

New Testament

Required Reading

The following readings are required for each lesson. It is recommended that you read the sections of the Bible first. Then, you will better be able to understand the discussion about them in the textbooks.

LESSON I

- (1) Matthew 1-16
- (2) Chapters 7 & 8 of *Reading the Bible: A Study Guide*
- (3) Maps 14-21 of *The Student Bible Atlas*
- (4) *Catholic Update* - "Finding the Heart of Jesus' Life"*
- (5) *Catechism of the Catholic Church* nos. 541-560

LESSON II

- (1) Matthew 17-28
- (2) Luke
- (3) Chapter 8 of *Reading the Bible: A Study Guide*
- (4) "The Gospel of Luke as Good News" (from reading packet)*

LESSON III

- (1) John 1,4:4-42,6,10,13-17
- (2) Acts 1-4, 9-11, 15, 18-19
- (3) Map 22 of *The Student Bible Atlas*
- (4) Chapter 8 of *Reading the Bible: A Study Guide*
- (5) "The Gospel of John as Good News" (from reading packet)*
- (6) *Scripture from Scratch* – "The Acts of the Apostles: Luke's Dramatic Sequel"*

LESSON IV

- (1) Romans 1-9
- (2) 1 Corinthians 11-14
- (3) Colossians
- (4) Chapter 9 of *Reading the Bible: A Study Guide*
- (5) Maps 23-26 of *The Student Bible Atlas*
- (6) "Studying the Letters of Paul" (from reading packet)*
- (7) *Scripture from Scratch* – "Paul: Letters From a Traveling Theologian"*

LESSON V

- (1) James
- (2) 1 Peter
- (3) Jude
- (4) 2 John
- (5) 3 John
- (6) Revelation 1-3, 12, 19-22
- (7) Map 27 of the *Student Bible Atlas*
- (8) Chapter 10 of *Reading the Bible: A Study Guide*
- (9) *Scripture from Scratch*: "Optimists & Pessimists Read the Book of Revelation"*

*These short articles can be accessed from the "Materials" section of the course once purchased.

Lesson 1 – Handout 1

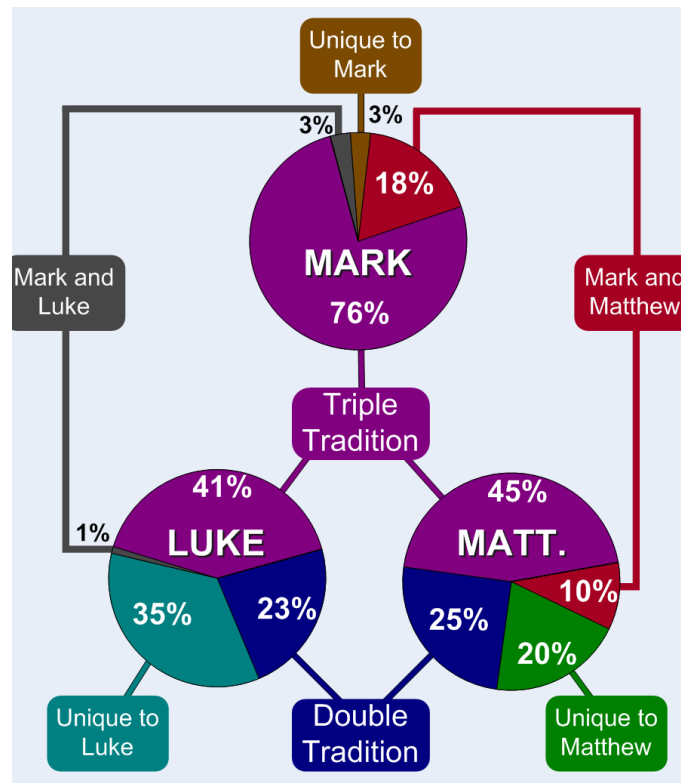
The purpose of this Pre-Test is to help your facilitator and you find the gaps in your knowledge that the course will be able to fill. How many you get right or wrong has no impact on your completion status.

1. Divino Afflante Spiritu is a pastoral letter issued by Pope John Paul II.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 2. Though we possess many ancient copies of Biblical documents, the original texts written in the author's own hand are lost.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 3. Textual criticism is a way of studying manuscripts of ancient texts in order to understand the Bible.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 4. What Christians call the "Old Testament" the Jews call "TaNaK."
 - a. True
 - b. False
 5. The term "testament" is from the Hebrew word meaning library.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 6. The entire Bible was written in Greek.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 7. The main Jewish feasts were Passover, Weeks, and Booths.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 8. Baal is the name of a city.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 9. The kingdom of Israel is split when the exiled northern leader Jeroboam returns from Egypt 933-922 BCE; thus is formed the northern (Israel) and southern (Judea) kingdoms.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 10. The four sources/traditions used in organizing the books of the Bible are: Exodus, Leviticus, Torah and Prophets.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 11. A prophet is one who foretells the future.
 - a. True
 - b. False
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12. Some prophets are called "ecstatic prophets" because of how they received their insights.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 13. The difference between "major and minor" prophets is how long they lived.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 14. From the time of St. Augustine (d. 430) to the 18th century, the accepted view was that the four Gospels were written in the order in which they appear in the Bible.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 15. In ancient Judah every king was a messiah, an anointed one.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 16. The Bible is a history book.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 17. Which of the following did the Greeks (Alexander the Great) NOT bring with them when they conquered nations?
 - a. literature
 - b. sports
 - c. the Olympic torch
 - d. language
 - e. religion (many deities)
 18. The policy of the Seleucids
 - a. called everyone to be a great gymnast.
 - b. enforced Hellenization of the community.
 - c. established Hanukkah.
 19. The First Book of Maccabees is one of the last books of the Old Testament to be written.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 20. The Septuagint is the Scriptures written in
 - a. Hebrew.
 - b. Aramaic.
 - c. Greek.
 - d. Italian.
 21. Identify the three languages that were eventually used in synagogues for worship.
 - a. Aramaic
 - b. Greek
 - c. Hebrew
 - d. Canaanite
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22. The Sadducees were associated with which dynasty?
- Hasmonean
 - Ptolemaic
 - Herodian
23. One of the most exciting archaeological discoveries in 1947 related to the Scriptures was
- the Ark of the Covenant.
 - the tomb of David.
 - the Dead Sea Scrolls.
24. The earliest of the four canonical Gospels is
- Matthew.
 - Mark.
 - John.
 - Luke.
25. The synoptic Gospels are
- Matthew, Mark and John.
 - John, Luke and Matthew.
 - Mark, Matthew and Luke.
 - Mark, Paul and Titus.
26. In writing their gospels, Matthew and Luke used
- principally their own experience.
 - mark and "Q."
 - conversations with Peter and Paul.
 - none of the above.
27. Mark's Gospel was written for
- the Jewish Community and offers a reflection on the Torah.
 - an audience that lived during the time of the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans.
28. Matthew's Gospel was written for
- the gentiles and focuses on their call to serve the poor.
 - a Jewish audience to help them embrace both their Jewish tradition and the mission to the gentiles.
 - a Jewish and Gentile community to help them create a new Church.
29. Luke's Gospel was written for
- the new Christian community of gentile converts unfamiliar with the Old Testament traditions, and helping them direct their energy into a worldwide mission following Jesus.
 - to put the call to follow the Mosaic Law within the Christian context.
 - none of the above.
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The Synoptic Question



