



Acts and Beyond

A Study of the
Early Church
by Location

Daniel F. Cates

CHURCHES IN THE FIRST CENTURY AND BEYOND

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TEXT FOR THE STUDY: [Eph 4:11-16](#), "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY:

1. Our aim ought always to be what the people of God generally, and the church particularly, has always been when at her best (e.g., [Eph 4:11-16](#)); therefore, we look to congregations of the past, generically called "churches" in Scripture though not to be confused with denominations of our day which are likewise termed "Churches" (e.g., the Catholic Church, the Baptist Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Methodist Church, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, the Church of God, the Christian Church, the Church of God in Christ, et al.), to see if any lessons can be gleaned from them.
2. The story of the early churches is one of successes and failures (typically in that order), and of persecutions and other obstacles (both from without and within).
3. What *can* we learn from a study of the churches of the early centuries A.D.?
 - a. What made the early church special.
 - (1). She "had a simple creed: One God, one Father of all; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one Spirit, one hope, one body, one name, one people, one purpose [see [Eph 4:4-6-DFC](#)] . . . the literal word of God, fairly translated, without note or comment, exposition or coloring. (Tolbert Fanning in A.R. Holton, "Ancient and Modern Churches," *Gospel Advocate*, April 19, 1951, p. 246).
 - (2). Her members knew that the cause was the Lord's not theirs and that they were each to work as "lively stones" ([1Pe 2:5](#)) to do His Will as His people (ibid).
 - b. How the early church fulfilled her commission and pleased her God.
 - (1). "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand

souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" ([Act 2:41-47](#)).

- (2). "Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand" ([Act 4:4](#)).
- (3). "And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things. And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) . . . Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us" ([Act 5:11-14](#), [Act 5:28](#)).
- (4). "And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, . . . And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" ([Act 6:1](#), [Act 6:7](#)).
- (5). "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied" ([Act 9:31](#)).
- (6). "And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord" ([Act 11:21](#)).
- (7). "But the word of God grew and multiplied" ([Act 12:24](#)).
- (8). "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed" ([Act 19:20](#)).
- (9). "So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world" ([Rom 10:17-18](#)).
- (10). "Which [the truth of the Gospel-DFC {[Col 1:5](#)}] is come unto you, as *it is* in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as *it doth*

also in you, since the day ye heard *of it*, and knew the grace of God in truth:" ([Col 1:6](#)).

- (11). "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have *free* course, and be glorified, even as *it is* with you:" ([2Th 3:1](#)).
- (12). "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee" ([Psa 22:27](#)).
- (13). "Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. . . . And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" ([Dan 2:35](#); [Dan 2:44](#)).

c. How the early church subsequently, and remarkably quickly, fell from her position of faithfulness.

- (1). "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves [the Ephesian elders-DFC {[Act 20:17](#)}] shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" ([Act 20:29-30](#)).
- (2). "For such [as would beguile the Corinthians-DFC {[2Co 11:3-4](#)}] *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" ([2Co 11:13-15](#); c.f., [2Co 2:17](#), "For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ").
- (3). "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *by* our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God,

shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: *Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" ([2Th_2:1-12](#)).

- (4). "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ" ([Gal_1:6-7](#)).
- (5). "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" ([Rom_16:17-18](#)).
- (6). "Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; . . . Nevertheless I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. . . . And unto the angel of the church in Pergamos write; . . . I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. . . . And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; . . . I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. . . . And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; . . . I know thy works, that thou hast a

name that thou livest, and art dead. . . . Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. . . . And unto the angel of the church in Laodiceans write; . . . I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. . . . thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: . . . repent ([Rev 2:1](#), [Rev 2:4-5](#), [Rev 2:12](#), [Rev 2:14-16](#), [Rev 2:18](#), [Rev 2:20](#); [Rev 3:1](#), [Rev 3:3](#), [Rev 3:14-17](#), [Rev 3:19](#)).

4. Consider some comments on the lessons that we can learn from these churches:
 - a. "There is no doubt in my mind but that the ideal church of the New Testament is one in which all the members and workers in the church grow up in the church and are the outgrowth of the life and work of the church. . . . the end of the teaching [of the church as exemplified in [Eph 4:11-16-DFC](#)] should be a self-edifying, self-working, and aggressive body, reaching out, doing good, and spreading the truth to all around. . . . None of the churches come up to the ideal, perhaps will not while man is in his present mortal state (David Lipscomb, "The Churches of the Scriptures," *Gospel Advocate*, March 23, 1905, p. 185).
 - b. "Degeneracy and decay mark the course of all institutions run by men. It is so with the churches of God. They were formed by God. The laws given to regulate them were given by God; and if these laws were perfectly lived up to, these churches would show no decay, but would live perennially, with a continually increasing vigor and strength. But poor, weak, uncertain men must study, understand, and apply that law. In doing these things the weakness and mistakes of humanity creep in and the blunders and degeneracy of the churches grow in them. In every family mentioned in the Bible, the family as a whole degenerated before the third generation. Out of all of Abraham's large and increasing family, only Jacob remained faithful to God. No other family did so well. Of the early churches planted by those filled with the Holy Spirit, fresh from the throne of God, how few remained faithful to God till the third generation! . . . Have the churches formed under the ministration of men improved in these things? [Later in this article {p. 1165}, Lipscomb lamented division and the causes thereof, but accurately concluded, "The divisions test us all, try our feelings; but to purify the church they must come" {c.f., [1Co 11:19](#), "For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be

made manifest among you."}]" (David Lipscomb, "The Apostasy of Churches," *Gospel Advocate*, September 16, 1909, p. 1164).

- c. "The apostasy of the churches has been more significantly set forth in the Scriptures than we give credit for. . . . The churches [especially the seven of Asia] as left here [presumably after the apostles had left for other fields or ultimately died-DFC] were liable to be entered by bad men, taught evil ways, perverted and made synagogues of Satan, casting out the apostles and inspired teachers of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to become perverters of the churches they claim to teach and preserve. The management of these churches was given to man for him to carry out under the laws of God. Man perverts them by refusing to obey these laws and by substituting the rules and laws of man for those of God. There are two ways of rejecting these laws of God. First, by going beyond and adding other laws; second, by restricting the laws of God and restraining man in his work within limits and from purposes permitted by God" (David Lipscomb, "Apostasy of Churches," *Gospel Advocate*, Vol. LXIV, December 21, 1922, p. 1209).

I. THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM.

A. Establishment.

1. The church at Jerusalem was established on the first Pentecost after the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Jesus (A.D. 29).
2. The establishment of it is recorded in [Act 2:1-41](#).
3. For a number of reasons this church "was different to all other churches" (J.C. Bailey, "The Jerusalem Church," in *Churches of the New Testament*, (Fort Worth, TX: Fort Worth Christian College Bookstore, 1963), p. 105).
 - a. "All the Apostles were Present at its Beginning" (ibid.).
 - b. "It Came with the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit" (ibid., p. 106).
 - c. "It is the Church of Prophecy" (ibid., p. 107).
4. At the same time, however, it is also "the same as all churches" (ibid., p. 108).
 - a. "The Gospel is Preached" (ibid., p. 109).
 - b. "The Kingdom Came" (ibid.).
 - c. A.M. Morris observed, "If this church is not an example to all nations and for all time, then there is no example. . . . The truth was not local, the ordinances were not temporary, the law of pardon was not experimental, the worship not acceptable [just-DFC] for that city and that age. There is no alternative" ("The Jerusalem Church," *Gospel Advocate*, September 1, 1932, p. 975).

B. Early history.

1. The early church was a community of Christians who were of diverse national but similar religious backgrounds; the early days of the church saw these new brethren heavily leaning upon each other while they learned doctrine, worshipped God, and converted other ([Act 2:42-47](#)).
2. Soon after the birth of the early church, Peter and John were threatened regarding their teaching about Jesus ([Act 4:1-22](#)) after healing a lame man at the temple ([Act 3:2-10](#)) and subsequently preaching a convicting sermon ([Act 3:12-26](#)) to a great crowd of Jews ([Act 3:11](#)); they then went back to the other disciples and prayed for boldness ([Act 4:23-30](#))--which prayer was answered ([Act 4:31-33](#)).
3. The early church saw both selfless ([Act 4:34-37](#)) and selfish ([Act 5:1-2](#)) members.
4. The church quickly learned that God would not be blasphemed therein ([Act 5:3-11](#)).

5. The early church won many converts ([Act_5:12-16](#)), but also angered those holding the Jewish *status quo* ([Act_5:17](#)).
6. The opposition against the church soon moved from threatenings to imprisonment ([Act_5:18](#)), but the prisons could not hold those whom the Lord did not want to be held ([Act_5:19-25](#)); this new persecution gave the disciples an opportunity to preach to the Jewish leaders ([Act_5:26-39](#)), though there would be punishment ([Act_5:40](#)).
7. Again there was prayer, but now not a prayer for boldness but of thanksgiving for the opportunity to suffer for Jesus ([Act_5:41](#)); accordingly, the preaching did not cease ([Act_5:42](#)).
8. Recognizing the need to have some do work that could have taken away from what the apostles were doing, others were appointed to serve ([Act_6:1-6](#)).
9. Still the kingdom spread in Jerusalem ([Act_6:7](#)).
10. As a result of his unanswerable teaching, one of the men appointed to serve was stoned because of his preaching ([Act_6:8-15](#); [Act_7:54-60](#)); but not before he preached a remarkable sermon ([Act_7:1-53](#)).
11. With this latest escalation of punishment (c.f., [Act_8:2-3](#)), the church at Jerusalem was "scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles" ([Act_8:1](#)); still they preached the Word ([Act_8:4](#))--but now to areas outside of Jerusalem.
12. When Jerusalem again enters the picture, she is the target of Saul--though not as persecutor (as in [Act_8:2](#)) but preacher ([Act_9:26-28](#)); incidentally, the hunter soon became the target ([Act_9:29](#)).
13. The next mention of Jerusalem involved the opposition faced at the hands of Judaizers ([Act_11:2-3](#))--who would become a consistent thorn in the churches side throughout the world.
14. A famine made the church in Jerusalem and Judaea the subject of benevolence from other areas ([Act_11:27-30](#)); this need of support is also mentioned in [Rom_15:25-26](#), [Rom_15:31](#) and [1Co_16:3](#) showing how far help was being sought on her behalf.
15. The second martyr of the early church was James, brother of John ([Act_12:1-2](#)); Peter, likewise, was threatened by miraculously was removed from the deadly threat ([Act_12:3-19](#)); incidentally, Barnabas, Saul, and, apparently, John Mark had been in Jerusalem while these things were taking place ([Act_12:25](#)), having gone there as distributors of aid from Antioch ([Act_11:30](#)).

