

The Christian Story

. . . a journey through time

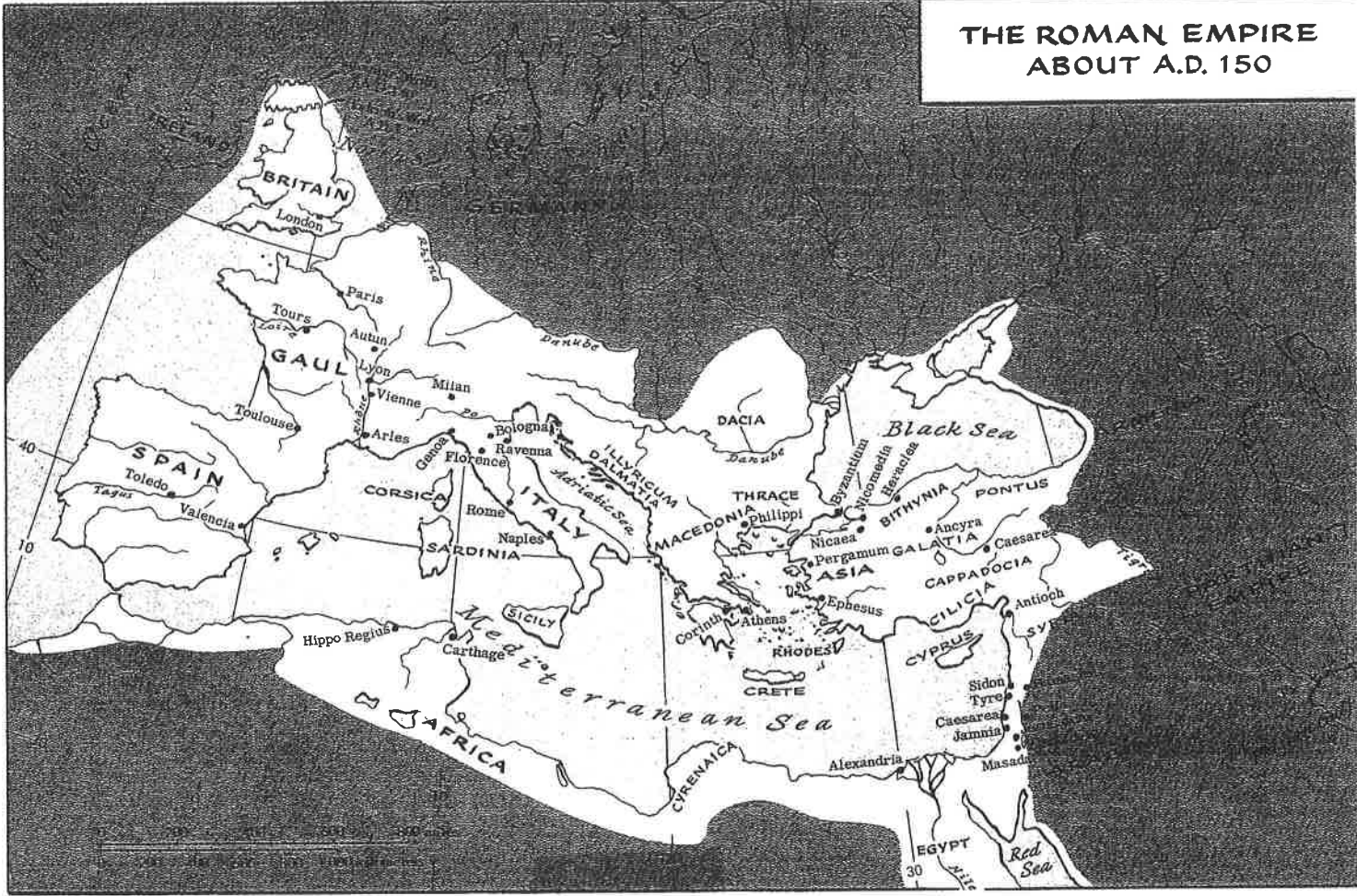
“Understanding the origins and development of Christian thought”

Introduction to: councils, doctrines, Crusades, Inquisition, Papacy, Transubstantiation, Trinity, Incarnation, Orthodoxy, Reformation, Infant vs believers, baptism. . . and more.

Stages of the Church:

- *Persecution - 325 AD
- *Privilege 325 -
- *Dominance
- *Reform
- *Decline
- *Uncertainty