Statistics

1. There is almost no pericope in Mark without a parallel in at least one of Matt and Luke
2. There are 220-235 verses found in both Matt and Luke but not in Mark

General principles for determining priority

1. A later author is more likely to remove extraneous details that do not add meaning than to add them
2. A later author is more likely to add material to make a potentially difficult situation easier than to remove material from an easy passage and make it potentially difficult
3. A later author is more likely to make groups of people respected by the community (e.g. the family of Jesus, the disciples) look better than to make them look worse
4. A later author is more likely to add a theologically significant pericope than to leave it out

Exercise:

Apply the above 4 principles to the following pairs of passages from Matthew and Mark to determine which is more likely to be the source and which the later document.

1. Matthew 8:18-27 vs. Mark 4:35-40
2. Matthew 3:12-17 vs. Mark 1:9-11
3. Matthew 12:24-32 vs. Mark 3:21-30
4. Matt 6:9-15 vs. no parallel passage in Mark

Religious Groups and Movements within Judaism at the Time of Jesus

Sadducees- descended from high priest Zadok- supervised Temple and Temple practices Centered in Jerusalem only. Collaborated with Romans to stay in power. High priest during Jesus' time was Sadducee. Since closely tied to Temple, this sect was wiped out after AD 70 Temple destruction. Accepted the Torah, but not prophets or writings. Did not believe in angels or resurrection. Sanhedrin consisted primarily of Sadducees.

Pharisees- believed in resurrection of the dead and divine judgement of living and dead. Strict observance of the law, separated themselves (separated ones) from Hasmonean dynasty. Kept themselves away from Gentiles. Strict observance of ritual purity-elaborate system of oral interpretation of the law. (Scribes- experts in Jewish law, often teachers, lawyers, mostly Pharisees.) Pharisees survived the AD 70 destruction and gathered at Jamnia, thus saving the Jewish religion.

After Jesus' death, Pharisees grew to hate the Christians because Christians refused to help with the revolt that ended in the destruction of the Temple. By 90 AD, the Pharisees completely broke with Jewish Christians and there was serious animosity between them.

Essenes- Segregated sect that believed that neither Sadducees, Pharisees nor regular Jews were really living the law. Lived at Qumran, lived celibate life and ritual purity. The Essenes MAY have influenced John the Baptist, although not all scholars agree on this. Believed in the catastrophic end of the world. They disappeared after the destruction of the temple

Zealots- despised Roman rule and believed in violence as a means to overthrow the Romans. Zealots eventually led the revolt against the Romans that ended with the destruction of the Temple.

Herodians- Jews who supported the Roman approved king

Common Narrative Forms within the Gospels

Pronouncement stories (e.g. Luke 20:20-26)

1. Involves an individual or a group disputing some topic with Jesus and/or his disciples.
2. Jesus concludes the controversy by pronouncing a definitive judgment, usually by means of a shorty pithy statement

Miracle stories (e.g. Mark 2:1-12)

1. A situation will prompt the miracle
2. The miracle itself is described
3. The reactions of those who witnessed it are described

Sayings (e.g. Matthew 5:13-16)

1. Statements of Jesus not connected in any other way with the narrative
2. Often several saying loosely connected by a common theme are given sequentially

Infancy narratives (e.g. Matthew 1:18-2:23)

1. tell the story of an important individual's origins
2. generally foreshadow even in infancy characteristics of importance that are made manifest later

Passion narratives (e.g. John 18-19)

Hymns (e.g. Luke 1:67-79)

Parables (e.g. Luke 10:29-37)

1. Definition of C. H. Dodd, "a metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life, arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness, and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought."
2. The word parable comes from the Greek parabolē meaning "to throw together" or "to throw alongside"
3. Extended metaphors making use of everyday Galilean situations
4. Often contain situations that are deliberately shocking – we might miss this because of the separation in time and culture from the original context
5. Parables are not allegories – though early Christians tended to allegorize parables
6. Forces hearers to engage the subject

Identify the Narrative Form for each of the following:

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| ✘ Matthew 6:24 | ✘ Mark 14:32-15:47 |
| ✘ Matthew 9:32-34 | ✘ Luke 1:46-55 |
| ✘ Matthew 20:1-16 | ✘ Luke 2:1-38 |
| ✘ Mark 3:1-6 | ✘ Luke 11:5-13 |
| ✘ Mark 7:1-15 | ✘ Luke 14:15-24 |
| ✘ Mark 10:35-45 | |

The Kingdom of God in the Synoptic Gospels

Miracles as manifestations of the Kingdom

1. See answer to John's disciples: Lk 7:18-22
2. Physical healing follows and makes manifest spiritual healing (e.g. Mk 2:1-11)
3. Healing as mark of God's triumphant will, see Is 35:4-6a
4. Word used in Greek "dynamus" means "act of power"
 - a. Power over demons
 - i. Luke 4:33f cure of a demoniac
 - ii. Matthew 12:22 blind and dumb demoniac
 - iii. Mark 5:1f Gaderene demoniac
 - iv. Matthew 9:32 possessed mute
 - v. Mark 9:13f possessed boy
 - b. Power over nature
 - i. Luke 5:1-11 miraculous catch of fish
 - ii. Mark 5:1ff calming the sea
 - iii. Mark 6:45ff Jesus walks on water
 - iv. Mark 6:34ff, 8:1-9 multitudes fed
 - v. Mark 7:23ff temple tax provided
 - vi. Mark 11:12 fig tree cursed
 - c. Power over physical ailments
 - i. Mark 1:29 Peter's mother-in-law
 - ii. Matthew 8:1-4 the leper
 - iii. Mark 3:1-6 man with shriveled hand
 - iv. Luke 7:1ff centurion's servant
 - v. Mark 8:22 blind man at Bethsaida
 - vi. Luke 13:10 woman cured
 - vii. Luke 17:11 ten lepers
 - viii. Mark 10:46 blind man at Jericho
 - d. Power over death
 - i. Luke 7:11ff widow's son at Nain
 - ii. Mark 9:21ff Jairus' daughter