16. In A.D. 58 (or 48) Judaizers threatened the church in other areas ([Act 15:1](#)), which led to a definitive answer to whether Christians had to be circumcised like the Jews ([Act 15:2-11](#)); Paul and Barnabas used this as an opportunity to report on their successes among the Gentiles ([Act 15:12](#)); James summed up the Truth on the matter ([Act 15:13-29](#)) and sent again Paul and Barnabas to Antioch ([Act 15:30](#)).
- a. Frend comments that if the Judaizers had their way, "It would have legitimized the Jerusalem Christians' claim to be the true Israel, but at the expense of the church's permanent expansion among the Gentiles" (W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), p. 86).
 - b. Frend concluded, "The Jewish party had not gotten their way, and their cause was to fade. Meantime, the missions to the Gentiles and to the Jews were placed on an equal footing" (p. 92).
 - c. On several levels Jesse Lyman Hurlbut missed the import and message of Acts 15; he wrote, "Jewish members of the church were expected to continue in their obedience to the Jewish law, though the regulations were interpreted broadly by such leaders as St. Paul. But Gentiles could enter the Christian fold by simple faith in Christ and a righteous life, without submission to legal requirements" (*The Story of the Christian Church*, (Philadelphia, PA: The John C. Winston Co., 1933), p. 34).
17. Perhaps Paul made a trip after the Second Missionary Journey to Jerusalem as he intended in [Act 18:21](#).
18. Paul did make a trip to Jerusalem following the Third Missionary Journey ([Act 21:15](#)) though he had been warned by inspired disciples in Tyre ([Act 21:4](#)) and by the prophet Agabus in Caesarea ([Act 21:10-11](#)) and by his fellow-laborers ([Act 21:12](#)) not to go to Jerusalem; he was received warmly ([Act 21:17-26](#)), but he ultimately was threatened in the temple ([Act 21:27-30](#)) only to be saved by the Romans garrisoned in the Fortress Antonia ([Act 21:30-38](#))--whereupon he preached ([Act 21:39~Act 22:21](#)), but was not accepted ([Act 22:22-30](#)) and ultimately appeared before the Sanhedrin ([Act 23:1-10](#)); thereafter, Paul was encouraged by the Lord ([Act 23:11](#)) and as tensions and threats rose was sent to Antipatris on the way to Caesarea ([Act 23:12-31](#)); this possibly took place in A.D. 58.

C. Early character.

1. J.M. Powell, ("A Study of the Jerusalem Church," in *Gospel Advocate*, March 16, 1961, pp. 168,169) identified her characteristics thus:
 - a. Her concerns and fellowship.
 - b. Her attitudes and actions.
 - c. Her prayer life.
 - d. Her progress and zeal.
 - e. Her honoring of Jesus.

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. While the focus in Scripture would shift toward Antioch ([Act 11:19](#), [Act 11:26](#); [Act 13:1](#); [Act 14:26](#); [Act 15:22](#), [Act 15:30](#); [Act 18:22](#)), the church in Jerusalem played an important role in converting Jews from around the world to Christianity; for their need to spread the Gospel, "widely and quickly, Jerusalem was the only possible center, thronged as it was on feast days by Jews from every part of the Dispersion" (Frend, p. 86).
2. In A.D. 70 Jerusalem was the target of the might of Rome as a greater threat to the city than any prior razed her to the ground excepting the three towers of Herod (Phasaël, Hippicus, and Mariamne) which served as watch-towers for Rome's Tenth Legion (see *ISBE*, "Jerusalem").
 - a. This event had been prophesied by Jesus in [Mat 24:4-35](#).
 - b. Tradition records that due to Jesus' warning concerning signs of the destruction no Christians died in this siege and capture.
 - (1). It is Eusebius who says, "The people of the church in Jerusalem were commanded by an oracle given by revelation before the war to those in the city who were worthy of it, to depart and dwell in one of the cities of Peraea, which they called Pella. To it those who believed on Christ migrated from Jerusalem, so that when the holy men had completely deserted the royal metropolis of the Jews and the whole land of Judaea, the judgment of God might at last come upon them for so many lawless acts against Christ and his apostles, and wipe out that generation of sacreligious persons from the human race (*Ecclesiastical History* 3.5.3)" (Paul McKechnie, *The First Christian Centuries: Perspectives on the Early*

Church, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), p. 84).

- (2). ". . . the Jerusalem church apparently ceased to be influential with other churches from this time" (McKechnie, p. 84).

3. A persecution of the church in A.D. 81 under Domitian resulted in Simeon's, an elder of Jerusalem who is referred to as a *successor* to Jesus' half-brother James, being martyred by crucifixion (William Byron Forbush, ed., *Fox's Book of Martyrs*, (Philadelphia, PA: Universal Book and Bible House, 1926), p. 6).
 - a. Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History* 3.11; 4.22.4; c.f., 3.32.6) calls Simeon (or Simon or Symeon) a cousin of Jesus (McKechnie, p. 85).
 - b. Eusebius apparently mentioned a number of such bishops; on which McKechnie commented, on there being more bishops in the lists than time would allow, that these were possibly "names of twelve elders who presided over the Jerusalem church with James in the first generation" (p. 85)--Bingo!
4. An early premillennialist named Cerinthus (A.D. 100) "maintained that Christ would establish a kingdom on earth, centered in Jerusalem, followed by the millenium 'to be spent in wedding festivities' . . . [however,-DFC] Cerinthus has gone down in history as a 'Jewish Gnostic' and an opponent of St. John" (Frend, p. 143; c.f., McKechnie, p. 93 in which Polycarp is said to have related the fleeing of John from a bath-house in which Cerinthus was located; John said, "Let us flee in case the bath-house falls down, since Cerinthus, the enemy of truth, is in it."); a converted philosopher from Rome also held this view (Frend, p. 239)--he was Justin, now referred to as Justin Martyr.
5. Between A.D. 132 and 135 Jerusalem witnessed another revolt, the Bar-Cochba rebellion, ended with the final destruction of Judaism there and, apparently, the clearing of the temple mount for the purpose of erecting an altar to Jupiter (*ISBE*, "Jerusalem").
 - a. Apparently this was the end of the church in Jerusalem, as McKechnie states, "So the Jewish Jerusalem church, already reduced in importance since the Pella migration, ceased to exist" (p. 91).
 - b. Incidentally, the Romans under Hadrian (A.D.117-138) killed Jew and Jewish-Christian alike--since the Jews

were enemies and the Christians were outlaws
(McKechnie, p. 91).

6. In A.D. 138, Jerusalem was rebuilt as Aelia Capitolina under the emperor Hadrian.
7. An altar to Venus was subsequently built where the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (a traditional site for the Joseph's tomb) now sits (Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, III, 36, in *ISBE*, "Jerusalem"); Frend says that "the reputed sites of Calvary and the tomb of Jesus [were replaced-DFC] with the temples of Jupiter and Venus (p. 162).
8. In the late A.D. 100's, a Christian named Hegesippus worked to record a history of various congregations, "notably the church at Jerusalem under James and his successors, and about the family of Jesus. His *Memoirs* (*Hypomnēmata*) survived to aid Eusebius of Caesarea compile his *Ecclesiastical History* in the first decades of the fourth century" (Frend, p. 243).
9. In the early 200's A.D., Origen "allowed himself to be consecrated presbyter by his friends the bishops of Caesarea and Jerusalem" (Frend, p. 380); this especially upset the church in Alexandria, Egypt, due to the doctrinal differences had between her and Origen--who believed such odd things as "the devil could be saved" (ibid.).
 - a. Notice the role that men were playing in elevating other men to positions of religious authority.
 - b. It is no wonder that a human hierarchy was delivering the church down a slippery slope.
 - c. Incidentally, regarding Jerusalem's *clout*, Frend says, "Already Jerusalem was beginning to assert its claims to special status as the site of the Holy Places, and to chafe at the authority of Caesarea, and more distantly at that of Antioch. The memory of James and his episcopal ["Denoting or governed by or relating to a bishop or bishops" {WordWeb}-DFC] chair could not be *wished* [emphasis mine-DFC] away" (p. 403).
10. Apparently, Origen also was a proponent of asceticism ["1. The doctrine that through renunciation of worldly pleasures it is possible to achieve a high spiritual or intellectual state. 2. The trait of great self-denial (especially refraining from worldly pleasures) 3. Rigorous self-denial and active self-restraint" (WordWeb)] (Guy Laurie, *Introducing Early Christianity*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), p. 302) and Neoplatonism ["... its most distinctive doctrine holds that the first principle and source of reality transcends being and thought

and is naturally unknowable" (WordWeb)] (Laurie, p. 199).

- a. The former is significant because Bishop Narcissus of Jerusalem "'spent many years secretly in deserts and obscure parts of the country,' c. 220" (Eusebius in Frend, p. 578).
- b. Interestingly, Eastern (of Constantine's empire) ascetics "attainment of the 'citizenship of Jerusalem' [assumed to be spiritual Jerusalem-DFC] was a positive aim contrasting with the more negative 'avoidance of sin' that motivated much of the Western ascetic's withdrawal from the world" (Frend, p. 747).

11. A broad persecution, apparently in the late second or early third century A.D. (perhaps in A.D. 192 under emperor Severus, or more likely A.D. 235 under emperor Maximus [Fox, pp. 12-14]), saw a native of Jerusalem named Alexander be imprisoned in Cappadocia; later, he would emerge from imprisonment to become a bishop (Frend, p. 294); later, in a persecution under the emperor Decius (Fox, p. 14), Alexander would again be imprisoned and die there around A.D. 250 (ibid., p. 319) due to "the severity of his confinement" (Fox, p. 17).

12. In A.D. 333 (*ISBE*, "Jerusalem") or 335 (September 17 to be specific, Frend, p. 527), the Roman emperor Constantine had a church, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, built on the site of the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea "before a great concourse of bishops from all over the empire" (ibid.).

- a. For Jerusalem, "The conversion to Christianity [in men's eyes-DFC] of Constantine I the Great (306-37) [October 27, 312 is when he received his "sign"; and his "conversion" occurred some time after that-DFC] inaugurated a new period of prosperity, founded as before on the pilgrim traffic" (Michael Grant, "Jerusalem," *A Guide to the Ancient World*, (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1997), pp. 317,318).

(1). As for his family, Constantine's mother, Helena, was a devout pilgrim who travelled to and identified many "holy sites" and who was emulated by many other pilgrims (Frend, p. 567); also, his sister, Constantia, was a Christian (Matthew Barrett, executive producer, *The Battle for Rome*, "Constantine," (BBC, 2006)).

- b. From the period of his "conversion" until his death was

seven years, in which time, "His mind was occupied with his own city of Constantinople [from which he ruled-DFC], with Jerusalem and the massive basilica he built over the spot identified with the Holy Sepulchre, and beginning the destruction of paganism" (Freund, p. 522).

- c. Incidentally, see Laurie, p. 233, for the account given by a "fourth-century female pilgrim Etheria" who described a "double screening process" prior to baptism during "the compressed forty-day Lenten process" associated with Easter; she said, "One by one the ones who are seeking baptism are brought up, men coming with their fathers and women with their mothers. As they come in one by one, the bishop asks their neighbors questions about them: 'Is this person leading a good life? Does he respect his parents? Is he a drunkard or a boaster?' He asks about all the serious human vices. And if his inquiries show him that someone has not committed any of these misdeeds, he himself puts down his name, but if someone is guilty he is told to go away, and the bishop tells him that he is to amend his ways before he may come to the font ["Bowl for baptismal water" {WordWeb}-DFC]."

- (1). Note the observing of days ([Gal 4:8-11](#)); here, Easter (a combination recognition of the Passover, Jesus' resurrection, and the offering of sacrifices in honor of a Saxon goddess, Eostre [M.G. Easton, *Easton's Bible Dictionary*, "Easter"]) and Lent (the forty days before Easter).
- (2). Note the *addition* of *screening* candidates to the practice of baptism; had this been practiced in the New Testament, perhaps Simon would not have been baptized in [Act 8:12-13](#), c.f., [Act 8:18-23](#); however, Saul of Tarsus likewise would have been disallowed; additionally, note that one could not repent and be baptized on the same day--or else those wishing to be converted would not be sent away (Laurie even makes mention of a "prebaptismal period" which included a two week long memorization of the creed).
- (3). Note the mode of baptism: such as would need

only a bowl of water, not a pool--baptism is most certainly an immersion ([Act 8:38-39](#); [Rom 6:4-5](#))!