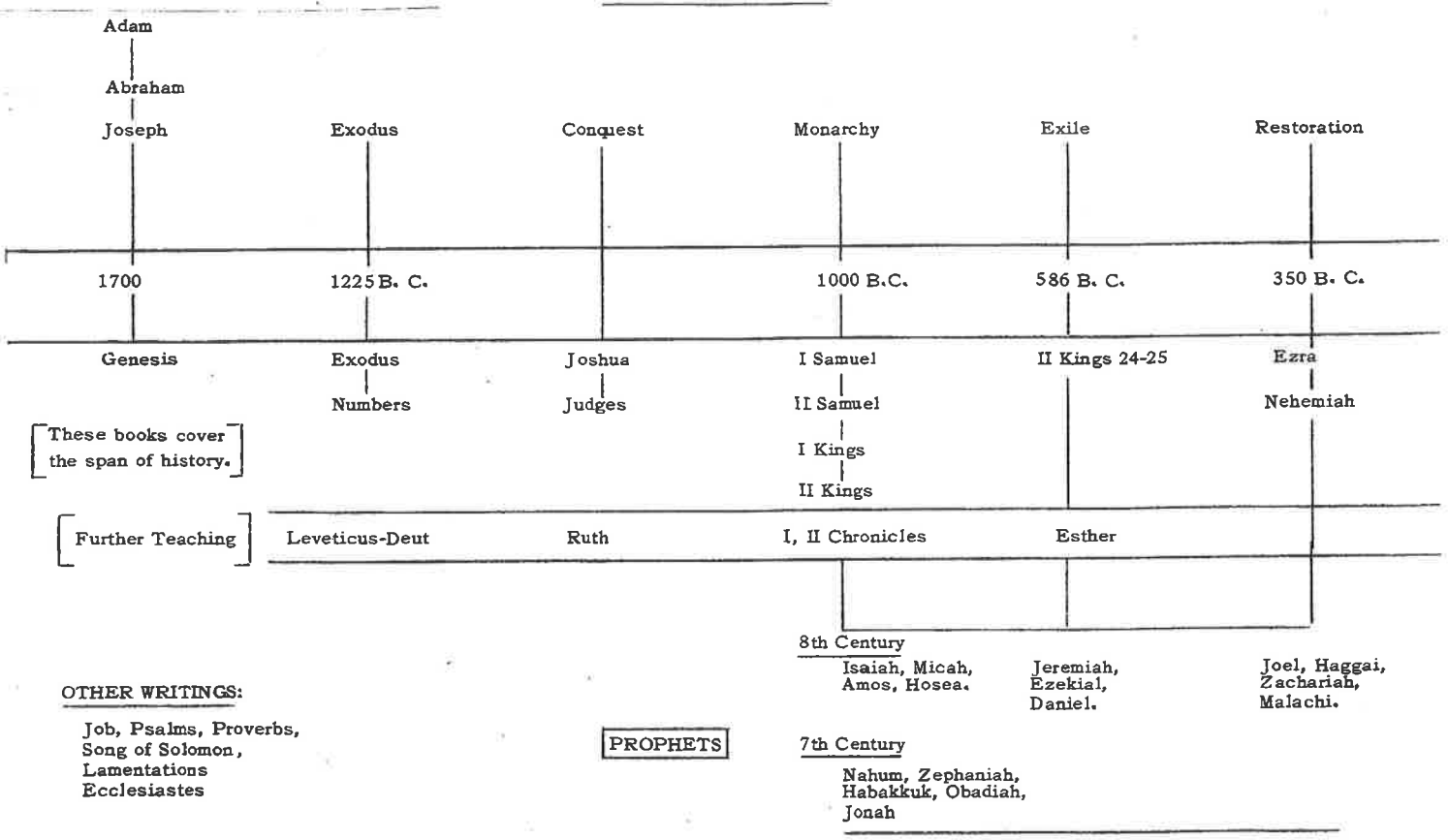
THE ROMAN EMPIRE ABOUT A.D. 150



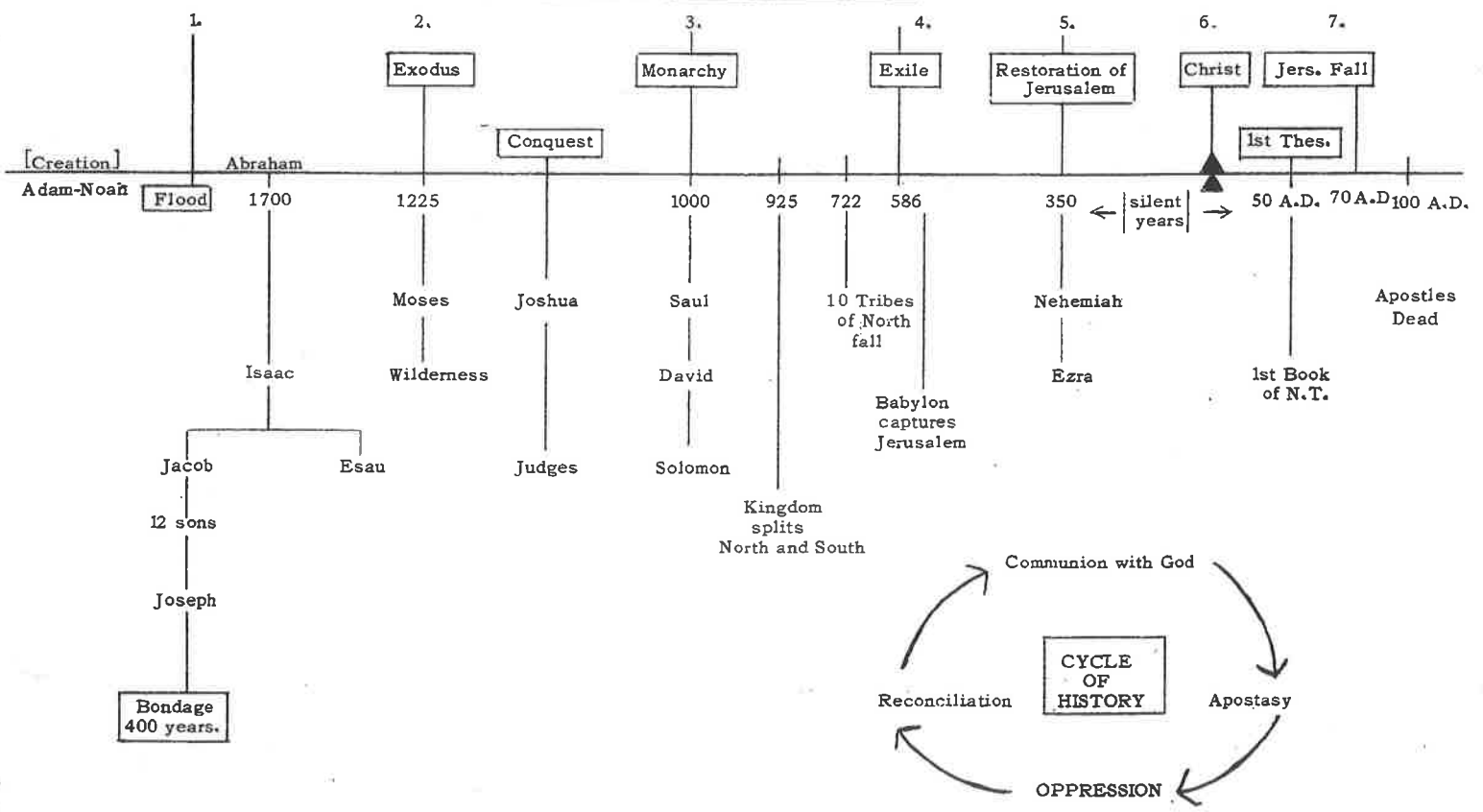
Christ in the Major Church Councils

| Statement | Council |
|---|-------------------------------|
| <i>Christ is fully divine trinity</i> | Council of Nicaea 325 |
| <i>Christ is fully human incarnation</i> | Council of Constantinople 381 |
| <i>Christ is a unified person</i> | Council of Ephesus 431 |
| <i>Christ is human and divine in one person</i> | Council of Chalcedon 451 |

BOOKS OF THE O. T.



HISTORICAL SKETCH OF BIBLICAL HISTORY



Thallus

Biographical Data:

Samaritan
Writing about AD 52

Literature Summary:

We do not have Thallus work per se. However, they are referred to by Julius Africanus in AD 221.

“Thallus, in the third book of his histories, explains away this darkness (that accompanied the crucifixion) as an eclipse of the sun - unreasonably, as it seems to me” (his argument is that Thallus’ explanation is unreasonable because a solar eclipse could not occur at the time of the Paschal full moon - Passover).

(J. Africanus, Chronography, 18.1)

Flavius Josephus

Biographical Data:

Lived AD 37 - 100
Jewish historian who became a Pharisee at the age of 19
Served as commander of Jewish forces in Galilee
Captured by Romans in AD 66 and attached to Roman headquarters. He probably wrote this about AD 75 - 85.

Literature summary:

He wrote Antiquities of the Jews, et al.

Quotation:

“At this time, there was a wise man who was called Jesus....Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. And those who became his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive: accordingly, he was, perhaps, the Messiah concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders.”