Synoptic Gospels present the proclamation of the Kingdom of God (Kingdom of Heaven) as the primary message of Jesus' preaching (Mk 1:15)

1. Weeds among the Wheat (Mt 13:24-30)
2. Mustard Seed (Mt 13:31-32/Mk 4:30-32/Lk 13:18-19)
3. Yeast (Mt 13:33/Lk 13:20-21)
4. Treasure in the Field and Pearl of Great Price (Mt 13:44-46)
5. Dragnet (Mt 13:47-49)
6. Greatest in the Kingdom (Mt 18:1-5)
7. Workers in the Vineyard (Mt 20:1-16)
8. Two Sons (Mt 21:28-32)
9. Wedding Feast (Mt 22:1-14/Lk 14:15-24)
10. Seek the Kingdom (Lk 12:29-34)

**Lesson 1 – Handout 6
(Home Group Exercise)**

With reference to *Reading the Bible: A Study Guide* pp 185-188 (Chapter 7 – “History”) and
Maps 16-19 of *The Student Bible Atlas*

- (a) From the time of Cyrus the Persian and the return of the people from exile to the birth of Jesus, what powers exercised political control of the land of Israel?
- (b) During the adult life of Jesus, who exercised direct and indirect control of the lands in which Jesus lived and traveled?
- (c) What were the major political events during the lives of the first two generations of Christians and what effect did they have on Christianity?

**Lesson 1 – Handout 7
(Expert Group 1)**

With reference to *Reading the Bible: A Study Guide* pp 199-200 (Chapter 8 – “Synoptic Problem”) and Handout 2

(a) Briefly summarize what is meant by the term “synoptic question”.

(b) Briefly summarize what is meant by the “Two source hypothesis”.

(c) List some of the reasons in support of two source hypothesis.

(d) Why does this matter from an interpretive standpoint?

**Lesson 1 – Handout 8
(Expert Group 2)**

With reference to *Reading the Bible: A Study Guide* pp 191-192 (Chapter 7 – “Jewish Religion”) and Handout 3

(a) What were some major religious groups/movements at time of Jesus?

(b) From which group is modern day Judaism most directly derived?

(c) In what ways did early Christians have more in common with Pharisees than Sadducees?

**Lesson 1 – Handout 9
(Expert Group 3)**

With reference to *Reading the Bible: A Study Guide* pp225-226, 234-235
(Chapter 8 – “Miracle Stories” and “Parables” and “Structure of the Parable”) and Handout 4

- (a) How does identifying the narrative form of a story assist in the process of understanding and interpreting it?
- (b) briefly define the distinctive elements of the follow seven narrative forms found in the gospels: Pronouncement stories, Miracle stories, Sayings, Infancy narratives, Passion narratives, Hymns, Parables.
- (c) Identify the narrative form of the passages on Handout 4

Lesson 1 – Handout 10
(Expert Group 4)

With reference to *Catechism of the Catholic Church* nos. 541-560,
Catholic Update – “Finding the Heart of Jesus’ Life”, and Handout 5

(a) What are key elements of the kingdom or reign of God as proclaimed by Jesus in the synoptic gospels?

(b) What spoken teaching form do the synoptic gospels portray Jesus as using extensively when speaking about the kingdom of God? Why is this form particularly suited for this message?

(c) In what ways can the miracles of the synoptic gospels be seen as part of this proclamation?

Self-Reflection and Personal Appropriation

Write about a paragraph to answer at least one of the following questions.

1. One of the main points of this lesson is that the socio-politico-cultural experience at the time of Jesus shapes the message of the New Testament. In what way does our contemporary socio-politico-cultural experience shape our religious experience? Positively? Negatively?
2. In what ways does our contemporary society reflect the values of the Kingdom of God? In what ways does it not? What responsibility do we have in this regard?

Lesson 2 – Handout 1

1. Synoptic means “seeing with,” sharing a common view of the life of Jesus. The synoptic Gospels can be placed side by side and easily compared.
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. Mark’s is the oldest of the four canonical Gospels.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. All of the evangelists use the term “gospel” (meaning “good news”) to label their writings.
 - a. True
 - b. False
4. Our Christmas manger scenes which include the shepherds and magi reflect a combination of the infancy narratives found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.
 - a. True
 - b. False
5. The Gospels are very much interested in having an accurate, chronological and historical account of Jesus’ words and actions.
 - a. True
 - b. False
6. The synoptic Gospels are
 - a. Matthew, Luke and John.
 - b. Mark, Paul and John.
 - c. Mark, Matthew and Luke.
7. The Gospel of John is placed last because
 - a. John died last.
 - b. it was found last.
 - c. it is different from the others and is most spiritual.
8. The Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles are written by different authors.
 - a. True
 - b. False

The Gospel of Mark

Authorship

1. All of the gospels are anonymous, i.e. none of them make a claim to authorship within the gospel itself
2. The evangelist does not claim to be an eyewitness or based on an eyewitness (unlike, e.g. John 21:24)
3. Eusebius quotes Papias (2nd century) who quotes an elder, “Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately whatever he remembered of what was said or done by the Lord, but not in order.”
4. Many patristic writers support or presuppose a relationship between Mark and Peter
 - a. Anti-Marcionite prologue
 - b. Ireneaus
 - c. Clement of Alexandria
 - d. Origen
 - e. Jerome
5. Thus a relationship between Mark and Peter is largely believable
6. Most likely **not** the Mark mentioned as being in relationship to Paul mentioned in Phlm 24, Col 4:10, and 2 Tim 4:11
 - a. Mark was a very common name
 - b. Despite the fact that all 3 of these are “prison letters”, Paul was imprisoned more than once
 - c. Most scholars doubt the Pauline authorship of the last two anyway
7. Also most likely **not** the John Mark mentioned in Acts 12:12, 12:25, and 15:37-39
 - a. John Mark was clearly a Jerusalemite
 - b. Mark the Evangelist
 - i. seems not very Jewish (certainly less so than Matthew)
 - ii. quotes the OT more in line with the LXX than with older Hebrew versions
 - iii. sometimes seems faulty in his knowledge of Palestinian geography and customs
 - iv. seems more address to the “nations” with a distancing from Judaism

Location, audience, and dating

1. Given the connection to Peter and Peter’s connection to Rome, a Roman setting has traditionally been presumed
2. Greater use of Latin loan words than other gospels
3. Seems to be written in a way that would have particular resonance for those suffering persecution
 - a. First Roman persecution of Christians happens in city of Rome by Nero after fire of 64.
 - b. This would then give a date no earlier than 64
4. Nothing in the gospel that makes it clear that the writer is aware of the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in the year 70
5. Has to have been written early enough that it achieved widespread circulation and acceptance before Matt and Luke use it
6. Traditionally dated, therefore, to late 60s or very early 70s.