- d. Similarly, Frend records the following: ". . . the intrepid pilgrim Etheria [I do not know, but Laurie and Frend may be referring to the same pilgrim] has left an eyewitness account of the details of the services she attended at Jerusalem (c. 385). At Easter people would become exhausted by their all-night vigil before Easter day, for the distinctive ceremonies of the Great Week began 'six days before the Passover.' Etheria recalls a merciful instruction from the bishop: 'Now off you go home and sit down for a bit until the next service. Then all be back here at about 8 o'clock so that you can see the holy wood of the Cross, that as everyone believes helps us attain salvation'" (p. 559). (1). Note a means of salvation not seen in Scripture!
- e. Responding to Constantine's pro-Christian stance, Julian, called "the Apostate," sought to restore the temple in Jerusalem for the Jews "to strike at the heart of Constantianian Jerusalem, to upstage the Holy Places by a new, rebuilt 'sacred city of Jerusalem.' Unfortunately [sic-DFC] workers struck hidden gaseous deposits when they began to lay the new foundations. Explosions and fire greeted their efforts, and the attempt was abandoned in confusion" (Frend, p. 606).

13. Cyril of Jerusalem (c. 310-386).

- a. Cyril of Jerusalem was coming into prominence; in fact he is recognized as an early promoter of the false doctrine of transubstantiation (*Catechetical Lectures* 19.7); he said, "The bread and the wine of the eucharist before the invocation of the holy and adorable Trinity were simply bread and wine . . . after the invocation the bread become the body of Christ, and the wine the blood of Christ" (Laurie, p. 199).
- b. Cyril of Jerusalem also wrongly taught that the living could aid the dead by participating in religious rites (*Catechetical Lectures* 23.8-10); he said, "Then we commemorate also those who have fallen asleep before us . . . believing that it will be a very great benefit to the souls, for whom the supplication is put up, while the holy and most awful sacrifice is set forth . . ." (Laurie,

p. 201).

- c. Cyril of Jerusalem also promoted "naked baptism" (*Catechetical Lectures* 20.1) since Jesus was *naked* upon the cross and Adam had been naked at his creation "and was not ashamed"; Laurie relates that Cyril reasoned, "In the same way that a baby emerged naked in physical birth, only nakedness in baptism could adequately depict the new birth process" (p. 221).

14. Dioscorus', "successor to Cyril" (Maragret A. Schatkin, "Eutyches", on *Microsoft Encarta*), "aim was ultimately to replace Antioch by Jerusalem as the most important see ["The seat within a bishop's diocese where his cathedral is located" {WordWeb}-DFC] in the Roman East" (Freund, p. 764).
15. In the 400's A.D., the rivalry grew between Antioch and Jerusalem, when Juvenal, bishop of Jerusalem since A.D. 421 or 422, sought to elevate the Jerusalem church over Antioch's (Freund, pp. 759,760) "the 'mother see' of the East" (Freund., p. 402) as Dioscorus had done.
 - a. On August 8, 449, Juvenal appeared on the Second Council of Ephesus as fourth in rank among the 135 bishops present (Freund, p. 767).
16. "From about the fourth century these [patriarchs-DFC] were the bishops of Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem. The patriarchs held the highest ecclesiastical offices in the church and exercised wide supervision" (Laurie, p. 298).
 - a. "Jerusalem . . . was added as a fifth patriarchate at the Council of Chalcedon in 451" (Laurie, p. 103) and "the boundaries of Antioch and Jerusalem had been established" (Freund, p. 772).
 - b. Grant says that Bishop Juvenal (A.D. 421-458) was the one responsible for increasing Jerusalem's standing in the Catholic Church to rival those of Antioch and Caesarea Maritima (Grant, p. 318).
17. Martyrius later served as patriarch of Jerusalem (Freund, p. 809).
18. The emperor Justinian (A.D. 527-565) built the Church of Mary on the temple mount and the Church of Sophia just north where the Fortress Antonia had stood (*ISBE*, "Jerusalem").
19. In A.D. 614, Persians destroyed the churches which had been built in Jerusalem; this opened the door for Jerusalem's takeover by Islam and provided material for the construction of Moslem buildings (*ISBE*, "Jerusalem").
20. In A.D. 637, Moslems seized Jerusalem, mercifully (*ISBE*,

"Jerusalem").

21. The Dome of the Rock was built in A.D. 691 (*ISBE*, "Jerusalem").
22. In A.D. 1077, Seljuk Turks "massacred 3,000 of the inhabitants of Jerusalem" helping to usher in the Crusades (A.D. 1096-1270) (*ISBE*, "Jerusalem").
23. In A.D. 1243 Moslems surrendered control of Jerusalem to "Christians" (*ISBE*, "Jerusalem").
24. In A.D. 1517, Ottomon Turks retook control of Jerusalem and it has not been wholly Jewish nor Christian since, although the Jews were restored to the city and land in 1948 (*ISBE*, "Jerusalem").
25. To this day Jerusalem, like the Bible lands around, is divided culturally, racially, politically and religiously.

E. Miscellany.

1. In 1959 Athens Clay Pullias wrote, "The plea of the restoration has been to restore simple New Testament Christianity as it was taught and practiced in the Jerusalem congregation as recorded in the book of Acts. This congregation has been held up as a model to exhort God's people to continue 'steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.' (Acts 2:42) It is a thrilling prospect that Ralph T. Henley and his family will undertake to establish a loyal church in the ancient city of Jerusalem" ("The Jerusalem Church Restored," *Gospel Advocate*, July 2, 1959, p. 425).
 - a. This marked "the first concerted effort by churches of Christ to re-establish the church in its doctrinal purity to Jerusalem" (Elders of the Central Church of Christ [Chattanooga], "The Jerusalem Church to Be Rebuilt," *Gospel Advocate*, June 23, 1960, p. 390).
 - b. In 1970 Ira North reported that there were "only about four native families of the church in Jerusalem ("Jerusalem Church of Christ," *Gospel Advocate*, December 3, 1970, p. 774).
 - c. Regrettably, the missionary of the church in Jerusalem at the time of North's visit recorded nine years later, "There are two types of countries our missionaries go into. One is *resistant* and the other is *ripe*. The ripe readily listen to the word of God and respond. The resistant resist every effort. The Jerusalem area is of the latter, due to political upheaval and distrust of foreigners" (John E. Crosslin, "A Trip to the Middle East," *Gospel Advocate*, September 20, 1979, p. 582).
2. Objectionable thoughts.

- a. Frend (p. 86) says that it was probably Peter who decided to go to Jerusalem to start the church; Scripture says it was Jesus' ([Luk_24:47](#); [Luk_24:49](#); [Act_1:4](#), [Act_1:8](#); apparently not realizing that he is defeating his own assertion he quotes [Luk_24:47](#) and [Act_1:8](#) on p. 127); furthermore, prophecy had placed it in the top of the mountains ([Isa_2:2](#); c.f., [Zec_8:3](#)), not beside a sea in Galilee.
- b. Frend (p. 106) says, "In Jerusalem, James seems to have presided over elders who formed a sort of Christian Sanhedrin. His power was authoritative if not absolute."
 - (1). That statement seems to be made pretty liberally.
 - (2). Frend also stated, "The keystone of the arch [as a figure of the organization of the Jerusalem church-DFC], however, was James, assisted by a council composed of the disciples at Jerusalem and *elders subordinate* [emphasis mine-DFC] to them" (p. 88).
- c. Frend (p. 139) takes from Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History* 3.20.6) that "kinship with Jesus was a qualification for leadership"; such nepotism may be implied by Eusebius, but is not found in Scripture.
- d. Frend (p. 120) says that the church in Jerusalem suffered after the fall of Jerusalem due to the Jewish Christians' being moderate--or so he implies; actually, they were not moderates, they had heeded the warning of Jesus to flee prior to A.D. 70's gruesome events.
- e. Laurie speaks of the baptism associated with fourth century Jerusalem as "Penultimate preparation for baptism in the early church" (p. 233); he missed it by a few centuries ([Act_2:38](#)), unless he is referring to the *means* of Catholic baptism--which giving the benefit of the doubt, he probably is.
- f. To an extent this may not be objectionable, but Frend says, "How the liturgy ["A rite or body of rites prescribed for public worship" {WordWeb}-DFC] was developing in Jerusalem in the 50s and 60s is not known for certain. From James's attitude towards other matters (for example, the sanctity of the Nazarite vow), we may assume that Jewish feasts were celebrated and that Christian worship remained near Jewish. Paul himself went to Jerusalem for Pentecost. His churches,

however, were evolving their own forms of service, related to the Hellenistic synagogue, which were to set the pattern of the future Christian liturgy " (p. 107).

- (1). Perhaps one could speak in terms of a *developing liturgy* based on [Mat_16:19](#); [Joh_16:13](#); and [Act_16:4](#); however, that would be an accurate statement *only* if one recognized that the development were by God, were limited in time, and universal in application.
- (2). To speak of one stream of development in *James' Jewish churches* and another in *Paul's Gentile churches* is to fly in the face of the Truth of the matter: There was a standard ([Joh_4:24](#)) which was not based upon any man but Christ and which was universal ([1Co_1:13](#))!
 - (a). While Frend does not call the church in Jerusalem "James' church" in this quote, he did speak of "James's church" on p. 139.
- (3). As for the supporting of Jewish rites and the keeping of Jewish feasts, Paul explained why one would keep such ([1Co_9:20-23](#)) but also demonstrated that there was no authority to bind such ([Act_16:1-3](#); [Gal_2:1-5](#)).

II. THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH OF SYRIA.

A. Establishment.

1. When persecution resulted in the death of Stephen in Jerusalem ([Act 6:8-15](#); [Act 7:58-59](#)), many Christians fled Jerusalem ([Act 8:1](#)) but did not stop preaching ([Act 8:4](#)).
2. Among those who fled Jerusalem were ones who "travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only" ([Act 11:19](#)).
 - a. Likely, the first converts in Antioch were Jews reached at this point; however, this is not necessarily the case, and, even if it were, it was not long until others were added.
 - b. However, some of the scattered "were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord" ([Act 11:20-21](#)).

B. Early history.

1. The church in Jerusalem was anxious to hear a report of what was taking place in Antioch, so they sent Barnabas ([Act 11:22](#)), a devout disciple who had been introduced in [Act 4:36-37](#).
2. Barnabas earned his moniker "son of consolation" for he "when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord" ([Act 11:23](#)).
3. As a direct result of Barnabas effort, "much people was added unto the Lord" ([Act 11:24](#)).
4. Soon Barnabas went to Tarsus to bring Saul (Paul) to Antioch to teach the Gospel there as co-laborers ([Act 11:25-26](#)).
5. It was in that place in those days that the disciples were first called Christians ([Act 11:26](#)); that is, followers of Christ.
 - a. Regarding the name Christian as opposed to sectarian names, see J.M. Powell, "Antioch, the Missionary-Minded Church," in *Gospel Advocate*, November 10, 1977, p. 711.
 1. Among those quoted by Powell were John Wesley ("Would God that all party names and unscriptural phrases and forms which have divided the Christian world were forgotten."), Martin Luther ("I pray you, leave my name alone; and not to call yourselves Lutherans, but Christians"), and Charles Spurgeon ("I look

forward with pleasure to the day when there will not be a Baptist living. I hope they will soon be gone. I hope the Baptist name will soon perish; but let Christ's name last forever.").

