

"After Peter had overcome Simon, in sowing the doctrine of God among the people, and in teaching chastity, he stirred up the minds of the Gentiles. When the Christians begged Peter to withdraw himself for a little while, although he desired to suffer, yet was he moved at the sight of the people praying. They asked him to save himself for the instruction and strengthening of his people. At night he began to leave town. Seeing Christ coming to meet him at the gate, and entering the city, he said, 'Lord, where are You going?' Christ answered, 'I am coming to be crucified again'. Peter understood the divine answer to refer to his own cross, for Christ could not be crucified a second time, for He had put off the flesh by the passion of the death which He had undergone. 'The death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God' (Romans 6:10). So, Peter understood that Christ was to be crucified again in the person of His servant. Therefore, he willingly returned; and when the Christians questioned him, he told them the reason. Peter was immediately seized, and glorified the Lord Jesus by his cross."

There are further details⁷⁰⁶ of the beheading of the Apostle Paul associated with a one-eyed woman named Perpetua:

"As Paul was being led away to be beheaded by three soldiers, who were brothers, a God-fearing one-eyed woman named Perpetua wept for him as he was being dragged along. When Paul saw her, he asked her to give him her handkerchief, saying that he would return it to her. Knowing that Paul was about to be beheaded, Perpetua asked the soldiers to bind Paul's eyes with the handkerchief when they behead him. After Paul was beheaded, someone gave the woman her handkerchief back, and her eye was restored as she was carrying it".

"When the woman saw the three soldiers about three hours later, she noted that she had recovered her sight from the handkerchief, and that she had asked the Lord that she might be considered worthy to become His slave as Paul was. The soldiers exclaimed with one voice that they might be His slaves also".

"Perpetua later mentioned, in the Emperor's palace, that both she and the three soldiers had believed in Christ. Nero, filled with rage, executed the three soldiers and had Perpetua locked in irons in prison. While in prison, Perpetua met Potentiana, the sister of Nero's wife. Potentiana had desired to become a Christian, but didn't know what to do. She had informed her sister and the wives of some of the Senators about what she had heard about Christianity, and the

⁷⁰⁵ Ambrose of Milan, *Sermon against Auxentius on the Giving Up of the Basilicas*, 13.

⁷⁰⁶ The Story of Perpetua; part of Roberts and Donaldson, "Acts of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul", *Apocrypha of the New Testament*, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

other women then left the palace and refused to have anything to do with their husbands' idolatry. Perpetua informed Potentiana of what she knew of the Faith".

After a few days, Nero tortured Perpetua a great deal, and finally killed her by tying a large stone to her neck and throwing her off a cliff. Potentiana was also tortured a great deal and finally burned alive".

As Peter was being crucified⁷⁰⁷, the crowd of bystanders reviled Nero and wanted to kill him. But Peter restrained them and told them of earlier events where the Lord told him that this would happen. Angels also appeared to receive Peter's body.

"And Peter, having come to the cross, said, 'Since my Lord Jesus Christ, who came down from heaven upon the earth, was raised upon the cross upright, and He has called me to heaven, my cross ought to be fixed head downward, so as to direct my feet towards heaven. I am not worthy to be crucified like my Lord. Then, having reversed the cross, they nailed his feet up".

"And the multitude was assembled reviling Caesar, and wishing to kill him. But Peter, hanging on the cross, restrained them saying, 'A few days ago, being exhorted by the brethren to leave, I was going away. And my Lord Jesus Christ met me, and having adored Him, I said, Lord, where are You going? And He said to me, I am going to Rome to be crucified. And I said to Him, Lord, weren't You crucified once for all? And the Lord answered and said, I saw you fleeing from death, and I wish to be crucified instead of you. And I said, Lord, I'm going; I will fulfill Your command. And He said to me, Fear not, for I am with you. On this account, then, children do not hinder my going; for already my feet are going on the road to heaven. Do not grieve; therefore, rather rejoice with me, for today I receive the fruit of my labors". And thus speaking, he said, "I thank You, Good Shepherd, that the sheep which You have entrusted to me, sympathize with me. I ask, then, that with me they may have a part in Your kingdom". And having thus spoken, he gave up the Spirit".

"And immediately there appeared men glorious and strange in appearance. And they said, 'We are here on account of the holy and chief Apostles from Jerusalem'. And they, along with Marcellus, an illustrious man, who left Simon and had believed in Peter's words, took up his body secretly, and put it under the terebinth near the place for the exhibition of sea-fights in the place called the Vatican".

"And the men, who had said that they came from Jerusalem, said to the people, 'Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, because you have been deemed worthy to have great champions. And know that Nero himself, after not many days, will be utterly destroyed, and his kingdom shall be given to another'. And after these things the people revolted against him. And when he knew of it, he fled into desert places; through hunger and cold he gave up the spirit, and his body became food for the wild beasts".

"And some devout men of the regions of the East wished to carry off the relics of the saints, and immediately there was a great earthquake in the city; and those that dwelt in the city having become aware of it ran and seized the men, but

⁷⁰⁷ Roberts and Donaldson, "Acts of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul", Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

they fled. But the Romans took the relics, put them in a place three miles from the city, and there they were guarded a year and seven months, until they had built the place in which they intended to put them. And after these things, all having assembled with glory and singing of praise, they put them in the place built for them. And the consummation of the holy glorious Apostles Peter and Paul was on the 29th of the month of June”.

When Peter and Paul were executed, others were also beheaded with them. Included in these were Herodion and Olympas⁷⁰⁸, of the Seventy, who had come to Rome with the Apostle Peter.

⁷⁰⁸ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 8, November 10.
<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp>, April 8, November 10.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, November 10.

APPENDIX A

The Seventy and Other Apostles

Achaicus: Achaicus was not one of the original Seventy Apostles, but some say he was added to the ranks of the Seventy later. Prior to Paul writing his second letter to Corinth, Fortunatus and Achaicus along with Deacon Stephanas brought a letter from Corinth to Paul which is now lost (1 Corinthians 16:15-17). Paul then answered this letter in his second letter (i.e. the one we know as 1 Corinthians). These three men probably returned to Corinth after delivering the letter. Achaicus is not recorded as serving as Bishop at any city.

Agabus: Agabus was⁷⁰⁹ one of the original Seventy Apostles and was a prophet in the Church of Jerusalem along with Joseph Barsabas and Silas (Acts 15:22-32). During the reign of Emperor Claudius (41-52 AD), and about the time that Paul first came to Antioch, Agabus predicted a great famine (Acts 11:27-30); Paul and Barnabas brought alms from Antioch to relieve the effects of the famine. Agabus also predicted the suffering of the Apostle Paul by the Jews in Jerusalem (Acts 21:10-14). He also preached⁷¹⁰ in many other lands and converted many pagans to Christ; he started in Jerusalem, then he prophesied in Antioch, then in other parts of the world.

Amplias: Amplias was⁷¹¹ one of the original Seventy Apostles and was a follower of Andrew of the Twelve Apostles. Since Paul refers to Amplias as being in Rome in c. 55 AD when he wrote his Epistle to Rome (Romans 16:8), there had to have been some contact between Paul and Andrew in sending Amplias⁷¹². Paul likely met Amplias on the 2nd Missionary Journey as he passed through Macedonia. Andrew ordained Amplias as Bishop of Odessos in Macedonia⁷¹³ and Amplias was later martyred there due to his preaching and his destruction of

⁷⁰⁹ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 8.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp#April8>.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2005, April 8.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁷¹⁰ See <http://oca.org/FSlives.asp#April8>.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2005, April 8.

⁷¹¹ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 31.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp#October31>.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 31.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁷¹² Paul refers to Amplias rather warmly "my beloved in the Lord", suggesting that Paul worked with Amplias a while. Because Paul refers to him in such a warm, personal manner, it is very probable Paul worked with him prior to his arrival in Rome. If Paul didn't work with them in Macedonia (Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea) or Achaia (Athens and Corinth) on his 2nd Missionary Journey, he must have done so on his 3rd Missionary Journey just prior to the drafting of the letter to the Romans. Most likely, however, would be that Paul worked with them in Macedonia, on his 2nd Missionary Journey. On his 3rd Missionary Journey, there may have been a very good report concerning him as Paul passed through Macedonia heading for Corinth -- therefore the term "my beloved". While in Macedonia on his 3rd Missionary Journey, Paul must have sent him to Rome to join Aquila and Priscilla -- whom he sent to Rome from Ephesus.

⁷¹³ The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2008, July 30.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

the idols. According to the Bulgarian Orthodox Church⁷¹⁴, Amplias was already there serving as Bishop in 56 AD⁷¹⁵. Odessos is today called Varna and is located in Bulgaria. It has also been called Odysopolis and Odysus. According to tradition, Amplias was also Bishop of Lydda⁷¹⁶ (also called Diospolis) at one time⁷¹⁷.

Ananias: Ananias was⁷¹⁸ one of the original Seventy Apostles, and he was the Bishop of Damascus at the time of the conversion of the Apostle Paul (Acts 9:10-18). At that time, Ananias had a vision from the Lord to go heal Paul's blindness, even though Ananias was greatly afraid of Paul. Ananias did as he was commanded; he healed and baptized Paul.

Later Ananias went to Eleutheropolis to preach the Gospel. He was arrested by Governor Lucian and tortured for a long time before being stoned to death.

Andronicus and Junia: Andronicus was one of the original Seventy Apostles. He and his wife Junia began traveling with Paul and Silas in c. 48 AD at the beginning of the 2nd Missionary Journey. To understand this, we need to look forward to c. 55 AD when Paul wrote to the Church of Rome from Corinth. There he addressed two of his "countrymen", Andronicus⁷¹⁹ and Herodion⁷²⁰ (Romans 16:7, 11), who were both members of the original Seventy Apostles (Luke 10:1-20). Paul there referred to Andronicus (and his wife Junia) as his "fellow prisoner" (Romans 16:7). However, the only recorded prison time Paul spent between 48 and 55 AD was in Philippi (Acts 16:19-34), about 51 AD. Andronicus thus must have accompanied Paul and Silas as they headed for Macedonia (and Philippi) after Paul had visited Andronicus in Tarsus⁷²¹. Andronicus must have been imprisoned along with Paul and Silas in Philippi, but not mentioned in Luke's account of Acts.

As Paul and Silas passed through Philippi (and Macedonia) on the 2nd Missionary Journey, Andronicus and his wife Junia probably also stayed behind with Luke⁷²², since Andronicus has traditionally been referred to as the

⁷¹⁴ See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Varna>.

⁷¹⁵ This means that Amplias went to Macedonia right after he was no longer needed in Rome.

⁷¹⁶ See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lod>.

⁷¹⁷ Nickolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 31. [http://oca.org/FSLives.asp for October 31](http://oca.org/FSLives.asp%20for%20October%2031).

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

⁷¹⁸ Nickolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 1. [http://oca.org/FSLives.asp for October 1](http://oca.org/FSLives.asp%20for%20October%201).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 1.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁷¹⁹ Nickolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, May 17. See: [http://oca.org/FSLives.asp for May 17](http://oca.org/FSLives.asp%20for%20May%2017).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2005, March 28, 2002, November 10.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁷²⁰ Nickolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 8, November 10. See: [http://oca.org/FSLives.asp for April 8, November 10](http://oca.org/FSLives.asp%20for%20April%208,%20November%2010).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2006, May 17.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁷²¹ Andronicus and Junia were native to Tarsus and were related to Paul. See Nickolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, May 17, July 30. See also: <http://oca.org/FSLives.asp>.

⁷²² For more details regarding this, see the section of the 2nd Missionary Journey titled "The Evangelist Luke Remained Behind in Philippi".

Bishop of Pannonia in Illyricum. During these 5 years, Luke got around to the whole area. Paul left Luke in Philippi c. 49-50 AD. By 55 AD when Paul wrote to the Romans, he said, "From Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ" (Romans 15:19). Paul is never recorded as going to Illyricum himself; but Luke could easily have been there during the five years that he was in Philippi.

After their tour of Rome, Andronicus and Junia traveled⁷²³ widely, but they spent the rest of their lives living as brother-sister and not as husband-wife. They healed many pagans, and as they did, the pagans voluntarily tore down the temples that they used to use for idol worship. There are differing accounts of their deaths, but it was probably by martyrdom, since their bones were discovered many years later in Byzantium (then Constantinople).

Apelles: There are two members of the Seventy Apostles named Apelles; one was Bishop of Smyrna; the other was Bishop of Heraclea in Thrace. The one Paul refers to as being in Rome is the one associated with Smyrna⁷²⁴. When Paul referred to this Apelles as "Approved in Christ" (Romans 16:10), Paul used the same word⁷²⁵ to refer to Apelles that he used to refer to Peter and James, except elsewhere this word is often translated that Peter and James "were of reputation" (Galatians 2:2, 6, 9). This suggests that Apelles was a presbyter in one of the Churches before being sent to Rome⁷²⁶. After his work in Rome, this Apelles was **ordained by the Apostle Andrew as Bishop of Smyrna, became a light to the city of Smyrna and was martyred by the Jews and pagan Greeks for preaching the Gospel**⁷²⁷. **The other Apelles was Bishop of Heraclea in Thrace**⁷²⁸. **He was an outstanding orator and brought many people to Christ. This Apelles may have interacted with Paul when Paul passed through Troas.**

The earliest accounts say that both men named Apelles were members of the original Seventy Apostles. Hippolytus (c. 230 AD) lists⁷²⁹ Apelles, Bishop of Smyrna, and Dorotheus of Tyre (c. 320 AD) lists⁷³⁰ Apelles, Bishop of Heraclea as being the original members. Both of

⁷²³ The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2006, May 17.

Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, May 17.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for May 17](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20May%2017).

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

⁷²⁴ Hippolytus, On the Seventy Apostles, 28.

⁷²⁵ That is the Greek word dokimos meaning "tested" or "approved".

⁷²⁶ Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", 28, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

⁷²⁷ Smyrna is located on the western coast of Asia Minor about 70 miles NW of Ephesus.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for September 10](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20September%2010).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, September 10

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

⁷²⁸ While there are many cities named after the Greek Hero Heracles, this Heraclea is probably the one along the northern coast of the Sea of Marmara near Byzantium (later Constantinople), and was at one time the Metropolitan See for Constantinople. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perinthus>.

Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 31.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for October 31](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20October%2031).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 31.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

⁷²⁹ Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, September 10.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for October 31](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20October%2031)

⁷³⁰ Dorotheus, "The Choosing of the Seventy Holy Apostles", in Lives of Orthodox Christian Saints, New Valaam Trading Company, 2008.

Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, September 10

these lists date to the 1st century, since they both also list the four members of the Seventy who apostatized⁷³¹: Demas, Nicholas of Antioch, Hermogenes, and Phygellus, who were removed from the ranks of the Seventy in the 1st century and replaced with others. Since Smyrna and Heraclea are only 200 miles apart, it is to be expected that confusion might arise over the identity of these two Apostles.

Of the Apelles, the Bishop of Smyrna, John Chrysostom noted⁷³² that the praise that Paul passed on to Apelles is no small thing. Being “approved in Christ” means being blameless!

“There is no praise like this, being blameless, and giving no handle in the things of God. For when Paul says, ‘approved in Christ’, he includes the whole list of virtues. These praises are great, not mere titles of rank; they are of virtue. This same honor Paul paid to all of those mentioned, not just at random, or as addressing several of inferior virtue with the great ones. Since he is addressing one along with another in the same letter, he honors them all alike. By stating the praise particular to each, he sets before us the virtue peculiar to each. He neither gives birth to envy by honoring one and dishonoring another, nor makes them listless and confused, by giving them all the same dignity, though they did not deserve it.”

Apollos: Apollos was one of the original Seventy Apostles and was native to Alexandria. Since he knew only the Baptism of John when he came to Ephesus in c. 52 AD (Acts 18:24-28), he must have been away from Jerusalem at the time of Pentecost. Priscilla and Aquila took him aside and explained⁷³³ the things that he had missed. John Chrysostom noted⁷³⁴ how awakened Apollos was in the Spirit. Apollos was a very eloquent (Acts 18:24) and learned man⁷³⁵ and vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ (Acts 18:28). Gregory of Nyssa wrote⁷³⁶ that Apollos very effectively watered what Paul had planted. Alexander Roberts wrote⁷³⁷ that he attributed the great Alexandrian School to the Apostle Apollos. Alexander Roberts further stated⁷³⁸ that it was Alexandria, not Rome, which was the center of the Christian world in the first three centuries, thanks in part to the foundation laid by the Apostle Apollos. Paul later sent Apollos back to Corinth (1 Corinthians 16:12), and again to Titus on Crete (Titus 3:13) to water some more.

Aquila and Priscilla: Aquila was not one of the original Seventy Apostles, but was added to the ranks of the Seventy later. Paul first met Aquila and Priscilla⁷³⁹ in Corinth on his 2nd

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, September 10.

<http://oca.org/FSLives.asp> for September 10.

⁷³¹ For more details on why these four apostles apostatized, see Mark Kern, Simon Magus Heresiarch, St. Athanasius Press, 2004.

⁷³² **John Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans, XXXI, v. 10.**

⁷³³ For more details, see the Section titled, “Paul Leaves Aquila and Priscilla in Charge in Ephesus”.

⁷³⁴ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, XL, Recapitulation.

⁷³⁵ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Corinthians, III, 7.

⁷³⁶ Gregory of Nyssa, Against Eunomius, II, 15.

⁷³⁷ Roberts and Donaldson, “Elucidation 4”, in Archelaus, Disputations with Manes, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1995.

⁷³⁸ Roberts and Donaldson, “Introductory Notice to Peter of Alexandria”, in Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1995

⁷³⁹ The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2008, July 14; 2004, February 13; 2003, January 4.

Missionary Journey. Aquila and Priscilla had been expelled from Rome by Emperor Claudius along with all the Jews in Rome (Acts 18:2). Aquila was a tent-maker like Paul, so Paul stayed with them for the year-and-a-half that he was in Corinth. When Paul left Corinth, Aquila and Priscilla traveled with him, and Paul left them in Ephesus to teach the new Christians while he went back to Antioch. On Paul's 3rd Missionary Journey, they were still there, and Paul sent them on ahead to Rome before he wrote his Epistle to the Romans in c. 55 AD. At that time, Claudius had died and Nero was then Emperor. In Ephesus (1 Corinthians 16:19) as in Rome (Romans 16:3-5), the Church met in the home of Aquila and Priscilla.

Aquila and Priscilla were not in Rome in 62 AD (Colossians 4:7-18) when Paul was under house-arrest there, and they were in Ephesus in c. 66 AD working with Timothy (2 Timothy 4:19) in his battle against others of the Seventy Apostles who had apostatized.

Archippus: Archippus was not one of the original Seventy Apostles, but was added to the ranks of the Seventy later. Paul was very close to three people who were from Colossae: Epaphras, Archippus, and Philemon (with his wife Apphia). Philemon and Epaphras were members of the original Seventy; Archippus was not. At the time that Paul spent two years in Ephesus (c. 53 to 55 AD); the Church in Colossae was getting started, probably at the hands of Epaphras and Archippus was the Bishop there. Paul needed to encourage Archippus to fulfill the ministry which he received in the Lord (Colossians 4:17), indicating that Archippus was having some difficulty. Archippus may have been having so many problems with local heretics that he was considering quitting. Just a few years later, Archippus was martyred along with Philemon and Apphia. Archippus was the Bishop of Colossae and Philemon was the roving Bishop of that whole area. Later on, Epaphras took over for Philemon after Philemon was martyred.

Aristarchus: Aristarchus⁷⁴⁰ was one of the original Seventy Apostles and traveled with the Apostle Paul extensively. Prior to traveling with Paul, Aristarchus was ordained as Bishop of Apamea, a city on the Orontes River in Syria, where he brought many people to knowledge of God. He was from Thessalonica of Macedonia (Acts 19:29, 20:4, 27:2).

Aristarchus lived very much like John the Baptist⁷⁴¹, wearing a garment of animal skin, a leather belt and eating locusts⁷⁴² and wild honey (Matthew 3:4, Mark 1:6). As a Bishop in Syria, he would have had easy contact with Paul during the break Paul had between the 2nd and 3rd Missionary Journeys (Acts 18:22-23), and he began accompanying Paul at the beginning of the 3rd Missionary Journey. Aristarchus also accompanied Paul on the 4th Missionary Journey to Rome (Acts 27:2), for which, Paul calls him "My fellow prisoner" (Colossians 4:10). Paul also refers to Aristarchus as "My fellow laborer" (Philemon 1:24).

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, July 14.

<http://oca.org/FSLives.asp> for July 14.

⁷⁴⁰ The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, April 14.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 15, September 27.

<http://oca.org/FSLives.asp>, April 15, September 27

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁷⁴¹ The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, April 14.