Language and writing style

1. Like all of the NT, written in Koine Greek
2. For the most part, not seemingly “well written” in the sense that did not follow typical Koine writing style
3. Parataxis
 - a. In classical Greek, sentences usually contained one main verb, and all other verbs were subordinated in adverbial clauses of one kind or another.
 - b. Hebrew (and other Semitic languages), tend to place main verbs side by side, joining them together with a simple conjunction (the Hebrew *waw* “and”). This is known as parataxis, from the Greek verb *paratasso* “I set side by side.”
 - c. The constantly recurring “and” (Greek *kai*) of Mark is certainly an overstraining of Greek literary usage.
 - d. Mark 10:33-34
 - e. “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and (*kai*) the Son of Man will be delivered up to the chief priests and scribes, and (*kai*) they will condemn him to death, and (*kai*) they will deliver him up to the Gentiles. And (*kai*) they will mock him and (*kai*) spit upon him and (*kai*) scourge him and (*kai*) kill him, and (*kai*) three days later he will rise again.”
4. Possible explanations for this
 - a. Mark was not a good writer
 - b. The Gospel was originally written in a Semitic language (e.g. Aramaic) and translated
 - c. Mark was not a native Greek speaker, but his first language was a Semitic language and that affected his thought patterns, even as he wrote in Greek
5. Problems with these explanations
 - a. Mark was a masterful writer, making deliberate use of vocabulary and structure in intentional ways
 - b. Rome is the most likely location, so an original composition in Aramaic seems unlikely
 - c. Mark was not likely to have been a Palestinian, and therefore Semitic thought patterns seem unlikely
 - d. There is one notable location in Mark (5:25-27) where very good Greek according to normal Greek style is employed (a long sentence with subordinating participles) that stands out
6. Possible alternative explanation
 - a. Mark makes frequent reference to the Old Testament
 - b. When he does so, it seems that he is quoting from the LXX
 - c. The LXX, largely being a translation from the Hebrew, contains many Semitisms, including extended use of parataxis
 - d. So perhaps either
 - i. Mark was so steeped in the Septuagintal style of writing that it influenced and permeated his own writing, perhaps subconsciously
 - ii. Mark wrote in deliberate imitation of Septuagintal style, perhaps indicating a self-awareness that what he is writing should be regarded as of equal status as the LXX

Major Literary devices

1. Repetition of keywords

- a. 1:3, 1:10, 1:12, 1:18, 1:20
 - i. "Make straight his ways"
 - ii. "straightway" = "immediately"
 - iii. used 43 times in the gospel, including 11 times in chapter 1
 - iv. In the beginning, everything happens as it should, i.e. God's ways are made straight
 - v. strong sense of immediacy and urgency
 - vi. when used in passion narrative (14:43 twice), 14:72, 15:1 a double irony
- b. 1:4, 1:31, 2:5, 15:9, 15:11, 15:15, 15:37
 - i. to release
 - ii. indicate forgiveness and healing intimately connected
 - iii. it is in dying that Jesus is fully set free
- c. 1:31, 2:11, 3:3, 5:41, 6:16, 14:28, 16:6
 - i. to raise up
 - ii. Jesus' healing miracles are connected to the great miracle of his resurrection
 - iii. Repetition of keywords
- d. 2:12, 3:21, 5:42, 16:8
 - i. "ecstasy" – from "ek" + "stasis" = to stand outside oneself or one's normal state of being
 - ii. idea that realization of God's power to restore life transforms human consciousness

2. Intercalation

- a. Also known colloquially as a "Markan sandwich"
 - b. A narrative that is begun, interrupted, and resumed
 - c. Purposes
 - i. Create suspense
 - ii. contrast one narrative with another
 - iii. interpret one narrative by another
 - d. Examples
 - i. 3:20-21 [22-30] 31-35
 - ii. 5:21-24 [25-34] 35-43
 - iii. 6:7-13 [14-29] 30-32
 - iv. 11:12-14 [15-19] 20-26
 - v. 14:1-2 [3-9] 10-11
 - vi. 14:54 [55-65] 66-72
 - e. Also, frames large blocks of material by similar narratives
 - i. 8:22-26 [8:27-10:45] 10:46-52 - two healings of blind people frame and contrast the gift of sight with the progressive blindness of the disciples as they face the mystery of Jesus' suffering
 - ii. 14:3-9 [14:11-15:39] 15:40-16:8 - highlights the devotion of the women during the Passion
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3. Important Patterns in Mark

- a. Chiasms in the form ABB'A' (e.g. 2:27)
- b. Threefold pattern of progressive heightening
 - i. 3 calls of commissions (1:16-20; 3:13-39; 6:7-13)
 - ii. 3 Passion predictions (8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34)
 - iii. 3 visits by Jesus to sleepy disciples in Gethsemane (14:32-42)
 - iv. 3 denials of Jesus by Peter (14:66-72)
- c. Doublets (too numerous to mention)
- d. Foreshadowing and Echoing
 - i. Techniques characteristic of oral narratives – showing roots of gospel in oral tradition
 - ii. narrative that turns back on itself to assist the memory to reach the end by having it anticipated in the beginning
 - iii. Examples
 - a. handing over of John the Baptist (1:14) foreshadowing his death (6:14-29)
 - b. handing over of Jesus (14:1-11) and his disciples (13:9-13) as foreshadowing his death
 - iv. Use of “Messiah” and “Son of God”
 - v. Echoing of OT texts and motifs
 - vi. Sections echo previous sections (e.g. John’s prediction of a stronger one 1:7 and the parable of Jesus as the strong one 3:27)

**Lesson 2 – Handout 3
(Home Group Exercise)**

With reference to *Reading the Bible: A Study Guide* pp. 220-222 (Chapter 8 – “The Gospel of Mark”) and Lesson 2 – Handout 2

- (a) When, where, and by whom was the Gospel of Mark written?
- (b) What are some major literary characteristics used in the Gospel of Mark?
- (c) What is the so-called Messianic secret and what is its function in the Gospel of Mark?