C. Early character.

1. This church was one interested in benevolence ([Act 11:27-30](#)); furthermore, consider that "many of these were Gentile converts to Christianity, now sacrificing for Jewish Christians" (Wayne Cox, "The Church at Antioch," in B.J. Clarke, ed., *The Lord's Church: Past, Present, Future*, (Pulaski, TN: Sain Publications, 1999), pp. 117,118).
2. This congregation was successful in and even willing to reach from one of the Roman Empire's centers of debauchery--Antioch had a "suburb," Daphne, which housed a "shrine of Apollo (among other royal gods)" and is referred to by some as "Antiochia by Daphne" rather than Antioch of Syria or Antioch on the Orontes (Grant, p. 39).
 - a. That Antioch folk should be influential on a national level--not only through Syria, but also throughout the Roman Empire--is not surprising, for she had been involved especially heavily in international politics from the time of Alexander's successor there, Seleucus I Nicator (c. 312 B.C.), and in Roman politics from 64 B.C. when she was conquered and ultimately given sway over not only her own affairs, but Judaea's as well (whose procurator was amenable to Syria's).
 - b. Grant wrote, "During the Roman Principate many easterners migrated from Antioch to Rome, so that the satirist Juvenal complained that the Orontes [the river on which Antioch lay-DFC] had flowed into the Tiber [the river on which Rome lay-DFC]. It was here that Mucianus, governor [procurator-DFC] of Syria, planned the rebellion that led to the accession of Vespasian (A.D. 69)" (p. 40).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. Ignatius.
 - a. Ignatius, who the *Anti-Nicene Fathers* indicates lived from A.D. 30-107--or 116, was bishop of Antioch, or as he called himself, "the bishop of Syria" ("The Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans," ch. II).
 - (1). Whether or not it is significant is debatable, but Ignatius liked to call himself Theophorus, a

combination of Theos (θεός, "God") and phoros (φόρος, "a load (as borne), that is, (figuratively) a tax (properly an individual assessment on persons or property;" [Strong]) which would therefore mean "borne of God," "taxed of God," or some other such--no reasonable and acceptable translation has been found by this writer.

b. Ignatius, knowing he was to be martyred, apparently had a good bit of liberty, though he was at the whim of Roman soldiers carrying him to Rome (of whom he said, "From Syria even unto Rome I fight with beasts, both by land and sea, both by night and day, being bound to ten leopards, I mean a band of soldiers, who, even when they receive benefits, show themselves all the worse" ["The Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans," ch. V]).

- (1). As he traveled toward Rome, Ignatius availed himself of opportunities to preach and write.
- (2). He wrote perhaps as many as fifteen letters during this time, although some have suggested that none of these genuinely came from Ignatius, as F.W. Mattox wrote, "The kindness of treatment on the way to Rome has led many students of church history to doubt the authenticity of the letters. ... A consideration of external conditions surrounding the writing of these letters and the statements made in the letters themselves has caused able scholars of the past to doubt their genuineness [Mattox used as examples Ignatius' ability to "talk with Polycarp and dictate to secretaries" and Rome's actual and absolute weakness in possibly preventing Ignatius' martyrdom]" (*The Eternal Kingdom*, (Delight, AR: Gospel Light Publishing Company, 1961), p. 59).
- (3). Of these letters, a preface to his work in the *Anti-Nicene Fathers* reads, "There are, in all, fifteen Epistles which bear the name of Ignatius. These are the following: One to the Virgin Mary, two to the Apostle John, one to Mary of Cassobelae, one to the Tarsians, one to the Antiochians, one to Hero, a deacon of Antioch,

one to the Philippians; one to the Ephesians, one to the Magnesians, one to the Trallians, one to the Romans, one to the Philadelphians, one to the Smyrnaeans, and one to Polycarp. The first three exist only in Latin: all the rest are extant also in Greek. . . . It is now the universal opinion of critics, that the first eight of these professedly Ignatian letters are spurious."

c. Ignatius preached some Truth in defense of Christ and the church.

(1). He fought Judaizers.

(a). "It is absurd to profess Christ Jesus, and to Judaize. For Christianity did not embrace Judaism, but Judaism Christianity, that so every tongue which believeth might be gathered together to God" ("The Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians," ch. X).

(b). "But if any one preach the Jewish law unto you, listen not to him. For it is better to hearken to Christian doctrine from a man who has been circumcised, than to Judaism from one uncircumcised" ("The Epistle of Ignatius to the Philadelphians," ch. VI).

(2). He fought Docetism ("This doctrine stated that Christ's sufferings were not real but it was only a semblance of actual suffering, [sic.-DFC] that Christ only seemed to suffer" [Mattox, p. 61]).

(a). "Stop your ears, therefore, when any one speaks to you at variance with Jesus Christ, who was descended from David, and was also of Mary; who was truly born, and did eat and drink. He was truly persecuted under Pontius Pilate; He was truly crucified, and [truly-not DFC] died, in the sight of beings in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth. He was also truly raised from the dead, His Father quickening Him, . . ." ("The Epistle of Ignatius to the Trallians," ch. IX).

(b). "But if, as some that are without God, that

is, the unbelieving, say, that He only seemed to suffer (they themselves only seeming to exist), then why am I in bonds? Why do I long to be exposed to the wild beasts? Do I therefore die in vain?" ("The Epistle of Ignatius to the Trallians," ch. X).

- (c). "Now, He suffered all these things for our sakes, that we might be saved. And He suffered truly, even as also He truly raised up Himself, not, as certain unbelievers maintain, that He only seemed to suffer, as they themselves only seem to be [Christians]. And as they believe, so shall it happen unto them, when they shall be divested of their bodies, and be mere evil spirits" ("The Epistle of Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans," ch. II).

- (3). Incidentally, Ignatius made an interesting statement concerning the baptism of Jesus, or more precisely, the *purpose* of the baptism of Jesus: "For our God, Jesus Christ, was, according to the appointment of God, conceived in the womb by Mary, of the seed of David, but by the Holy Ghost. He was born and baptized, that by His passion He might purify the water" ("The Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians," ch. XVIII).

d. Ignatius held to one primary error; he felt that a bishop was to be over the elders in the local church.

- (1). "It is manifest, therefore, that we should look upon the bishop even as we would upon the Lord Himself" ("The Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians," ch. IV).
- (2). "Now it becomes you also not to treat your bishop too familiarly on account of his youth, but to yield him all reverence, having respect to the power of God the Father, as I have known even holy presbyters do, not judging rashly, from the manifest youthful appearance [of their bishop-not DFC], but as being themselves prudent in God, submitting to him, or rather not

to him, but to the Father of Jesus Christ, the bishop of us all” (“The Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians,” ch. III).

- (3). “For, since ye are subject to the bishop as to Jesus Christ, ye appear to me to live not after the manner of men, but according to Jesus Christ, who died for us, in order, by believing in His death, ye may escape from death. It is therefore necessary that, as ye indeed do, so without the bishop ye should do nothing, but should also be subject to the presbytery, as to the apostle of Jesus Christ . . .” (“The Epistle of Ignatius to the Trallians,” ch. II).
- (4). “Fare ye well in Jesus Christ, while ye continue subject to the bishop, as to the command [of God-not DFC], and in like manner to the presbytery” (“The Epistle of Ignatius to the Trallians,” ch. XIII).
- (5). “Take ye heed, then, to have but one Eucharist. For there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup to [show forth-not DFC] the unity of His blood; one altar; as there is one bishop, along with the presbytery and deacons, my fellow-servants: that so, whatsoever ye do, ye may do it according to [the will of-not DFC] God” (“The Epistle of Ignatius to the Philadelphians,” ch. IV).
- (6). “See that ye all follow the bishop, even as Jesus Christ does the Father, and the presbytery as ye would the apostles; and reverence the deacons, as being the institution of God. Let no man do anything connected with the Church without the bishop. Let that be deemed a proper Eucharist, which is [administered] either by the bishop, or by one to whom he has entrusted it. Wherever the bishop shall appear, there let the multitude [of the people] also be; even as, wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church. It is not lawful without the bishop either to baptize or to celebrate a love-feast; but whatsoever he shall approve of, that is also pleasing to God, so that everything that is done may be secure and valid” (“The Epistle

- of Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans,” ch. VIII).
- (7). “It is well to reverence both God and the bishop. He who honours the bishop has been honoured by God; he who does anything without the knowledge of the bishop, does [in reality] serve the devil” (“The Epistle of Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans,” ch. VIII).
 - (8). “Give ye heed to the bishop, that God also may give heed to you. My soul be for theirs that are submissive to the bishop, to the presbyters, and to the deacons, and may my portion be along with them in God!” (“The Epistle of Ignatius to Polycarp,” ch. VI).
 - (9). What does Scripture say on the matter?
 - (a). Bishops ([Tit 1:7](#)), elders ([Tit 1:5](#); [1Pe 5:1](#)), overseers ([Act 20:28](#)), pastors ([Eph 4:11](#); [Act 20:28](#)), and presbyters ([1Ti 4:14](#)) are all the same officials!
 - (b). There was not to be one such official, but a plurality if there were any ([Tit 1:5](#); [Act 14:23](#); [1Pe 5:1](#); [Act 20:28](#); [1Ti 4:14](#); [Jas 5:14](#); [Act 11:29-30](#)).
 - (c). There is only one "chief Shepherd": Jesus Christ ([1Pe 5:4](#)).
 - (10). Regarding the use of Ignatius as an authority on doctrine, Mattox advised, "In recent years it has become more apparent that the statements attributed to Ignatius cannot be taken as the true picture of conditions in the church, but rather represent what he wanted them to be. . . . His desire for martyrdom and his attitude toward the elders of the church has led many to believe that he had a 'neurotic will to power,' and that this explains his statements that elders should be in subjection to their bishops. . . . The other writers of this period all agree that the churches were governed by a plurality of elders and there was no congregation which had a monarchical bishop as Ignatius advocates. . . . Ignatius believed that the church could be protected from heresy and could be unified only by one individual in each

congregation assuming a position of authority. The position would naturally fall to the chairman of the group of elders. . . . The very fact that Ignatius labors at length to bring the 'elders' into submission to the 'bishops' indicates that such a distinction did not exist at the time he wrote but that he was working to bring it about. His writing and thinking, however, was generally accepted later and became the basis for the departure from the New Testament pattern into a succession of bishops" (pp. 59-61).

- (11). Considering that Ignatius wrote around A.D. 106 (McKechnie, p. 71) or A.D. 107 (Freund, p. 917) being martyred around A.D. 110-115 (Guy, p. 301), what did Ignatius' contemporaries say?
- (a). Neither Mathetes written A.D. 130 ("Introductory Note to 'The Epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus,'" ANF, Vol. 1) nor Polycarp who wrote the Philippians in A.D. 108 (Freund, p. 917) nor Barnabas written A.D. 100 ("Introductory Note to 'The Epistle of Barnabas,'" ANF, Vol. 1) nor Papias with fragments dating to A.D. 130 (Freund, p. 918) nor the Shepherd of Hermas written around A.D. 120 (Freund, p. 918) used the term "the bishop" either as Ignatius did or differently, neither is it found in inspired Scripture!
 - (b). The *Didache* written around A.D. 100 or earlier (Freund, p. 917) or even between A.D. 90 and 150 (Mattox, p. 62) admonished, "Therefore appoint for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men who are humble and not avaricious and true and approved, for they too carry out for you the ministry of the prophets and teachers" (Chapter 15, Verse 1).
 - (c). The first non-Ignatius mention this teacher

could find was written by Clement of Alexandria who flourished three-quarters of a century later than Ignatius (Frend, p. 921); in "Who Is the Rich Man that Shall Be Saved," chapter XLII, Clement gave a narrative about John who "went away [from Ephesus after his return from exile-DFC], being invited, to the contiguous territories of the nations, here to appoint bishops"; John "looking to a bishop appointed, and seeing a youth, powerful in body, comely in appearance, and ardent"; then "the presbyter [John-DFC] taking home the youth committed to him, reared, kept, cherished, and finally baptized him"—this is hardly "the bishop" of Ignatius' meaning--young and un-baptized!

(12). What do "scholars" say?

(a). Frend apparently assumes that there were lone church leaders in the first century, saying, "Diotrophes seems to have been a 'diocesan [territorial-DFC] bishop' whose bad manners earned a merited rebuke from his superiors" (p. 127); however, Scripture does not speak of him as any type of bishop, merely a power hungry egomaniac ([3Jo_1:9](#)).