(Antiquities, xviii 33, Arabic text)

(See also early second century text variation)

Cornelius Tacitus

Biographical Data:

Born AD 52 - 54

Roman historian

In AD 112 (at 60 years old) he was Governor of Asia and wrote the following in his history of Nero's reign.

Literature Summary:

He wrote of Nero's attempt to relieve himself of the guilt of burning Rome and alludes to the death of Christ and to the existence of Christians in Rome.

Quotation:

"Hence, to suppress the rumor (of his being responsible for the burning of Rome) he falsely charged with the guilt, and punished with the most exquisite tortures, the persons commonly called Christians, who were hated for their enormities. Christus, the founder of the name, was put to death by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea in the reign of Tiberius; but the pernicious superstition, repressed for a time, broke out again, not only through Judea where the mischief originated, but through the city of Rome itself."

(Annals, XV, 44)

Suetonius

Biographical Data:

Court official under Hadrian

Official Court Historian

Literature Summary:

Annalist for the Imperial House, he wrote several histories. The following two excerpts were written about AD 120.

"As the Jews were making constant disturbance at the instigation of Christus (variant spelling of Christ), he (Nero) expelled them from Rome."

(Life of Claudius, 25.4)

"Punishment by Nero was inflicted on the Christians, a class of men given to a new and mischievous superstition"

(Lives of the Caesars, 26.2)

Pliny the Younger (Secundus)

Biographical Data:

Son of Roman naturalist, Pliny the Elder, who was killed investigating the Vesuvius volcano which destroyed Pompeii in AD 79.

Governor of Bithynia (the province in which the Christians addressed by 1st Peter lived - see 1st Peter 1:1)

Literature Summary:

We have 10 volumes of his writings, written about 120 AD, that are still in existence today. In the tenth volume he wrote to the emperor Trajan about how he killed many Christians, men, women, and children. He says that he "attempted to make them curse the name of Christ, which a genuine Christian cannot be induced to do". He also wrote the following report:

"They were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was daylight, when they sang in alternate verse a hymn to Christ, as to a god, and bound themselves with a solemn oath not to do any wicked deeds, but to abstain from all fraud, theft and adultery, never to break their word and never to deny a truth when they should be called upon to deliver it up; after which was their custom to separate, and then to meet again to partake of food, but food of an ordinary and innocent kind"

(Epistle X.96)

Lucian

Biographical Data:

Greek satirist writing about AD 170.

Literature Summary:

In the style of a satirist, he was hostile to Christianity.

"The Christians, you know, worship a man to this day — the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rights, and was crucified on that account..... You see, these misguided creatures start with the general conviction that they are immortal for all time, which explains the contempt for death and voluntary self-devotion which are so common among them; and it was impressed on them by their original lawgiver that they are all brothers from the moment they are converted, and deny the gods of Greece, and worship the crucified sage, and live after his laws."

(The Passing Peregrinus)

Mark

"The beginning of the work of Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God."
...ends with the centurion at the foot of the cross confessing "Surely this was the Son of God."

Luke

"In as much as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things

accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the Word have handed them down to us, it seemed fitting for me, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus.

...ends with Peter addressing the Pentecost crowd with the words " you are witnesses of these things."

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| LUKE | MARK | MATTHEW |
| 350 vs OF MARK FOUND IN LUKE | | 606 vs OF MARK FOUND IN MATTHEW |
| "Q" 250 vs | | |
| "L" 550 vs | 31 vs MARK 661 vs Only 31 verses of Mark are not included in the combination of Luke and Matthew. | "Q" 250 vs "M" 300 vs |
| LUKE 1149 vs | | MATT 1068 vs |

Matthew

"The book of the generation of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham."
...ends with "Go and make disciples of all nations."

This Q document, when extracted, seems to have been written originally in Aramaic, the language of Jesus. It is hypothesised, from the content of Q, that the original document may have been organized in the standard format of an Old Testament prophet's book:

- Jesus and John (Baptist) (the call of the prophet)
- Jesus and his disciples (the prophet's teaching)
- Jesus and his opponents (the prophet's correction)
- Jesus and the future (the prophet's warning)

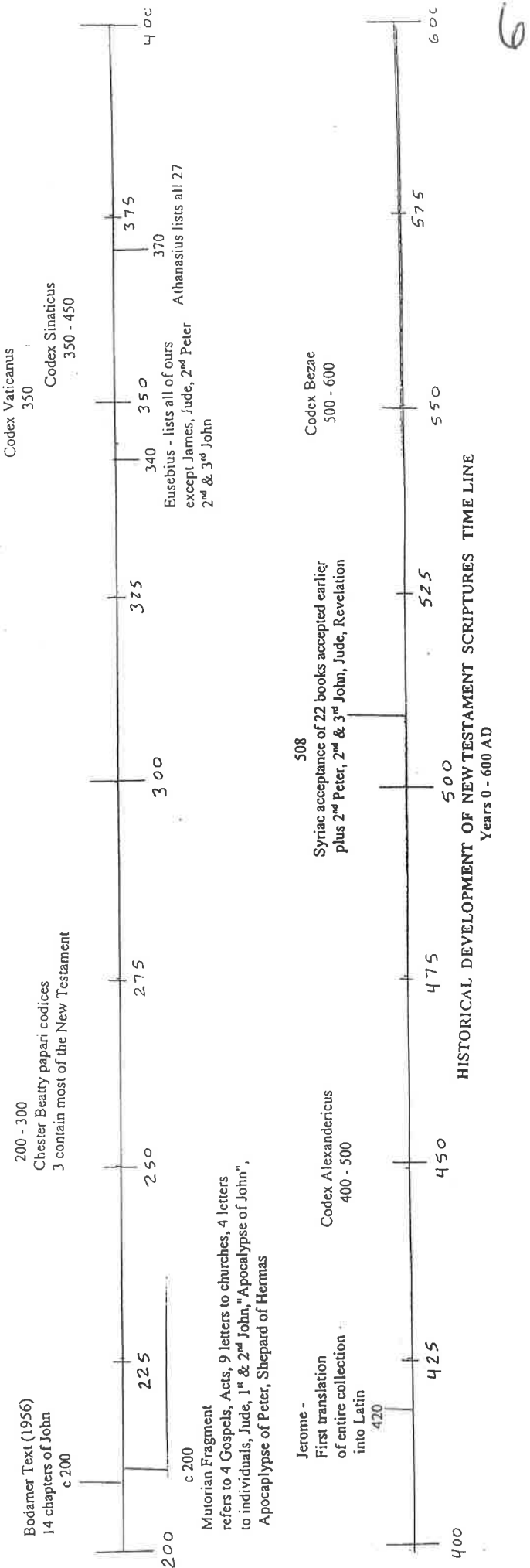
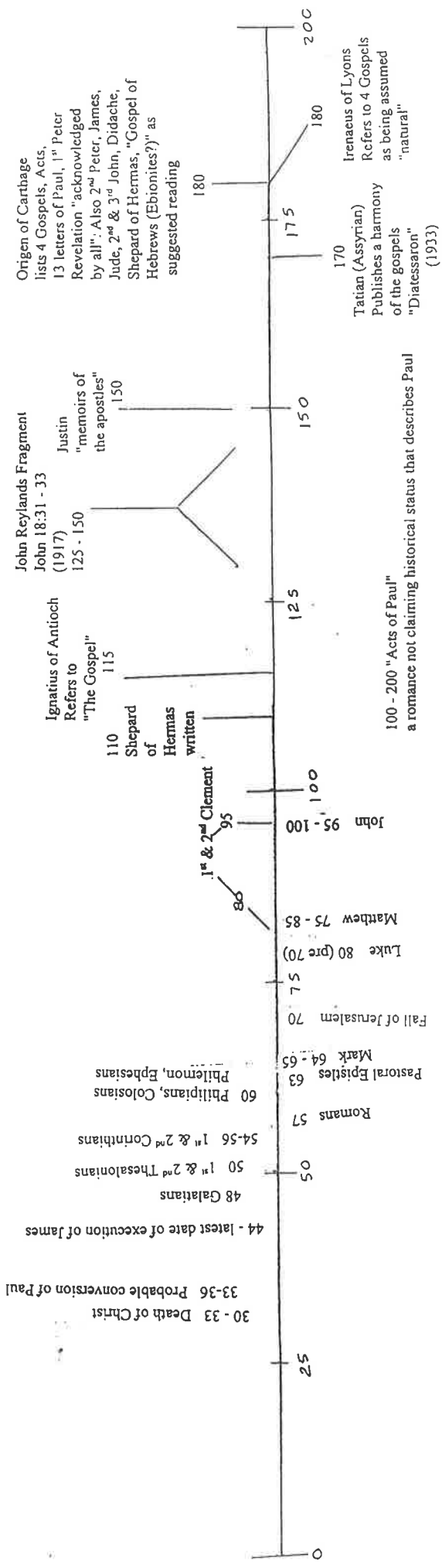
"Q" refers to the 250 verses common to both Luke and Matthew, but not contained in Mark.