Lesson 2 – Handout 4
(Expert Group 1)

With reference to *Reading the Bible: A Study Guide* pp. 205-210
(Chapter 8 – “Matthew” through “Structure of Matthew’s Gospel)

- (a) When, where, and by whom was the Gospel of Matthew written?
- (b) What were the major concerns of the community for whom Matthew was writing and how do we see those concerns reflected in the Gospel?
- (c) What is the basic structure of Matthew’s gospel and what is the significance of that structure?

**Lesson 2 – Handout 5
(Expert Group 2)**

With reference to *Reading the Bible: A Study Guide* pp. 211-217
(Chapter 8 – “Themes in Matthew” through “Called a Nazorean”)

- (a) Does the gospel of Matthew present a higher or lower Christology than does the gospel of Mark? Where and in what ways can this be seen?
- (b) What is Jesus’ relationship to the law as presented in the Gospel of Matthew?
- (c) In what major ways does the gospel of Matthew present Jesus as being like Moses? What is the significance of this?

Lesson 2 – Handout 6
(Expert Group 3)

With reference to *Reading the Bible: A Study Guide* pp. 229-230 (Chapter 8 – “The Gospel of Luke”) and “The Gospel of Luke as Good News” (from reading packet)

- (a) When, where, and by whom was the Gospel of Luke written?
- (b) What are some major literary characteristics used in the Gospel of Luke?
- (c) What roles do geography and the periodization of time play in Luke’s gospel?

Lesson 2 – Handout 7
(Expert Group 4)

With reference to *Reading the Bible: A Study Guide* pp. 229-230 (Chapter 8 – “The Gospel of Luke”) and “The Gospel of Luke as Good News” (from reading packet)

- (a) What is the fundamental mission of Jesus, as portrayed in the Gospel of Luke?
- (b) What are some ways in which Luke’s treatment of women is distinctive and what are some interpretive implications of that?
- (c) Why must we carefully distinguish between the literary role the religious opposition to Jesus plays in the Gospel of Luke and the historical world of 1st century Judaism? What is at stake here?

Self-Reflection and Personal Appropriation

Write about a paragraph to answer at least one of the following questions.

1. The Gospel of Mark makes the claim that Jesus cannot be understood apart from the cross. What place does the cross play in your personal spirituality?
2. The Gospel of Luke makes it clear that the poor, vulnerable, and marginalized receive the special attention and care of Jesus. Do these groups receive your special attention and care?

Lesson 3 – Handout 1

1. Our celebration of Christmas owes much to the Gospel of Luke.
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. The Acts of the Apostles is written by the same author as the Gospel of John and serves as “Part 2” to John’s Gospel.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. Women have a significant role in the Church portrayed in Luke’s Gospel.
 - a. True
 - b. False
4. Scripture scholars believe that Luke composed both the Gospel of Luke and
 - a. the Book of Revelation.
 - b. the Acts of the Apostles.
 - c. the letters of Timothy and Titus.
5. Parables are essentially
 - a. metaphorical stories which are often about the Kingdom of God.
 - b. catchy phrases used to stimulate dialogue.
 - c. stories told to simply entertain the audience.
6. There are no parables in the Gospel of John.
 - a. True
 - b. False
7. Eschatology is the study and discussion of the
 - a. present.
 - b. past.
 - c. end of all things.
8. John’s Gospel was the last Gospel to be written, probably as late as 90-100 CE.
 - a. True
 - b. False
9. Luke’s Gospel emphasizes Jesus’ relationship with the poor, lonely and outcasts/outsideers.
 - a. True
 - b. False

The Gospel of John

Book said to be structured into two parts

1. Book of Signs:
 - a. Wedding at Cana 2:1-12
 - b. Cure of official's son 4:46-54
 - c. Cure of the paralytic 5:1-47
 - d. Loaves and fishes 6:1-14
 - e. Walking on water 6:16-21
 - f. Man born blind 9:1-41
 - g. Raising of Lazarus 11:1-44
2. Book of Glory
 - a. Achieved on the cross
 - b. cross as throne

I AM statements

1. In the Old Testament the divine name is revealed to be: YHWH
2. This name is never spoken (except once a year by high priest) – instead usually use the word “Adonai” when reading scriptures
3. LXX usually translates as kurios – English bibles use Lord
4. Actual meaning difficult to discern. In one place LXX uses “ego eimi” – “I am”
5. (At least) nine times in the gospel Jesus begins solemn statements with the phrase “ego eimi”
 - a. 4:26 speaking to the woman of Samaria at the well
 - b. 6:20 when walking across the water
 - c. 8:24 if you do not believe that I AM you will die in your sins
 - d. 8:28 when you lift up the Son of Man you will recognize that I AM
 - e. 8:58 before Abraham came to be I AM
 - f. 11:25 I am the resurrection and the life
 - g. 13:19 that you may believe that I AM
 - h. 14:6 I am the way, the truth, and the light
 - i. 18:5-7 speaking to the soldiers and guards in the garden

Personal belief in Jesus

1. Pattern of discipleship
 - a. Someone introduces you to Jesus
 - b. You come to know Jesus personally
 - c. You respond with faith and believe – or not
 - d. Those that have faith then witness to others
 - e. See, e.g. 4:39-42
2. Possible danger – can lead to a “me and Jesus” individualism
3. Hard to structure leadership

**Lesson 3 – Handout 3
(Home Group Exercise)**

With reference to *Reading the Bible: A Study Guide* pp. 236-238
(Chapter 8 – “The Author of John”, “The Community of John” and “Sources and the Synoptic Gospels”) and “The Gospel of John as Good News” (from reading packet)

(a) When, where, and by whom was the Gospel of John written?

(b) What are some distinctive differences between John and the synoptic gospels?

Lesson 3 – Handout 4
(Expert Group 1)

With reference to *Reading the Bible: A Study Guide* p. 239 (Chapter 8 – “Themes and Styles”) and Handout 2

- (a) What are the I AM sayings and what is their theological significance in the Gospel of John?
- (b) Some of the I AM sayings have an object and some do not. What are some of the objects that are applied to them?
- (c) From the perspective of the gospel of John, does it matter whether or not Jesus spoke these words?

**Lesson 3 – Handout 5
(Expert Group 2)**

With reference to *Reading the Bible: A Study Guide* pp. 238-239 (Chapter 8 – “Themes and Styles”) and “The Gospel of John as Good News” (from reading packet)

- (a) What are some examples of misunderstandings that take place in the narrative of the Gospel of John and what role do they play?

- (b) What is meant by dualism in the Gospel of John? What are some dualistic categories and what are their significance?

**Lesson 3 – Handout 6
(Expert Group 3)**

With reference to *Reading the Bible: A Study Guide* pp. 241-246 (Chapter 8 – “John 10:1-18”)

(a) In what ways is the use of shepherd imagery in the Gospel of John influenced by the Old Testament’s use of shepherd imagery?