⁷⁴² The term "locusts" refers not to an insect, but to the bean of the "locust tree", which was ground into flour. See http://www.sierrapotomac.org/W_Needham/BlackLocust_060515.htm. The "locust tree" is similar to a carob tree.

There are two Apostles named Aristarchus, both mentioned by both Hippolytus and Dorotheus of Tyre as being members of the original Seventy Apostles. The other Aristarchus was beheaded⁷⁴³ on the same day as Paul.

Aristobulus: Aristobulus was⁷⁴⁴ one of the original Seventy Apostles, and was also the brother of the Apostle Barnabas and the father-in-law of the Apostle Peter. He followed the Apostle Paul for a while (Romans 16:10), and was later consecrated as Bishop of Britain. Britain was a wild and savage people at that time and Aristobulus was at one time beaten and at another time dragged through the marketplace. Nevertheless, by means of these afflictions and no small trials, many of the islanders were influenced by his deeds and words, so that they came to believe in Christ. He consequently built churches, and ordained deacons and presbyters. The blessed apostle reposed in peace.

Artemas: Artemas was⁷⁴⁵ one of the original Seventy Apostles. When Timothy began traveling with Paul on Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey, Paul had to ordain someone else in his place. This would have had to have been Artemas, of the Seventy, who was later regarded as the Bishop of Lystra and who had been traveling with Paul and Silas at the beginning of the 2nd Missionary Journey. Paul sent Artemas as a courier to Titus on Crete (Titus 3:12) c. 14 years later. Little is known about Artemas after the death of Peter and Paul in c. 67 AD except that he stayed in Lystra and he died in peace.

Asyncritus: Asyncritus was one⁷⁴⁶ of the original Seventy Apostles and was later Bishop of Hyrcania, which was a province of the Persian Empire south of the Caspian Sea. When Paul wrote to him as being in Rome in c. 55 AD (Romans 16:14), it does not appear that Paul knew him well, and it is not obvious which of the Twelve Apostles sent him to Rome. He was later tortured and martyred in Hyrcania by the Jews and Greeks.

Barnabas: Barsabas⁷⁴⁷ was one⁷⁴⁸ of the original Seventy Apostles and was also a long-

⁷⁴³ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 15, September 27 both refer to the life of Aristarchus. One says that Aristarchus was beheaded with Paul, but the other doesn't. Yet both have Aristarchus as Bishop of Apamea.

⁷⁴⁴ The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2005, March 15; 2002, October 31.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, March 16, October 31.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for March 16, October 31>.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

⁷⁴⁵ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 30.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for October 30>.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 30.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

⁷⁴⁶ The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2005, April 8.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 8.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for April 8>.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

⁷⁴⁷ For more information on the Apostle Barnabas, see Mark Kern, The Feast Day of the Apostle Barnabas, St Athanasius Press, 2011.

⁷⁴⁸ The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2007, June 11.

time associate of the Apostle Paul, even from their youth. The Apostle Barnabas was born⁷⁴⁹ in c. 14 BC on the island of Cyprus into the family of the tribe of Levi, and he was named Joseph (Acts 4:36). He received his education at Jerusalem⁷⁵⁰, being associated with his friend and fellow student Saul (the future Apostle Paul) under the renowned teacher of the Law, Gamaliel. Joseph was pious; he frequented the Temple; he strictly observed the fasts and avoided youthful distractions. Barnabas was a very well-known and well-liked member of the Apostles. He had a unique gift for encouraging the brethren, which showed up in the name “Barnabas” that the brethren gave him.

After the Ascension of the Lord to Heaven, Barnabas sold land belonging to him near Jerusalem and he brought the money to the feet of the Apostles, leaving nothing for himself (Acts 4:36-37). After the stoning of Stephen, it was Barnabas who was the leader of the Seventy Apostles, the first in preaching and chief spokesman of the Seventy.

After the scattering of the saints with the stoning of Stephen, and the beginning of the Church at Antioch, the Apostles “sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord” (Acts 11:22-24). Shortly after arriving in Antioch, “Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Paul. And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So, it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch” (Acts 11:25-26). About a year later, the Church in Antioch sent Barnabas and Paul out on their 1st Missionary Journey, where they were also accompanied by others of the Seventy Apostles.

After Barnabas and Paul returned from the 1st Missionary Journey, they went up to Jerusalem accompanied by Titus to meet with the Apostles over the issue of circumcision for the Gentiles. The Church in Jerusalem completely ratified what Barnabas and Paul had been teaching the Gentiles and sent a letter stating this to be read in all the Gentile Churches.

After the Council in Jerusalem, Barnabas and Paul split up by mutual consent, where Barnabas took John Mark and went back to Cyprus, where he spent most of the rest of his life working with his countrymen. Finally, in c. 62 AD, the Jews on Cyprus got infuriated at Barnabas and incited the pagans against him. Barnabas was stoned to death, and later buried in a cave by John Mark.

Caesar: Caesar was one⁷⁵¹ of the original Seventy Apostles and was later a Bishop in the Peloponnese. However, there is no reference to him in the Scriptures and there is no reference regarding him working with the Apostle Paul.

Nikolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, June 11.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for June 11](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20June%2011).

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁷⁴⁹ See <http://ocafs.oca.org/FeastSaintsViewer.asp?SID=4&ID=1&FSID=101691>. If Barnabas died in 62 AD at age 76, he had to have been born in c. 14 BC, and he was probably 15 to 20 years older than the Apostle Paul.

⁷⁵⁰ Nikolai Velimirovic, *The Prologue from Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, June 11.

⁷⁵¹ *The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church*, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2003, December 8.

Nikolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, December 8.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for December 8](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20December%208).

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

Carpus: Carpus was one of the original Seventy Apostles and, according to tradition⁷⁵², he was the first Bishop of Berea. He was ordained by Silas and Timothy after Paul had to leave town quickly in c. 50 AD; for Silas and Timothy to ordain a presbyter by themselves indicates that they had become mature Apostles and they were capable of embarking on their own missionary journeys at this time. In c. 67 AD, just before Paul's martyrdom in Rome, Carpus was in Troas (2 Timothy 4:13), directly across the Aegean Sea from Berea, working as an Apostle there.

Cephas: Cephas is one of the only members of the original Seventy Apostles who is not referred to in the Scripture. According to tradition, he was Bishop of Iconium⁷⁵³, but this must have been after the martyrdom of Tertius in Iconium. Tertius wrote down Paul's Epistle to the Romans (Romans 16:22) in c. 55 AD from Corinth, where he was traveling with Paul and was then sent to Iconium as Bishop, where he spent the rest of his life. Probably by the 60's, Tertius was martyred in Iconium and Cephas took over for him as Bishop. Prior to taking over in Iconium, Cephas was probably traveling with Paul much of the time.

Clement of Sardis: Clement was one of the original Seventy Apostles⁷⁵⁴, and was later Bishop of Sardis in Western Asia Minor, but he is not to be confused with Clement the Bishop of Rome in the late 1st century. Sardis was one of the Churches that the Apostle John wrote to (Revelation 3:1-4) and was about 50 miles northwest of Ephesus.

Paul addressed Clement of Sardis when he was in Philippi in c. 62 AD (before he was sent to Sardis) asking him to help some of the women in Philippi who were having difficulty.

"I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the Gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names *are* in the Book of Life" (Philippians 4:2-3).

Clement of Rome: Clement of Rome was never considered one of the Seventy Apostles. His journey to Christianity was a very dramatic one and is documented in the "Recognitions of Clement". Both his parents were related by blood to the emperors in Rome, but he was separated from his parents while still a young man. The "Recognitions" describe his journeys looking for his parents and how he encountered the Apostles Barnabas and Peter, and how they assisted him in recognizing his parents and his twin brothers. The prefect in Antioch heard of Clement's reunion with his family and wrote about this remarkable reunion to the emperor in Rome.

⁷⁵² Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, May 26.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for May 26](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20May%2026).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2006, May 26.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

⁷⁵³ Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, December 8.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for March 30, December 8](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20March%2030,%20December%208).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, December 8.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

⁷⁵⁴ Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, May 26.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for May 26](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20May%2026).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2006, May 26.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

Clement's father was then recalled to Rome by the emperor and restored to his previous position with honors and wealth. Clement was later ordained Bishop of Rome by Peter before Peter's martyrdom.

Besides the "Recognitions", Clement is credited with writing an Epistle to the Church of Corinth while he was Bishop of Rome. There are other documents that some people claim were written by Clement, but not all agree about this.

Cleopas: Cleopas, also called Alphaeus, was the father of the Apostles of the Twelve James and Matthew, and he was also one of the original Seventy Apostles. Most say that Cleopas died shortly after Pentecost; however, Dorotheus said⁷⁵⁵ that he lived until the late 1st century and was crucified by Domitian (ruled 81 to 96 AD).

Codratus: Codratus (or Quadratus) was not one of the original Seventy Apostles, but was added to the ranks of the Seventy later. As Bishop of Athens, he wrote a defense of Christianity and gave it to Emperor Hadrian; this defense was so strong that Hadrian decreed that Christians should not be persecuted without special cause. When he was stoned, beaten and driven out of Athens, he went to Magnesia where he was martyred.

Crescens: Crescens was one of the original Seventy Apostles, but did not work with the Apostle Paul very much. Crescens was ordained⁷⁵⁶ as Bishop of Carthage, and later Paul sent him to Galatia (2 Timothy 4:10), where he eventually finished his life. Crescens later went to Gaul⁷⁵⁷ but returned to Galatia after ordaining someone in his place there.

Crispus: Crispus was not one of the original Seventy Apostles, but may have been added to the ranks of the Seventy later. Paul first met Crispus when Crispus was the Synagogue Ruler in Corinth (Acts 18:5-8). Crispus was baptized by Paul in Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:14) on Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey and faithfully followed Paul after that. Crispus was ordained⁷⁵⁸ Bishop of the Greek island of Aegina.

Demas: Demas was one of the original Seventy Apostles⁷⁵⁹, but he apostatized in c. 67 AD just before Paul was beheaded (2 Timothy 4:10). He was working with Paul when Paul wrote his Epistles to the Philippians and Colossians in c. 62 AD (Philemon 1:24, Colossians 4:14) during the 4th Missionary Journey. He was also with Paul on the 1st Missionary Journey⁷⁶⁰.

⁷⁵⁵ Dorotheus of Tyre, The Choosing of the Seventy Holy Apostles.

⁷⁵⁶ The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2006, July 30.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for January 4, July 30>.

Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, July 30.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁷⁵⁷ The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2008, July 30.

Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, July 30.

⁷⁵⁸ <http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for January 4>.

⁷⁵⁹ Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, May 26.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for May 26>.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2006, May 26.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

He very likely also accompanied Paul on the 2nd and 3rd Missionary Journeys. According to Hippolytus⁷⁶¹, he became a priest for the idols of Thessalonica after he abandoned Paul (2 Timothy 4:10).

Dionysius: Dionysius was not one of the original Seventy Apostles, and was never considered among the ranks of the Seventy. However, he played an important role in the Church in the 1st century. Dionysius was converted along with his wife Damaris in Athens on Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey (Acts 17:34). At that time, Dionysius was⁷⁶² a member of the Areopagus Council (Athenian high court), and was an outstanding jurist on the 9-member council regarding justice for all. At that time Paul ordained Hierotheos as Bishop of Athens, where Dionysius had been a student of Hierotheos. When Hierotheos died in the mid 50's AD, Paul ordained Dionysius in his place. Whereas Hierotheos wrote many wonderful hymns for the Church, Dionysius composed many instructive books⁷⁶³.

Dionysius traveled to many places, including Jerusalem to meet the Virgin Mary, and to Rome to visit Paul just before he was beheaded. He also traveled to Gaul with two of the disciples of Bishop Clement of Rome. There he planted many seeds in Paris, Spain and Britain before being martyred⁷⁶⁴ by Domitian at the age of 90 in c. 96 AD.

Epaenetus: Among the first Paul addressed in Rome was Epaenetus 'Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who is the first fruits of Achaia to Christ' (Romans 16:5). Epaenetus (or Epenetus) was one of the original Seventy Apostles and he was probably native to Achaia (Corinth and Athens are part of Achaia). Since Paul was writing Romans from Corinth (Corinth is in Achaia!) on his second visit there, he must have run into Epaenetus on his first visit (during his 2nd Missionary Journey) either in Athens or Corinth. Since Epaenetus was also Bishop of Carthage (in North Africa) by the time of Paul's 1st Missionary Journey, the "first fruits of Achaia to Christ" probably refers to Epaenetus' conversion in Jerusalem when the Lord sent the Seventy out two by two (Luke 10:1-20). From Paul's affectionate greeting, however, there must have been some contact also on Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey. We can conclude that Epaenetus was native to Achaia, and was visiting Jerusalem during Jesus' public ministry, when Jesus selected him as one of the Seventy. As Bishop of Carthage⁷⁶⁵ for many years, Epaenetus must have returned home to Achaia for a visit when he met Paul on Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey.

⁷⁶⁰ See the section titled: "The Church of Iconium in Galatia", and also see Holy Apostles Convent, The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, Holy Apostles Convent, 2002, September 24, pp. 589-593.

⁷⁶¹ Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5
See also Mark Kern, Simon Magus the Heresiarch, St. Athanasius Press, 2004 at
<http://www.stathanasius.org/resources/e-books/>.

⁷⁶² The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 3.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 3.
<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for October 3>.

⁷⁶³ There is some controversy today over the author of these books attributed to Dionysius; some think that the author was a man of the same name who lived in the 5th century.

⁷⁶⁴ Some think that the one who was martyred in 96 AD was another man named Dionysius.

⁷⁶⁵ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, July 30.
<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for July 30>.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2008, July 30.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

Since Paul was so affectionate with Epaphretus in his letter to Rome, it is likely that it was Paul who sent him to Rome in c. 55 AD (Romans 16:5) along with seventeen others of the Seventy (Romans 16:3-15) to counteract the heresy⁷⁶⁶ that developed there. Following that Epaphretus went back to Carthage and finished his life there.

John Chrysostom stated⁷⁶⁷ that Paul's praise of Epaphretus was no small one, and a proof of great excellence and faithfulness in him.

"It is worth learning from this how Paul distributes to each different praise. This praise is no slight one, but very great, and a proof of great excellence in Epaphretus, that Paul should hold him beloved. Paul had no idea of loving by favor, but by cool judgment. Paul gives further praise: 'Who is the first-fruits of Achaia'. What Paul means is, either that he leaped forward before anyone else, and became a believer (this is no slight praise), or that he displayed more faithful behavior than any other. On this account after saying, 'who is the first-fruits of Achaia', Paul does not stop, but to prevent your suspecting it to be a glory of the world's, he added, 'unto Christ'. Now if in civil matters, he that is first seems to be great and honorable, much more so in these. Since they were probably common folks, Paul speaks of the true noble birth and preeminence, and gives Epaphretus his honors from this. Paul says, that he 'is the first-fruits', not of Corinth only, but of the whole nation, as having become as it were a door, and an entrance to the rest. This reward is no small one! Such a one will reap much recompense also from the achievements of others, in that he too contributed much toward them by beginning."

Epaphras: Epaphras was one of the original Seventy Apostles, and he played an important role in the Church in the 1st century.

During the time that Paul spent two years in Ephesus on the 3rd Missionary Journey (c. 53 to 55 AD), it was probably Epaphras who founded the Church in Colossae, perhaps with the help of others. At the time that Paul wrote to the Colossians from Rome (c. 62 AD), Epaphras was then in Rome with Paul (Colossians 1:7, Colossians 4:12, Philemon 1:23) and Archippus, one of the original Seventy Apostles, was Bishop of Colossae. Epaphras was very active in teaching the Colossians as "a faithful deacon of Christ" (Colossians 1:7-8).

Paul mentioned a "great conflict" (Colossians 2:1) that he had for Colossae and Laodicea. From the text of Colossians, we can infer that Paul got word of what was happening in Colossae from Epaphras, who had journeyed to Rome to seek Paul's help. Epaphras brought word to Paul about the inroads that the heresies of Simon Magus had been making in Colossae⁷⁶⁸. Evidently things were changing in Colossae and there were a number of heresies present that Epaphras brought to Paul's attention. Paul answered many of these heresies in his Epistle.

Demetrius of Rostov stated⁷⁶⁹ that Epaphras was later the Bishop of Colossae, Laodicea and Hierapolis⁷⁷⁰. This is reasonable, since Archippus, Philemon and Apphia were martyred about the same time as Paul.

⁷⁶⁶ For more information, see Mark Kern, Simon Magus the Heresiarch, St Athanasius Press, 2004.

⁷⁶⁷ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans, XXXI, v. 5.

⁷⁶⁸ For more details, see the section titled: "Paul Wrote to the Colossians".

⁷⁶⁹ Demetri of Rostov, "The Great Collection of the Lives of the Saints", tr. Fr. Thomas Marretta, Chrysostom Press, House Springs, MO, 2002

⁷⁷⁰ Hierapolis was about 15 miles North of Laodicea.

Epaphroditus: Epaphroditus⁷⁷¹ was one of the original Seventy Apostles. He was probably from Philippi and Paul calls him an Apostle and a Liturgist to Philippi as well as his fellow-worker and fellow-soldier (Philippians 2:25). We first see him in Paul's letters in c. 62 AD when Paul sent him to Philippi from Rome. Epaphroditus had been longing for the Philippians and was distressed because they were worried about him when he was sick (Philippians 2:26-30). This implies that he had been working with Paul for quite a while already. When Paul passed through Philippi on his 2nd Missionary Journey, Epaphroditus was probably there. On the 2nd Missionary Journey, Paul left Luke behind in Macedonia⁷⁷² and Luke worked with several others of the Seventy in Macedonia. On Paul's 3rd Missionary Journey, as he passed through Philippi again, Luke started traveling with Paul again. Probably Epaphroditus did so also and Hermas of the original Seventy was left behind in Philippi. Hermas thus became known as the first Bishop of Philippi.

Epaphroditus was later ordained as Bishop for Colophon in Pamphylia⁷⁷³.

Erastus: Erastus, the Steward of the Jerusalem Church and one of the original Seventy, was mentioned as one of Paul's deacons (Greek *diaconos*, sometimes translated minister) along with Timothy while Paul was in Ephesus on the 3rd Missionary Journey. Paul sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, but he himself stayed in Asia for a time" (Acts 19:21-22). He was also with Paul when Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans on the 3rd Missionary Journey (Romans 16:23). Probably Erastus joined Paul from Antioch. Erastus was at first⁷⁷⁴ a deacon and treasurer of the Church of Jerusalem. Erastus, being an expert in finances and stewardship⁷⁷⁵, went on to serve the Church of Jerusalem in the same capacity. Blessed Theophylact says⁷⁷⁶ that he served as steward for the Church at Corinth also. Dorotheus stated⁷⁷⁷ that Erastus was later Bishop of Paneas.

John Chrysostom pointed out⁷⁷⁸ something about Gaius and Erastus⁷⁷⁹. By hosting Paul (Romans 16:23), Gaius exhibited the strictness of his life as agreeable to Paul. By referring to Erastus, Paul was quick to point out that the Gospel had reached more than just the poor folks, and that high office and riches are not an impediment to the Kingdom of God.

"Notice what a crown Paul framed for Gaius by bearing witness to such great hospitality in him, and brought in the entire Church into Gaius' house!

⁷⁷¹ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, December 8.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for March 30, December 8.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2003, December 8.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

⁷⁷² See the section of "Paul" on the 2nd Missionary Journey titled "The Evangelist Luke Remained Behind in Philippi".

⁷⁷³ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, December 8.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2003, December 8

⁷⁷⁴ <http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for January 4.

⁷⁷⁵ The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, November 10.

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⁷⁷⁷ Dorotheus of Tyre, The Choosing of the Seventy Holy Apostles.

⁷⁷⁸ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans, XXXII, v. 23.

⁷⁷⁹ Erastus was native to Lystra. See Roberts and Donaldson, ed., "The Teaching of the Apostles", 10, in Memoirs of Edessa and Other Ancient Syriac Documents, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1995.

(Romans 16:23) When you hear that Gaius was Paul's host, do not admire him for his generosity only, but also for his strictness of life. Unless he were worthy of Paul's excellency, Paul would never have lodged there; Paul, who took pains to go beyond many of Christ's commands, would never have trespassed against that law, which asks us be very particular about who receives us, and about lodging with 'worthy' persons (Matthew 10:11). 'Erastus, the treasurer of the city, greets you, and Quartus a brother' (Romans 16:23). There is a purpose in Paul's adding 'the treasurer of the city'. As he wrote, 'All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household' (Philippians 4:22), that he might show that the Gospel had taken a hold on great folk. Here too Paul mentions the title with a view to the same object; he shows that, to the man who pays attention, neither riches, the cares of government, nor anything else of the kind are a hindrance."

