

Writings of John Outline

John

John the Apostle, son of Zebedee

Usually associated with Beloved Disciple

Certainly a Jew from the Holy Land – knows customs and geography very well

Gospel of John

A book about the Sacraments

Probably written last of the Gospels to “fill in the story” of Jesus

There are some elements only in Luke and John

Lazarus, Martha and Mary, Judas possessed by Satan, Pilate’s acquittal of Jesus,

Peter’s visit to empty tomb, Jesus’ appearance to disciples on Easter Sunday night

Written for Christians in “Greco-Roman” setting – perhaps Ephesus

Teachings:

Light coming into sinful world of darkness

Divine Word (logos) made flesh

Relationship between Son and Father

“God is love” – Cross, etc.

God of abundance

Summary:

Begins with new beginning, new Genesis

Backbone is seven miraculous “signs”

Wedding at Cana (2:1-11) – Marriage

Healing of official’s son at Cana (4:46-54) – Anointing of the Sick

Healing of paralytic at Bethesda (5:1-18) – Reconciliation

Feeding of 5000 (6:1-15) – Eucharist

Healing of man born blind (9) – Baptism

Raising of Lazarus from dead (11) – Confirmation

Death and Resurrection (19-20) – Holy Orders

Letters of John

No indication in text of author – authorship handed down from earliest Christians

Overall themes: love for one another, walking in the truth, unity in the Church, caution against deceivers

1 John

Setting forth criteria of those who truly belong to God

Son of God really incarnate in Jesus

Must love one another as God first loved us (4:8,10)

Must acknowledge and confess sins, but also must not live in sin

Distinction between God and the world

Role of the Spirit in the Christian life

True Christian life means fellowship with God

Book of Revelation

200-1000 OT allusions

Scott Hahn's *The Lamb's Supper*

Revelation (Latin) = Apocalypse (Greek)

Dispute over authorship

“Lamb of God” – John 1:29; Rev 5:6

“Word of God” – John 1:1; Rev 19:13

Visions of John on island of Patmos off coast of Ephesus

Jesus dictates letters to seven churches in present-day Turkey

John taken up into heaven where he witnesses heavenly liturgy (4-5)

24 elders – 12 tribes and 12 apostles – combined leadership of OT and NT

4 living creatures (Ezekiel)

Lamb that was slain = lion of Judah = root of David

Breaking of seven seals (6-7)

Blowing of seven trumpets (8-11)

Pouring out of seven sacred bowls (15-16)

Destruction of “Babylon” (17-19)

Binding of Satan and final judgment (20)

Heavenly Jerusalem – “bride of the Lamb” – replaces Babylon (21-22)

Hebrews

Author: formally anonymous

Against Paul: all Paul's letters explicitly identify him as author

Lack of Paul's greeting: "grace and peace"

Vocab and style very different

More centered on priestly theology and terminology

Biggest problem: author says he received gospel secondhand

Seems to be a letter wrapped around a sermon

Probably written to Jewish Christians who were Greek

Probably written before destruction of temple in 70

Focus: paschal mystery as culmination of plan of salvation; fulfilment of covenant

Heavy focus on connection with OT

Themes:

Jesus as Our High Priest (allusion to Day of Atonement) – only found here

Christ's solidarity with sinners – He suffered with us (com-passion)

Power of Christ's death (9:14; 10:22)

Meaning of OT found in Christ

The need for faith and endurance as the pilgrim church on earth (journey)

Our need to draw near to God (4:16; 7:25; 10:22; 11:6) or enter into God's presence (4:11; 6:19-20; 10:19)

James

Author: first bishop of Jerusalem, "brother of the Lord"; also in Acts 15; "James the Just"

Martyrdom in 62 mentioned in multiple ancient (Jewish) accounts

James the Lesser?

Sometimes rather blunt – out of love

Change of behavior begins with change of heart

Significant teaching on faith and works (2:14-26)

Misinterpretation of Paul justification by faith (Rom 3:28; Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8-9)

Care for poor and neglected (1:27, 2:5)

Also need control of tongue (3:9-10; 4:11-12; 4:16)

Need for humility before God (1:9, 21; 3:13; 4:6,10)

Anointing of the sick (5:14-15) – in line with Mark 6:13

1 Peter

Tradition: written by Peter during final years in Rome (early 60s)

Written to churches in Turkey – probably mostly Gentile

Written to prepare Christians for suffering like Christ

All the while “indescribable and glorious joy” (1:8) of new life in Christ

Other theme: sobriety and holiness (don’t behave like others – 4:3)

Two major parts:

Who we are as God’s people and household (1:3-2:10)

How we are to live as God’s people and household (2:11-5:11)

2 Peter

Some question of authorship – by Peter (and secretary) or by follower of Peter?

Date: either late 60s (Peter) or 70s-90s (follower)

Probably written in Rome and perhaps to churches in Turkey

Three goals: remind of Truth of God’s Word, warn against false teachers, await Christ’s return by living holy life

Eschatology – the “last things”

Writing against “opponents” who deny Christ’s return and teach immoral way of life

Closer connection with Jude – virtually all of that letter found in chapter 2

Jude

Author: Jude “Judah” brother of James

Written somewhere between 50 and 90; no clear intended audience

Vigorous defense of faith against false teachers

Next up: March 31, Paul’s Letters