(b) How is the material about shepherds structured?

(c) What is the meaning of this section?

**Lesson 3 – Handout 7
(Expert Group 4)**

With reference to *Scripture from Scratch* – “The Acts of the Apostles: Luke’s Dramatic Sequel”

- (a) What role and function do speeches play in the Acts of the Apostles? What terms are used to describe these speeches and what do they mean?
- (b) What is the dominant message of the Acts of the Apostles? Who are the two main characters and how do they each serve to further that message?
- (c) What controversy surrounds circumcision in the Acts of the Apostles? What decision is ultimately made and what are the implications of that decision?

Self-Reflection and Personal Appropriation

Write about a paragraph to answer at least one of the following questions.

1. One the keys to understanding the Gospel of John is understanding the idea of witness/testimony. How could you better incorporate the call to give personal testimony to your personal relationship with Christ?
2. One of the key moments in the Acts of the Apostles is when the community decides that one does not first need to become a Jew in order to become a Christian. The Christian community is open to all and they don't have to give up their ethnic or cultural identity to become Christian. How well do we live that today?

Lesson 4 – Handout 1

1. Paul's influence on the development of Christianity is enormous and second only to that of Jesus.
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. Paul's Letter to the Romans is the shortest and least carefully written of his letters.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. People in Paul's time were concerned about the fate of those who died before Jesus' Second Coming.
 - a. True
 - b. False
4. Saul/Paul's early relationship with Christians was friendly and respectful.
 - a. True
 - b. False
5. Paul's letters are the earliest of our New Testament writings.
 - a. True
 - b. False
6. Paul thought that any gentiles who became Christians needed to follow the Jewish way of life.
 - a. True
 - b. False
7. Paul was
 - a. a Hebrew.
 - b. a citizen of Tarsus.
 - c. a Roman citizen.
 - d. a citizen of heaven.
 - e. all of the above.
8. All of the letters Paul wrote were to Christian communities that he had formed.
 - a. True
 - b. False
9. Paul wrote some of his letters from prison.
 - a. True
 - b. False
10. The poorer members of society and women were most attracted to Paul's teachings.
 - a. True
 - b. False

Undisputed letters of St. Paul

- A. 1 Thessalonians
 - 1. Earliest written
 - 2. Responding to internal concerns, not external threats
 - 3. 4:13-5:11
 - a. Concern about the immanence of the Parousia
 - b. Worry about the status of those who die before it
- B. Galatians
 - 1. Read 1:11-24
 - a. Paul is defending the authenticity of the apostleship and his gospel – needs authority for what follows
 - b. Responding to Judaizers, including St. Peter!
 - 2. Justification by faith: 3:1-14
 - 3. Freedom from the law does not permit immorality: 5:13-26
 - 4. Only letter without a Thanksgiving – Paul is very angry!
- C. 1 Corinthians
 - 1. Written to address problems in the Corinthian community
 - a. Factions and divisions
 - i. 1:10-17, 11:17-22
 - ii. Response: image of body 12:1-31
 - b. Need for wisdom and eloquence answered by paradox of the cross -1:18-2:16
 - c. Sexual immorality – 5:1-13;6:12-20
 - d. Meat offered to idols – 8:1-13
 - e. Misuse of spiritual gifts – 14:20-25
 - f. Disorders in worship – see factions above
 - g. Beliefs about the resurrection – 15:12-58
 - 2. Other gems:
 - a. Recalling institution of the Eucharist – 11:23-26
 - b. Hymn of love – 13:1-13
- D. 2 Corinthians
 - 1. Possibly a compilation of several fragments
 - 2. Still dealing with problems, probably both Judaizers and Enthusiasts
 - 3. Contrasts old and new ways – 3:6-18
 - 4. Sin is alienation from God which leads to death, Christ brings salvation through reconciliation – 5:17-21
 - 5. Need for generosity in giving – 8:1-15
 - 6. Paul defends himself against opponents – 11-12
 - 7. Unclear reference to “thorn in the flesh” – 12:6-10

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- E. Romans
 - 1. Closest thing to a systematic presentation by Paul of his theology
 - 2. Written as a letter of introduction to a community he himself had not yet visited in order to elicit their support for a hoped for missionary trip to Spain
 - 3. 2:5-11 – God is a just judge
 - 4. 2:25-29 – The Law saves only if you keep it
 - 5. 3:9-18 – But no one can keep the Law for we are all bound by sin
 - 6. 3:21-31 – We are justified apart from the law through faith in Jesus Christ
 - 7. Chps 6-9 – We are free from the Law but called to live in a particular way in Christ, not permission for immorality
 - 8. 11:1-10,25-29 – God has not rejected the Jews
 - 9. 11:11-24 – Gentiles’ salvation is through the Jews
 - 10. Chps 12-15 Duties of a Christian include: mutual love, obedience to authority, patience, self-denial, consideration of others
 - 11. Ch 16 – long list of names, see 16:1 and Phoebe
 - F. Philippians
 - 1. According to Acts, first church on the European continent
 - 2. Clearly written while in prison – 1:7-17
 - 3. Possibly stitched together from three letters (see 3:1-2)
 - a. 1:3-3:1 – a letter detailing Paul’s imprisonment, the activities of Timothy and Epaphroditus, and exhortations on about Christian conduct
 - b. 3:2-21 – warning of threats to the faith of the Philippian community, especially threat of Judaizers
 - c. 4:10-20 – note of thanks for help delivered by Epaphroditus
 - 4. Stresses centrality of Christ
 - 5. Quotes a hymn in 2:6-11
 - G. Philemon
 - 1. Shortest of Paul’s letters (a single chapter)
 - 2. Only one of Paul’s letters written to an individual (and his family) rather than a community
 - 3. At issue is a slave (Onesimus) who has escaped from his owner Philemon, come to Paul, and been converted to Christianity
 - 4. Paul does not question the institution of slavery as such, but makes the point that inter-personal relationships are radically altered in light of baptism – vv 15-18
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Disputed Pauline Letters