Evodius: Evodius⁷⁸⁰ (also spelled Evodus, Euodius, Euodus) was the 1st Bishop of Antioch, and it was he who coined the term "Christian" as the Bishop of Antioch (Acts 11:26). Evodius never accompanied Paul on any of his Missionary Journeys, but it was Evodius who Paul reported back to after each of his first two Missionary Journeys (Acts 14:26-28; 18:22-23). Evodius was one of the original Seventy Apostles and was martyred in c. 64 AD by Vespasian, just before the destruction of Jerusalem, and he was then replaced as Bishop by Ignatius.

Evodius wrote several works, but all have been destroyed during the persecution of the Church at various times. One of these works was dedicated to the Virgin Mary and described the circumstances where she gave birth to Christ at the age of fifteen. We know about these works because they were quoted by various others at different times.

Fortunatus: Fortunatus was not one of the original Seventy Apostles, but may have been added to the ranks of the Seventy later⁷⁸¹. He carried⁷⁸² a letter to Paul from Corinth (1 Corinthians 16:15-17) along with Paul's reply, which we know as "1 Corinthians". He was later beheaded for the Faith.

Gaius: Gaius⁷⁸³ was one of the original members of the Seventy Apostles, yet Paul felt it necessary to baptize Gaius in Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:14) on the 2nd Missionary Journey. Gaius had also been ordained an elder for the Church in Derbe on Barnabas and Paul's 1st Missionary

⁷⁸⁰ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, September 7.

<http://oca.org/FSLives.asp for September 8>.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, September 7.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

⁷⁸¹ The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2003, January 4.

<http://oca.org/FSLives.asp for January 4>.

Fortunatus is not listed as one of the Seventy by:

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

⁷⁸² For more details, see the section titled "Paul's Epistles to Corinth".

⁷⁸³ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, November 5.

<http://oca.org/FSLives.asp for November 5>.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, November 5.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

Journey. Gaius was still in Derbe when Paul and Silas returned on the 2nd Missionary Journey. Since Gaius was with Paul at the end of the 2nd Missionary Journey (Romans 16:23), Gaius must have started accompanying Paul and Silas as they began their 2nd Missionary Journey. Gaius then accompanied Paul on his 3rd Missionary Journey (Acts 19:29).

Paul refers to the baptism of Gaius and Crispus (1 Corinthians 1:14) as being the only two he baptized in Corinth besides the household of Stephanas. Since Paul wrote this from Ephesus on his way back to Corinth on the 3rd Missionary Journey, the baptism must have occurred on his first visit to Corinth on the 2nd Missionary Journey or at Derbe on the 1st Missionary Journey. Gaius must have started to accompany Paul on the 2nd Missionary Journey such that we now see him traveling with Paul when Paul arrived in Ephesus on his 3rd Missionary Journey (Acts 20:4). Gaius went on to become Bishop of Ephesus after Timothy.

Tertullian argued⁷⁸⁴ that Paul's mission was not to baptize, but to preach; however, Paul did baptize when necessity called for it. This suggests that the baptism of Gaius was some exceptional circumstance.

Paul said, 'For Christ sent me not to baptize' (1 Corinthians 1:17), as if by this argument baptism were done away! For if so, why did he baptize Gaius, Crispus, and the house of Stephanas? However, even if Christ had not sent him to baptize, yet He had given other apostles the precept to baptize. But these words were written to the Corinthians with respect to the circumstances of that particular time; where schisms and dissensions were agitated among them, while one attributed everything to Paul, another everything to Apollos. The 'peace-making' Apostle Paul, for fear he should seem to claim all gifts for himself, said that he had been sent 'not to baptize, but to preach'. Preaching comes first; baptizing comes second. Therefore, I think baptizing was permitted to him to whom preaching was the norm.

Hermas: Hermas was⁷⁸⁵ one of the original Seventy Apostles and was later Bishop of the city of Philippi⁷⁸⁶, where he died as a martyr. When Paul wrote to him as being in Rome in c. 55 AD (Romans 16:14), it does not appear that Paul knew him well, and it is not obvious which of the Twelve Apostles sent him to Rome; it may have been Luke who did so when Luke was in Macedonia. Hermas is best known for an instructive book he wrote called "The Shepherd", which was very popular in the first few centuries, and was treated as Scripture by many until the canon of the Scripture was settled in the late 4th century.

Hermes: Hermes was⁷⁸⁷ one of the original Seventy Apostles and was later Bishop of

⁷⁸⁴ Tertullian, *On Baptism*, III, ii, 14.

⁷⁸⁵ *The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church*, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, November 5.

Nikolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 8, May 31.

<http://oca.org/FSLives.asp> for March 8, May 31.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁷⁸⁶ There is some disagreement about this. Dorotheus says Dalmatia, which is near Philippi; the Prologue says Philippopolis instead of Philippi.

⁷⁸⁷ *The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church*, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2005, March 8; 2002, November 5.

Nikolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, November 5.

<http://oca.org/FSLives.asp> November 5.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

Dalmatia⁷⁸⁸. When Paul wrote to him as being in Rome in c. 55 AD (Romans 16:14), it does not appear that Paul knew him well, and it is not obvious which of the Twelve Apostles sent him to Rome.

Hermogenes: Hermogenes was⁷⁸⁹ one of the original Seventy Apostles, but he apostatized to follow the arch heretic Simon Magus. The Apostle Paul referred to Hermogenes:

“This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes” (2 Timothy 1:14-15).

Since Hermogenes had already apostatized before Paul was beheaded, his time in Ephesus must have been short-lived. When Paul spent two years in Ephesus (c. 56-58 AD), only the idolaters were in Ephesus⁷⁹⁰, not the heretics; similarly, when Paul wrote his Epistle to the Ephesians⁷⁹¹ (c. 62 AD). When Paul wrote his first Epistle to Timothy⁷⁹² (c. 64 AD), Paul asked Timothy to remain in Ephesus as Bishop, probably to counteract the teachings of Hermogenes and Phygellus⁷⁹³, who was Bishop there. Paul stated,

“As I urged you when I went into Macedonia -- remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach⁷⁹⁴ no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith” (1 Timothy 1:3-4).

This was a formidable task for Timothy, since Phygellus and Hermogenes were members of the original Seventy Apostles, but Timothy was not; besides, Timothy was probably much younger. This was something akin to Timothy coming to Ephesus and defrocking two archbishops.

Siding with Phygellus and Hermogenes against Timothy and Paul were Alexander, Hymenaeus and Philetus. Alexander and Hymenaeus were so bad that Paul felt it necessary to deliver them over to Satan for the destruction of their flesh in hope that they might be saved (1 Timothy 1:20). Paul stated to Timothy very strongly that he (Timothy) was involved in warfare against these heretics

“This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare” (1 Timothy 1:18).

Paul quoted Hymenaeus and Philetus as “straying concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some” (2 Timothy 2:18). Their

⁷⁸⁸ Dorotheus said that Hermes was Bishop of Philippopolis and Hermas was Bishop of Dalmatia, exactly backward from what others said.

⁷⁸⁹ Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5
Dorotheus of Tyre, The Choosing of the Seventy Holy Apostles.

⁷⁹⁰ See the sections titled:

“Paul’s Return to Ephesus”

“The Jewish Exorcists and the Magicians”

“The Controversy over the Temple of Diana”

“The Widespread Renown of the Apostle Paul”

“The Riot over the Temple of Diana”

“Onesiphorus Was Very Helpful to Paul in Ephesus”

⁷⁹¹ At this time Paul warned the Ephesians about the heresies of the followers of Simon Magus. Earlier Paul had warned the Ephesians that “savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock” (Acts 20:29).

⁷⁹² Phygellus was apparently one of these wolves, and he appears to have been Bishop of Ephesus at this time.

⁷⁹³ Phygellus was probably in league with Hermogenes, another member of the original Seventy Apostles who apostatized also. Alexander and Philetus (), not Apostles, helped Phygellus also.

⁷⁹⁴ Those charged with “teaching” were usually the Bishops.

concept was that our resurrection occurs as we come up out of the waters of baptism. As with many heresies, there was some insight into the importance and power of baptism, but with a twisted understanding.

Tertullian lumped together⁷⁹⁵ Hymenaeus, Philetus, Hermogenes and Phygellus in speaking of those who deserted Paul and the things of God, and he compared them to Judas Iscariot.

“The Scripture says, ‘Your eyes are upon the ways of the children of men’ (Jeremiah 32:19 LXX). ‘Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart’ (1 Samuel 16:7 LXX). ‘The Lord knows those who are His’ (2 Timothy 2:19); and ‘Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted’ (Matthew 15:13); and ‘So the last will be first, and the first last’ (Matthew 20:16); and He carries ‘His winnowing fan *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor’ (Matthew 3:12). Let the chaff of a fickle faith fly off as much as it will at every blast of temptation, all the purer will be that heap of grain which shall be laid up in the granary of the Lord. Did not certain of the disciples turn back from the Lord Himself, when they were offended? Yet the rest did not therefore think that they must turn away from following Him, but because they knew that He was the Word of Life, and had come from God, they continued in His company to the very last, after He had gently inquired of them whether they also would go away (John 6:66-67). It is a comparatively small thing, that certain men, like Phygellus, Hermogenes, Philetus, and Hymenaeus, deserted Paul (2 Timothy 1:15, 2:17; 1 Timothy 1:20); the betrayer of Christ was himself one of the apostles. We are surprised at seeing His churches forsaken by some men, although the things which we suffer after the example of Christ Himself, show us to be Christians. ‘They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us’” (1 John 2:19).

Herodion: Herodion traveled with Paul on many of Paul’s missionary journeys⁷⁹⁶ and Paul called him his kinsman (Romans 16:11) when Herodion was in Rome in c. 55 AD (at Peter’s and Paul’s request). He is often confused with another person called Rhodion, who some think is just a contraction of Herodion. But the consensus seems to be that they were two different persons.

Hippolytus refers⁷⁹⁷ to Herodion as one of the original Seventy Apostles and the Bishop of Tarsus, but Herodion didn’t remain there long. Herodion was also referred to in some accounts as the Bishop of Neoparthia⁷⁹⁸ and in others as the Bishop of New Patras⁷⁹⁹, where he was severely beaten and left for dead by the idolaters and the Jews. But he miraculously survived and continued to accompany the Apostles Paul and Peter. Finally, he was beheaded by Emperor Nero in c. 67 AD on the same day that Peter was crucified and Paul was beheaded. The most likely sequence of events is that Herodion was the Presbyter (later called Bishop) of Tarsus before or during Paul’s 1st Missionary Journey; then he accompanied Paul on the 2nd Missionary

⁷⁹⁵ Tertullian, The Prescription Against Heretics, II, I, 3.

⁷⁹⁶ <http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for April 8.

⁷⁹⁷ Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

⁷⁹⁸ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 8.

⁷⁹⁹ The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2006, March 28.

Journey and part of the 3rd Missionary Journey. After that he was sent to Rome in c. 55 AD with the 17 other members of the Seventy Apostles who are addressed in Romans 16. After he completed his mission in Rome, he was assigned to help out in either Neoparthia or New Patras.

James: James was the step-brother of Jesus and one of the original Seventy Apostles. That is, he was the natural son of Joseph, the Virgin Mary's husband, from before he married the Virgin. After Pentecost, this James⁸⁰⁰ was chosen by Peter, James and John (the sons of Zebedee) as the first Bishop of Jerusalem. After Paul's conversion, James was there in Jerusalem to receive Paul and also to hustle him out of town to avoid a murder plot (Galatians 1:18-19; Acts 9:28-30). James asked Paul specifically to remember the poor in Jerusalem (Galatians 2:10), who were being persecuted by the confiscation of all their property.

When Paul returned to Jerusalem after the 1st Missionary Journey, it was James the Lord's brother who presided over the Council of Jerusalem regarding circumcision. It was he who insisted on drafting a letter to all the Gentile Churches stating that the Gentiles did not need to be circumcised (Acts 15:1-30).

When Paul returned to Jerusalem after the 3rd Missionary Journey, James insisted that Paul be purified by the Mosaic Law rituals (Acts 21:18-26) to show everyone that Paul kept the Law⁸⁰¹ (which Paul had been doing). James pointed out to Paul at this time how many thousands of his brethren had left the idolatry of the Pharisees and Sadducees to become Christians (Acts 21:20).

During Paul's two years in prison in Caesarea, while he was waiting for his appeal to Caesar in Rome to be processed, James sent a number of the brethren from Jerusalem to visit Paul since Paul was allowed free access to visitors (Acts 24:23-24).

After Paul was sent to Rome, comfortably out of the reach of the Jewish Zealots in Jerusalem, they took out their anger and frustration on Bishop James and murdered him⁸⁰² right in front of the Temple in c. 62 AD.

Jason: Jason was⁸⁰³ one of the original Seventy Apostles. Jason was a native of Tarsus and had been Bishop of Tarsus during Paul's 1st Missionary Journey. According to tradition⁸⁰⁴, Jason was still Bishop of Tarsus when Paul started his 2nd Missionary Journey⁸⁰⁵ and began

⁸⁰⁰ Note that James the Lord's brother (Galatians 1:19) is not the same person as James, the son of Alphaeus (Matthew 10:3, Mark 3:18, Luke 6:15, Acts 1:13). James the Lord's brother remained in Jerusalem the rest of his life and was murdered in front of the Temple in c. 62 AD. James the son of Alphaeus spent most of the rest of his life after Pentecost in Egypt and was crucified there.

⁸⁰¹ For more details on what James was doing by insisting on this, see the section titled: "What Was Bishop James' Methodology in Jerusalem?"

⁸⁰² For more details on the death of James, the Lord's brother, see the section titled: "The Murder of James the Lord's Brother in Jerusalem".

⁸⁰³ The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2005, April 29.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 28.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp#April28>.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

⁸⁰⁴ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 28.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp>, April 28

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁸⁰⁵ Jason is traditionally known as the Bishop of Tarsus, but he also was a key helper of Paul on the 2nd Missionary Journey in Thessalonica (Acts 17:5-9). After Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey, Jason teamed up with

traveling with Paul on the 2nd Missionary Journey. Jason evidently had a real vision for the impact that Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey would have on the world and wanted to join Paul. After leaving Philippi, Paul, Silas and Timothy visited Thessalonica, and stayed with Jason (Acts 17:7), who was now living in Thessalonica. Knowing that he would come to Thessalonica, Paul must have sent Jason ahead to obtain a house where everyone could stay when they got there. Again, Paul's preaching created an uproar, but Jason put up Paul's bail, and the brethren sent them away by night to Berea, which was also in Macedonia (Acts 17:10-12). Jason was worthy to be admired in how he put himself in danger for Paul's sake (Acts 17:5-9). We might note that just as Paul and Silas took a beating for the sake of the Christians in Philippi⁸⁰⁶ on the 2nd Missionary Journey, so Jason did in Thessalonica a few months later. Jason was imitating Paul; he was probably traveling with Paul and Silas and saw what happened in Philippi. Jason could see the benefit to others in taking a beating on their behalf (1 Thessalonians 2:1-2). Jason later joined up with Paul in Corinth (Romans 16:21) on the 3rd Missionary Journey, probably leaving Silvanus behind in Thessalonica as Bishop. On Paul's 3rd Missionary Journey, when he wrote Romans, Paul was staying in Corinth; with him in Corinth were Lucius, Jason and Sosipater (Romans 16:21), all members of the original Seventy and now doing Apostolic work with Paul. Jason later went on his own missionary journey to establish the Church on the Island of Corfu in the Peloponnesus (West coast of Greece), along with the Apostle of the Seventy, Sosipater⁸⁰⁷.

Justus: Justus, also known as Joseph, Barsabas, Judas (Acts 1:23, 15:22) and Jesus (Colossians 4:11), was Jesus' older step-brother (Matthew 13:55, Mark 6:3), one of the leading men in the Jerusalem Church, and himself a prophet (Acts 15:32). He was one of the original Seventy Apostles⁸⁰⁸ and he was one of two put forward to replace Judas Iscariot as one of the Twelve Apostles (Acts 1:15-26). Justus and Silas were sent to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas after the Council of Jerusalem to confirm the judgment of the Council that the Gentiles did not need to be circumcised (Acts 15:22-23). Silas continued with Paul on his 2nd Missionary Journey, but Justus returned to Jerusalem (Acts 15:32-34). Later Justus worked with Paul when Paul was under house-arrest in Rome (Colossians 4:11). Justus continued to be Bishop of Eleutheropolis⁸⁰⁹ and died there as a martyr. He is also credited⁸¹⁰ with writing a book called "Divine Peace".

Sosipater to evangelize the island of Corfu. The only time he could have been Bishop of Tarsus is prior to Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey.

⁸⁰⁶ For more details, see the section titled: "Paul and Silas Took a Beating for the Philippian Christians".

⁸⁰⁷ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 28.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for April 28.](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20April%2028)

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, April 29.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

⁸⁰⁸ The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 30.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 30.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for October 30.](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20October%2030)

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

⁸⁰⁹ Eleutheropolis was located just to the West of the Dead Sea.

⁸¹⁰ The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 30.

Linus: The only time we encounter Linus in the Scriptures is in c. 67 AD when Paul wrote to Timothy just before his death in Rome. Linus was Bishop of Rome at that time, but he died⁸¹¹ soon afterward in the 2nd year of Emperor Vespasian (i.e. 70 AD) after having been Bishop of Rome for 12 years. Yet Linus was one of the original Seventy Apostles⁸¹² appointed by the Lord Jesus (Luke 10). From tradition⁸¹³, Linus was the first Bishop of Rome (starting in c. 58 AD) and was ordained by Peter before Peter had to leave Rome. We note that this fits well with Romans 16; since Linus isn't mentioned by Paul, he had to have been ordained after 55 AD⁸¹⁴. This means that Linus was Bishop of Rome before the death of Peter⁸¹⁵. Ignatius of Antioch referred⁸¹⁶ to Linus as having been a deacon to the Apostle Paul at one time, just as Stephen was to James in Jerusalem. This must have occurred prior to 55 AD. From this we can conclude that Linus traveled with Paul during the 3rd Missionary Journey and possible the latter part of the 2nd Missionary Journey. Linus was martyred in Rome after Peter and Paul, and Clement became Bishop of Rome after that. It is quite possible⁸¹⁷ that Linus and Clement were co-presbyters for a while in Rome and that Clement, who was related to the Emperors, took over for Linus after Linus' death.

Lucius: Lucius⁸¹⁸ was Bishop of Laodicea in Northern Syria⁸¹⁹. When Paul wrote Romans, he was in the middle of his 3rd Missionary Journey and was staying in Corinth at the time. With him in Corinth were Lucius, Jason and Sosipater (Romans 16:21), all members of the original Seventy and now doing Apostolic work with Paul; they were also kinsmen of Paul (Romans 16:21).

⁸¹¹ From Eusebius of Caesarea, Church History, III, 13, Linus died in the second year of Emperor Vespasian or about 70 AD.

⁸¹² The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2005, November 5.

Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, November 5.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for November 5>.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

⁸¹³ Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies, III, iii, 3.

Eusebius of Caesarea, Church History, V, 6.

Jerome, Lives of Illustrious Men, 15.

Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, May 17.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for May 17>.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2006, May 17.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

⁸¹⁴ That is, Paul wrote Romans in c. 55 AD.

From Eusebius of Caesarea, Church History, III, 13, Linus was Bishop of Rome for 12 years

⁸¹⁵ There are some opinions that Linus, Anencletus and Clement were all co-presbyters in Rome for a while. See Roberts and Donaldson, ed., "Introductory Note to the First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians", in Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1, Hendrickson Publications, Peabody, MA, 1995.

⁸¹⁶ Ignatius of Antioch, Epistle to the Trallians, 7.

⁸¹⁷ Roberts and Donaldson, ed., "Introductory Note to the First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians", in Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1, Hendricksom Publications, Peabody, MA, 1995.

⁸¹⁸ The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, September 10.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for September 10>.

Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, September 10.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁸¹⁹ This is not the same Laodicea that was near Ephesus, and which was addressed by the Apostle John (Revelation 3:14-22).

Luke: Luke the Evangelist was⁸²⁰ one of the original Seventy Apostles, was native to Antioch and was trained as a physician (Colossians 4:14). In writing his Gospel, Luke addressed it to Theophilus (Luke 1:3, Acts 1:1), who was then governor of Antioch. Luke's writing style included more attention to details than the other Gospel writers.

Luke did not travel with Barnabas and Paul on the 1st Missionary Journey⁸²¹. We can see this from the text of Acts, where Luke describes the events of that time in the 3rd person⁸²² (they did this; they did that). On the 2nd Missionary Journey, Luke switches to the 1st person (we did this; we did that), indicating that Luke had joined Paul and Silas in Philippi on the 2nd Missionary Journey. Living in Antioch, Luke had become well-acquainted with Paul from the account that Paul brought back after the 1st Missionary Journey.