"M" refers to the 330 verses peculiar to Matthew.

After Paul's 2 year detention in Caesarea, Luke went with him to Rome. We find Paul, Luke, & Mark together about year 60 (Collosians 4:10, Philemon 24)

Thesis:

Luke enlarged Matthew's "Logia" by adding information gleaned from his travels in Palestine. The first draft, Q + L = "Proto-Luke". It was then amplified by inserting Mark's material, especially where Mark's material did not overlap.



Canon Formation

- 1. Many books written, early church fathers refer to multiple books.
- 2. Examples: I,II Clement leader at Rome beginning of second century
 - Letter of Barnabus-- attacks Judaism
 - Seven letters of Ignatius (107) leader at Antioch while on journey to martyrdom
 - Wrote to churches. Polycarp had these letters sent to Phillipi
 - Preaching of Peter 2nd century --superiority of Christianity
 - Didache Church Manual on baptism, fasting, Eucharist, traveling prophets
 - Gospel of Hebrews, Philip, James, Peter, Thomas, Truth, other infancy gospels
 - Shepherd of Hermas freed slave angel vision
 - Apocalypse of Peter
 - Acts of Peter, Paul, Andrew, John, Thomas

- 3. Writing was 2nd best
 - * Apostles were living witness were the best sources
 - * People who knew an Apostle
 - * Those who knew someone who knew an apostle Papias
 - Ireneaus (175-222) Polycarp -- John

- 4. Canon lists
 - Marcion (160, died) rejected O.T. [accepted 10 letters of Paul, part of Luke]
 - Ireneaus said had to have four Gospels because of four winds and four corners of the earth
 - Clement of Alexandria accepts (letter of Barnabus, I Clement, Preaching of Peter)
 - Montanist new writings inspired by H.S. Conflict with him brought bad name for apocalyptic writings and Gospel of John

- 5. Guidelines
 - Must be (Ancient book)
 - Written by an apostle or friend of Apostle
 - Shepherd of (Hermas) out! Mark and Luke in. Letter of Hebrews questioned and rejected in the west for awhile.
 - Book must be (orthodox) in teaching
 - Gospel of Phillip, Thomas, Truth rejected
 - (Suitable) for public worship
 - Generally accepted by the Church
 - In time some accepted books were eventually rejected. Eastern ch. Had problems with Apoc. of John.
 - As long as we all agree was the test.
 - Letter of Barnabus friend of Apostle
 - Not unorthodox
 - Accepted then not accepted
 - Diache and I Clement eventually fall out of favor

- 6. Name for Collection
 - Toward end of 2nd century --- Idea of two Covenants
 - Isa 55:3, Jer. 31:31. 32:40, Ezk 16:60, 2 Cor 3:6, Gal 4:24

Greek word diatheke - Covenant used for marriage and adopting child document
New and old Covenants
??? Christianity had replaced Judaism
Europe and North Africa spoke (Latin) -- Diatheke becomes testamenium

7. Authority

Until Constatine (324) Christianity illegal ✓

In Rome - (200) Muratorian Canon

Hebrews, James, 1,2, Peter not included. Apocalypse of Peter in.

Shepherd of Hermas not for public worship.

Letter to Laodicea Letter to Alexandria forgeries.

Eusebius Bishop of Caesarea (300) ✓

Recognized books: 4 Gospels, Letters of Paul, Hebrews, I Peter, I John and Revelation "if an apostle wrote it."

Disputed Books

James, Jude, 2 Peter, 2,3, John

Spurious books (not by apostle)

Acts of Paul, Shepherd of Hermas, Letter of Barnabus, Didache,

Apoc of Peter, Rev if not by apostle, Gospel of Hebrews.

Heretical books

Gospel of Peter, Thomas, Mattithias,

Acts of Andrew, John, Peter, Preaching of Peter

Athanasius (367) Bishop of Alexandria lists present 27 books

Herms and Didache listed as useful but not in canon

Council of Carthage (397) North Africa --- present 27 books.

→ VULGATE (382) - Bishop of Rome commissioned Jerome to translate into Latin

Stood as Bible for Latin church for 1,000 years; included

Septuagint which contained the Apocrapha.

Jerome questioned - Hebrews, 2,3 John, Jude, 2Peter, James, Rev.

But Bishop of Rome didn't so they were included.

Over time a decision was made. After the Vulgate there was not more discussion

Luther wanted James as 2nd class scripture.