(b). McKechnie indicates the move to hierarchy was a process, for "by A.D. 200 the situation had changed. Christianity had become an institution headed by a three-rank hierarchy of bishops, priests and deacons . . ." (p. 17).

(c). McKechnie identifies the point of change, writing, "The bipartite ministry (bishops/deacons) is close to the pattern of [Tit_1:5-9](#), where there seems to be no distinction between elders/presbyters and

overseers/bishops. There began to be a difference not many decades later: in Ignatius of Antioch, writing about 106, bishops rank above presbyters" (p. 71).

- (d). Guy calls this bishop over elder hierarchal system "[t]he Ignatian concept" (p. 41), indicating "Ignatius's position being innovative and controversial" given that apparently "the church in Rome in the first part of the second century was led by presbyters (plural)"; Guy concluded what Mattox had as well: "Ignatius's solution, his dying legacy, for churches in danger of doctrinal derailment and organizational fragmentation, was a disciplined structure led by the bishop. His innovation was to be the way of the future" (p. 43).

e. Ignatius longed for martyrdom.

- (1). ". . . I am afraid of your love [in desiring to prevent my death-DFC], lest it should do me an injury [keeping me from pleasing God-DFC]" ("The Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans," ch. I).
- (2). "[R]equest in my behalf both inward and outward strength, that I may not only speak, but [truly-not DFC] will; and that I may not merely be called a Christian, but really be found to be one. For if I be truly found [a Christian-not DFC], I may also be called one, and be then deemed faithful, when I shall no longer appear to the world" ("The Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans," ch. III).
- (3). "I write to the Churches, and impress on them all, that I shall willingly die for God, unless ye hinder me. I beseech of you not to show an unseasonable good-will towards me. Suffer me to become food for the wild beasts, through whose instrumentality it will be granted me to attain to God. I am the wheat of God, and let me be ground by the teeth of the wild beasts,

that I may be found the pure bread of Christ. Rather entice the wild beasts, that they may become my tomb, and may leave nothing of my body . . .” (“The Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans,” ch. IV).

- (4). “Let fire and the cross; let the crowds of wild beasts; let tearings, breakings, and dislocations of bones; let cutting off of members; let shatterings of the whole body; and let all the dreadful torments of the devil come upon me: only let me attain to Jesus Christ” (“The Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans,” ch. V).
- (5). “Permit me to be an imitator of the passion of my God” (“The Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans,” ch. VI).
- (6). “And why have I also surrendered myself to death, to fire, to the sword, to the wild beasts? But, [in fact, -Ignatius'] he who is near to the sword is near to God; he that is among the wild beasts is in company with God; provided only he be so in the name of Jesus Christ” (“The Epistle of Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans,” ch. IV).
- (7). Ignatius got that which for which he longed; he was martyred in the persecution instigated by the Roman emperor Trajan, around A.D. 108 (Fox, pp. 7,8).
- (8). Frend commented on "two traditions uniting to produce confessions of the character of Ignatius of Antioch. First, there is the heroic tradition [e.g., [2Ma_7:1-42](#) -DFC] enshrined in the Maccabean Wars whose martyrs believed themselves atoning for Israel's collective sin [e.g., [2Ma_7:32-33](#); [2Ma_7:38](#) -DFC] as well as vindicating the justice of the cause against idolatrous oppression. The second tradition consisted in imitation of the passion of Christ, involving complete communion with him, atonement for sin and hastening his coming. To change the world, however, the Christian like his or her master must be prepared to die to it also [e.g., [Act_21:13](#); c.f., [Rom_8:35-37](#); [2Co_4:10-17](#), [Phi_1:20-21](#);

[Phi_2:17](#); [Col_1:24](#); [2Pe_1:14](#); [Rev_12:11](#) - DFC]" (pp. 133,134).

- a. This study shall show that a number of martyrs between the first and third centuries were of Antioch!
2. The term "Trinity" is not found in Scripture, in fact it was precipitated by Theophilus of Antioch's use of the term "Triad" to represent the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Guy, p. 261); this was around A.D. 180 (Freund, p. 252).
 - a. "Theophilus highlighted the threeness (*triados*) of 'God and his Word and his Wisdom.' . . . [Tertullian] coined the new term 'tri-unitas' [or 'trinitas' (Guy, p. 262); that is, Trinity-DFC] around the end of the second century" (Guy, p.261).
 - b. Regarding the theology of this Theophilus, Freund says that "Theophilus had nothing but indignant hostility for paganism"; however, in a letter to Autolycus (A.D. 190 according to Mattox, p. 72), a pagan, he was "Christian in form and missionary in aim, [but-DFC] Hellenistic-Jewish in content" though he had no use for Greek philosophy or writings (p. 252); incidentally, Mattox says concerning the letter to Autolycus, "Theophilus quoted freely from both the Old and the New Testaments and said they were both 'inspired by one spirit of God'" (p. 73).
 - c. Back to the trinity in light of his theology, especially with reference to the second person of the Godhead, the Word ([Joh_1:1](#)), Freund says that Theophilus "doctrine of the Word is derived from Hellenistic-Jewish sources 'further developed in the light of Stoic and rhetorical refinements [which is a bit ironic since he apparently had no use of Greek philosophy of which Stoicism was one-DFC]. The Word remained as his Counselor, Mind, and Intelligence as 'innate' (*Logos endiathetos*). Before creation, however, it became the Word 'expressed' (*Logos prophorikos*), 'spoken' by God at the moment of creation, and represented by Spirit, Power of the Most High, Light, Voice, and Son. In the last named, it was to be identified with Jesus Christ, preexisting from all ages. **Antioch was developing its own distinctive Christology and biblical exegesis** [Emphasis-DFC], which when expounded by Paul of Samosata eighty years later would be

denounced as 'Jewish' and heretical by its opponents, especially the Alexandrians" (p. 252).

(1). What does the Bible say about the Word?

- (a). "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." ([Joh 1:1](#)).
- (b). "And he *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God." ([Rev 19:13](#)).
- (c). Studying both of these contexts, it is clear that the Word is Jesus Christ (c.f., [Joh 1:14](#); [1Jo 1:1-2](#), [1Jo 5:7](#))!

(2). Who was Paul of Samosata, and what would he have said?

- (a). He was an Antiochan bishop from A.D. 261-272 (Freund, p. 344) who had such authority "by grace of Queen Zenobia of Palmyra" (Freund, p. 338).
- (b). Eusebius says that Paul of Samosata "held a low view of Christ, contrary to the church's teaching, regarding him as an ordinary man" (vii, 27); this resulted in three synods in Antioch, "264, 265 and 268" (McKechie, p. 218), which led to Paul's [who is described by McKechie as "a flamboyant man with a talent for publicity" (p. 218); compare this with Eusebius, 'vii, 30] removal as from his bishopric.
[1]. Ironically, it seems that the removal was due as much as if not more to politics than doctrine.

- (c). Freund says that Paul *effectively* held [as stated regarding Beryllus of Bostra] "that 'the Lord did not pre-exist in an individual existence of his own before the incarnation, nor did he have a divinity of his own but only his Father's indwelling in him'" (p. 385) and [as stated in *Acts of Archelaus*] "that 'Mary bore a man who was not made perfect until the dove descended on

him in baptism" (p. 386).

(d). It is believed that Paul wrote, "Mary did not give birth to the Word; she was not before the ages. And Mary is not older than the Word, but she gave birth to a man like us though better in every way since he was of the Holy Ghost" (Freund, p. 385).

(e). No matter the extenuating circumstances, it is virtually certainly the case that Paul held a Gnostic view in thinking that "Godhead and humanity were ultimately different in constitution" (Freund, p. 386) which would disallow the belief that man even has a spirit and therefore [Gen 1:26](#), [Ecc 12:7](#); [Isa 26:9](#); [Zec 12:1](#); [Mat 10:28](#); [Act 7:59](#) [1Th 5:23](#); [Heb 4:12](#); [Jam 2:26](#); c.f., [Joh 1:1](#), [Joh 1:14](#); [1Jn 1:1-3](#).

(3). What did others of that day say?

(a). First and second century writers Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Athenagoras, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian all overtly state that Jesus Christ is the Word.

(b). While there may be some underlying difference, there is no obvious difference between Theophilus of Antioch's and any of the others' views of the Word (*logos*) or the Godhead who were three but one.

(4). Note this: What the Word is does not depend upon human interpretation (c.f., [2Pe 1:20](#))!

3. In A.D. 205 during a persecution begun by the Roman emperor Severus in A.D. 192 (Fox, p. 12), "Asclepiades, bishop of Antioch, suffered many tortures, but his life was spared" (ibid., p. 13).

a. Freund commented that "most of those confessors of whom we know anything were either catechumens [simplified, ones who were being taught-DFC] or recently baptized converts [redundant-DFC]. . . . while influential bishops, such as . . . Serapion of Antioch . . .

remained unscathed" (p. 294).

(1). Serapion was apparently a conservative and overly powerful bishop who served from 190-209; Frend says that Serapion "enforced an orthodox canon of Scripture on the churches under his rule. He forbade the congregation of Rhossus on the Gulf of Issus to read the apocryphal *Gospel of Peter* at services (p. 284).

(a). There is no defense for Serapion's actively tending toward hierarchy--period!

(b). Regarding the *Gospel of Peter*, let Serapion speak for himself:
"[W]ritings falsely attributed to [Peter and the other apostles-DFC] we reject, knowing that such were not handed down to us. When I visited you, I presumed that all of you adhered to the true faith, so instead of going through the 'gospel' alleged by them to be Peter's, I said: 'If this is the only thing that seems to engender quibbling notions among you, then read it.' . . . [Serapion bases what follows upon the justifying of false doctrines such as Docetism, a form of gnosticism, therein; he continued,- DFC] I have gone through the book and conclude that most of it accords with the genuine teaching of the Savior, but some [spurious-Eusebius] addenda are appended below for your benefit" (Eusebius, vi, 12).

[1]. Serapion not only fought Docetism, but Montanism [which taught an inspiration of its originator Montanus--though inspiration had ended, an imminent second coming--though no such time element was given in Scripture, and an impossibility of a second law of pardon--though the apostate

could be restored] as well
(Eusebius, v, 19).

(2). Serapion was predecessor of the aforementioned
Asclepiades (Eusebius, vi, 11).

4. Of this period Frend wrote, "There were now four (or five) main centers of Christianity--Rome, Carthage, Alexandria, (Antioch), and Ephesus--long-established communities whose bishops dominated their subordinates over very wide areas. These were the leading sees of Christendom and during the third century each, with the possible exception of Ephesus (of which too little is known), came to reflect its individual interpretation of Christianity" (p. 338).

a. Are not many of the religious "centers" of our day guilty of reflecting their "individual interpretations" of Christianity?

(1). The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

(a). "'Sacred Scripture is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit.' 'And [Holy] Tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. It transmits it to the successors of the apostles so that, enlightened by the Spirit of truth, they may faithfully preserve, expound, and spread it abroad by their preaching.' . . . As a result the Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, 'does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence.' . . . The Church accepts and venerates as inspired the 46 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New" (<http://www.usccb.org/catechism/text/pt1sect1chpt2.htm>).

(2). The Lutheran Church (via Dr. Samuel Nafziger).