In the middle of the 2nd Missionary Journey, after Paul and Silas left Philippi, Luke was left behind with several others of the original Seventy Apostles to care for the Church that was established there. We can see this again from the text of Acts, where Luke switches back to the 3rd person (Acts 17:1) to describe the events of the remainder of the 2nd Missionary Journey and the beginning of the 3rd Missionary Journey⁸²³. As Paul passed through Macedonia on the 3rd Missionary Journey about 5 years later, Luke then rejoined Paul (Acts 20:5-6), where Paul left others behind in Macedonia to fill in for Luke. During those 5 years, Luke had done an admirable job working as an Apostle.

On the first part of the 4th Missionary Journey, that is the Journey to Rome in chains, Luke and Aristarchus accompanied Paul on the ship that was lost at sea. We can ascertain this also from Luke's use of the 1st person to describe these events⁸²⁴.

On the second part of the 4th Missionary Journey, that is, the two years of house-arrest in Rome, Luke's account ends⁸²⁵ before Paul was released from house-arrest. Most of those years, Luke was with Paul in his travels and in his house-arrest. As Paul was writing Epistles from Rome to Philemon, the Colossians, the Philippians, the Hebrews and the Ephesians, Luke was drafting his account of the Acts of the Apostles, with Paul reviewing it⁸²⁶. According to Dorotheus⁸²⁷, it was the Apostle Peter who had asked Luke to write the Acts of the Apostles.

After the death of Paul, Luke continued his work as an Apostle for almost 20 years, traveling from place to place: Italy, Dalmatia, Gaul and especially Macedonia, where he had spent 5 years earlier. When he was quite elderly, Luke traveled to Egypt and Libya, where he

⁸²⁰ The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 18.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 18.

[http://oca.org/FSLives.asp for October 18, January 4.](http://oca.org/FSLives.asp%20for%20October%2018,%20January%204)

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁸²¹ For more details, see the section: "Barnabas and Paul Take Their 1st Missionary Journey".

⁸²² Compare Acts 14:1-3, 16:4, 7 (they did this or that) with Acts 16:11, 16 (we did this or that). Luke stayed in Philippi (Acts 17:1), where we notice that Luke switches back to the 3rd person (they passed through..).

⁸²³ For more details, see the section:

"The Evangelist Luke Remained Behind in Philippi"

"Others of the Seventy Worked with Luke in Macedonia"

"Paul Picks Up Luke in Macedonia"

"Epaphroditus Also Joins Paul in Philippi"

⁸²⁴ For more details, see the section titled "The Beginning of the Journey to Rome".

⁸²⁵ John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LV, Recapitulation.

⁸²⁶ For example, see Philemon 1:22-24, Colossians 4:14-15.

⁸²⁷ Dorotheus of Tyre, The Choosing of the Seventy Holy Apostles

ordained as Bishop Abilius as successor to Annas, who had been ordained by the Evangelist Mark.

Luke returned to Greece and raised up a number of Churches, where the newly enlightened believers destroyed all the pagan shrines. At the age of 84, Luke was crucified on an olive tree in Achaia.

The Memoirs of Edessa state⁸²⁸ that Luke placed his record of the Acts of the Apostles in the hands of Priscilla and Aquila for safekeeping, and that they accompanied him after the death of Paul.

“Luke the evangelist had such diligence that he wrote the exploits of the Acts of the Apostles, and the ordinances and laws of the ministry of their priesthood, and where each one of them went. By his diligence, Luke wrote these things, and he placed them in the hand of Priscilla and Aquila, his disciples. They accompanied Luke up to the day of his death, just as Timothy and Erastus of Lystra, and Menaëus, the first disciples of the Apostles, accompanied Paul until he was taken up to the city of Rome because he had withstood Tertullus the orator” (Acts 24:1-21).

During his life, Luke created many icons, mostly of the Virgin Mary holding her young son, Jesus. He brought two of these to the Virgin Mary for her approval. Many of Luke’s original icons still exist.

Mark the Evangelist: Mark the Evangelist was⁸²⁹ one of the original Seventy Apostles and was a follower of the Apostle Peter, who sent him as Bishop to Alexandria⁸³⁰. Mark the Evangelist was native to Cyrene of Pentapolis, which is near Libya, and never had any contact with the Apostle Paul.

Mark the Cousin of Barnabas: This Mark was⁸³¹ one of the original Seventy Apostles and was later the Bishop of Apollonia in Samaria, just north of Joppa on the Mediterranean coast. Since Barnabas was native to Cyprus (Acts 4:36), Mark, his cousin, probably was also native to Cyprus. We don’t hear from this man named Mark until c. 62 AD when Paul is under house-arrest in Rome; then Mark, Barnabas’ cousin is there with Paul.

“I am sending Tychicus to you for this very purpose, that he may know your circumstances and comfort your hearts, with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is *one* of you. They will make known to you all things which *are happening* here. Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark

⁸²⁸ Roberts and Donaldson, ed., “The Teaching of the Apostles”, 8-10, in *Memoirs of Edessa*, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1995.

⁸²⁹ *The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church*, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, April 25.

Nikolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 25.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for April 25](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20April%2025).

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁸³⁰ For a detailed study of the life of Mark the Evangelist, see Mark Kern, *The Feast Day of Mark the Evangelist*, St. Athanasius Press, April 25, 2011.

⁸³¹ *The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church*, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 30.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

Nikolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 30.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for October 30](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20October%2030).

the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him), and Jesus who is called Justus. These *are my* only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are of the circumcision; they have proved to be a comfort to me” (Colossians 4:8-11).

Since Mark, the cousin of Barnabas was with Paul during the time of house-arrest, and since Paul wrote to the Colossians and to Philemon at about this time, Paul’s reference to Mark in his Epistle to Philemon probably also refers to Mark, the cousin of Barnabas (Philemon 1:23-24).

About five years later, Paul was back in Rome under hard arrest, where he knew that he would not escape this time. Demas of the original Seventy had just apostatized and only Luke was with Paul at this time. Paul asked Timothy to get Mark and bring him to Rome when he comes himself. This Mark is probably Barnabas’ cousin also.

“Be diligent to come to me quickly; for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica -- Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry. And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus” (2 Timothy 4:9-12).

John surnamed Mark: John Mark was⁸³² one of the original Seventy Apostles, and was later Bishop of Byblos in Phoenicia just north of Beirut on the Mediterranean coast. Since Byblos is just 140 miles north of Apollonia, it is easy to see how accounts of John Mark and Mark, the cousin of Barnabas could have gotten confused.

The family of John surnamed Mark lived in the Jerusalem area, which means that John Mark was probably native to the Jerusalem area. When an angel broke Peter out of prison, Peter first came to the house of John Mark’s mother to let them know that he was out (Acts 12:12-16), before he left town.

John, surnamed Mark, accompanied Barnabas and Paul on the 1st Missionary Journey, but he abandoned the Apostles⁸³³ when the first hardship came up as they started climbing the mountains toward Antioch of Pisidia. When it came time for the 2nd Missionary Journey, Barnabas wanted to take John Mark, but Paul didn’t. So, Barnabas took John Mark and headed to Cyprus, while Paul took Silas and headed overland to the Churches that he and Barnabas had established on the 1st Missionary Journey⁸³⁴.

Later in his life John Mark attained great boldness before God, so that his very shadow healed the sick⁸³⁵, just like Peter’s shadow had in earlier years (Acts 5:15).

Narcissus: Narcissus was⁸³⁶ one of the original Seventy Apostles and was sent to Rome

⁸³² The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, September 27.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for September 27>.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, September 27.

⁸³³ For details, see the section: “John Mark Abandons His Apostleship in Pamphylia”.

⁸³⁴ For details, see the section: “Visiting the Churches from the 1st Missionary Journey”.

⁸³⁵ <http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for September 27>.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, September 27.

by either the Apostle Andrew or Philip in c. 55 AD. Paul greeted him in Rome, but Paul may not have known Narcissus very well or he may not have worked with him very much since Paul didn't have much to say about him (Romans 16:11). Narcissus was made Bishop of Athens by either the Apostle Andrew or Philip, but this was quite a bit after 55 AD. Hierotheos was the first Bishop of Athens and died shortly after 55 AD, after which Paul consecrated Dionysius the Areopagite as Bishop of Athens. Narcissus must have followed Dionysius. He was later tortured and martyred in Athens.

Nicholas of Antioch: Nicholas was⁸³⁷ one of the original Seventy Apostles and also one of the first seven “deacons” (Acts 6:5). After Philip of the Seventy evangelized Samaria, Nicholas was sent⁸³⁸ to Samaria as Bishop. There he came under the corrupting influence of Simon Magus and began to deviate from the teachings of the Twelve Apostles in favor of Simon's teachings.

Nicholas never had any contact with the Apostle Paul, but his (and Simon's) teachings caused considerable trouble for the Apostle Paul and the Early Church. Each of Paul's Epistles deals⁸³⁹ with some aspect of the teachings of Simon (and Nicholas).

Olympas: Olympas was one of the original members of the Seventy Apostles and a follower of the Apostle Peter⁸⁴⁰. Olympas traveled continuously with Peter and never got a chance to settle down as Bishop of any city. In c. 67 AD, when Peter was crucified and Paul was beheaded, Olympas was beheaded at Nero's command also.

Onesimus: Onesimus was⁸⁴¹ probably not one of the original members of the Seventy,

⁸³⁶ The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 31; 2002, November 14. The reference included in the history of the Apostle Philip on November 14 could be another man named Narcissus.

Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 31.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for March 16, October 31>.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁸³⁷ Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁸³⁸ For considerably more details on the life of Nicholas of Antioch, see Mark Kern, The First Seven Deacons, St. Athanasius Press, 2007.

⁸³⁹ For example, see the sections:

“Paul Wrote to the Colossians”

“Paul Wrote to the Philippians”

“Paul Probably Wrote to the Hebrews at This Time”

“Paul Wrote to the Ephesians”

“Paul Wrote to Timothy the First Time”

“Paul Wrote to Titus”

“Paul Wrote to Timothy Again”

See also Mark Kern, Simon Magus the Heresiarch, St. Athanasius Press, 2004 at

<http://www.stathanasius.org/resources/bible-study-downloads/>.

⁸⁴⁰ Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, November 10.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for November 10>.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, November 10.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁸⁴¹ The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, February 15.

Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, February 15.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for February 15>.

but he may have been added later. He was originally a slave of Philemon, who stole something of Philemon's and headed to Rome. In Rome, he met⁸⁴² the Apostle Paul, who was still under house-arrest, and Paul converted him and baptized him (Philemon 1:10). After serving Paul in Rome for a while, Paul sent Onesimus to Colossae, along with Tychicus, to deliver his Epistle to the Colossians, and after that to deliver his Epistle to Philemon (Colossians 4:7-9). Paul asked for Philemon's blessing to free Onesimus, which Philemon did, and Onesimus continued to travel with Paul when Paul was released from house-arrest.

After the death of Paul, Onesimus was made Bishop of Berea⁸⁴³. As an old man during the reign of Trajan (98 AD to 117 AD), Onesimus was arrested, taken to Rome, tortured for many days, and finally martyred in Puteoli according to Dorotheus⁸⁴⁴.

Onesiphorus: Onesiphorus was⁸⁴⁵ one of the original members of the Seventy Apostles and Paul and Silas stayed at his house⁸⁴⁶ while they were in Iconium on the 2nd Missionary Journey. Onesiphorus had a wife and some children⁸⁴⁷, but they were not recorded as traveling with him; perhaps the children were too young. Onesiphorus was very helpful⁸⁴⁸ to Paul in Ephesus on Paul's 3rd Missionary Journey, and he probably began traveling with Paul beginning with the 2nd Missionary Journey. Onesiphorus was still in Ephesus, now helping Timothy, when Paul was about to be executed (2 Timothy 4:19).

After Paul's death in c. 67 AD, Onesiphorus was Bishop of Colophon, which is located between Ephesus and Smyrna. He was martyred there by being drawn and quartered⁸⁴⁹. Dorotheus stated⁸⁵⁰ that at one time he was also Bishop of Cyrene.

Parmenas: Parmenas was⁸⁵¹ one of the original Seventy Apostles and also one of the first Seven Deacons. Parmenas was ordained Bishop of the city of Soli on Cyprus, but he became sick shortly afterward and died in Jerusalem in front of the Apostles. Others say⁸⁵² that Parmenas' sickness came much later during the reign of Trajan (98 – 117 AD).

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁸⁴² For details, see the section titled: "Paul Met Onesimus in Rome".

⁸⁴³ Some think that this Onesimus was Bishop of Ephesus after Timothy. This is probably not the case. See the section titled: "Paul Met Onesimus in Rome".

⁸⁴⁴ Dorotheus of Tyre, *The Choosing of the Seventy Holy Apostles*.

⁸⁴⁵ *The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church*, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, September 7.

Nikolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, September 7.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for September 7>.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁸⁴⁶ For details, see the section titled: "The Church of Iconium in Galatia".

⁸⁴⁷ *The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church*, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, September 24.

⁸⁴⁸ For details, see the section titled: "Onesiphorus Was Very Helpful to Paul in Ephesus".

⁸⁴⁹ That is, he was bound behind four wild horses, and the horses were chased off in four directions. In most cases, both arms and one leg would be ripped off, and his body would be dragged along by one of the horses. Centuries later, this kind of execution came to be called "Drawn and quartering". Betting may have also occurred regarding which of the four horses dragged his body.

⁸⁵⁰ Dorotheus of Tyre, *The Choosing of the Seventy Holy Apostles*.

⁸⁵¹ *The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church*, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2008, July 28.

Nikolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, July 28.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁸⁵² <http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for July 28>

Patrobus: Patrobus (also spelled Patrobulus) was⁸⁵³ one of the original Seventy Apostles and was later Bishop of Naples and Puteoli in Italy. When he was sent to Rome in c. 55 AD, he didn't have very far to go. When Paul wrote to him as being in Rome in c. 55 AD (Romans 16:14), it does not appear that Paul knew him well, and it is not obvious which of the Twelve Apostles sent him to Rome.

Philemon & Apphia: Philemon was⁸⁵⁴ one of the original members of the Seventy Apostles and Apphia was his wife and helper in everything he did. Philemon and Apphia were very wealthy and were also very close to the Apostle Paul along with Epaphras and Archippus in Colossae. While Archippus was the Bishop of Colossae, Philemon was a roving Bishop in charge of Colossae and neighboring towns – possibly like an archbishop today. As Philemon traveled around to various towns near Colossae, Apphia worked with the local poor and prepared her house in Colossae for the Church to meet in. At the time that Paul spent two years in Ephesus (c. 53 to 55 AD); the Church in Colossae was getting started, probably at the hands of Epaphras.

When Paul wrote his Epistle to Philemon, the primary issue he addressed was the status of Philemon's former slave Onesimus. Onesimus had stolen something of Philemon's and headed to Rome. In Rome, Onesimus met⁸⁵⁵ the Apostle Paul, who was still under house-arrest, and Paul converted him and baptized him (Philemon 1:10). After serving Paul in Rome for a while, Paul sent Onesimus to Colossae, along with Tychicus, to deliver his Epistle to Philemon (Colossians 4:7-9). Paul asked for Philemon's blessing to free Onesimus, which Philemon did, and Onesimus continued to travel with Paul when Paul was released from house-arrest. At the same time that Paul wrote about Onesimus, he also asked Philemon to prepare a guest-room for him for when he visits Colossae next, since Paul had either never been to Colossae, or had been there only briefly.

Philemon, Apphia and Archippus were martyred⁸⁵⁶ by the pagans of that area about the same time as the Apostle Paul during the last years of Emperor Nero. During a pagan festival, some of the rioters stormed into the Church that met in Philemon's and Apphia's house and they dragged off Philemon, Apphia and Archippus to the local magistrate. Archippus was stabbed to death en route, while Philemon and Apphia were later buried up to their waist and stoned to death.

Philip: Philip⁸⁵⁷ was a Samaritan, born in Caesarea and one of the original Seventy

⁸⁵³ The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, November 5.

Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, November 5.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for November 5.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁸⁵⁴ The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, November 22.

Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, February 19.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for February 19, November 22.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁸⁵⁵ For details, see the section titled: "Paul Met Onesimus in Rome".

⁸⁵⁶ <http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for February 19, November 22.

⁸⁵⁷ Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 11.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 11.

Apostles⁸⁵⁸; he was Bishop of the city of Caesarea, where he lived with his four virgin daughters who were prophetesses (Acts 21:8-9). We need to distinguish this Philip from the Philip who was one of the Twelve Apostles (Matthew 10:3, Mark 3:18, Luke 6:14). Philip of the Seventy was also chosen as one of the first “deacons” along with Stephen (Acts 6:5). Philip of the Seventy worked a great deal of wonders such that he astonished the magician Simon Magus in Samaria (Acts 8:13). When Peter and John came to Samaria, Simon tried to purchase the Gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:18) so that he could do what they were doing. Peter told Simon in effect, “Take your money and go to hell” (Acts 8:20). After Philip left Samaria, the Apostles in Jerusalem sent Nicholas of Antioch to Samaria as Bishop, but Nicholas was corrupted by Simon and he later apostatized to follow Simon’s teachings.

In the meantime, Philip was called by the Holy Spirit to speak to the Ethiopian eunuch on the road to Gaza (Acts 8:26-38). Philip did so and thus he sent the message of the Resurrection to Ethiopia. Shortly after this, Matthew and Matthias of the Twelve Apostles went to Ethiopia themselves.

After the Ethiopian eunuch was baptized, Philip was caught up by the Holy Spirit and was teleported to Azotus – about 40 miles away (Acts 8:39-40).

We don’t hear from Philip of the Seventy for over 25 years, and by then he was Bishop of Caesarea. Paul passed through Caesarea at that time on his way to Jerusalem and four years of captivity. Paul stayed at the house of Philip (Acts 21:8-10), where we notice that Philip has four virgin daughters who are prophetesses. Philip’s daughters would be in their early 30’s at this time.

Philip went on to become Bishop of the city of Tralles in Asia Minor, where he converted many pagans, and eventually died of old age.

Philologus and Julia: Philologus (with his wife Julia) was⁸⁵⁹ one of the original Seventy Apostles and was later ordained by the Apostle Andrew as Bishop of Sinope (near the Black Sea). When Paul wrote to him as being in Rome in c. 55 AD (Romans 16:15), it does not appear that Paul knew him well, and it is probably Andrew of the Twelve Apostles, who sent him to Rome.

Phlegon: Phlegon⁸⁶⁰ was one of the original Seventy Apostles and was Bishop of the city of Marathon in Thrace, where he was martyred. When Luke spent about 5 years in Macedonia, Phlegon probably worked with Luke. When Paul wrote to him as being in Rome in c. 55 AD

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for October 11.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁸⁵⁸ For many more details about the life of the Deacon Philip, see Mark Kern, *The First Seven Deacons*, St. Athanasius Press, 2011.

⁸⁵⁹ *The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church*, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, November 5.

Nikolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, November 5.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for November 5.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁸⁶⁰ *The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church*, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2005, April 8.

Nikolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 8.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for April 8.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

(Romans 16:14), it does not appear that Paul knew him well, and it is not obvious which of the Twelve Apostles sent him to Rome.

Phygellus: Phygellus was⁸⁶¹ one of the original Seventy Apostles, but he apostatized to follow the arch heretic Simon Magus. The Apostle Paul referred to Phygellus:

“This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes” (2 Timothy 1:14-15).

Hippolytus referred to Phygellus as the Bishop of Ephesus⁸⁶², yet this is not recorded in any of Paul’s letters. Since Phygellus had already apostatized before Paul was beheaded, Phygellus’ time as Bishop of Ephesus must have been short-lived. When Paul spent two years in Ephesus (c. 56-58 AD), only the idolaters were prominent in Ephesus⁸⁶³, not the heretics; similarly, when Paul wrote his Epistle to the Ephesians⁸⁶⁴ (c. 62 AD). When Paul wrote his first Epistle to Timothy⁸⁶⁵ (c. 64 AD), Paul asked Timothy to remain in Ephesus as Bishop, probably to counteract the teachings of Phygellus⁸⁶⁶ who was Bishop there. Paul stated,

“As I urged you when I went into Macedonia -- remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach⁸⁶⁷ no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith” (1 Timothy 1:3-4).

This was a formidable task for Timothy, since Phygellus was a member of the original Seventy Apostles, but Timothy was not; besides, Timothy was probably much younger.

Siding with Phygellus and against Timothy and Paul were Hermogenes⁸⁶⁸, Alexander, Hymenaeus and Philetus. Alexander and Hymenaeus were so bad that Paul felt it necessary to deliver them over to Satan for the destruction of their flesh in hope that they might be saved (1 Timothy 1:20). Paul stated to Timothy very strongly that he (Timothy) was involved in warfare against these heretics

“This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare” (1 Timothy 1:18).