The New Testament As It Gained Acceptance by the Early Church

300
400

| New Testament used in the church at Rome (the "Muratorian Canon") | New Testament used by Origen | New Testament used by Eusebius | New Testament fixed for the West by the Council of Carthage |
|--|---|---|---|
| Different parts of our New Testament were written by this time, but not collected and defined as "Scripture." Early Christian writers (for example Polycarp and Ignatius) quote from the Gospels and Paul's letters, as well as from other Christian writing and oral sources. | Four Gospels Acts Paul's letters: Romans 1 & 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 & 2 Thessalonians 1 & 2 Timothy Titus Philemon James 1 & 2 John Jude Revelation of John Revelation of Peter Wisdom of Solomon To be used in private, but not public, worship The Shepherd of Hermas | Four Gospels Acts Paul's letters: Romans 1 & 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 & 2 Thessalonians 1 & 2 Timothy Titus Philemon 1 Peter 1 John Revelation of John | Four Gospels Acts Paul's letters: Romans 1 & 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 & 2 Thessalonians 1 & 2 Timothy Titus Philemon 1 Peter 1 John Revelation of John (authorship in doubt) |
| Paul's letters were collected late in the first century, Matthew, Mark, and Luke were brought together by 150. | Disputed Hebrews James 2 Peter 2 & 3 John Jude The Shepherd of Hermas Letter of Barnabus Teaching of Twelve Apostles Gospel of the Hebrews | Disputed but well known James 2 Peter 2 & 3 John Jude | To be excluded The Shepherd of Hermas Letter of Barnabus Gospel of the Hebrews Revelation of Peter Acts of Peter Didache |

N LANGUAGE

interpret, and to apply what had

assumed this position lies in... One of the first is a documentatorian Canon, from its... it in 1740. The document is... as with Luke, but its list of... n, Acts, 1 and 2 Corinthians, ... ns, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, ... de, 1 and 2 John, the Apoca- ... ocalypse of Peter, and The ... did not remain on the ap- ... early accepted the idea of ... res, one fulfilling what the

f books continued to create... n the western regions of the... : east. At the outset of the... ummed up the situation and... d Jude were the only books... others. Revelation, however,

ve them today, came in an... us from Alexandria. Shortly... (393) and at Carthage (397)

the canon. Their decisions... nother sense, however, they... made their authority felt in... nent shows that the early... ie teachings of the apostles... hristianity for all time. The... s apostolic.

The New Testament Canon

New Testament Books Treated as Traditional Scripture by Early Writers

Italic type indicates that the writer either does not mention the book or expressed some doubt about the status of the book.

134
(170-220)
(Canon clear.)

time of Muratorian List

| Athanasius (b. 296) | Origen (b. 185) - 254 | Irenaeus (b. 130) - 200 | Marcion* (b. 85) - 140 |
|------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Matthew | Matthew | Matthew | |
| Mark | Mark | Mark | |
| Luke | Luke | Luke | Luke |
| John | John | John | |
| Acts | Acts | Acts | |
| Romans | Romans | Romans | Romans |
| 1 Corinthians | 1 Corinthians | 1 Corinthians | 1 Corinthians |
| 2 Corinthians | 2 Corinthians | 2 Corinthians | 2 Corinthians |
| Galatians | Galatians | Galatians | Galatians |
| Ephesians | Ephesians | Ephesians | Ephesians |
| Philippians | Philippians | Philippians | Philippians |
| Colossians | Colossians | Colossians | Colossians |
| 1 Thessalonians | 1 Thessalonians | 1 Thessalonians | 1 Thessalonians |
| 2 Thessalonians | 2 Thessalonians | 2 Thessalonians | 2 Thessalonians |
| 1 Timothy | 1 Timothy | 1 Timothy | |
| 2 Timothy | 2 Timothy | 2 Timothy | |
| Titus | Titus | Titus | |
| Philemon | Philemon | Philemon | Philemon |
| Hebrews | Hebrews | * Hebrews | |
| James | * James | * James | |
| 1 Peter | 1 Peter | 1 Peter | |
| 2 Peter | * 2 Peter | * 2 Peter | |
| 1 John | 1 John | 1 John | |
| 2 John | * 2 John | * 2 John | |
| 3 John | * 3 John | * 3 John | |
| Jude | * Jude | * Jude | |
| Revelation** | Revelation | Revelation | |

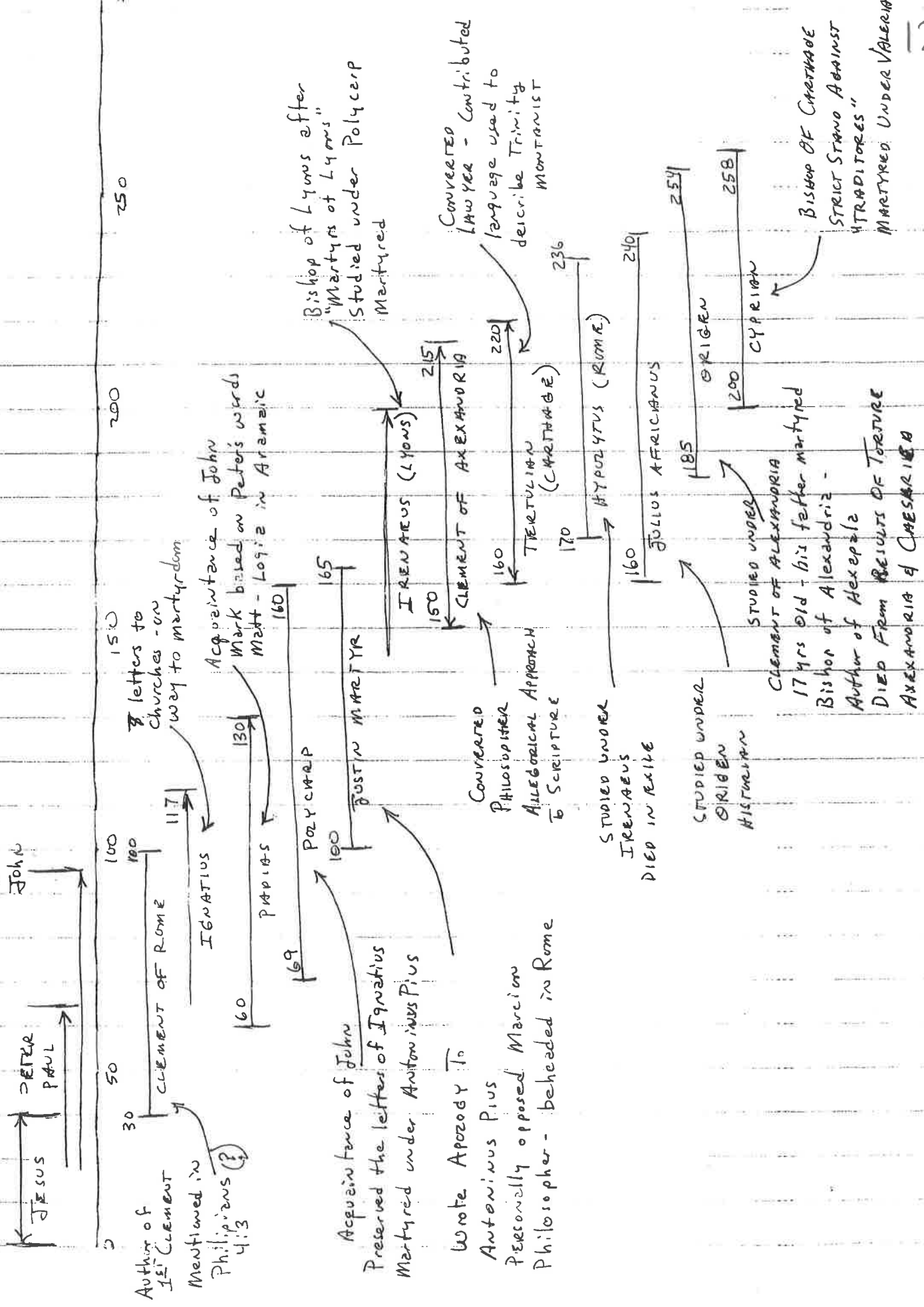
(some dispute these)