- I. Ephesians & Colossians
 - A. Ephesians and Colossians show similarity of style and theme – most probably written by the same hand. Was that Paul?
 1. Read Ephesians 1:1-14
 2. Name “Ephesians” missing in many early manuscripts
 3. No traditional thanksgiving
 4. No personal comments, here or elsewhere, to a community in which Paul lived for over two years
 5. Paul had never been to Colossae – why would he write to them?
 6. Very high Christology (compare to Col 1:15-17,19-20)
 7. Eph 1:22-23, Col 1:18 – image of body used to stress headship of Christ, very different from usage in 1 Cor
 8. Conclusion: Either Paul’s theology has developed significantly, or he did not write these himself
 - B. Key themes of Ephesians and Colossians
 1. Seeming resolution of tension between Jewish and Gentile Christians – see Eph 2:11-22
 2. Universality of call and salvation – see Eph 4:4-6
 3. Problem of false teachers – see Col 2:4-8
 4. Ethical concerns – see Eph 5:13-26, Col 3:5-17
 5. Family concerns – see Eph 5:21-33, Col 3:18-21
- II. 2 Thessalonians
 - A. Very similar in style to 1 Thessalonians
 - B. May have been written later by another writer in imitation of Pauline style
 1. Insistence at 3:17 that it is in Paul’s own hand unusual and may be an example of trying too hard to claim Pauline authority
 2. More impersonal in style
 3. While in 1 Thessalonians there was an insistence that the Parousia is imminent, in 2 Thessalonians the focus is on why it has been delayed and a sense that it will be delayed yet more
 - C. Seems to be written to a community under persecution
 - D. Chapter 2 contains apocalyptic language hard to understand and interpret

III. Pastoral Epistles

- A. 1&2 Timothy and Titus are called the Pastoral Epistles because they are written, not to communities, but to pastors
 - 1. We know from elsewhere that Timothy and Titus really were companions and colleagues of Paul and that Timothy exercised leadership in Ephesus and Titus in Crete
- B. These three letters show similarities in theme and style and were probably written by the same person – but that person was probably not Paul
 - 1. Letters show a more highly developed ecclesiology more consistent with second or third generation community than first
 - 2. 1 Timothy and Titus missing Thanksgiving section
 - 3. Body of letters does not follow usual pattern of responding to particular problems or questions and then expanding the answers to more general advice
 - 4. Advice is more practical than theological
- C. Key themes
 - 1. Qualifications for ministers
 - a. 1 Tim 3:1-13; 5:17-22
 - b. Titus 1:5-9
 - 2. Warning against false teaching
 - a. 1 Tim 1:3-4; 4:1-5; 6:2b-5
 - b. 2 Tim 2:16-19
 - 3. Appropriate Christian behavior
 - a. 1 Tim 2:1-15; 5:3-166:1-2a
 - b. 2 Tim 2:14-16
 - c. Titus 2:1-3:8

**Lesson 4 – Handout 4
(Home Group Exercise)**

With reference to *Reading the Bible: A Study Guide* pp. 257-258 (Chapter 9 – “The Letter Form”)

(a) What is the basic structure of a Pauline letter?

(b) Identify these parts in the letter to Philemon.

(c) What conclusion(s) would you draw if a letter were missing one or more of these parts?

**Lesson 4 – Handout 5
(Expert Group 1)**

With reference to *Reading the Bible: A Study Guide* pp.248-257
(Chapter 9 – “Biography of Paul” through “Paul’s Letters”) and
Maps 23-26 of *The Student Bible Atlas*

(d) Where was Paul born?

(e) What was his original name?

(f) What was his profession?

(g) What was his religious background?

(h) What event(s) shifted his religious focus?

(i) What was the religious and philosophical milieu in which he preached?

**Lesson 4 – Handout 6
(Expert Group 2)**

With reference to *Scripture from Scratch* – “Paul: Letters From a Traveling Theologian” and
“Studying the Letters of Paul” (from reading packet)

(a) What was the basic dispute regarding the status of Gentiles who wished to become Christian?

(b) What was Paul’s position on this question and what were the theological reasons behind it?

(c) How was this question resolved by the early Christian community?

**Lesson 4 – Handout 7
(Expert Group 3)**

With reference to *Reading the Bible: A Study Guide* pp. 264-280
(Chapter 9 – “Outline of Romans” to the end of the chapter) and Handout 2

(a) What are the seven undisputed letters of Paul?

(b) What are some of the major themes developed by Paul in these letters?

With reference to Handout 3

(a) What are the letters, traditionally ascribed to Paul, whose authorship is now the subject of dispute?

(b) Can these letters be grouped in any way?

(c) What are some reasons that people now dispute Pauline authorship?

(d) What are some of the major themes developed in these letters?

Self-Reflection and Personal Appropriation

Write about a paragraph to answer at least one of the following questions.

1. The community of Corinth seemed to be beset by many, many problems. Paul attempts to address them, drawing on key foundational beliefs. What problems does our Church community have today that Paul's reflections can be of assistance in addressing?
2. Of the practical and ethical advice we find in the undisputed letters of Paul, which of it seems most relevant to our contemporary times? Is there any that seems completely irrelevant? Is there something here you find challenging?

Lesson 5 – Handout 1

1. The Catholic Letters (Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2 and 3 John and Jude) reflect the generation after the letters of Paul and the Gospels.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 2. The Catholic Letters are believed to have been written by the same unknown author.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 3. The Catholic Letters
 - a. offer us alternative voices and more variety in the New Testament.
 - b. give us a glimpse of the development of the early Church.
 - c. provide commentary on previous New Testament writings.
 - d. help us see the challenges faced by the early Church and the various solutions offered.
 - e. all of the above.
 4. Peter the apostle wrote the Catholic Letters known as 1 and 2 Peter.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 5. John, the author of the Book of Revelation, is not the same person as the author of the Gospel of John.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 6. The genre used in writing the Book of Revelation is
 - a. gospel.
 - b. apocalypse.
 - c. parable.
 7. The Book of Revelation presents Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of all Old Testament prophecy.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 8. The number seven is used frequently in a symbolic way in the Book of Revelation.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 9. All Christian churches accept the Book of Revelation as canonical.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 10. Angels are common in apocalyptic literature.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 11. The images of Christ as warrior in the Book of Revelation has been used to defend
 - a. the Crusades.
 - b. the Inquisition.
 - c. the conquest of the Western Hemisphere.
 - d. all of the above.
 12. The story in the Book of Revelation is about the
 - a. past.
 - b. present.
 - c. future.
 - d. all of the above.
-

Non-Pauline Epistles

Letter to the Hebrews

1. General considerations
 - a. Definitely not written by Paul
 - i. very different language, style, themes, theology
 - ii. Pauline authorship disputed as early as 2nd century
 - b. Not really a letter at all, but an extended homily
 - c. Written before 96 since quoted by Clement of Rome
 - d. May reflect the period of the Domitian persecution
 - e. Makes extensive use of references to Hebrew Scriptures
2. Key themes:
 - a. Superior status of Jesus
 - i. Over the angels 1:1-4
 - ii. Over Moses 3:1-6
 - iii. Over the Law and cult 10:1-25
 - b. Jesus as High-Priest
 - i. Like us in all things but sin 4:14-16
 - ii. A heavenly priesthood 8:1-6
 - iii. Jesus offers himself as sacrifice 9:11-10:18
 - iv. In the line of Melchizedek and not Levi 7:1-17
 - c. Ethical advice for daily living 13:1-17