Paul quoted Hymenaeus and Philetus as “straying concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some” (2 Timothy 2:18). Their concept was that our resurrection occurs as we come up out of the waters of baptism. As with

⁸⁶¹ Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5
Dorotheus of Tyre, The Choosing of the Seventy Holy Apostles.

⁸⁶² Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

⁸⁶³ See the sections titled:

“Paul’s Return to Ephesus”

“The Jewish Exorcists and the Magicians”

“The Controversy over the Temple of Diana”

“The Widespread Renown of the Apostle Paul”

“The Riot over the Temple of Diana”

“Onesiphorus Was Very Helpful to Paul in Ephesus”

⁸⁶⁴ At this time Paul warned the Ephesians about the heresies of the followers of Simon Magus. Earlier Paul had warned the Ephesians that “savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock” (Acts 20:29).

⁸⁶⁵ Phygellus was apparently one of these wolves, and he appears to have been Bishop of Ephesus at this time.

⁸⁶⁶ Phygellus was probably in league with Hermogenes, another member of the original Seventy Apostles who apostatized also. Alexander and Philetus (), not Apostles, helped Phygellus also.

⁸⁶⁷ Those charged with “teaching” were usually the Bishops.

⁸⁶⁸ Hermogenes was also one of the original Seventy Apostles who apostatized.

many heresies, there was some insight into the importance and power of baptism, but with a twisted understanding.

Tertullian lumped together⁸⁶⁹ Hymenaeus, Philetus, Hermogenes and Phygellus in speaking of those who deserted Paul and the things of God, and he compared them to Judas Iscariot.

“The Scripture says, ‘Your eyes are upon the ways of the children of men’ (Jeremiah 32:19 LXX). ‘Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart’ (1 Samuel 16:7 LXX). ‘The Lord knows those who are His’ (2 Timothy 2:19); and ‘Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted’ (Matthew 15:13); and ‘So the last will be first, and the first last’ (Matthew 20:16); and He carries ‘His winnowing fan *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor’ (Matthew 3:12). Let the chaff of a fickle faith fly off as much as it will at every blast of temptation, all the purer will be that heap of grain which shall be laid up in the granary of the Lord. Did not certain of the disciples turn back from the Lord Himself, when they were offended? Yet the rest did not therefore think that they must turn away from following Him, but because they knew that He was the Word of Life, and had come from God, they continued in His company to the very last, after He had gently inquired of them whether they also would go away (John 6:66-67). It is a comparatively small thing, that certain men, like Phygellus, Hermogenes, Philetus, and Hymenaeus, deserted Paul (2 Timothy 1:15, 2:17; 1 Timothy 1:20); the betrayer of Christ was himself one of the apostles. We are surprised at seeing His churches forsaken by some men, although the things which we suffer after the example of Christ Himself, show us to be Christians. ‘They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us’” (1 John 2:19).

Prochorus: Prochorus was⁸⁷⁰ one of the original Seventy Apostles and was also one of the first seven deacons. For most of his life he was a follower of the Apostle John, and John dictated his Gospel, his Epistles and the Book of Revelation to Prochorus.

At first, Prochorus was a follower of the Apostle Peter; but after the dormition of the Virgin Mary in the mid 50’s AD, Prochorus became a companion of the Apostle John. Prochorus suffered along with John on the Island of Patmos, and he wrote down the words John dictated in composing the Book of Revelation.

After the death of the Apostle John, Prochorus was appointed Bishop of Nicomedia in Asia Minor which is about 50 miles from Byzantium.

Pudens: Pudens⁸⁷¹ was one of the original Seventy Apostles and was a Roman Senator at

⁸⁶⁹ Tertullian, The Prescription Against Heretics, II, I, 3.

⁸⁷⁰ The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2008, July 28.

Nicolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, July 28.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for July 28](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20July%2028).

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁸⁷¹ The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2005, April 14.

Nicolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 15.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for April 15](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20April%2015).

one time. He never served as a Bishop, like most of the rest of the Seventy. Pudens' home in Rome served as a Church where Peter himself served as priest. Just before Paul's death, we notice that Pudens was with Paul in Rome. Pudens was martyred in Rome by Emperor Nero shortly after Peter and Paul.

Quartus: Quartus is only mentioned as being with Paul in Corinth on the 3rd Missionary Journey when Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans (Romans 16:23). Quartus was known⁸⁷² as the Bishop of Beirut, and he probably joined Paul before the beginning of the 3rd Missionary Journey when Paul was in Jerusalem. Quartus later returned to Beirut, probably when Paul returned to Jerusalem at the end of the 3rd Missionary Journey. He converting many Greek pagans to the Lord in Beirut, and then reposed in peace.

Rhodium: Rhodion (or Rodion) is listed as one of the original Seventy Apostles by both Hippolytus⁸⁷³ and Dorotheus of Tyre⁸⁷⁴ as a separate individual than Herodion, who was also one of the original Seventy Apostles. Later lists of the Seventy Apostles refer to Rhodion and Herodion as the same person. Dorotheus stated⁸⁷⁵ that it was Rhodion and not Herodion who was martyred with the Apostle Peter in Rome in c. 67 AD.

Rufus: Rufus⁸⁷⁶ was the son of Simon of Cyrene, who carried Jesus' cross for Him (Mark 15:21), and was probably among those from Cyprus and Cyrene who founded the Church in Antioch⁸⁷⁷ (Acts 11:20). Rufus traveled with Paul to some extent and Paul greeted Rufus warmly, along with Rufus' mother in c. 55 AD (Romans 16:13). Rufus was ordained Bishop of the Greek city of Thebes (30 miles northwest of Athens) and died there as a martyr for Christ. Rufus was especially noted⁸⁷⁸ for his godliness.

John Chrysostom paid complements⁸⁷⁹ to Rufus and his mother, who was in Rome with her son. This does not mean that Paul and Rufus were brothers; it just means that Rufus' mother was a special lady.

“Paul wrote to Rome, ‘Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine’ (Romans 16:13). Here again the good things are without any drawback, since the son and the mother are each of such a character, the house is

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁸⁷² The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, November 10.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, November 10.
<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for November 10>.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁸⁷³ Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁸⁷⁴ Dorotheus of Tyre, The Choosing of the Seventy Holy Apostles. For the significance of Hippolytus' and Dorotheus' list of the Seventy Apostles, see Appendix B.

⁸⁷⁵ Dorotheus of Tyre, The Choosing of the Seventy Holy Apostles.

⁸⁷⁶ The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2005, April 8.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 8.
<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for April 8>.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁸⁷⁷ See Mark Kern, The Apostle Paul, St. Athanasius Press, 2014, the section titled, “The Scattering of the Saints after the Death of Stephen”.

⁸⁷⁸ Eusebius of Caesarea, Church History, III, 36.

⁸⁷⁹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans, XXXI, v. 12.

full of blessing, and the root agrees with the fruit. Paul would not have simply said, ‘his mother and mine’, unless he had been bearing testimony to the woman for great virtue.”

Silas: Silas⁸⁸⁰ was one of the original Seventy Apostles; he was also one of the leading men in Jerusalem (Acts 15:22) and a prophet (Acts 15:32). We first hear about Silas when Bishop James of Jerusalem sent him to Antioch along with the letter drafted by the Council in Jerusalem. Silas and Justus Barsabas, Jesus’ step-brother, were assigned to confirm the contents of the letter among the Gentiles. After doing this, Justus returned to Jerusalem, but Silas stayed in Antioch and accompanied Paul on the 2nd Missionary Journey.

Since the Apostle Silas was present at the Council of Jerusalem, he saw the results of the work of Paul first hand. Being a prophet in the Church of Jerusalem (Acts 15:32), Silas understood the significance of what Paul was doing and the work of the Holy Spirit in Paul. And Silas greatly desired to be part of this work.

As Paul left on his 2nd Missionary Journey with Silas, Silas served to further confirm this letter from the Church in Jerusalem to the Gentiles everywhere Paul went. The result of Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians⁸⁸¹ followed by the visit of Paul and Silas with the letter from the Church in Jerusalem was an authoritative rebuke for everyone who had been trying to push circumcision on the Galatians.

From the text of Luke’s account in Acts, Silas was with Paul when they arrived in Corinth (Acts 18:5), but he did not accompany Paul when Paul left Corinth (Acts 18:18). According to tradition, Silas was the first Bishop of Corinth. Silas thus became the Bishop who was presiding at Corinth when Corinth developed the factions favoring Paul, Cephas, Apollo and Christ. Silas was still in Corinth when Paul passed through on the 3rd Missionary Journey.

Silas remained in Corinth for the rest of his life and died there in peace.

Silvanus: Silvanus⁸⁸² was one of the original Seventy Apostles and he is sometimes confused with Silas even though both were members of the original Seventy Apostles. Silvanus probably began traveling with the Apostle Paul early on the 2nd Missionary Journey. When Paul got to Thessalonica, Silvanus stayed behind⁸⁸³ with Jason, who had put up Paul’s bail. Silvanus later became known as the Bishop of Thessalonica.

When Paul was in Corinth on the 2nd Missionary Journey, Silvanus joined Paul for a while as Paul wrote two Epistles to the Church in Thessalonica. Silvanus was there with Paul when Paul wrote both these Epistles (1 Thessalonians 1:1, 2 Thessalonians 1:1, 2 Corinthians 1:19).

⁸⁸⁰ The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2008, July 30.

Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, July 30.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for July 30](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20July%2030).

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁸⁸¹ For a summary of the effect of Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians, where Paul referred to those pushing circumcision as “accursed” (Galatians 1:6-9), see the section titled “Paul Probably Wrote to the Galatians at this Time”.

⁸⁸² The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2008, July 30.

Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, July 30.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for July 30](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20July%2030).

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁸⁸³ For more details, see the sections titled:

“The Church in Thessalonica”

“The Reaction of the Jews”

Silvanus also worked briefly with the Apostle Peter (1 Peter 5:12), where Silvanus apparently carried Peter's first Epistle around to various Churches.

Silvanus, according to tradition⁸⁸⁴, was an older man and he ended his life in Thessalonica.

Sosipater: Sosipater, Paul's kinsman (Romans 16:21), and originally from Berea (Acts 20:4) and had been ordained elder (that is, presbyter) of Iconium on Barnabas' and Paul's 1st Missionary Journey⁸⁸⁵. On the 2nd Missionary Journey, he left Iconium and began traveling with Paul and Silas, where he was replaced in Iconium by Tertius, also of the Seventy. He continued to travel with Paul on the 3rd Missionary Journey and he was with Paul in Corinth in c. 55 AD when Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans (Romans 16:21-22). When the Jews plotted against Paul as he was about to sail to Syria, Paul decided to return through Macedonia. Sosipater of Berea accompanied him to Asia -- also Aristarchus, Gaius, Timothy, Tychicus and Trophimus. These men, going ahead, waited at Troas. Paul sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days joined them at Troas, where they stayed seven days (Acts 20:1-6). Sosipater later went on his own missionary journey to establish the Church on the Island of Corfu, along with the Apostle of the Seventy, Jason⁸⁸⁶.

Sosthenes: We know Sosthenes as the ruler of the synagogue in Corinth who replaced Crispus when Crispus started following Paul. But Sosthenes was⁸⁸⁷ also one of the original Seventy Apostles. We also need to ask why Sosthenes would backslide from his calling as an Apostle to become synagogue ruler. Why didn't he believe before Paul came? This was now over 20 years after the Crucifixion, and some people may have changed. There was some backsliding among Jesus' disciples earlier. For example, in John 6:66, some of Jesus' disciples walked with Him no more after He said if we don't eat His body and drink His blood (the Lord's Supper), we have no life in us (John 6:54). Another factor with the Seventy was the possibility that they were in Jerusalem only for Passover and then left shortly afterward. So, after they returned from being sent out two by two, they may have gone home to their native country and weren't present for the Resurrection and Pentecost.

After a year and a half of Paul's stay in Corinth, the Jews couldn't take it any longer and hauled Paul to the judgment seat of the proconsul for Achaia named Gallio. Gallio wouldn't even listen to the Jews' complaint so the Jews instead vented their wrath against Sosthenes,

⁸⁸⁴ The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2008, July 30.

⁸⁸⁵ Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, November 10, April 28. See: [http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for October 30, November 10](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20October%2030,%20November%2010).
The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, November 10.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

⁸⁸⁶ Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 28.
[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for April 28](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20April%2028).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, April 29.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

⁸⁸⁷ Nikolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, December 8.
[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for December 8](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20December%208).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, December 8.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

beating him in front of the judgment seat. Sosthenes was probably just trying to be the peacemaker and win over his fellow Jews like James was doing in Jerusalem. About three years later, when Paul wrote to the Corinthians from Ephesus (on his way to Corinth), Sosthenes was now traveling⁸⁸⁸ with Paul as an Apostle (1 Corinthians 1:1).

On Paul's 3rd Missionary Journey when he was at Ephesus, Paul sent Sosthenes to Corinth to find out what was going on. Sosthenes came back to Ephesus at the direction of Silas to seek Paul out with a report on what was going on. Following Paul's letter-writing (i.e. after Paul's 4th letter to Corinth), Sosthenes probably traveled back to Corinth with Paul.

Sosthenes went on to become Bishop of Colophon in Asia Minor, between Ephesus and Smyrna, perhaps after Onesiphorus was martyred there; Sosthenes died in peace in Colophon.

Stachys: Stachys was one of the original Seventy Apostles and was made Bishop of Byzantium⁸⁸⁹ by the Apostle Andrew. Stachys built a Church at Argyropolis, (near Byzantium) and more than 2000 people gathered there to hear him preach. He was a good shepherd to his flock, tirelessly laboring for their salvation and died in peace after being there 16 years. Argyropolis means "silver city" in Greek and there are several cities by that name, making the exact location hard to identify. Stachys was sent to Rome in c. 55 AD by the Apostle Andrew (Romans 16:9), along with seventeen others of the Seventy (Romans 16:3-15) to counteract heresy⁸⁹⁰ that developed there. Since Paul greeted Stachys as "my beloved", this implies that Paul had worked with him to some extent prior to 55 AD⁸⁹¹. Paul is not recorded as having been to Byzantium, but Troas is about 150 miles from Byzantium; it is quite possible that Paul met Stachys at Troas as he was passing back and forth between Ephesus and Philippi. Stachys was ordained bishop of Byzantium⁸⁹² by Andrew probably in the late 50's AD.

John Chrysostom noted⁸⁹³ how Paul heaped praise on some of those he worked with such as Amplias, Urbanus and Stachys. This says a great deal about the character of these men.

⁸⁸⁸ For more details of Sosthenes' journey back as an Apostle, see the sections titled:

"Silas and Timothy Arrive from Macedonia"

"The Jews Create a Disturbance Again"

⁸⁸⁹ Nickolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 31.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp#October31>.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2008, October 31.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

⁸⁹⁰ For more information, see Mark Kern, *Simon Magus the Heresiarch*, St Athanasius Press, 2004.

⁸⁹¹ Because Paul refers to him in such a warm, personal manner, it is very probable Paul worked with him prior to his arrival in Rome. If Paul didn't work with them in Macedonia (Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea) or Achaia (Athens and Corinth) on his 2nd Missionary Journey, he must have done so on his 3rd Missionary Journey just prior to the drafting of the letter to the Romans. Most likely, however, would be that Paul worked with them in Macedonia, on his 2nd Missionary Journey. On his 3rd Missionary Journey, there may have been a very good report concerning him as Paul passed through Macedonia heading for Corinth -- therefore the term "my beloved".

⁸⁹² Stachys as Bishop of Byzantium became controversial centuries later. The Bishop of the Church of Rome was regarded throughout Christendom as the spokesman, or "first among equals", for the Church, since Rome was where the emperor lived. But when Constantine moved the center of government to Constantinople (former Byzantium), the question arose whether the Bishop of Constantinople should now be the first among equals. One of the arguments against the Bishop of Constantinople stated that Constantinople didn't even have an Apostolic origin. While this is not the case, the Church of Byzantium was not an important center of Christianity prior to Constantine.

⁸⁹³ John Chrysostom, *Commentary on Acts*, XXXI, vv. 8-9.

“Paul stated, ‘Greet Amplias my beloved, Urbanus, my helper in the Lord and Stachys, my beloved’ (Romans 16:8-9). Paul passes praise upon their persons by his love. The love of Paul was for God, carrying countless blessings with it. If being loved by the king is a great thing, what a great praise must it be to be beloved by Paul? If they had not acquired great virtue, they would not have attracted his love. Those who live in vice and transgressions Paul is accustomed not only to abstain from loving them, but even to anathematize them. He says, ‘If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed’ (1 Corinthians 16:22); and, ‘If any man preaches any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed’” (Galatians 1:8).

Stephen: Stephen was⁸⁹⁴ one of the original Seventy Apostles and also one of the first seven Deacons. He was stoned to death by the Jewish Zealots after he challenged their concept of the work of God (Acts 6:8-7:60). In speaking with Stephen, the Zealots were not able to “resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke” (Acts 6:10). Just like they did later with the Apostle Paul⁸⁹⁵, they misrepresented Stephen’s views and accused him of blasphemy before the Sanhedrin. False witnesses were brought in to accuse him of speaking against Moses, the Temple and the Law, just as had been done against Christ (Matthew 24:1-2, 26:61, 27:40 Mark 13:1-2, 14:58, 15:29).

When Stephen was permitted to defend himself, he spoke of Old Testament prophecies just as Paul later did⁸⁹⁶. Stephen concluded with, “Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God! (Acts 7:56) “Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast *him* out of the city and stoned *him*. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul” (Acts 7:57-58). Just before Stephen died, he said, just as Christ had said, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin” (Acts 7:60).

The Zealots left Stephen’s body for the dogs to eat; however, Gamaliel, a secret follower of Christ, came two days later and took Stephen’s body to Caphargamala and buried it in a cave on his own land. Gamaliel was later buried in the same place when he died.

Tertius: Sosipater, originally from Berea (Acts 20:4), served well as Presbyter in Iconium and was later replaced by Tertius⁸⁹⁷, also one of the Seventy, who wrote down Paul’s Epistle to the Romans (Romans 16:22). Sosipater and Tertius were both with Paul in Corinth in c. 55 AD when Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans (Romans 16:21-22). Sosipater later

⁸⁹⁴ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, December 27.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for December 27>.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2003, December 27.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

⁸⁹⁵ See for example the sections titled:

“The Accusation of the Jewish Zealots against Paul”, and

“Paul’s Response to the Accusations”

⁸⁹⁶ See for example the sections titled:

“Paul Addresses the Rioters”

⁸⁹⁷ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, November 10, October 30.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for October 30, November 10>.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, November 10.

Hippolytus, “On the Seventy Apostles”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

accompanied Paul to Asia (Acts 20:4) in c. 57 AD, and Tertius was probably in Iconium by that time, taking over for Sosipater as Bishop of Iconium, where he spent the rest of his life and died as a martyr.

Thaddaeus: Thaddaeus was born in Edessa and was⁸⁹⁸ one of the original Seventy Apostles; he is credited with bringing the Gospel to the city of Edessa.

Just before Jesus' Crucifixion, some Gentiles came to see Jesus from Edessa (John 12:21). These Gentiles were from King Abgar of Edessa, and they came to invite Jesus to Edessa to heal their king. Jesus knew that he was going to the Cross, and he couldn't go with them. But he instructed them in the ways of God by telling them about the grain of wheat, loving their own life, and serving Him (John 12:24-26). To let them know that this was for real, Jesus then said, "Father, glorify Your name" (John 12:28).

"Then a voice came from heaven, saying, 'I have both glorified it and will glorify it again'. Therefore, the people who stood by and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, 'An angel has spoken to Him'. Jesus answered and said, 'This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake'" (John 12:28-30).

Thus, Jesus assured the Gentiles from Edessa that their desires had been heard, and God the Father witnessed to this from heaven. In the event that Jesus could not come, Abgar had sent a painter along with the group, who had been instructed to paint an image of Jesus, which Abgar had faith would heal his leprosy. Anticipating this, Jesus took a piece of linen cloth, and pressed his face against it, forming an image of his face in the cloth. When the emissaries returned to Edessa, the "Holy Napkin" healed most of King Abgar's leprosy. After Pentecost, Thaddaeus returned to his homeland and healed Abgar of the rest of his disease. The "Holy Napkin" became one of the most famous icons of all time, and today the "Holy Napkin", otherwise known as The Mandylion, has its own Feast Day⁸⁹⁹.