* Marcion's views were peculiar to his sect. He was aware of the fact that many of the other books were read as scripture in most churches.

3. The Apostolic Fathers

| NAME | DATES | PLACES OF MINISTRY | WRITINGS | NOTABLE FACTS |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|---|---|
| CLEMENT OF ROME | c.30-c.100 | Rome | I Clement | Is considered by Roman Catholic church to have been 4th pope. Is perhaps mentioned in Phil. 4:3. Was martyred under Domitian. His letter stresses apostolic succession. |
| IGNATIUS | d. 117 | Antioch in Syria | To the Ephesians To the Magnesians To the Trallians To the Romans To the Philadelphians To the Smyrnaeans To Polycarp | His letters were written en route to martyrdom in Rome—a fate he joyfully espoused. Was first to distinguish between bishops and elders. Opposed Gnostic heresies. Was martyred under Trajan. |
| HERMAS | late 1st to early 2nd century | Rome | The Shepherd | Was a contemporary of Clement. Wrote of visions and parables. Was perhaps a former slave. Was probably Jewish. |
| BARNABAS OF ALEXANDRIA | late 1st to early 2nd century | Alexandria | Epistle of Barnabas | Was probably an Alexandrian Jew. Was familiar with allegorical methods of Philo. |
| PAPIAS | c.60-c.130 | Hierapolis | Exposition of the Oracles of Our Lord | Was an acquaintance of the apostle John. Held premillennial view of eschatology. Claimed Mark's Gospel was based on Peter's words. Said that Matthew's Gospel was originally written in Aramaic. |
| POLYCARP | c.69-160 | Smyrna | Epistle to the Philippians | Was an acquaintance of the apostle John. Compiled and preserved epistles of Ignatius. Is said to have confronted Marcion as "the firstborn of Satan." Was martyred under Antoninus Pius. |

TIME LINE OF EARLY CHURCH FATHERS



Opposition from within

1. Galatians 1: 6 . . . a different gospel
2. Colossians 2: 8 . . . no one makes a prey of you by philosophy, deceit, human traditions
2: 18. . . worship of angels, visions,
3. I John 1:22 denies Jesus as Christ, 2:26 those who deceive you
4. Jude 3 contend for the faith once and for all delivered to the saints
5. Acts 20:29 wolves come in among you

The need for a Canon of authoritative teaching

1. Gnosticism:

Elect souls being divine sparks temporarily imprisoned in physical bodies as a result of a precosmic catastrophe, can obtain salvation by means of a special gnosis (knowledge) of their origin and destiny.

Philosophical dualism: visible world by subordinate deity (Demiurge) Christ as redeemer only seemed to a real human. (Docetism)

Church Fathers: Gospels and writings of Paul does not teach this.

Answer: Jesus did not teach this in public, only to trusted apostles. This teaching came in the period between the resurrection and the ascension of Christ. (Acts 1)

→ At the transfiguration, Jesus instructs the apostles to tell no one until after resurrection. (Mk 9:9)

Basilides: Jesus only appeared to suffer on the cross. Lent his form to Simon who carried the cross.

Valentinus: received revelation from the Logos. The Demiurge is the God of the O.T. Three types of people: Spiritual, Those who merely possess a soul unenlightened, Those who are made up solely of matter--destiny of hell. O.T. is not the work of the highest God.

Marcosians: Heavenly Christ came upon the earthly Jesus in the baptism. The numerical value of the Greek word for dove comes to 801. Rev. 1:8 Alpha is 1; Omega is 800.

Gospel of Thomas: These are the secret words which the living Jesus spoke and which Didymus Judas Thomas wrote down. No futuristic eschatological component--true destiny of human existence is divine wisdom.

2. Marcion: wealthy Christian ship-owner; gave much to the church. Wrote: "Contradictions"

- a. Supreme God of goodness -- N.T.
Inferior God of justice, creator and god of the Jews
These two gods cannot be reconciled.
- b. Moses: eye for eye
Jesus: love your enemy
- c. Elisha had children eaten by bears
Jesus: let the children come to me.
- d. Joshua had stopped the sun in order to continue to slaughter enemies
Jesus: let not sun go down on anger
- e. divorce polygamy permitted in O.T.
Jesus does not allow this.
- f. Moses: Sabbath and Law
Jesus; freed believer from both
- g. No work on Sabbath yet Joshua commanded to carry ark on Sabbath.
- h. No images and yet Moses makes Nehustan.
- i. Deity not omniscient: "Adam, where are you?"
- j. The true gospel (Gal 1:6) is not the Jewish law gospel. Marcion only accepted Luke's gospel.

3. Montanism

1. Enthusiastic and apocalyptic movement
2. Ecstatic outbursts of Holy Spirit -- only true form of Christianity. Montanus fell into a trance and spoke in tongues as the paraclete promised in John 14. Prisca and Priscafflatus left their husbands and joined themselves to the mission of Montanus.
3. New Jerusalem was soon to descend to a town in Phrygia. Many prophetic oracles written down. Man is a lyre and God is the speaker. Seven virgins dressed in white carrying torches deliver oracles to prepare the way for Montanus and stir the crowd.
4. With end of world in view, asceticism was promoted for rigorous discipline of holiness. Church becoming more institutionalize and corrupt.

How was the Church to respond?

Attempted to cast demons out of the two prophetess. Synods called and eventually excommunicated Montanus.

Issue: a new production of sacred scriptures

A distrust of apocalyptic writing; i.e.; Rev of John; some went so far as to reject the Gospel of John because of the paraclete sayings and being different from the Synoptic Gospels.