- (a). "Lutheran churches, including the LCMS, are creedal churches. We do not define ourselves by organizational structure (many Lutheran churches such as the LCMS [Lutheran Church Missouri Synod] are basically congregational, but some can be quite hierarchial in polity). There are both "high-church" and "low-church" Lutherans in terms of patterns and styles of worship. But all Lutherans subscribe to creeds/confessions which state what we understand to be the teachings of the Bible, which alone can determine doctrine" (<http://www.lcms.org/pages/internal.asp?NavID=2219>).
- (b). "Standing firmly in the tradition of the trinitarian and Christological formulations of the 4th and 5th centuries, we believe that sinners are justified (declared right) with the Creator God by grace alone (sola gratia), through faith alone (sola fide), on the basis of Scripture alone (sola scriptura)" (ibid).
- (c). "We believe that Baptism has God's command and promise. Baptism is 'the Word of God in water,' Luther said (Smalcald Articles, Part III, V, 1). We believe that it is precisely in the baptism of infants, who are included in Christ's Great Commission ([Mat_28:19-20](#)), that we can see the full meaning of 'through faith alone.' We believe that those who deny that God gives faith to infants through Baptism, nevertheless in actuality deny salvation by grace alone (perhaps without intending to do so). God's action in Baptism, apart from any human initiative, creates and bestows the gift of faith through which the Christian lays hold of God's grace. We

also believe that the Scriptures teach that the bread and the wine in the Lord's Supper are the true body and blood of Christ" (ibid).

(3). Presbyterian Church in America.

- (a). "We believe that salvation is by God alone as He sovereignly chooses those He will save. We believe His choice is based on His grace, not on any human individual merit, or foreseen faith. . . . We believe that God is gracious and faithful to His people not simply as individuals but as families in successive generations according to His Covenant promises. . . . We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells God's people and gives them the strength and wisdom to trust Christ and follow Him"
(<http://www.pcanet.org/general/beliefs.htm>).

(4). Independent Baptists.

- a. "We do believe in the systematic teaching know as T.U.L.I.P. or the five points of sovereign grace. While this systematic teaching does not go back to the New Testament times all five points do. John Calvin my [sic] have systemized the teaching, however the teaching is that of Christ Himself"
(<http://www.baptistsonline.org/>).

(5). Free Will Baptists.

- a. "Man receives pardon and forgiveness for his sins when he admits to God that he is a sinner, when in godly sorrow he turns from them and trusts in the work of Christ as redemption for his sin. This acceptance of God's great salvation involves belief in Christ's death on the cross as man's substitute and the fact of God's raising Him from the dead as predicted. It is a salvation by grace alone and not of works. . . . Free Will Baptist churches enjoy local church

autonomy (self-governing). The local church is the highest authority in the denomination. Local churches voluntarily organize themselves into quarterly meetings, district, state, and national associations for the purpose of promoting the cause of Christ on the local, state, district, national, and world-wide level"

(<http://www.nafwb.org/believe>).

(6). Southern Baptists.

(a). "Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners.

. . . All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end"

(<http://www.sbc.net/aboutus/basicbeliefs.asp>).

(7). The United Church of God.

(a). "We believe that all who truly repent of their sins in full surrender and willing obedience to God, and who by faith accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, have their sins forgiven by an act of divine grace. Such individuals are justified, pardoned from the penalty of sin, and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, which literally abides within them and supplies the divine love that alone can fulfill the law and produce righteousness. They are baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ, which is the true Church of God. We believe in a true change in life and attitude. Only those who have the indwelling presence of and are being led by the Holy Spirit are Christ's" (<http://www.ucg.org/about/fundamentalbeliefs.htm>).

(b). "We believe that those meats that are

designated 'unclean' by God in
Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 are
not to be eaten" (ibid).

(8). The Church of God in Christ.

(a). "We believe in the Blessed Hope, which is the rapture of the Church of God, which is in Christ at His return. . . . We believe that regeneration by the Holy Ghost is absolutely essential for personal salvation. . . . We believe that the baptism in the Holy Ghost, according to [Act 2:4](#), is given to believers who asks for it. . . . We believe in the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, by whose indwelling, the Christian is enabled to live a Holy and separated life in this present world, Amen" (www.cogic.com/believe.htm).

(b). "The Church of God in Christ believes that miracles occur to convince men that the Bible is God's Word" (www.cogic.com/dctrn.htm).

(9). The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, i.e., the Mormons (via Joseph Smith).

(a). "We believe that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof. . . . We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, namely, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and so forth. . . . We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, and so forth. . . . We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God. . . . We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many

great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. . . . We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion (the New Jerusalem) will be built upon the American continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory. . . . We claim the privilege of worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may" (<http://www.lds.org/library/display/0,4945,106-1-2-1,FF.html>).

(10). The Salvation Army.

(a). "**We believe** [emphasis theirs-DFC] that our first parents were created in a state of innocency, but by their disobedience, they lost their purity and happiness, and that in consequence of their fall, all men have become sinners, totally depraved, and as such are justly exposed to the wrath of God. . . . **We believe** that repentance toward God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and regeneration by the Holy Spirit are necessary to salvation. . . . **We believe** that we are justified by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and that he that believeth hath the witness in himself" (http://www.salvationarmy.org/ihq/www_sa.nsf/vw-dynamic-arrays/4FBD2041D52325CC80256D4E003B6CFA?openDocument).

b. Christianity is not so subjective; it is concrete, being objectively based upon God's--not man's--standard of Truth.

(1). [2Pe 1:20](#), "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation."

- (2). [Joh_17:17](#), "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."
- (3). [Psa_119:151-152](#), "Thou *art* near, O LORD; and all thy commandments *are* truth. Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever."
- c. Furthermore, God's Truth is not difficult to ascertain if one will reason rightly dividing, not deceitfully.
 - (1). [Isa_1:18](#), "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."
 - (2). [2Ti_2:15](#), "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
 - (3). [Psa_19:7](#), "The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple."
 - (4). [2Co_4:2](#), "But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

5. Persecution hit the Antioch church hard in A.D. 251 under the Roman emperor Decius; the following are accounts from Fox:

- a. "Babylas, a Christian of a liberal education, became bishop of Antioch, A.D. 237, on the demise of Zebinus. He acted with inimitable zeal, and governed the Church with admirable prudence during the most tempestuous times.

"The first misfortune that happened to Antioch during his mission, was the siege of it by Sapor, king of Persia; who, having overrun all Syria, took and plundered this city among others, and used the Christian inhabitants with greater severity than the rest, but was soon totally defeated by Gordian.

"After Gordian's death, in the reign of Decius, that emperor came to Antioch, where, having a desire to visit an assembly of Christians, Babylas opposed him, and absolutely refused to let him come in. The emperor dissembled his anger at that time; but soon sending for the bishop, he sharply reproved him for his insolence,

and then ordered him to sacrifice to the pagan deities as an expiation for his offence. This being refused, he was committed to prison, loaded with chains, treated with great severities, and then beheaded, together with three young men who had been his pupils. A.D. 251 ["perhaps on 24 January" (Freund, p. 319)]" (pp. 16,17).

(1). Regarding Babylas, by the time of Julian the Apostate in the mid-300s there was a "shrine [though not in a glorious state-DFC] dedicated to St. Babylas, the bishop martyred under Decius, whose cult Julian's own half brother Gallus had favored so ostentatiously"; Julian visited the shrine while in Antioch around A.D. 362 (Freund, p. 606).

(a). When he arrived in Antioch, the inhabitants received him "with disrespectful mockery, for which he retaliated in his satirical treatise the *Misopogon* (Beard-Hater)" (Grant, p. 41).

(b). Among Julian's remarks on Antioch's Christian society was this: "Every one of you allows his wife to carry everything out of the house to the Galileans" (Freund, p. 562).

[1]. This was hardly an insult, for these women were evidently supplying liberally and happily for the needs of their brethren and sisters--hardly attack-worthy.

[2]. See [1Co_13:3-5](#); [1Co_16:14](#); [Col_3:14](#); [1Ti_1:5](#); [1Ti_4:12](#); [2Ti_2:22](#); [1Pe_3:9](#); [1Pe_4:8](#).

b. "Also forty virgins, at Antioch, after being imprisoned, and scourged, were burnt" (p. 17).

c. "Theodora, a beautiful young lady of Antioch, on refusing to sacrifice to the Roman idols, was condemned to the stews, that her virtue might be sacrificed to the brutality of lust. Didymus, a Christian, disguised himself in the habit of a Roman soldier, went to the house, informed Theodora who he was, and advised her to make her

escape in his clothes. This being effected, and a man found in the brothel instead of a beautiful lady, Didymus was taken before the president, to whom confessing the truth, and owning that he was a Christian the sentence of death was immediately pronounced against him. Theodora, hearing that her deliverer was likely to suffer, came to the judge, threw herself at his feet, and begged that the sentence might fall on her as the guilty person; but, deaf to the cries of the innocent, and insensible to the calls of justice, the inflexible judge condemned both; when they were executed accordingly, being first beheaded, and their bodies afterward burnt" (p. 17).

6. A subsequent persecution, this one under the Roman emperor Diocletian, reached Antioch in A.D. 303.
 - a. A deacon from the church in Caesarea was condemned at Antioch; "he was scourged, put to the rack, his body torn with hooks, his flesh cut with knives, his face scarified, his teeth beaten from their sockets, and his hair plucked up by its roots. Soon after he was ordered to be strangled, November 17, A.D. 303" (Fox, p. 27).
 - b. A man named Cyprian, who was originally from Antioch, was converted and wooed a much admired woman of Antioch, Justina; thence they "were seized upon as Christians, the former was torn with pincers, and the latter chastised; and, after suffering other torments, both were beheaded" (Fox, pp. 27,28).
7. In A.D. 311 the emperor Gaius Galerius Valerius Maximinus, "a bitter persecutor [Microsoft Encarta]," persecuted the church as far away as Antioch; Eusebius recorded, "Lucian, a presbyter at Antioch of the finest, temperate character and adept in theology, was brought to Nicomedia, where the emperor was staying. After defending the faith in the presence of the ruler, he was sent to prison and put to death. So swift and brutal was the assault by Maximin, that hater of anything good, that this persecution seemed to us much worse than the previous" (ix, 6).
 - a. Of Lucian, Eusebius had written, "Of the martyrs at Antioch, the noblest throughout his life was Lucian . . . who proclaimed the kingship of Christ there [at Nicomdeia-DFC] first by an oral defense of the faith and then also by his deeds" (viii, 13).

b. There were other martyrs referred to by Eusebius, though without reference to the date of their persecutions.

- (1). Eusebius recorded, "At Antioch they were roasted in hot gridirons for prolonged torture, not seared to death. Rather than touch the cursed sacrifice [offered to false gods-DFC], some struck their hands directly into the fire. Others, to escape such trials, threw themselves down from the roofs of tall houses before they were caught, regarding death as a prize snatched from the wicked [not unlike the Jews at Masada in A.D. 73-DFC]" (viii, 12).
- (2). Eusebius also gave some other specific examples: a woman and her two virgin daughters who were "recalled to Antioch" chose to throw "themselves into the river that flowed by" while they were midway into the journey, also two other girls of Antioch were actually thrown into the sea to be killed "As if the earth could not stand such perfection" for these girls were "true godly sisters of eminent birth, admirable life, youthful charm, pious conduct, and splendid devotion" (viii, 12).

8. Over the years, Antioch was one of the churches at the center of controversy regarding the humanity/deity of Jesus/the Word--much of which was yet help over from Gnostic origins (for example, see Theophilus and Paul of Samosata generations earlier)--some of the later history regarding Antioch is as follows.

- a. In A.D. 325 there was a council called at Antioch in which Arius was condemned (Grant, p. 41).
 - (1). Arius, who was basically of Alexandria, was associated with the "Heretical teaching that the Son is not co-eternal and co-equal with the Father" (Guy, p. 300).
 - (2). He was opposed, among others, by Athanasius "Bishop of Alexandria and theologian. Champion of 'orthodoxy' against Arianism. Promoted monasticism" (Guy, p. 300).
 - (a). Incidentally, regarding monasticism and Antioch, Grant speaks of Antioch as a "preeminent center of eastern monasticism" (p. 41).