King Abgar was catechized along with the entire city and the surrounding area. The idol worshippers in Edessa also tore down their altars and were baptized. Thaddaeus established many priests and deacons to serve the many new Churches in the Edessa area. Word spread to neighboring Assyria, which was utterly astonished by what was happening in Edessa, and many Churches sprang up in secret in Assyria. After this Thaddaeus traveled to Beirut, where he died in peace in the year 44 AD.

Timon: Timon was⁹⁰⁰ one of the original Seventy Apostles and served as Bishop of Bostra in Arabia. Bostra was one of the cities of the Decapolis where Jesus sent the Gadarene

⁸⁹⁸ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, August 21.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for August 21](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20August%2021).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2009, August 21.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

⁸⁹⁹ The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2009, August 16.

Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, August 16.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for August 16](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20August%2016).

⁹⁰⁰ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, December 30, July 28.

[http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for December 30, July 28](http://oca.org/FSlives.asp%20for%20December%2030,%20July%2028).

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2008, July 28.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

demoniacs after they were healed (Mark 5:20). It is also close to the place where Paul went after he was converted (Galatians 1:17), and Paul may have worked with Timon during his three years in Arabia.

Timon served well in Arabia and was later persecuted by the Jews and the pagans. When he was an old man, they threw him into a furnace to kill him. Some traditions say that he survived the furnace, only to be subsequently crucified. Others say that he died in the furnace.

Timothy: Timothy was not one of the original Seventy Apostles⁹⁰¹, but he was added to the ranks of the Seventy later and he is commemorated with the Seventy today. Paul first met Timothy⁹⁰² in Lystra (2 Timothy 3:11, Acts 16:1-2) on his 1st Missionary Journey and Barnabas and Paul ordained Timothy as an elder (or presbyter) for Lystra as they went back through the Churches⁹⁰³ on their return to Antioch (Acts 14:23). As Paul and Silas passed through these same Churches on the 2nd Missionary Journey, Timothy joined them⁹⁰⁴ in Lystra and continued to travel with them, where Artemas replaced Timothy in Lystra. Since Paul had to leave Thessalonica on short notice due to envy of the Jews, he sent Timothy back⁹⁰⁵ to Thessalonica from Athens to see how things were going with Jason and Silvanus, who was the new presbyter in Thessalonica. In the meantime, Timothy and Silas went with Paul to Berea. When Paul had to leave Berea on short notice also, Silas and Timothy stayed behind in Berea (Acts 17:14) to ordain elders⁹⁰⁶ for Berea. Shortly after Paul arrived in Athens from Berea, he sent some of the Apostles who were traveling with him to go back to Berea to get Silas and Timothy. By the time Silas and Timothy joined Paul, Paul was in Corinth. As soon as Silas and Timothy arrived in Corinth from Berea, Paul became much bolder in his testimony in the synagogue of Corinth (Acts 18:5). Timothy then accompanied Paul for the rest of the 2nd Missionary Journey and continued on the 3rd Missionary Journey.

Titus: Titus⁹⁰⁷ was with Barnabas and Paul on their 1st Missionary Journey, but he was not one of the original Seventy Apostles⁹⁰⁸; he was later added to the ranks of the Seventy and today he is commemorated with the Seventy.

When Paul and Barnabas returned and reported their results to the Church at Jerusalem, Titus was with them as a 3rd witness to the events, even though he was uncircumcised. The Apostles in Jerusalem accepted Titus as he was and did not compel him to be circumcised (Galatians 2:3). On the 1st Missionary Journey, Titus was just accompanying Barnabas and Paul; on the 3rd Missionary Journey, Titus played a much more prominent role in adjudicating the problems in Corinth (2 Corinthians 7:6-7, 12:12-13). Since Paul mentioned that Titus was his

⁹⁰¹ Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

⁹⁰² Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, January 22.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for January 22>.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2003, January 22.

⁹⁰³ See the section in this document titled: "Ordaining Elders and the Report Back to Antioch of Syria".

⁹⁰⁴ See the section in this document titled: "Visiting the Churches from the First Missionary Journey".

⁹⁰⁵ See the section in this document titled: "The Reaction of the Jews".

⁹⁰⁶ See the section in this document titled: "The Church in Berea".

⁹⁰⁷ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, August 25.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for August 25>.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, August 25.

⁹⁰⁸ Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", Ante-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

partner and fellow-worker (2 Corinthians 8:23), Titus probably accompanied Paul from the outset of the 3rd Missionary Journey.

After Paul's death, Titus spent the remainder of his life on Crete and died peacefully⁹⁰⁹ at the age of 97.

Trophimus: Trophimus was one of the original Seventy Apostles and we first encounter Trophimus⁹¹⁰ toward the end of Paul's 3rd Missionary Journey (Acts 20:4). He had obviously been following Paul for a while by then; since he was from Ephesus, we may presume that he began following Paul during the two years that Paul spent in Ephesus on the 3rd Missionary Journey. He continued to accompany Paul to Jerusalem, and he was so close to Paul that some of the Jews mistakenly assumed that Paul had brought him into the Temple (Acts 21:29). Almost 10 years later in c. 67 AD, Paul had to leave Trophimus in Miletus (near Ephesus) because he was very sick.

Trophimus never had the occasion to be Bishop of any city, since he was beheaded under Emperor Nero shortly after Paul was.

Tychicus of Asia: Tychicus⁹¹¹ was a native of Asia Minor⁹¹² (Acts 20:4). Since he was one of the original Seventy Apostles, he must have heard about Paul when Paul spent two years in Ephesus on his 3rd Missionary Journey, and he began following him after that. We see him following Paul toward the end of the 3rd Missionary Journey in c. 57 AD (Acts 20:4) and again being sent to Ephesus by Paul when Paul was still under house arrest in c. 62 AD (Ephesians 6:21). Besides going to Ephesus, Tychicus also went to nearby Colossae (Colossians 4:7) on that same trip. In c. 64 AD, after Paul was released from house arrest, Paul sent either Artemas or Tychicus to Crete to fill in for Titus so that Titus could travel to consult with Paul in Nicopolis (Titus 3:12). At the end of Paul's life in c. 67 AD, Paul sent Tychicus on a mission to Ephesus (2 Timothy 4:12).

After Paul's death, most say⁹¹³ that Tychicus went on to be Bishop of Caesarea. Philip of the Seventy had been Bishop of Caesarea, but later in his life, Philip went on to become Bishop of the city of Tralles in Asia Minor, where he converted many pagans, and eventually died of old age. Tychicus must have become Bishop of Caesarea after Philip.

There is another Tychicus who was one of the original Seventy Apostles, and who was later Bishop of Chalcedon, but he never seems to have had any interaction with Paul.

⁹⁰⁹ <http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for August 25.

⁹¹⁰ Nickolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, April 15.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for April 15.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, April 14.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

⁹¹¹ Nickolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, December 8.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for December 8.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2003, December 8.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

⁹¹² Ephesus was also in Asia Minor.

⁹¹³ Nickolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, December 8.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp> for December 8.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2003, December 8.

Urbanus: Urbanus is remembered as the Bishop of Macedonia who was ordained by the Apostle Andrew⁹¹⁴. He served for a long time there and was eventually tortured to death by the Jews and the pagans for his zeal in preaching the Gospel. In the Scriptures, we see Urbanus only in Rome in c. 55 AD (Romans 16:9). Before this, Luke had been left behind in charge in Macedonia⁹¹⁵ during the middle of Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey (c. 50 AD), and this continued for about 4 years until Paul passed through Macedonia again on his 3rd Missionary Journey (c. 54 AD). Similarly, Urbanus had been left behind in Tarsus so that Jason could continue on the 2nd Missionary Journey with Paul. On the 3rd Missionary Journey, Urbanus started traveling with Paul, and someone else took his place in Tarsus. If Urbanus was in Rome in 55 AD, he had to have been sent there along with the other 17 of the Seventy Apostles who had been sent there. Most likely Urbanus was in Macedonia with Luke from 50 to 54 AD and had proven himself in the work there with his zeal for the Faith. When Paul came through Macedonia on the 3rd Missionary Journey, Paul sent Urbanus to Rome to help the others with dealing with the Heresiarch Simon Magus⁹¹⁶. A few years later Urbanus returned to Macedonia. Urbanus was later tortured to death in Macedonia.

Others helping out in Macedonia were Epaphroditus and Hermas, where both were of the original Seventy Apostles. Epaphroditus was probably from Philippi and Paul calls him an Apostle and a Liturgist to Philippi as well as his fellow-worker and fellow-soldier (Philippians 2:25). Hermas was later Bishop of the city of Philippi, where he died as a martyr

Zenas: Zenas⁹¹⁷ was one of the original Seventy Apostles and was an expert on the Mosaic Law. We only encounter Zenas in the Scriptures following Paul's 4th Missionary Journey when he wrote to Titus on Crete. Paul sent two Apostles to help out on Crete with questions over the Mosaic Law: Zenas the lawyer and Apollos. Zenas was an expert on the Mosaic Law, not civil law; Apollos was very good at showing from the (Old Testament) Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ (Acts 18:24-28). Apollos by himself had a tremendous impact in Corinth; combined with Zenas, these two Apostles had to have had the effect of "stopping the mouths of the circumcision" (Titus 1:11). Zenas isn't recorded as working with Paul earlier than this. This was all happening about a year before the beginning of the First Jewish-Roman War that occurred from 66 AD to 70 AD.

Afterwards, Zenas became bishop of the city of Diospolis or Lydda in Palestine; this would have been after the destruction of Jerusalem⁹¹⁸ by the Romans.

⁹¹⁴ Nickolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, October 31.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for October 31>.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, October 31.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5

⁹¹⁵ For more details regarding this, see the section of the 2nd Missionary Journey titled "The Evangelist Luke Remained Behind in Philippi".

⁹¹⁶ For more details regarding Simon Magus, see Mark Kern, *Simon Magus the Heresiarch*, St. Athanasius Press, 2004. See <http://www.stathanasius.org/resources/e-books/>.

⁹¹⁷ Nickolai Velimirovic, *Prologue From Ochrid*, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, September 27.

<http://oca.org/FSlives.asp for September 27>.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church, translated and published by Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista CO, 2002, September 27.

Hippolytus, "On the Seventy Apostles", *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1995, v. 5.

⁹¹⁸ For a summary of the chronology of the destruction of Jerusalem, see

<http://www.josephus.org/warChronologyIntro.htm>.

APPENDIX B

Source Data on the Identity of the Seventy Apostles

There is a difference between the original Seventy Apostles and those who are today commemorated as the Seventy Apostles. Similarly, there is a difference between the original Twelve Apostles and those who are commemorated as the Twelve Apostles today. With the Twelve, the Scriptures make it quite clear that Judas was rejected and Matthias was substituted in his place (Acts 1:15-26). Some people say that the Apostles made a mistake in selecting Matthias, and that they should have waited for Paul's conversion. But that is not what the Scriptures say. It says that Matthias "was numbered with the Eleven Apostles" (Acts 1:26). A similar problem occurred with the Seventy Apostles, where four of the Seventy apostatized (these are shown in red type at the end) and were replaced with others before the death of the Apostle Paul. Others such as Timothy and Titus, who were so prominent working with Paul, were added to the ranks of the Seventy later. These are shown at the end in blue.

In the following table are listed ten sources of the list of the Seventy Apostles. The first two (Hippolytus and Dorotheus) include the original Seventy before the four Apostles apostatized, while the other eight include just those whom we commemorate today as the Seventy. Thus, the first two sources have to be dated to around the middle of the 1st century, before any of the Seventy apostatized. The other eight represent lists that were put together after the 1st century, where these other eight are organized left to right in the approximate order of their date of origin.

The impact of Table 15 is that there is very good agreement regarding who most of the Seventy were and who the original Seventy were. A few of the Seventy are not as well-known and there is a lack of 100% consensus on their identity. On these few I have attempted to include those who the majority of sources say were of the Seventy.

Of note in Table 15 is that there were three Apostles named "Mark" among the original Seventy Apostles. Their separate lives are summarized in Appendix A.

Table 15
The Original Seventy Apostles versus Those Added Later

Apostle	Number	Hippolytus	Dorotheus of Tyre		Prologue of Ochrid	Great Synaxaristes	Byzantine Manaion	Greek Manaion	Russian Manaion	OCA Web Site Data	Demetrius of Rostov	Dionysius of Fourn
Original Seventy												
Agabus	1	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Amplias	2	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Ananias	3	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Andronicus	4	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Apelles of Heraclea	5		O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	
Apelles of Smyrna	6	O				C		C		C		C
Apollos	7	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Aristarchus	8	O	O				C	C	C			
Aristarchus, Apamea	9	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Aristobulus	10	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Artemas	11	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Asyncritus	12	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Barnabas	13	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Caesar	14	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C		C
Carpus	15	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Cephas	16	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C		
Clement	17	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Cleopas	18	O			C		C	C	C	C	C	C
Crescens	19	O			C	C	C	C		C	C	C
Epaenetus	20	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Epaphras	21		O								C	
Epaphroditus	22	O			C	C		C		C	C	C
Erastus	23	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Euodus	24	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Gaius	25	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Hermas	26	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Hermes	27	O	O		C	C		C	C	C	C	C
Herodion	28	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
James, Lord's Brother	29	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Jason	30	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Justus	31	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Linus	32	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Lucius	33	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Luke	34	O	O		C	12	C	C	C	C	C	12
Mark Evangelist	35	O	O		C	12	C	C	C	C	C	12
Mark, Barnabas' Cousin	36	O	O		C	C			C	C	C	C
John Mark	37	O	O		C	C		C?	C	C	C	
Narcissus	38	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Nicanor	39	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Olympas	40	O			C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Onesiphorus	41	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Parmenas	42	O	O		C	C		C		C	C	C
Patrobus	43	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C

Philemon & Apphia	44	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Philip	45	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Philologus & Julia	46	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Phlegon	47	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	
Prochorus	48	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Pudens	49	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Quartus	50	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	
Rhodion	51	O	O				C	C	C			C
Rufus	52	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Silas	53	O	O		C	C		C	C	C	C	C
Silvanus	54	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Sosipater	55	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Sosthenes	56	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Stachys	57	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	
Stephen	58	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Tertius	59	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Thaddaeus	60	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Timon	61	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Trophimus	62	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Tychicus of Asia	63	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Tychicus of Chalcedon	64	O	O				C	C	C			
Urban	65	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Zenas	66	O	O		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Demas	67	O	O									
Hermogenes	68	O	O									
Nicholas	69	O	O									
Phygellas	70	O	O									
Apostles Added Later												
Achaicus	1					C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Aquila	2				C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Archippus	3				C	C				C	C	
Codratus	4				C	C				C	C	C
Fortunatus	5					C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Onesimus	6		O		C	C				C	C	
Simeon	7				C	C				C	C	C
Timothy	8				C	C				C	C	
Titus	9				C	C	C	C		C	C	C
Crispus									C		C	
Mathias							C	C	C			
Apollos (Another)							C					
Luke (Another)							C					

The Life of the Apostle John

The Beloved Apostle

Perfecting the Love of God in Us

GOSPEL: John 19:25-27, 21:24-25

EPISTLE: 1 John 4:12-19

Background: The Life of John

John's Family

John, son of Zebedee, and his brother, James were the grandsons of Joseph, the betrothed of the Virgin Mary. John's mother, Salome, was one of the myrrh-bearing women. She was also Jesus' stepsister and was a very close confidante of the Virgin Mary. It was quite natural for the Lord to entrust the care of His mother to John at the cross (John 19:25-27) since Mary and Salome were such close friends. Throughout John's Gospel, he refers to himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23, 19:26, 20:2, 21:7, 20) and this is the subject of the Gospel lesson. John was probably the youngest of the 12. Being Jesus' relative (either step-nephew or second cousin, once removed), he was treated very tenderly by the Lord (John 13:23-25).

John was one of a number of the Twelve Apostles who were fishermen by trade. This included his brother James, Thomas, Nathanael, Peter and Andrew, plus others (John 21:2). His father, Zebedee, ran the fishing business, and there were a number of hired servants who helped with the day-to-day tasks (Mark 1:19-20). Most of the fish caught were taken to the city of Magdala for salting to preserve freshness, but some fish were sold fresh locally. Fish was a major part of the diet of 1st Century Palestine, and fresh fish commanded a very good price. Recent studies of the operations of the 1st Century fishing industry indicate that the owner of a fishing business had a good income, equivalent to upper middle class today. For more details about the 1st Century fishing industry see Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "Fishers of Fish, Fishers of Men", Bible Review, June 1999, pp. 22-27, 48. John's mother, Salome, was not mentioned by name as one of the chief supporters of Jesus' public ministry (Luke 8:2-3). However, she was very closely connected to Jesus' ministry (Matthew 20:20-22), and was present at the foot of the Cross and at the Tomb (Mark 15:40, Matthew 27:56). From this we can conclude with reasonable certainty that she was one of the lesser supporters of Jesus' ministry, and that she was not as wealthy as Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Susanna (Luke 8:2-3).

John's family owned property in Jerusalem, and John had his own home (John 19:27) which was located on Mt. Zion according to tradition (Holy Apostles Convent, The Life of the Virgin Mary, p. 417). During Jesus' crucifixion, John was known to the high priest, Caiaphas, and went with Jesus into the courtyard of Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas. It is uncertain whether Caiaphas knew John because he was of priestly descent or because of his family wealth. John then went out and spoke to the doorkeeper to let Peter in also (John 18:13-16). John, however, was spared the inquisition that Peter received (John 18:17-27).

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The Jewish rulers, elders and Scribes described the fishermen-turned-Apostles as uneducated and untrained men. This group of Jewish leaders included Annas and Caiaphas

(Acts 4:5-13), where the priests and the high priest were from among the Sadducees, who did not believe in a bodily resurrection (Luke 20:27). “Uneducated and untrained” does not mean unintelligent, but only refers to formal training in the Mosaic Law, philosophy and oratory. As a result, these Sadducees marveled that Peter and John, who had no training in oratory, were very eloquent in proclaiming the resurrection of Christ (Acts 4:13).

Accompanying the Lord

John was among Jesus’ “inner circle”, with Peter and James (John’s brother). He was prominent at a number of events during Jesus’ public ministry:

- At the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law (Mark 1:29-31).
- As an Apostle at the ordination of the Twelve (Mark 3:17).
- At the raising of Jairus’ daughter (Mark 5:35-37).
- At the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1, Mark 9:2, Luke 9:28).
- Rebuking someone who cast out demons, but who did not follow Christ (Luke 9:49).
- With his brother James, seeking to call down fire from heaven just like Elijah (2 Kings 1:10-12) on a Samaritan village that wouldn’t receive them (Luke 9:54).
- With James and Salome, asking for the highest place in the Kingdom. This caused the other ten Apostles to be greatly displeased with John and James (Matthew 20:20-24, Mark 10:35-41).
- Asking for private clarification of future events (Mark 13:3).
- Sent ahead by Jesus to prepare the Passover and Last Supper (Luke 22:8).
- Asking Jesus who would betray Him at Peter’s request (John 13:23-26).
- With Peter and James in Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-33).
- As the only one of the Twelve at the Cross, where Jesus assigned to him the care of His mother as a son would normally do (John 19:26-27).
- With Peter, following Jesus after His arrest, and gaining entrance to Annas’ house (John 18:15-16).

Jesus nicknamed John and his brother James “the Sons of Thunder” (Mark 3:17) due to their desire to call down fire from heaven on a Samaritan village that would not receive Jesus (Luke 9:51-56). On the other hand, his Epistles portray him as a gentle old man who emphasized love among the brethren. This is the subject of the Epistle lesson.

John certainly had a desire to understand the depths of the Kingdom of God, and this was reflected in his life. Besides asking for the highest place in the Kingdom (Matthew 20:20-24, Mark 10:35-41), he was very intimate with Christ and recognized some things quicker than the other Apostles. For example, at the tomb, John recognized that the Lord had risen even though they did not understand yet that this is what the Scriptures said (John 20:2-9). He was also first to recognize the Risen Christ at the Sea of Galilee while they were fishing (John 21:6-7). Because of this intimacy, John became known as “the disciple that Jesus loved” (John 21:7, 20). This is not to say that Jesus loved no one else, but that Jesus loved John in a special manner. As part of this intimacy, the Lord showed John many things about the goings-on in heaven and about what will happen in the future. John was even caught up to heaven to see some of these things himself (Revelation 1:10-11, 4:1-11).

John came to be known in later centuries by the name, John the Theologian. This was due to widespread circulation of his Gospel, with an accompanying understanding of the depth of the mystery of God revealed in his writings, which include a Gospel, three Epistles and Revelation.

John lived his entire life in celibacy, as did a number of the Apostles and the Virgin Mary. In doing this, their concentration was on fasting, prayer, overcoming the passions of the flesh and on understanding the Will of God every moment of their lives.