The call to discipline and holiness was hard to deny. (Tertullian)

Issue: The continuous gift of inspiration and prophecy

Response: The final authority of apostolic writings as the rule of faith.

Christian writers like Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Hippolytus devote much time to a refutation of its contentions. As a basic ingredient was secret gnosis (knowledge), Gnosticism took many forms, depending on who was its principal spokesman. In the Christian community, three of its most influential spokesmen were Basilides, Valentinus, and Marcion. It drew upon the Greek philosophical dualism of body-spirit, making the former inferior, unreal, and evil. The spirit was the only real element in man and it had to be freed from the material bondage of this world. Everything depended on that key presupposition of the superiority of the spirit. Extended and applied, the dichotomy of body-spirit yielded strange fruits which the mainline Christians fought to reject.

1. In addition to this basic presupposition, the many forms of Gnosticism had other similarities. Its secret knowledge came to a favored few through a special revelation either directly or through a secret tradition from the apostles. It usually had a theosophy or mythology that denied the creation of the world by the good, spiritual God, whose pure spirituality could not be contaminated by such material involvement. That mundane task was accomplished by a Demiurge, a creature who had fallen or was removed from the Divine Being by a series of emanations. Demiurge created men and ruled the world. Into men he knowingly or inadvertently placed bits of divinity, spirit, more in some than in others, so that the Gnostics could speak of different grades of human beings. Some were very spiritual, while others had such small amounts of spirit that they could hardly be distinguished from animals. Various rites and ethical practices were designed to free those bits of spirit, the real persons, from their fleshly embodiments. Christ was sent to earth to show men the way, but he was not incarnate, he merely invaded and used the body of the carpenter Jesus. Since spirit is immortal, Christ did not die; the man Jesus suffered on the cross, and there was no resurrection of the body. Docetism, from the Greek word for "seeming," derives from this notion that Christ merely seemed to be human.

Basilides, a teacher at Alexandria in the second century, apparently posed a system purportedly from St. Peter, of 365 eons or worlds emanating from the unity of the godhead. Among the lower eons, very far removed from the pure reality of the supreme God, was the God of the Jews who brought about creation and attempted to subjugate men. The supreme God then sent his Nous (mind) into the world to rescue men from their mundane imprisonment. The high spiritual being, Nous, dwelt without contamination and suffering in Jesus to show men how to rid themselves of matter and ascend to the supreme God. Data on Basilides' system is unfortunately very sparse.

Valentinus (d. ca. 160), a teacher in Rome, received his gnosis in a vision. Valentinianism, as evolved, posed a Platonic parallelism between the realms of ideas and phenomena. It conceived of an eternal primal Being whose

silent contemplation became his spouse, for God is love and love must have an object. Then an elaborate process of emanations devolved, until there were twenty-eight eons, in sexual pairs, symbolizing various attributes of divinity. All together, they constituted the fullness of reality—pleroma. A dividing line—horos—separated reality from unreality—kenoma. All was well until Sophia, the twenty-eighth eon, felt lonely and attempted to leap into the heart of the All-Father, primal Being. In doing so, Sophia kicked a hole in the horos, and reality began to drain away. In the process Demiurge, the god of the Old Testament, was born. He took the particles of reality and created the visible world. The All-Father then projected the last pair of eons—Christ and the Holy Spirit—to rescue the reality. When all reality is reclaimed, a great wedding celebration will take place in heaven and matter will sink back into nothing. The Soter, Christ, united with the man Jesus at the time of his baptism to reveal true gnosis to the pneumatics (the Valentinians) who alone will enter into pleroma. The psychics (Christians who live by faith and good works) will make it only to some kind of middle realm. And the hylics (those submerged in matter) will suffer eternal perdition.

Fantastic as it may appear, Gnosticism attracted many devotees. It was a serious attempt to answer the problem of evil. What is the nature of evil and how can man be redeemed from it? The answer was that men are essentially spiritual and that redemption is the freeing of pure spirit from impure matter. The world is evil, unreal; salvation is escape from this world. Gnosticism posited a docetic Christ, no human incarnation. It denied history and God's activity in the world. It posited predestination: only those who have a portion of the spirit can be saved. Generally it fostered an ascetic ethic, rejection of sex and physical matters, a debasement of the body, and a cultivation of the spirit. However, by making the spirit everything and the body nothing it also fostered physical license; some Gnostics justified licentiousness by saying their bodies, not they themselves, were indulging. Stress on privileged gnosis led some to assumptions of arrogant superiority, a form of Gnosticism that troubled the Corinthian church.

Marcion (d. ca. 160), who perhaps left a more lasting mark than any of the others, was not a Gnostic in the sense of having an elaborate cosmic theosophy. He was a Christian, possibly the son of a bishop, well versed in Scriptures, and may have been excommunicated from the church in Rome for immorality. Over a large part of the Roman empire he established communities committed to the thesis that love is the central element of Christianity. The Old Testament and its laws he regarded as the antithesis of love and rejected them. Leading Christians of the day, Irenaeus of Lyons, Tertullian of Carthage, and Hippolytus of Rome, entered the lists against him. His followers flourished in the second and third centuries, only to be engulfed in Manichaeism, although a few remnants endured for centuries.

The Infancy Gospel of Thomas

The Infancy Gospel of Thomas

93

"You shall go no further on your way." And immediately the child fell down dead. Some people saw this happen and said, "From whence was this child begotten, for his every word is an act accomplished?" 2. The parents of the dead boy went to Joseph and blamed him: "Because you have such a boy, you cannot live with us in the village; your alternative is to teach him to bless and not to curse, for he is killing our children."

5.1. Joseph took the child aside privately and warned him, saying, "Why do you do such things? These people are suffering and they hate us and are persecuting us!" Jesus said, "I know that these are not your words, but on account of you I will be silent. However, they shall bear their punishment. ¹ Immediately, those who accused him were blinded. 2. Those who saw were very frightened and puzzled, and they said about him, "Every word he speaks, whether good or evil, happens and is a miracle." When he saw what Jesus had done, Joseph arose and took hold of Jesus' ear and pulled it hard. 3. The child was angry and said to him, "It is fitting for you to seek and not find. You have acted very stupidly. Do you not know I am yours? Do not vex me."

6.1. A man named Zaccheus, a teacher, was standing there and he heard, in part, Jesus saying these things to his father. He was greatly astonished that he said such things, since he was just a child. 2. And after a few days he approached Joseph and said to him, "You have a smart child, and he has a mind. Come, hand him over to me so that he may learn writing. I will give him all understanding with the letters, and teach him to greet all the elders and to honor them as grandfathers and fathers and to love his peers." 3. He told him all the letters from the Alpha to the Omega plainly, with much discussion. But Jesus looked at Zaccheus the teacher, and said to him, "You do not know the Alpha according to nature, how do you teach others the Beta? You hypocrite! First, if you know it, teach the Alpha, then we shall believe you about the Beta." Then he began to question the teacher about the first letter and he could not answer him. 4. Many heard as the child said to Zaccheus, "Listen, teacher, to the order of the first element, and pay attention to this, how it has lines, and a central mark which goes through the two lines you see, (they) converge, go up, again come to head, become the same three times, subordinate, and hypostatic, isometric . . . [The text is unreliable.] You now have the lines of Alpha."