(b). Guy says that John Chrysostom of Antioch, who served as Bishop of Constantinople, promoted monasticism (p. 301).

[1]. This John was given the name Chrysostom due to his persuasive preaching-- *Chrysostom* meant "Golden-mouth" (Guy, p. 301).

(c). Regarding the extremes of monasticism, or particularly asceticism, Frend wrote, "in Syria the association between asceticism and Christianity was longstanding. [At times in the third century asceticism was so pervasive that-DFC] baptism involved sexual abstinence [not unlike the whole population of Shakers in America nor the clergy and monks and nuns of Roman Catholicism-DFC] by the baptized Christian [a tautological wording-DFC]. The 'spiritual sisters' (*subintroductae*) of Antioch that aroused the ire of Eusebius were also symbols of asceticism paralleled by the spiritual virgins in Hermas, with whom one slept 'like sisters.' The institution reached far back into Jewish-Christianity as a reminder of the sexless life that was required of those who would devote themselves wholly to God's service" (p. 424).

[1]. In reality, nowhere are Christians commanded to live "sexless" lives; the only passage even bordering on such was the thought of Paul that due to the present persecution ([1Co 7:26](#), "I suppose therefore this is good for the present distress, . . .") it would basically be wise to not have such earthly ties as that of

marriage and parenthood
([1Co 7:1](#), [1Co 7:6-8](#), "Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: *It is* good for a man not to touch a woman. . . . But I speak this by permission, *and* not of commandment. For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I [unmarried-DFC].").

- [2]. In that very context Paul said, "Nevertheless, *to avoid* fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except *it be* with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency" ([1Co 7:2-5](#)), "But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn" ([1Co 7:9](#)), "But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned.

Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh [due to the aforementioned persecution of [1Co_7:26](#) -DFC]: but I spare you" ([1Co_7:28](#)), and "But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of *her* age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry" ([1Co_7:36](#)).

[3]. "Forbidding to marry" ([1Ti_4:3](#)) was actually a trait of "seducing spirits" preaching "doctrines of devils" ([1Ti_4:1](#)).

[4]. Here is the conclusion of Scripture: "Marriage *is* honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" ([Heb_13:4](#)).

[5]. This is not to say that Antioch was wholly ascetic, wholly monastic, for "Some senior bishops, such as Demetrius of Antioch (251-261) were married with families" (Freund, p. 411).

b. In A.D. 340 (Grant, p. 41) or 341, another council was held in Antioch.

(1). The extent to which Rome vaunted herself is evident in a letter from Julius, who was Bishop of Rome from 337-352, which says, "And why were we not written to about the church of Alexandria in particular? Do you not realize that it has been the custom for word to be sent to us first, that in this way just decisions may be arrived at from this place? If therefore any suspicion was directed against the bishop there, word ought to have been sent to the bishop of this place. But they neglected to inform us, and proceeded at their own pleasure

and on their own authority; and now they wish to obtain our approval of their decisions, though we never condemned him [Athanasius-Bettenson]. This is not in accordance with the constitutions of Paul or the directions of the traditions of the Fathers. I am informing you of the tradition handed down from the blessed Apostle Peter" (Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church*, pp. 86,87).

(a). When did either Peter or Paul authorize matters going through Rome for Rome's input in universal church business?

[1]. Never!

(b). Julian, in the preceding paragraph did make this appropriate statement:

"Dearly beloved, the judgements of the Church are no longer according to the Gospel" (Bettenson, p. 86).

[1]. Apparently, however, he felt that Roman interference was according to the Gospel.

[2]. Does this not remind the reader of [Mat 15:9](#), "But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men"?

8. In A.D. 341, "Constantine's son Constantius II dedicated a magnificent basilica, the Golden Octagon, which his father had begun" (Grant, p. 41).

9. Mention has been made of John Chrysostom ("c350-407" [Guy, p. 301]), a proponent of monasticism, who was quite popular and prominent in the church at Antioch and beyond--rising to bishop of Constantinople from presbyter of Antioch (Frend, p. 642).

a. His popularity, along with his focus on Scripture, is described thus by Frend: "[In the period 330-360-DFC] Good sermons would be cheered. John Chrysostom sometimes preached, and was applauded, three times a week. He was a tireless speaker [sic-DFC] but sometimes he wished that people would give more attention to Scripture reading. . . . To learn about the Bible and the love of God revealed in it was

the object of the sermon" (p. 559).

(1). There is no Scriptural authority for nor justification of such praise due preachers, singers, or otherwise.

(2). There are few Scriptures that specifically address this subject, but a verse and a thought may demonstrate the folly of such.

(a). Paul said--albeit in an admittedly different context, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." ([Gal 6:14](#)).

(b). Can one imagine the priests of the Old Testament urging the congregation to "whoop it up" because a sacrifice had been slaughtered, divided, and burned?

[1]. Yet, that is the reaction sought by many speakers appealing to the emotions and excitement of young people or a television audience who could turn to a sporting event in lieu of such excitement's not being in the televised religious programming.

[2]. There is truth in the idea that if you win people with emotion/excitement, then you must provide even more emotion/excitement to keep them--this is the same idea that motivates stadiums/coliseums to blast loud music during commercial breaks--any lapse of excitement may impact future ticket sales.

b. An important point was brought out by Frend in another regard: Christian women are extremely important in the forming of Christian character.

(1). Frend wrote, "Christian womenfolk in the family played a great part in forming the outlook of

Basil of Caesarea, John Chrysostom, and Ambrose of Milan. Each owed his later, strongly held views to the influence of a mother or sister in the decade 350-360" (p. 562).

- (2). Frend is not always right, but he is spot on here; perhaps he has even understated what women can mean to Christianity.
- (3). Think of the great women of the New Testament especially, including the Marys ([Luk_1:26-38](#); [Luk_10:42](#); [Mar_16:1](#); [Rom_16:6](#)), Martha ([Joh_11:5](#)), Dorcas ([Act_9:36](#)), Lydia ([Act_16:14-15](#)), Priscilla ([Act_18:26](#)), Phebe ([Rom_16:1-2](#)), Lois and Eunice ([2Ti_1:5](#)), and the ladies of Philippi ([Phi_4:3](#)).
 - (a). Is it any wonder that God chose a bride to symbolize the church? ([2Co_11:2](#); [Eph_5:23-25](#)).

c. John Chrysostom in his preaching included politics, "discreetly reminding his hearers of the latent authority of the church even over the emperor himself" (Frend, p. 625).

- (1). The Christian appreciates that God rules in the kingdoms of men ([Dan_4:32](#)) and that God orders government ([Rom_13:1](#)).
- (2). That being said, the church, per se, holds no authoritative sway over government; rather, Christians are subject to ([Tit_3:1](#); [1Pe_2:13-16](#)) respectful to ([1Pe_2:17](#)) and prayerful for those who are *over* them ([1Ti_2:1-2](#)), rendering that required as citizens of human kingdoms ([Mat_22:21](#)).

d. It was during John Chrysostom's period that "some prominent Western Christians were beginning to think of Christendom as divided into three distinct groupings of 'Antioch,' 'Alexandria,' and the 'Apostolic See' [Rome-DFC]" (Frend, p. 642).

1. The move to hierarchy has been seen, and here is the moved toward denominationalism.
2. As an extra-biblical hierarchy is wrong, so is anti-Biblical division, for Paul fitly asked, "Is Christ divided?" ([1Co_1:13](#)).

e. We shall reserve further discussion regarding John Chrysostom for our study of Constantinople.

10. An interesting wish is revealed on the part of the Antiochenes toward Cyril, archbishop of Alexandria, with whom they had interpretive and philosophical differences in favor of their own Nestorius; of their disdain for Cyril, Frend wrote, "His Antiochene opponents had some justification in wishing that a heavy stone would be placed over his grave to prevent any return of his spirit to the earth!" (p. 753).
 - a. Incidentally, Frend records, "Since 421 Cyril had been denouncing Antiochene theology and defining his own position based on what he believed Athanasius had taught" (p. 754).
 - b. Two things come to mind: first, given the ability to define the terms, one can justify virtually anything; second, when did Athanasius, rather than Scripture, become authoritative?
 - c. Even if one has Truth, he must hold it based upon God's terms and Scriptural support!
 - (1). Regarding Cyril this much can be said in a concise manner: Cyril was not angel nor saint being dangerous and rude; furthermore, while his view of the Christ appears to be better than that of the Antiochenes (who held that "the virgin gave birth to the man Jesus, not to the divine Word" [Frend, p. 755]), it opened the door for an undue elevation of Mary.
11. John of Antioch (A.D. 428-441) arose in defense of Cyril, apparently seeing Nestorius as being stubborn, reckoning Antioch as being wrong, and misunderstanding the full significance of Cyril's position (Frend, pp. 756,757).
 - a. Ultimately, John and Antioch sided together against Cyril and Jerusalem in a first Council of Ephesus (Frend, pp. 758,759).
 - b. Both attempted to discredit and weaken the other--Cyril won, "John of Antioch and his supporters were excommunicated" (Frend, p. 761).
12. Frend reports that "From now on [following the Council of Ephesus I] these archbishops of the four great sees--Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch--would be known as patriarchs [fathers, a term still used today {Title for the heads of the Eastern Orthodox Churches (in Istanbul and Alexandria and Moscow and Jerusalem) [WordWeb]}-DFC]" (Frend, p. 761).
13. Time did not erase differences on the subject of the nature of

Jesus.

- a. A doctrine called Monophysitism (mono [one]+phusis [spirit]) which held that Jesus had one nature was the product of Severus, patriarch of Antioch (512-518); being exiled, he became the "'ecumenical leader' of a rival church" (Freund, p. 838).
 - b. Beginning with the martyrdom of John of Tella in A.D. 538, Monophysites became the targets of deadly persecutions (Freund, p. 843).
 - c. In the early 600s, union with Monophysites was sought by those promoting a similar doctrine Monoenergy, which taught that Jesus' miracles "were the work of a single nature activated by a single energy" (Freund, p. 838).
 - (1). Exactly what the implications are is not easily ascertained from the histories; this much is understood: How greatly are we benefitted by the restorers who desired only "to call Bible things by Bible names" and "to speak only where the Bible speaks" and "to remain silent where the Bible is silent."
 - (2). Sadly, "the language of Ashdod" was heard in centuries soon after the church was established ([Neh 13:23-24](#)).
 - (3). When "the language of Ashdod" replaces the language of God's Word; necessarily, the Word of God is relegated to a distant second place.
14. It was around this time that Antioch faded, marked by these two characteristics: she was practically bankrupt, "crippled with debt and strangled by creditors"; and was spiritually bare having had fifty bishops deposed (Freund, p. 839).

E. Miscellany.

1. There was an early Christian from Antioch who apparently became ignominious--or at least his followers did; the ISBE records, "According to Irenaeus (*Adv. Haer.*, i. 26, 3; iii. 10, 7), followed by Hippolytus (*Philos.*, vii. 36), they [the Nicolaitans-DFC] were founded by Nicolaus, the proselyte of Antioch, who was one of the seven chosen to serve at the tables ([Act 6:5](#))."
2. No information was found regarding a congregation of the Lord's church in Antakya, that is, modern Antioch (Grant, p. 39).

III. THE CHURCH AT SELEUCIA.

A. Establishment.

1. Seleucia is only mentioned once in Scripture, in [Act 13:4](#), and is only mentioned as a stop between Antioch and Cyprus on the First Missionary Journey--it was Antioch's seaport according to the ISBE.
2. Accordingly, there is no Biblical reference to the establishment of a congregation there.

B. Early history.

1. No record could be found regarding the early church in Seleucia, but one would expect for there to have been one there in the first century given the proximity of Antioch.