At the end of John's Gospel, he dispelled the rumor that was spreading about hinting that he (John) would never die. This rumor grew out of a misunderstanding of Christ's words to Peter. Jesus had just spoken to Peter, signifying by what death he would glorify God. Peter replied by asking what about John. Jesus said, "If I will that he remains till I come, what is that to you?" John pointed out that Jesus did not say that he would not die, but merely, "If I will that he remains till I come, what is that to you?" (John 21:19-23).

John's Care of the Virgin Mary After Pentecost

At the foot of the Cross, Jesus assigned the care of His mother to the Apostle John. This was necessary in 1st Century Jewish culture. The oldest son in the family had the "birthright" and was expected to care for his mother for the rest of her life in the event of his father's death. He was given an extra share of the birthright to do this with. Out of this extra share, he was also expected to provide for any unmarried sisters, including their dowry upon marriage (Deuteronomy 21:15-17). Therefore, the Virgin Mary lived in John's house along with John's mother, Salome, until her death. This implies that Salome's husband, Zebedee, died shortly after Pentecost.

John was very prominent in the early Church. This was very noticeable to Paul when he came to Jerusalem in c. 48 AD for the Council in Jerusalem regarding the issue of circumcision of the Gentiles (Acts 15). At that time, Paul perceived that James, Peter and John were the pillars of the Jerusalem Church (Galatians 2:9). This James was James the Lord's brother (Galatians 1:19), and not John's brother James. John's brother had already been martyred in 44 AD (Acts 12:1-3).

This prominence can also be seen in the accounts of the miracles performed by the Twelve in Jerusalem in the year following Pentecost. As Peter and John went up to the Temple for 9th Hour Prayers, they healed a man who was lame from birth (Acts 3:1-10). As the Twelve taught in the Temple, it was Peter and John who were arrested for preaching the Resurrection of Christ. In defending themselves before Annas, the high priest, Caiaphas, and the family of the high priest, everyone marveled at the boldness of the speaking of Peter and John (Acts 4:1-19). Later, after the death of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10), the high priest (and the Sadducees) arrested all of the Twelve Apostles. In their defense, it was Peter and the other Apostles who spoke and not just Peter and John (Acts 5:17-29).

Not quite one year after Pentecost, Stephen was stoned (Acts 7:54-60). According to tradition, John and the Virgin Mary watched from a distance, praying for Stephen during his execution. Also, from tradition, Deacon Nicanor (Acts 6:5) and 200 others were stoned the

same day. These events began a great persecution of the Church at Jerusalem, largely by the hand of the future Apostle Paul (Acts 8:1-3, 22:4-5, 26:10-11, 1 Corinthians 15:9). It was at this time of persecution that most of the Apostles began their various missionary journeys abroad, and the Twelve Apostles are not mentioned as being together at any time after this. However, John and the Virgin Mary remained in Jerusalem during this persecution.

In about 44 AD, Herod (i.e. Agrippa) began to persecute the Church, killing James, John's brother, with the sword (Acts 12:1). James, like John, had been very eloquent in proclaiming the Resurrection of Christ following his return from Spain. Herod also arrested Peter since he saw it pleased the Jews; but an angel let Peter out of prison at night (Acts 12:3, 7). Peter stopped by at the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where everyone was praying for him. There he told them he was okay; but that he was leaving town, and they should be sure to tell James, the Bishop of Jerusalem (Acts 12:17). From there Peter made his way first to Caesarea and eventually to Antioch. Barnabas brought Paul to Antioch c. 46 AD while Peter was there (Galatians 2:11-15, Acts 11:25-26).

John and the Virgin Mary left Jerusalem also at the time of Herod's persecution. Since John's lot in the evangelization of the world was Asia Minor, they sailed for Ephesus. There they stayed until the death of Herod (Acts 12:20-23). To put this in context, the Apostle Andrew had already been to Ephesus briefly, but the Apostle Paul would not arrive until 52 AD, at the end of his Second Missionary Journey. Since Herod died not too long after he killed James, John and the Virgin Mary most likely stayed in Ephesus less than two years. As was her custom, the Virgin Mary spent her time in prayer, fasting and meditation on the Scriptures.

John and Mary returned to Jerusalem following the death of Herod, and remained there until the early 50's. About that time, Mary heard that Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha desired to see her very much. Lazarus had been ordained Bishop of Cyprus by the Apostle Barnabas, but did not dare enter Jerusalem for fear of the Jews. It had been over 20 years since the Jewish leaders had tried to kill him; but they still sought to do so (John 12:9-11).

To solve this dilemma, Mary wrote to Bishop Lazarus asking him to send a ship for her so that she might visit him on Cyprus. This he did and the Apostle John with the Virgin Mary and some others set sail for Cyprus. Out at sea, however, they encountered a violent storm that took them far off course and up to the northern part of the Aegean Sea near Macedonia. There, they put in to the port of Clumes on Athos at the tip of the 50-mile long peninsula. At this location today, there are a number of famous monasteries that trace their origin to the visit of John and the Virgin Mary in the early 50's, and most of the information we have concerning the Virgin Mary's voyage comes from these monasteries.

At that time, the population of Athos consisted of young virgins dedicated to the goddess Diana who were expected to become priestesses to serve in the Greek temples. Also on Athos was a large gold and ivory statue of Jupiter on top of the 6,600-foot peak of Mt. Athos. This statue was mentioned in ancient history accounts of Plutarch and Anaximander as having large gems for eyes; it was used for navigation by seamen. Also present on the peninsula was a huge temple of Apollo where fortune telling, divining and witchcraft took place.

When John and Mary arrived at the port of Clemes, the huge statue of Jupiter fell and shattered to pieces with a thunderous noise. At the same time, the ground shook and idols and pagan statues in the temple and in all the shrines fell prostrate and broke in pieces. During the chaos of this collapse, a voice was heard saying, “Men of Apollo, all of you, go to Clemes Harbor and welcome Mary, the mother of the Great God Jesus”. Thus, the demons inhabiting the idols were forced against their will to proclaim the truth.

Seeing the destruction around them, all the inhabitants of Athos hurried to Clemes Harbor to meet the Virgin Mary. They received her, the Apostle John and the others with great honor and brought them to a large meeting hall. There they asked her to explain who was the God that she bore and they inquired diligently into the mystery of the Incarnation. They also wondered at how Mary, a Hebrew woman, could explain everything to them in Greek. This was due to the gift of languages that Mary received along with the 120 at Pentecost (Acts 1:14, 2:1-3).

All this resulted in the entire group of the residents of Athos accepting the Christian Faith. They were all then catechized and baptized into the Faith. During their stay on Athos, Mary and the Apostle John performed many miracles among the new converts. Before leaving, they appointed a leader and teacher for the newly illumined residents of Athos from among their traveling party. In addition, Mary prayed for the blessing of Athos, that the Lord would have mercy on it and keep it free from harm until the end of the world along with its inhabitants.

Having blessed Athos, Mary, John and the others set sail for Cyprus. Meanwhile, Lazarus had grown very concerned about Mary’s delay, assuming it was because of a storm, and not knowing that all was well. When the ship arrived, there was great rejoicing and thanksgiving. Mary presented Bishop Lazarus with an ornophorion and spimanikia (part of a bishop’s vestments) that she had made. And John and Mary shared the good news of all that happened on Athos.

After staying on Cyprus for a short time, Mary blessed the Christians there and returned to Jerusalem with John and the others.

Shortly after Mary and John returned from Cyprus, Mary Magdalene also returned to Jerusalem from her evangelism in Rome and elsewhere. Since she had been very close to the Virgin Mary during Jesus’ three-year ministry, she stayed with the Apostle John for several years until the Virgin Mary’s death. At this time, the Virgin Mary was in her early 70’s and Mary Magdalene was in her late 60’s.

John Drafts His Gospel

Jerome of Bethlehem wrote⁹¹⁹ some details about the drafting of John’s Gospel. Many people had urged him to write this in response to current heresies, and the brethren proclaimed a fast while he was writing.

John, the Apostle and Evangelist, whom Jesus loved most, who, reclining on the Lord’s bosom, drank the purest streams of doctrine, and was the only one

⁹¹⁹ Jerome, Prefaces to Gospel Commentaries

thought worthy of the words from the cross, ‘Behold your mother’ (John 19:27). When he was in Asia, at the time when the seeds of heresy were springing up⁹²⁰, he was urged by almost all the bishops of Asia then living, and by deputations from many Churches. They urged him to write more profoundly concerning the divinity of the Savior, and to break through all obstacles so as to attain the very Word of God with a boldness as successful as it appears audacious. Ecclesiastical history relates that, when he was urged by the brethren to write, he replied that he would do so if a general fast were proclaimed and all would offer up prayer to God. When the fast was over, the narrative goes on to say, being filled with revelation, he burst into the heaven-sent Preface: ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God’” (John 1:1-2).

Jerome also pointed out⁹²¹ the reason that John was referred to as “The Beloved Disciple”. John renounced more than the other Apostles, and he was fearless among his enemies.

“Jesus loved the evangelist John more than the other disciples, since John had renounced both rank and wealth more than the others. For John was of noble birth and known to the high priest, yet was so little appalled by the plotting of the Jews that he introduced Peter into his court. And he was the only one of the Apostles bold enough to take his stand before the cross. For it was he who took the Savior’s mother to his own home; it was the virgin son who received the virgin mother as a legacy from the Lord.”

John Chrysostom noted⁹²² that the Apostle John was the last of the Apostles to write anything. John didn’t include as many of Christ’s miracles in his Gospel as the other Gospel-writers; instead John included more information about the reaction of the Jewish leaders to Christ. John was the only one of the Gospel writers to refer to his own testimony; he did this because Christ had moved him to do this.

“John stated, ‘This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true’ (John 21:24). Why is it, then, when none of the others do so, John alone uses these words, and that for the second time, witnessing to himself? This seems to be offensive to the listeners. What then is the cause? John was the last of the Apostles who came to write anything, Christ having moved and roused him to the work. On this account he continually sets forth his love, alluding to the cause by which he was impelled to write. Therefore, John continually makes mention of it, to make his record trustworthy, and to show, that, moved by this, he came to this work. John continued to say, ‘There are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written’” (John 21:25).

“It is also clear that John could not have written just to court favor! When the miracles were so many, John did not even relate as many as the others Gospel

⁹²⁰ Jerome referred to Cerinthus, Ebion, and the rest who say Christ has not come in the flesh, whom John in his own epistle calls Antichrists, and whom the Apostle Paul frequently assails.

⁹²¹ Jerome, Letters, CXXVII, 5.

⁹²² John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, LXXXVIII, 2.

writers had, but omitted most of them. John brought forward the plots of the Jews, the stonings⁹²³, the hatred, the insults, the reviling, and have shown how they called Him a demoniac and a deceiver. Certainly, he could not have acted as he did to gain favor. One who courted favor would do the contrary, reject the reproachful, and set forth the glorious. Since he wrote what he did from full assurance, he does not decline to produce his own testimony, challenging men separately to inquire into and scrutinize the circumstances. For it is a custom with us, when we think that we are speaking exactly true, never to refuse our testimony; and if we do this, much more would he who wrote by the Spirit. What then the other Apostles, when they preached, declared, he also said; ‘We are His witnesses to these things, and *so* also *is* the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him’ (Acts 5:32). And besides, John was present at all events, and did not desert Christ even when He was crucified; he even had Christ’s mother entrusted to him. All these things are signs of his love for Him, and of his knowing all things exactly. If he has said that so many miracles had taken place, don’t marvel at that; but, considering the ineffable power of the Doer, receive with faith what is spoken.”

The Missionary Journeys of John

After Pentecost, John was at first downcast when he drew the lot of Asia Minor as his mission field due to the danger that lay before him. He repented of this sin of doubt, however, when he remembered the words of the Lord, “There shall not a hair of your head perish” (Luke 21:17-18). After the Virgin Mary died (in the mid-50’s AD), John moved to Ephesus permanently. We can see this from Revelation 2 and 3, where John addressed seven churches in Asia Minor: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. These seven churches John knew quite well and he helped to establish them in the 60’s and 70’s AD, prior to his exile on Patmos. All these Churches are within a 70-mile radius in what is now Western Turkey.

An illustration of John’s work in this area can be seen from an account from tradition of events in Hierapolis of Phrygia, a few miles from Laodicea. John worked for a short time there with Nathanael, Philip and Philip’s sister Mariamne. There they killed a huge snake-god by their prayers. Following this, John moved on leaving Nathanael, Philip and Mariamne to evangelize the city.

In the late 60’s AD, John returned to Jerusalem where Prochorus who had been bishop of Nicomedia joined him. Together, they left for Joppa and stayed three days with Tabitha; then left by ship for Ephesus. They were shipwrecked and all hands were cast ashore at Seleucia except John. Prochorus was arrested under suspicion of sorcery since John didn’t come ashore. (They thought John made off with the ship’s cargo). Finally, he was released and made his way overland to Mareotis (upon John’s prior instruction), walking for 40 days toward Ephesus. Upon Prochorus’ arrival, a great wave washed John ashore. After embracing and talking about their experiences, they headed for Ephesus. This was the beginning of a long series of experiences that Jesus had predicted for John, where John would “drink the cup that He drank” (Mark 10:35-39).

⁹²³ See John 8:59; John 10:31.

In Ephesus they stayed near the house of Dioscorides, the city chief, and went to work for a woman named Romana who ran a bathhouse. John worked at stoking the fire; Prochorus worked at fetching water. After four days, she came by and saw John standing around trying to figure out what to do. She punched him in the face, knocking him to the ground, and called him a lazy, good-for-nothing. [She was a stout woman who used to serve in the army.] John remembered how Jesus was struck, spat upon, lashed, etc. And he told Prochorus that this was an encouragement for them to always bear good will. This happened repeatedly as John began learning the trade. He never gave a word of back talk and Romana thought he was an uneducated peasant. She then had forged legal papers drawn up saying that John and Prochorus were her slaves.

Three months later, Domnus, the 18-year-old son of Dioscorides (who owned the bathhouse) came in and was strangled by a demon that dwelt there. (Prochorus and Domnus' servants watched helplessly.) Romana was in profound grief over how to explain this to her boss. She prayed to Artemis (or Diana) and pulled out her hair and tore her clothes.

John paused in his work to come ask what happened. Before Prochorus could explain, Romana grabbed John, accused him of being a warlock, punched him in the face and demanded he raise Domnus from the dead. John stayed calm, withdrew to pray, then raised Domnus and brought him to Romana. Romana was so ashamed of how she had treated John she couldn't even look him in the face but cried bitterly at his feet. John then explained who he was and forgave her and she believed.

Meanwhile, Dioscorides had died of a heart attack on learning that his only son was dead. John, Prochorus, Romana and a crowd of others went there and John raised him also. Dioscorides, Domnus and Romana were then baptized.

Later at a festival of Artemis (Diana), John stood on the high place near the statue of Artemis in his sooty work clothes. This angered the crowd and they hurled a number of stones at John; all these missed John and hit the statue. The "son of thunder" then spoke to them of their delusion and challenged them to have their broken statue punish him. They threw more stones, which only turned back and hit the ones throwing them.

John prayed that the Lord would show these people who's Lord. An earthquake and sudden heat wave struck and 200 people died; the rest begged John for mercy. John prayed again, raised up the 200 and they all believed, were catechized and baptized.

Following this, John performed many other signs similar to those he and Peter did back in Jerusalem in the early 30's AD. The demon that dwelt in the temple of Artemis, however, began to fear that John would cast him out and destroy the temple. So, the demon assumed the appearance of a magistrate and persuaded some citizens that he was escorting two sorcerers, John and Prochorus, to prison when they escaped. He offered a large bounty for their capture, dead or alive.

At first, Romana and Dioscorides rescued John and Prochorus. But then the demon aroused a whole mob against them while they were in Dioscorides' house. John voluntarily surrendered to the mob and they took him to the temple of Artemis. By his prayers, the "son of thunder" caused the statue of Artemis to topple and the temple to collapse. John then forced the demon to confess to his plot and directed him to leave the area. "Numberless crowds came to believe and disdained the worship of idols."

However, certain Jews brought news of this to Emperor Domitian in about 81 AD. Domitian began a great prosecution of Christians and had John arrested. After many beatings, John was forced to drink a cup of strong poison, then was boiled in oil. Neither had any effect. Domitian thought John was immortal and had him exiled to the island of Patmos, a penal colony.

On the way to Patmos, one of the sailors fell overboard, drowned and was lost at sea. Everyone on board was grief-stricken except John. John asked each sailor in turn which deity they worshipped. After inquiring of everyone on the ship, John exclaimed how many gods, yet none could save one drowned man. John prayed and a large wave broke over the ship depositing the drowned man alive on the deck.

Later in the voyage, a storm arose and the ship was in danger of breaking up. The crew asked John to pray again, which he did and calmed the sea. Still later, when they ran out of water, John turned seawater into fresh water. Near the end of the voyage, John healed one of the sailors of dysentery. At this, the entire crew wanted to become John's disciples and go wherever he wanted. John replied that this was not proper; they still needed to take him to Patmos lest the emperor punish them. When they arrived on Patmos, John catechized and baptized the entire crew.

John first stayed in the home of Myron the governor's father-in-law. After John cast a demon out of Myron's eldest son, the entire family believed. The governor, Lawrence, sent his wife and son to be baptized also. The wife wished to remain celibate in her father's house, but John would not agree to this. John sent her back to her husband saying that he too would come to believe soon. This happened two years later when his term of office expired.

Many of people in the city came to Myron's home to be catechized, healed and baptized by John. Those who were rich wanted to offer John large amounts of money. John instructed them to give it to the poor with their own hand in order that they might have treasure in heaven.

Three years after arriving on Patmos, John and Prochorus were in the market place near the temple of Apollo. Some of the priests of Apollo began to sneer at John and ridicule what he taught. The "son of thunder" prayed, and the temple of Apollo collapsed. The priests immediately grabbed John and inflicted many stripes on him; then they had him thrown into the deepest dungeon. When Myron and his family heard, they got John out -- since they were very influential.

A magician named Coenops, a master of illusion, lived in the wilderness of Patmos. The priests of Apollo went to him to get him to take revenge on John and kill him. This began a

battle between the “son of thunder” and the son of perdition. First Coenops sent demons three times to kill John; but John sent them to torment in the abyss. Finally, Coenops was so mad he came to the city to challenge John face to face with his illusions.

Several times, Coenops appeared to raise the dead relatives of grieving bystanders by having demons take the form of the loved ones. Coenops challenged John to do the same, but John calmly and humbly said that the Lord did not send him to do that but to teach deluded people. Then John said that Coenops’ signs would soon come to nothing. Hearing this, the people jumped on John and beat him until they thought he was dead.

The next day, Coenops returned with his demons in the form of the “resurrected” loved ones and announced to John how he planned to disgrace and shame John further. At the shore of the Aegean, Coenops clapped his hands together and plunged into the sea out of sight, saying he would return in glory. Then the “son of thunder” prayed that the same fate might befall Coenops as befell Pharaoh. At this, there was a peal of thunder and a “boiling” or stirring of the waters where Coenops went under; then nothing. The people waited for three days for Coenops to return -- all to no avail. As for the demons that served Coenops, John ordered them to depart from the island.

Sometime later, a Jew named Philo met John in the market place and debated John on the Scriptures for two days. As John was debating, a young man brought a sick man for John to heal, which John did. Philo replied, “Teacher, what is love?” John responded, “God is love and he who has love has God.” Philo replied, “Therefore show the love of God and come home with me.” John did so and healed Philo’s wife of leprosy while he stayed there. Philo and his wife believed and were baptized.

After John left Philo’s house, he came across two of the priests of Apollo who had urged Coenops against John. One priest asked John to heal his lame son that he too may believe. John said, “First believe, then God will heal your son.” The priest replied, “First heal my son, then I’ll believe.” The “son of thunder” raised his voice, “Do not tempt God that your lack of faith become blasphemy. In the Name of Jesus Christ, you shall have your son’s crippled feet.” Then, John sent the other priest with Prochorus to the first priest’s house to bring back the son. When Prochorus got there the child was healed. When the crippled priest saw his son, he cried out with tears in a loud voice, “Have mercy on me, disciple of the Compassionate God.” John then healed him and baptized his entire household.

All this happened in the city of Flora on Patmos. After three years, John and Prochorus went to Myrimousa where they observed a young man in chains about to be sacrificed to a wolf-god, that was actually a demon. John commanded the demon to depart; bystanders were very amazed and listened intently as John taught them.

The priests of Zeus, who worshipped the wolf-god, were angry with John. One day, one of the priests’ sons was strangled in a bathhouse by the same demon that John had cast out of Romana’s bathhouse six years earlier. The priest confessed to John that he, too, had come to believe and asked if John would raise his son. John did so, then cast out the demon and baptized the priest, his son and many others.