7.1. When the teacher, Zaccheus, heard so many such allegories of the first letter spoken by the child, he was puzzled about such expoundings and his teaching. He said to those present, "Woe is me, I am wretched and puzzled; I have shamed myself trying to handle this child. 2. I beg you, brother Joseph, take him away. I cannot bear the severity of his

¹ An interesting Syriac variant: "If these children had been born in wedlock they would not be cursed."

Introduction: One of the earliest (A.D. 125) writings devoted to "filling the gap" left by some of the other gospels, namely, what happened to Jesus before his twelfth year, this Gospel became very popular, and was translated into numerous languages. It is a classic example of the influence of the Hellenistic "divine man" concept on a Christian description of Jesus Christ.

1. 1. Thomas the Israelite, announce and make known to all you brethren from the Gentiles the childhood and great deeds of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he did when he was born in our country. This is the beginning.

2.1. When this child Jesus was five years old, he was playing at the ford of a stream. He made pools of the rushing water and made it immediately pure; he ordered this by word alone. 2. He made soft clay and modeled twelve sparrows from it. It was the Sabbath when he did this. There were many other children playing with him. 3. A certain Jew saw what Jesus did while playing on the Sabbath; he immediately went and announced to his father Joseph, "See, your child is at the stream, and has taken clay and modeled twelve birds; he has profaned the Sabbath." 4. Joseph came to the place, and seeing what Jesus did he cried out, "Why do you do on the Sabbath what it is not lawful to do?" Jesus clapped his hands and cried to the sparrows, "Be gone." And the sparrows flew off chirping. 5. The Jews saw this and were amazed. They went away and described to their leaders what they had seen Jesus do.

3.1. The son of Annas the scribe was standing there with Joseph. He took a branch of a willow and scattered the water which Jesus had arranged. 2. Jesus saw what he did and became angry and said to him, "You unrighteous, impious ignoramus, what did the pools and the water do to harm you? Behold, you shall also wither as a tree, and you shall not bear leaves nor roots nor fruit." 3. And immediately that child was all withered. Jesus left and went to the house of Joseph. The parents of the withered one bore him away, bemoaning his lost youth. They led him to Joseph and reproached him, "What kind of child do you have who does such things?"

4.1. Once again he was going through the village, and a child who was running banged into his shoulder. Jesus was angered and said to him,

The Coptic Gospel of Thomas

The Coptic Gospel of Thomas

Man, and when you say, 'Mountain, move away,' it will move."

107. Jesus said, "The Kingdom is like a shepherd who had a hundred sheep. One of them, which was the largest, wandered off. He left the ninety-nine; he searched for the one until he found it. After he tired himself, he said to the sheep, 'I love you more than the ninety-nine.'" 108. Jesus said, "He who drinks from my mouth will be as I am, and I will be he, and the things that are hidden will be revealed to him." 109. Jesus said, "The Kingdom is like a man who had a treasure [hidden] in his field, and he did not know it. And [after] he died, he left it to his son. His son did not know; he received the field, and he sold [it]. The one who bought it went plowing; and [he found] the treasure. He began to lend money at interest to whomever he wished." 110. Jesus said, "He who finds the world and becomes rich, let him reject the world."

111. Jesus said, "The heavens and the earth will roll up in your presence, and he who lives by the Living One will not see death . . . Because did not Jesus say, 'He who finds himself, the world is not worthy of him?'"

112. Jesus said, "Woe to the flesh which depends on the soul; woe to the soul which depends on the flesh."

113. His disciples said to him, "On what day will the Kingdom come?" (He said,) "It will not come by expectation. They will not say, 'Look here,' or, 'Look there,' but the Kingdom of the Father is spread out on the earth and men do not see it."

114. Simon Peter said to them, "Let Mary leave us, because women are not worthy of the Life." Jesus said, "Look, I shall guide her so that I will make her male, in order that she also may become a living spirit, being like you males. For every woman who makes herself male will enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

36. Jesus said, "Do not be anxious from morning to evening and from evening to morning about what you will wear."

37. His disciples said, "On what day will you be revealed to us and on what day shall we see you?" Jesus said, "When you undress without being ashamed, and you take your clothes and put them under your feet as little children and tramp on them, then you shall see the Son of the Living [One], and you shall not fear."

38. Jesus said, "Many times you desired to hear these words which I say to you, and you have no one else from whom to hear them. There will be days when you will seek me, and you will not find me."

39. Jesus said, "The Pharisees and the scribes took the keys of knowledge; they hid them. They did not enter, and they did not allow those to enter who wanted to enter. But you be wise as serpents and as innocent as doves."

Introduction: When it was discovered near the town of Nag Hammadi in upper Egypt, this Gospel caused a sensation. It was found in an ancient Coptic monastery's library (of which the Gospel of Philip is a part). Bits of the Coptic Gospel of Thomas had been known in Greek, but the extent and nature of the whole work were virtually unsuspected. Suddenly, the world had a book which called itself a gospel but which was only a collection of sayings; it looked like no other gospel. It had no narratives, no miracles, no passion story.

Moreover, early attempts to show that this Gospel was derived from the first three (synoptic) Gospels were not convincing. There are sayings in the Coptic Gospel of Thomas which do not occur in the New Testament Gospels. And some of the sayings in the Coptic Gospel of Thomas which are also found in Matthew or Luke appear to have been less influenced by later Christian alteration than the same sayings in the synoptic Gospels. This is particularly true of certain parables. Could it be that (1) the Coptic Gospel of Thomas represents a tradition of Jesus sayings which is independent of the New Testament Gospels, and (2) this Gospel has some sayings which are older in form than their parallels in the synoptic Gospels? Many scholars tend to answer yes to both questions.

These are the secret words which the living Jesus spoke, and Didymos Judas Thomas wrote them down.

1. And he said, "He who finds the meaning of these words will not taste death."
2. Jesus said, "Let him who seeks not cease seeking until he finds, and when he finds, he shall be troubled, and when he is troubled, he will marvel, and he will rule over the All."
3. Jesus said, "If the ones who lead you say, 'There is the kingdom, in heaven,' then the birds of heaven shall go before you. If they say to you, 'It is in the sea,' then the fish shall go before you. Rather, the kingdom is within you and outside you. If you know yourselves, then you will be known, and you will know that you are sons of the living Father. But if you do not know yourselves, then you are in poverty and you are poverty."