“Catholic” letters are so called because they are addressed to the entire universal Church and not to some particular Church

James

1. A letter only in a conventional sense (an opening only) - really within the Jewish tradition of exhortation, similar to much of the wisdom literature of the Old Testament
2. Traditionally ascribed to James the Brother of the Lord, the leader of the church in Jerusalem
 - a. Written in excellent Greek, among the best in the New Testament
 - b. While makes extensive use of the Hebrew scriptures, makes little to no reference to the Law
 - c. Gives no personal details or references to having known Jesus personally
 - d. Some of the statements may be read as a response to Pauline theology and so must be subsequent to it
3. Key themes:
 - a. Perseverance 1:2-18
 - b. Faith and works 1:22-27;2:14-26
 - c. Proper conduct 3:1-5:12
 - d. Sacramental system
 - e. Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick 5:13-15
 - f. Confession? 5:16-18

1 Peter

1. By late second century, ascribed to Simon Peter
 - a. No personal recollections of Jesus
 - b. Written in cultivated Greek
 - c. Strong similarity in theme and style to Pauline letters
 - d. Appears to refer to widespread persecution of Christians, something not true until reign of Domitian 81-96
 - e. Seems unlikely Peter would address a letter to Gentile churches of Asia during Paul's life
 - f. Some of the statements may be read as a response to Pauline theology and so must be subsequent to it
2. Key themes:
 - a. Gift and call of God in Baptism, including reality of salvation 1:3-2:10
 - b. Christian ethical conduct in a hostile world 2:11-4:11
 - c. Suffering persecution for Christ's sake is a blessing and a participation in Christ's redeeming act 4:12-19
 - d. Advice to church leaders 5:1-4

Letters of John

1. General considerations
 - a. Clearly come from the same community and theological school as the fourth gospel
 - b. Second and third letter definitely from the same hand (calls himself only "The Presbyter"), perhaps also the first
 - c. 1 John Gives a method of reading the fourth gospel that probably saved it from exclusion in the canon
2. Key themes
 - a. Like fourth gospel, focus is on ethic of love—1 John 3:11-18, 4:7-21; 2 John 5
 - b. Great concern with false teachers 1 John 2:18-23, entirety of 2 John, 3 John
 - c. What were the false teachings?
 - i. Jesus is not the Christ 1 John 2:22-23
 - ii. Docetism 2 John 7
 - iii. Domineering leaders who do not agree with the author 3 John 9

Jude

1. Identity of the author rather obscure – even attributed author identified by better known brother
2. Probably late work
 - a. seems to refer to apostles as well in the past – vv 17-18
 - b. Faith referred to as a fixed body handed down – v3
 - c. Well written Greek
3. Includes references to Jewish apocryphal works Assumption of Moses and Book of Enoch
4. Main thrust is argument against godless licentiousness
5. Concluding exhortation

2 Peter

1. 2:1-18 copied almost verbatim from Jude 4-16, except with references to apocryphal literature removed
 2. Last book accepted into the canon because of persistent doubt of Petrine authorship
 3. Probably latest work in entire New Testament
 - a. Refers to apostles as in the past 3:2-4
 - b. Paul's letters already viewed as canonical Scripture 3:15-16
 - c. Need to explain the delay of the parousia 3:1-10
-

**Lesson 5 – Handout 3
(Home Group Exercise)**

With reference to Lesson 5 – Handout 2

(a) What letters are included in the collection known as the “Catholic Epistles” and what makes them “catholic”?

(b) What are some key themes of these letters?

Lesson 5 – Handout 4
(Expert Group 1)

With reference to *Reading the Bible: A Study Guide* pp. 283-292
(Chapter 10 – All of the sections dealing with 1 Peter)

- (a) Given the different socio-cultural realities of twenty-first century North America from those experienced by the author of 1 Peter, what meaning and message can we take for today from the household code in 2:11-4:11?
- (b) What is the meaning of baptism as understood by the author of 1 Peter and what relationship does it have to the story of Noah and the flood?
- (c) What attitude does 1 Peter say a Christian should have toward suffering?

Use Your Bible to Complete the Following Chart

Lesson 5 – Handout 5 (Expert Group 2)

Letters to the Angels of the Seven Churches (Rev 2-3)

Item in each letter:	Ephesus (2:1-7)	Smyrna (2:8-11)	Pergamum (2:12-17)	Thyatira (2:18-29)	Sardis (3:1-6)	Philadelphia (3:7-13)	Laodicea (3:14-21)
Title or description of the speaker (Christ):							
Status of the Church: Good things acknowledged by the speaker							
Status of the Church: Bad things speaker has against them							
Admonitions; encouragements:							
Promise to whoever has ears to hear what the Spirit says to the churches:							

**Lesson 5 – Handout 6
(Expert Group 3)**

With reference to *Reading the Bible: A Study Guide* pp. 294-296
(Chapter 10 – “Background and Purpose” and “The Genre of Apocalypse”) and
Scripture from Scratch: “Optimists & Pessimists Read the Book of Revelation”

(a) What are important characteristics of apocalyptic literature and to what extent does the Book of Revelation correspond and differ from to this genre of literature?

(b) In what sense is the seer of Patmos to be considered an optimist? A pessimist?

(c) What final vision does the Book of Revelation offer?

**Lesson 5 – Handout 7
(Expert Group 4)**

With reference to *Reading the Bible: A Study Guide* pp. 300-304
(Chapter 10 – “Angels in Apocalyptic Literature” to the end of the chapter)

- (a) What is the Old Testament background of angels, the Son of Man, and the Lamb?
- (b) How are those images appropriated and changed in the Book of Revelation?
- (c) What is the view of violence in the Book of Revelation and how is it the same or different from to world at the time it was written? From our world?

Self-Reflection and Personal Appropriation

Write about a paragraph to answer at least one of the following questions.

1. Peter seems to suggest that patience in the face of persecution, even persecution leading to death, can have a salvific effect on the persecutors. How, if at all, could you incorporate such an idea into your own lived spirituality?
2. Paul clearly argues that justification is from faith alone, i.e. one does not earn salvation but it comes as free gift through the Paschal Mystery of Christ. James clearly has an issue with some disciples of Paul and insists on the importance of good works. How does one reconcile these apparently conflicting perspectives?

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