After this John and Prochorus left for the suburb of Phlogeon where John cast a demon out of a widow's only son, then catechized and baptized them. On the fourth day they were there, John stood near the temple of Dionysus (Bacchus) as the pagans were starting an orgy. To keep John from hindering the festival, the priests bound John, took him away and beat him until he was half-dead. John prayed that He would do to this temple as He did to the Philistines' temple by Samson. The temple then collapsed, crushing the twelve priests inside who were preparing the orgy.

A renowned sorcerer, Noetian, was furious at John for leveling the temple of Dionysus. He conjured up twelve demons to pose as the resurrected twelve priests, pretending that he had raised them. Knowing Noetian's intent, John sent Prochorus around the other side of the collapsed temple before Noetian could introduce the demons and had Prochorus send the demons to a waterless place. When Noetian tried to "raise" the 12 priests, nothing happened and he was embarrassed. The townsfolk would have killed him if John hadn't prevented them.

The next day, as John was baptizing 220 people, Noetian turned the water John was using as a baptismal font into blood. John turned it back and also struck Noetian with blindness. At this, Noetian begged John's mercy, repented, and was baptized also along with his household.

After this, John and Prochorus went to the city of Karo, three miles distant. One young man in the crowd, Sosipater, who was listening to John, wanted to follow Christ, but was being hounded by his mother into incest with her. He invited John to his house to help him resist his mother. The mother, in turn, denounced John and her son to the governor and the governor ordered John and Sosipater sown into leather bags full of poisonous snakes. Before they could do so, John caused the right hands of the governor and the mother to wither.

The judge, who was secretly a Christian, then confessed his faith and begged John's forgiveness. John restored the judge's and the mother's hands and the judge invited John, Prochorus and Sosipater to his house for two days. During this time, the judge and his family were catechized and baptized. Meanwhile, the mother had come to profound repentance. When John and Sosipater came to her house, they found her weeping bitterly. John comforted her, then catechized and baptized her and her son. She lived the rest of her life in fasting and prayer and in distributing her wealth to the poor.

Toward the end of John's exile on Patmos, he wrote the book of Revelation by dictating it to Prochorus who then copied it onto good parchment.

In about 96 AD, Emperor Domitian was assassinated and his successor, Nerva, did not persecute the Christians. John was free to return to Ephesus. By then, nearly all the inhabitants of Patmos had come to believe, and they wanted John to stay. When he told them that the Lord had instructed him to return to Ephesus, they asked him to draft a written document that they could use to remain steadfast in the faith. This John did later by dictating his Gospel to Prochorus who had Sosipater copy it onto good parchment. After bidding farewell (with many tears) to the residents of Patmos where John had spent 15 years, John and Prochorus sailed to

Ephesus where they were received with great joy and stayed in the house of Domnus [Dioscorides had died during John's absence.]

John spent the rest of his life in Ephesus in strict fasting and prayer, living as a Nazarite. Because of his age, he didn't have the strength to preach anymore but taught just the bishops privately. Jerome stated that the faithful carried him to Church where he would say over and over "Little children, love one another." When his disciples asked him why he just said this, he replied, "This is the Lord's commandment; and if you keep it, it is enough."

John died in the third year of Trajan (about 101 AD) at the age of nearly 100. Most accounts state that John instructed seven of his disciples to go outside the city with him and dig his grave. John then climbed in and died as he lay in the grave. The seven then buried him. Later the faithful dug up the grave to give John a more prominent resting-place, but the grave was empty.

The Beloved Apostle

Gospel: John 19:25-27, 21:24-25

John as The Beloved Apostle

The Gospel reading for Matins expands on the above Reading to include John 21:15-25. Today's Gospel Reading begins at the foot of the Cross, where the Virgin Mary, Mary the wife of Clopas, Mary Magdalene, and John were gathered. Clopas (or Cleopas) was the brother of Joseph, the betrothed of the Virgin Mary, and his wife was the Virgin Mary's sister-in-law. All of the Twelve Apostles, except John, had scattered and were in hiding (John 20:19) as was predicted by the Scriptures (Matthew 26:31, Zechariah 13:7). Judas Iscariot had already hanged himself (Matthew 27:3-10).

As Jesus was dying on the Cross, He committed the care of His mother to the Apostle John. This was a tremendous honor for John and this indicates John's closeness to the Lord and how he was "beloved". Under the provisions of the Mosaic Law, the oldest son in the family had the "birthright" and was expected to care for his mother for the rest of her life in the event of his father's death. However, the Virgin Mary had no other natural children, and it was her only Son that was dying. John was very close to the Virgin Mary and John was also the only one with the courage to be present and to be identified with Jesus at the Cross. As we'll see from the Epistle lesson, John also had a considerable measure of the love of God.

John Chrysostom commented⁹²⁴ on why Jesus selected the Apostle John as the disciple that He loved. John concealed this out of modesty in his Gospel. Selecting John to care for His mother says a great deal.

"John concealed himself in modesty as he wrote his Gospel. Had John desired to boast, he would have also put in the cause for which Jesus loved him, since probably it was some great and wonderful one. But why did Jesus speak about nothing else with John, not even comforting him? Because it was no time for comforting by words; besides, it was no little thing for him to be honored with such honor and to receive the reward of steadfastness. For since it was likely that, being His mother, she would grieve and require protection, He with reason entrusted her to the beloved disciple. This He did, knitting them together in love. John understood this and took her to his own home".

A similar circumstance occurred at the Last Supper. At one point during the Last Supper, Jesus was troubled in Spirit; He testified and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me" (John 13:21). The disciples were perplexed about whom He spoke, and looked at one another. John, however, was leaning on Jesus' bosom. Peter motioned for John to ask Jesus who it was of whom He spoke. John then leaned back on Jesus' breast and asked, "Lord, who is it?" (John 13:22-25).

⁹²⁴ John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, LXXXV, 2.

John Chrysostom stated⁹²⁵ that there are indications that John was loved by Jesus. He followed Jesus right away; he went to the Transfiguration and Jairus' house with Jesus. And he was at ease when others were stressed.

“It is a question worth asking why, when all were distressed and trembling, when their Leader was troubled, John like one at ease leans on Jesus' bosom, and not only leans, but even lies on His breast? Nor is this the only thing worthy of enquiry, but also that which follows. John referred to himself in his Gospel as ‘the disciple whom Jesus loved’. Why did no one else say this of himself? The others were loved too, but John was loved more. If no one else has said this about him, but he about himself, it is nothing wonderful. Paul does the same thing when occasion calls, saying, ‘I knew a man fourteen years ago’ (2 Corinthians 12:2). It was no small thing that, when John had heard, ‘Follow Me’ (Matthew 4:20-22), he immediately left his nets, and his father, and followed. Christ took John alone with Peter and James up the mountain for the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1) and another time when He went into Jairus' house? (Luke 8:51).

Peter's Love for John

The Gospel lesson contains another interchange between John, Peter and Jesus. This time, the Lord had just indicated to Peter by what death he would glorify God. Peter then turned around and, pointing to John asked, “But Lord, what about this man?” Jesus replied, ‘If I will that he remains until I come, what is that to you? You follow Me’ (John 21:18-22). This time Peter asked the question while John was silent.

John Chrysostom wrote⁹²⁶ that Peter loved John as much as the Lord loved John. Peter was concerned about John and expressed it by saying “But Lord, what about this man?” We note that in the Early Church, Peter and John went everywhere together.

“Christ foretold great things to Peter, committed the world to him, spoke beforehand of his martyrdom, and testified that his love was greater than that of the others. Peter's response was that he desired to have John share this with him; Peter said, ‘But Lord, what about this man?’ (John 21:21) In other words, shall he (i.e. John) not come the same way with us? As at that other time not being able himself to ask, he put John forward (John 13:21-26); so here desiring to make John a return and supposing that he would desire to ask about the matters pertaining to himself, but had not courage, he himself undertook the questioning. Jesus spoke from strong affection, but also by His words taught us not to be impatient, or curious beyond what seems good to Him. For because Peter was always hot and springing forward to inquiries such as this, to cut short his warmth and to teach him not to inquire farther, He said this.”

Just prior to this, the Lord had asked Peter three times whether he loved Him. Each time that Peter responded in the affirmative, the Lord replied, “Feed My lambs”, “Tend My sheep”, and Feed My sheep”. Chrysostom summarized⁹²⁷ this by saying that caring for our neighbor

⁹²⁵ John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, LXXII, 1.

⁹²⁶ John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, LXXXVIII, 2.

⁹²⁷ John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, LXXXVIII, 1.

most of all brings good will from on high.

“There are indeed many other things which are able to give us boldness towards God and to show us bright and approved. But that which most of all brings good will from on high is tender care for our neighbor”.

The Lord had summarized this in a similar fashion earlier with the Greatest Commandment, which was part of a Creed used in the 1st Century synagogue worship. “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37-40). For more details of the Lord’s teaching on the Greatest Commandment, see the Gospel lesson for the 15th Sunday after Pentecost.

One might ask why the Lord singled Peter out to ask him this and not John or one of the others. Chrysostom stated⁹²⁸ that Peter was the “mouth of the disciples, the leader of the band”; that is, as the first among equals. Paraphrasing the situation, Chrysostom wrote⁹²⁹

“If you love Me, preside over your brethren. And the warm love which you always showed and in which you rejoiced, show now. And the life which you said you would lay down for Me, now give for My sheep”.

Peter was grieved that the Lord asked him this question a third time (John 21:17). He remembered how he denied he even knew Jesus three times in the courtyard of the high priest (John 18:13-27). He knew that he was forgiven, and it was painful for him to even remember his sin. But the Lord had a larger purpose here. Earlier Peter had overstated his love, saying that he would never stumble because of his Lord. He even proclaimed that he would die with his Lord before he ever denied Him (Matthew 26:33-35). Chrysostom stated⁹³⁰ that the Lord did not ask Peter out of lack of trust for Peter but to instruct us how we should love Him.

“For on this account Peter was troubled, ‘lest perchance I think I love and don’t, as before when I thought and affirmed much, yet I was convicted at last’. But Jesus asked him the third time to show at what price He sets the care of His own sheep, and that this especially is a sign of love towards Him. The Lord did not say this to Peter as distrusting him, but as greatly trusting him. The Lord wished besides to point out a proof of love towards Him and to instruct us in what manner especially we ought to love Him”.

Peter and John continued to be very close after this for the next two decades. After Pentecost, we see them together going up to the Temple for 9th Hour Prayer, and healing the man who was born lame (Acts 3:1-10). Peter and John together were bold in testifying before the family of the high priest and the Sadducees (Acts 4:5-13, 5:17). After the Apostles were arrested, the boldness of Peter and John encouraged the other Apostles to be bold also (Acts 5:29). When the Samaritans received the Word of God from Deacon Philip, the Apostles at Jerusalem sent Peter and John to them that they might receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:5-17).

⁹²⁸ John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, LXXXVIII, 1.

⁹²⁹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, LXXXVIII, 1.

⁹³⁰ John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, LXXXVIII, 1.

However, Peter began travelling more frequently, even taking his wife with him (1 Corinthians 9:5). Since John had been assigned to the care of the Virgin Mary, he remained behind in Jerusalem more frequently, such as when Peter “went through all parts of the country and came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda” (Acts 9:32). When Herod (Agrippa) killed James, the brother of John, with the sword in 44 AD and tried to kill Peter also, Peter escaped (Acts 12:1-17) and slowly made his way to Antioch and out of Herod’s jurisdiction (Galatians 2:11). Peter and John were together again briefly for the Council of Jerusalem in 48 AD (Acts 15:1-29). After that, Peter began his four major missionary journeys to Asia Minor, Europe, Africa and Britain and he saw John infrequently during the rest of his life. One time of reunion for all the Apostles was the occasion of the funeral for the Virgin Mary in about 55 AD.

Perfecting the Love of God in Us

Epistle: 1 John 4:12-19

Being greatly loved by the Lord, John had a perspective on love that was uncommon in its depth among the people of God. There are several aspects to this that are brought out in the Epistle lesson:

The Source of Love

God is love (1 John 3:8, 4:8, 4:16), meaning that He is the source and embodiment of all love. “We love Him because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19). He did this by sending His Son to be the propitiation for our sins (1 John 4:10), where the plan for the coming of His Son was first announced in the Garden of Eden after the Fall (Genesis 3:15). “In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His Only Begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him (1 John 4:9). Christ is “the Son of the Father in truth and in love” (2 John 1:3). To be godly, one needs to continue in or abide in the love of God. “God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God in him” (1 John 4:16). To say that God is love is not to define who God is, but rather it is a description of His relationship to us as our Father. He shows fatherly care to believer and unbeliever alike (Matthew 5:45), but unbelievers don’t acknowledge Him as Father.

There is a theological aspect to the love of God. “Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also. Therefore, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father” (1 John 2:23-24). John was fighting a heresy most of his life. Two main issues were: 1) Does God the Father have a Son who is of the same substance as His Father (i.e. consubstantial)? 2) Is the man Jesus that person, God the Son? John was teaching that Jesus Christ is one Divine Person having two natures (i.e. God and man). To deny this denies the love of God in the Incarnation in sending His Son.

The Greatest Commandment

“Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot (i.e. the Father) also loves Him who is begotten of Him” (1 John 5:1). Since Christ is the Head of the Body (Colossians 1:18), one cannot love the Head without loving the Body. This is what the Greatest Commandment states also. “For this is the message that you heard

from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's works were righteous" (1 John 3:11-12). When Christ was asked which was the Greatest Commandment, He quoted from the Mosaic Law (Deuteronomy 6:5, Leviticus 19:18). "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. And you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 22:36-40). Yet this Commandment didn't originate with Moses' revelation on Mt. Sinai. Adam and Eve knew this in the Garden of Eden from the beginning and Cain was judged for failing to live up to it.

John reminded people of this ancient Commandment. "And this is His Commandment: that we should believe on the Name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us Commandment" (1 John 3:23). "And this Commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also" (1 John 4:21). "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His Commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His Commandments. And His Commandments are not burdensome" (1 John 5:2-3). This is not a legalistic code of do this and don't do that. For the Law of God has been written on His people's hearts (Hebrews 8:10-13, Jeremiah 31:33). Even unbelievers have at least a portion of God's Law written on their hearts, where their conscience also bears witness (Romans 2:15).

John continued this theme in his second Epistle directed to "the elect lady and her children" (2 John 1:1). Most people interpret "the elect lady" as one of the Churches that looked to John for guidance. "And now I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: that we love one another. This is love that we walk according to His Commandments. This is the Commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it" (2 John 1:5-6).

Love for one's brother in keeping with the Greatest Commandment meant a lot in the 1st century. "By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16). After all, Christ instructed us to love others as He had loved us. "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another. As I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34-35). This "new commandment" is "new" in the sense that the quality of our love is measured against that of Christ Himself, and is to be a sacrificial love as His was. "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself" (Philippians 2:3). The way this works out was described by the Lord as feeding, welcoming, visiting, and clothing the least of these My brethren. To refuse to do so to the least of the members of the Body of Christ is to refuse to do so to the Lord Himself (Matthew 25:37-40). John stated it like this: "But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?" (1 John 3:17).

False Love, the Love of this World

In contrast to love of God and love of neighbor, John stated, "He who does not love does not know God, for God is love" (1 John 4:8). "If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar. For he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love

God whom he has not seen?” (1 John 4:20). “My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth” (1 John 3:18). The **Venerable Bede** put it this way: “Even though he may think he is enlightened by the Lord, anyone who comes to the font of life hating his brother is still in darkness. It is there that he is to be reborn; it is the cup of that precious blood whereby he is to be redeemed. He cannot in any way have put off the darkness of his sins when he did not take care to put on the fundamentals of love.”

John’s uncle was James, the Lord’s brother and Bishop of Jerusalem from 30 to 62 AD. Living in Jerusalem until c. 55 AD, John was very much influenced by his uncle. If we take the word “love” in John’s writings and substitute the word “faith”, John sounds very much like his uncle. “You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. For as the body without the Spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead” (James 2:24, 26).

The love of God creates a stark contrast between those who love God and those who don’t. “In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother” (1 John 3:10). “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore, the world does not know us, because it did not know Him” (1 John 3:1). “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:15).

In John’s 3rd Epistle, he wrote to “the beloved Gaius” who embodied the love of God both toward the brethren and toward strangers.

Perfecting the Love of God in Us

The love of God as seen in His Church is not a static situation, but is always changing. We can either grow toward being perfected in Christ or we can grow cold. An example of growing cold can be seen from John’s vision while he was in exile on Patmos (Revelation 1:9). He wrote to the Church in Ephesus that they had left their first love (Revelation 2:4). In other words, they had grown cold in their love toward God and their brethren. In contrast to this, John wrote in his Epistle that we can and should be perfected in love. This begins with faith: “And we have known and believed the love that God has for us” (1 John 4:16).

For love to be perfected, we need a continuing vision of Christ. “No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us” (1 John 4:12). Love for one another is the result or the evidence of the continuing vision of Christ. Keeping His Commandments is one of the prerequisites for achieving that result. “Whoever keeps His Word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him” (1 John 2:5). Keeping His Commandments does not imply a mere lip service to the Ten Commandments, although the Ten Commandments are a good place to start in our culture. Keeping His Commandments rather implies living by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God (Matthew 4:4, Deuteronomy 8:3). Our bodies are a Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20), and we have the Law written on our hearts (Jeremiah 31:33, 2 Corinthians 3:3). Therefore, we do not need to make great efforts to go somewhere or do something to find out what God would have us do at any moment (Deuteronomy 30:11-15).

Keeping His Commandments is part of a process of striving for righteousness. It is like faith versus works (James 2:24-26). Without both, one has neither. Without striving for righteousness, one does not have the love of God, and vice versa. “If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:6-9). We all sin (Romans 3:23); therefore, we all need to confess our sins as part of our striving for righteousness. A study of the lives of the saints is helpful for us in that we see examples of people who struggled in their striving for righteousness, and who exhibited the love of God as a result.

In our striving for righteousness, it is also helpful to see where the battlefield is. It is our own desires that we need to fight. “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God.’ For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin. And sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death” (James 1:13-15). For it is the things that come from our own hearts that really defile us (Matthew 15:18-20). Thus, the striving forces us to concentrate on the plank in our own eyes, rather than looking for specks in the eyes of others (Matthew 7:3). A good treatise on this striving was written by John Cassian⁹³¹. He wrote his treatise for the benefit of the monks of his day, but his insight is very apropos for our day also.

Fear is not part of this love because fear does not involve faith. “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love” (1 John 4:18). “Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment. Because as He is, so are we in this world” (1 John 4:17). “God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7). We have been delivered to serve Him without fear (Luke 1:74), for it is the Father’s good pleasure to give us the Kingdom (Luke 12:32). To return to fear again would be to receive the spirit of bondage (Romans 8:15, Hebrews 2:15).

During our striving for righteousness, however, we do have the fear of God. “Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Corinthians 7:1). Mired in our sins, we fear coming short of entering His rest (Hebrews 4:1). Thus, we work out our own salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12), and we submit to one another in the fear of God (Ephesians 5:21). Sometimes it is necessary for sinners to be rebuked publicly in order that the rest may fear and not be carried away with the sins of a few (1 Timothy 5:20). Fear is part of the struggle, but fear is done away with when love is perfected. Even Christ was described as having a godly fear in learning obedience by the things which He suffered. Even Christ was described as having been perfected (Hebrews 5:7-9); i.e. perfected in His flesh, for He was always perfect in His Deity.

We are encouraged to have a simple, childlike faith where we are not concerned about worldly matters such as food, clothing and shelter (Matthew 6:25-34). This way, we will be free

⁹³¹ John Cassian, “On the Eight Vices”, The Philokalia, Faber and Faber Ltd., 1983.

to concentrate on love. If our love were perfected, we would not fear those who may kill the body, because we know that they cannot kill the soul (Matthew 10:28). This is a striving that takes some effort, but it is not impossible. For the Lord said, “Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in Heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). In this way we are to be imitators of God (Ephesians 5:1).

The wisdom of God in this is also a mystery. Paul wrote about “the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:26-27). Because of the continuing vision of Christ that Paul had, he labored, “striving according to His working which worked in him mightily”. His goal was to teach “every man in all wisdom, that he may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” (Colossians 1:28-29), that they “may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God” (Colossians 4:12).

John’s Epistles may seem at first glance like they were written by a simpleton and not by a theologian. But the converse is the case. All of John’s writings have profound insight into the love of God that was bestowed on him in an uncommon way.

Diadochos of Photiki commented⁹³² on this: “Obedience is the chief among the initiatory virtues; for first it displaces presumption and then it engenders humility within us. Thus, it becomes for those who are willing to embrace it, a door leading to the love of God”.

⁹³² Diadochos of Photiki, On Spiritual Knowledge, Text 41