C. Early character.

1. Christians in Seleucia would have had to deal with such worship of Zeus on the nearby Mount Casius that even emperors fancied being at the annual festivals--among them Julian the Apostate in the late 300's (Grant, p. 574).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. ISBE records, "Church synods occasionally met in Seleucia in the early centuries, but it gradually sank into decay, and long before the advent of Islam it had lost all its significance."
2. Grant says, "The foundations of a cruciform Christian Martyr's Shrine (Martyrion) on the later fifth century AD--restored in the sixth--are also visible" (pp. 574, 575).

E. Miscellany.

1. There remains Biblical influence in Seleucia, modern el-Kalusi (Easton), for ISBE speaks of "two strong piers or moles" in the "silted up" harbor "which are locally named after Barnabas and Paul."

IV. THE CHURCH AT SALAMIS.

A. Establishment.

1. While one sees no congregations established in Salamis, which was the first stop on Cyprus during the First Missionary Journey, nonetheless he sees that the Gospel was preached there during that journey ([Act 13:5](#)).
2. "Of work among the Gentiles we hear nothing, nor is any indication given either of the duration of the apostles' visit or of the success of their mission; but it would seem that after a short stay they proceeded 'through the whole island' ([Act 13:6](#) the Revised Version (British and American)) to Paphos. The words seem to imply that they visited all, or at least most, of the towns in which there were Jewish communities" (ISBE).
3. It is probable that Barnabas and John Mark preached again in Salamis ([Act 15:39](#)), though Paul evidently did not.

B. Early history.

1. Grant implies that a congregation was established in Salamis, apparently on the First Missionary Journey; he writes, "A Christian community was founded by St. Paul and Barnabas . . . whose reputed tomb is to be seen in the neighborhood" (p. 553).
2. Barnabas, according to tradition, was martyred in Salamis (ISBE).

C. Early character.

1. There must have been a large population of Jews in Salamis as demonstrated by Salamis' having not one but multiple synagogues (Robertson shows why this necessitates a large population of Jews, "The rule of the rabbis required ten men to constitute a synagogue").
 - a. Fausset takes this as the reason that Paul and Barnabas went to Cyprus, and specifically Salamis, first.
 - b. Fausset also proposes that the large population of Jews was due to Herod the Great's copper mining in Cyprus (c.f., Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, XIV. iv. 5).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. Epiphanius, bishop of Salamis in the late 300's (according to Grant he lived into the 400's [p. 553]; Frend has him dying in A.D. 397 on page 254, but A.D. 404 on page 742--assuming he was not a bishop posthumously), is characterized by Frend as "a former Jew [a farmer-Frend, p. 742] and avid heresy hunter" (p. 254).
 - a. Epiphanius wrote *Panarion*, or *Medicine Chest*, which was "a catalogue of heresies" (Harold O.J. Brown, *Heresies: Heresy and Orthodoxy in the History of*

the Church, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., fourth printing, 2007), p. 96).

- (1). Epiphanius wrote against a Roman doctrine called "adoptionism" which held that Jesus was "mere man" (Brown, p. 96) and which developed into the aforementioned "monarchianism" (Brown, p. 95).
- (2). Epiphanius rightly believed that "Jesus is both God and man by nature--not a deified man or a humanized deity" (Brown, p. 171).
- b. Epiphanius was a friend of Jerome, who translated the Scriptures (appropriately leaving out the Apocrypha which were added after his death) into Latin.
 - (1). This friendship put Epiphanius squarely in the battle for regional supremacy, in favor of Jerusalem (Freund, p. 742), at least temporarily (Freund, p. 751).
- c. This Epiphanius began a "large basilica," another name for a cathedral, in Salamis, but died before it was completed; remains extant today show the location of the nave, the middle of the basilica, and three aisles (Grant, p. 553).

E. Miscellany.

1. Easton indicates that modern Famagusta is ancient Salamis.

V. THE CHURCH AT PAPHOS.

A. Establishment.

1. Paphos, on the opposite side of Cyprus from Salamis, was visited on the First Missionary Journey by "Barnabas and Saul" (note the priority of Barnabas who was Cyprian [[Act_4:36](#)]).
2. It is assumed that the first convert in Paphos was the prudent ruler, a Roman proconsul (Strong), Sergius Paulus ([Act_13:7](#), [Act_13:12](#)).
 - a. Interestingly, the punishing of Elymas the sorcerer ([Act_13:6](#), [Act_13:8-11](#)) played a positive role in the converting of Sergius Paulus ([Act_13:12](#)).

B. Early history.

1. According to tradition, Tychicus was martyred in Paphos (ISBE).

C. Early character.

1. The church in Paphos had to deal with "the worship of Aphrodite or Venus, who was fabled to have here risen from the sea" (Smith; c.f., Homer, *Odyssey*, viii. 362 [ISBE]).
 - a. Among religious devotion to her was temple prostitution (Grant, p. 472), not unlike that in Ephesus, Corinth, and other locations in which the church was forced to face religious sensuality and immorality.
 - b. How difficult is preaching against something as immoral that is readily accepted among the religious authorities of the world!
 - (1). The necessary thing to remember, and the only thing that matters, is that God, not man, is the Standard!
 - (2). [Pro_16:25](#), "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death."
 - (3). [Col_2:6-8](#), "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ"; c.f., [Joh_14:6](#), "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
 - (4). Here the point is summed up: "Cease, my son, to hear the instruction *that causeth* to err from

the words of knowledge" ([Pro_19:27](#)).

2. A shrine to Apollo Hylates was also found outside of New Paphos (Grant, pp. 473,474).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. For a time, Paphos "served as an episcopal see" (Grant, p. 473).

E. Miscellany.

1. Modern Baffa lies where Paphos' "harbor and the chief town" were located; the aforementioned temple was in "Old Paphos" what is modern Kuklia, or Kouklia (ISBE), about ten miles from the harbor-town of "New Paphos" (Smith).

VI. THE CHURCH AT PERGA.

A. Establishment.

1. Perga was similar to Seleucia in her being merely a port-stop on the entrance into Pamphylia on their First Missionary Journey ([Act_13:13-14](#)).
2. Returning through Perga on the same journey, Paul and Barnabas did stop and "preached the word" ([Act_14:25](#)).

B. Early history.

1. Grant mentions that Paul visited Perga twice (p. 483); it is assumed that he meant that the beginning and end of the First Missionary Journey were the two separate occasions; perhaps, however, he meant that Paul returned at a later time--the former is more likely, for Scripture indicates just one missionary journey passing through Perga.
2. Paul did visit locations not named in the book of Acts, so standing dogmatically on his definitely not having returned to Perga is not warranted.

C. Early character.

1. Christians in Perga would have to withstand the influence of "the local Asiatic goddess, who corresponded to Artemis or Diana of the Ephesians, and was locally known as Leto, or the queen of Perga"; the seat of her worship was Perga (ISBE).
2. Testifying to the pantheon of Perga, Grant says that, in the town itself, "water issued from behind a reclining figure of the river-god Cestrus to flow down a channel in the middle of the street" (p. 484).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. "Though the city was never a stronghold of Christianity, it was the bishopric of Western Pamphylia, and several of the early Christians were martyred there" (ISBE).
 - a. Among the martyrs was Nestor who was martyred "during the persecution of Trajanus Decius (251) (Grant, p. 484).

E. Miscellany.

1. This is the location from which John Mark turned back during the First Missionary Journey ([Act_13:13](#)).
2. Either modern Murtana (ISBE) or Eski Kalessi (Easton) is the location of ancient Perga.

VII. THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH OF PISIDIA.

A. Establishment.

1. During the First Missionary Journey, Paul and Barnabas left Perga to go into Pisidia where they preached in Antioch's synagogue.
 - a. In the course of the synagogue service Paul and Barnabas were invited to speak to the congregation ([Act_13:14-15](#)).
 - b. No response is recorded to the strong message of [Act_13:16-41](#); however, after some exhortation, "the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God" ([Act_13:42-44](#)).
 - c. The envious Jews began to oppose Paul causing Paul and Barnabas to change the focus of their preaching ([Act_13:45-46](#)), or more accurately focus upon their mandate: being "a light of the Gentiles" ([Act_13:47](#))--which was, needless to say a reason for Gentile joy ([Act_13:48](#)).
2. Seeing the events leading up to [Act_13:49](#), it is reasonable to assume that the establishment of the church there was associated with this occasion and was the spring-board for area-wide evangelism.

B. Early history.

1. Paul and Barnabas were thrust out of Antioch after the envious Jews "stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas" ([Act_13:50](#)).
 - a. This persecution, and others suffered on the First Missionary Journey is referred to by Paul in [2Ti_3:11](#), "Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of *them* all the Lord delivered me."
 - b. An interesting statement follows the expulsion of Paul and Barnabas: "And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost" ([Act_13:52](#)).
 - (1). Inspiration did not specify where these disciples were located; arguably, they were either from Antioch itself or from the region in general.
 - (2). Persecution does have a way of strengthening those who are persecuted (c.f., [Mat_5:12](#), "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you"; [Act_5:41](#), "And they departed from the

presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.").

2. As Paul and Barnabas returned through Lystra, Lyconium, and Antioch toward the end of their journey, they were "[c]onfirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith" and ordaining "elders in every church" ([Act_14:21-23](#)).
- a. Ironically, Jews from Antioch were part of the opposition faced by Paul and Barnabas in Lystra ([Act_14:19](#)).
3. It is supposed that Antioch was again visited on the Second ([Act_16:6](#)) and Third ([Act_18:22-23](#)) Missionary Journeys.

C. Early character.

1. The Pisidian Antiochans would have had to face a couple of types of religious competition.
- a. Apparently Caesar worship was strong in the city for there was a Temple to Augustus in Antioch (Freund, p. 40); while this was likely Octavian--the first Augustus, subsequent Caesars also bore the title Augustus.
- b. The local Greco-Roman god was Men Askaenos (Freund, p. 40), indicating that mythology had the same influence here as in other cities where the church was found; Freund mentions that this was a "powerful" god who appeared on coins and for whom were games (likely akin to though smaller than the Olympic, Isthmian, or other such) organized.
2. If the book of Galatians was penned to this region of Galatia, then some of the factors motivating Paul to write that book would have been found in Antioch.
- a. Among other things Paul addressed were these "character traits":
- (1). They had quickly abandoned the Truth ([Gal_1:6](#)).
- (2). They had allowed themselves to be bewitched ([Gal_3:1](#)), "fascinate[d] (by false representations)" [Strong].
- (3). They had left the spiritual new law for the carnal old law (see especially, [Gal_3:3](#), [Gal_3:24-29](#)).
- (4). They had to be reminded of the need to "[w]alk in the Spirit" to not "fulfil the lust of the flesh" ([Gal_5:13-17](#), [Gal_5:19-21](#)).
- (5). Apparently there was also a problem with ones being arrogant busy bodies ([Gal_6:3-4](#)).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. Apparently, after the first century the church in Antioch of Pisidia

faded into history.

E. Miscellany.

1. Frend indicates that Antioch, a Roman colony, was also called Colonia Caesarea (p. 39).
2. Modern Yalobatch (Smith) was this Antioch.

VIII. THE CHURCH AT ICONIUM.

A. Establishment.

1. Having been expelled from Antioch, Paul and Barnabas "shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium" ([Act 13:51](#)).
2. As usual, Paul and Barnabas went first to the synagogue where they converted "a great multitude of the Jews and also of the Greeks" ([Act 14:1](#)).

B. Early history.

1. Again the missionaries faced opposition and wisely fled for safety ([Act 14:2-6](#)).
2. Paul and Barnabas again visited Iconium on the return leg of the First Missionary Journey ([Act 14:21-22](#)).
3. Probably Paul returned to Iconium on the Second Missionary Journey and there heard positive testimony concerning Timothy ([Act 16:2](#)).
4. A reasonable inference also puts Paul in Iconium on the Third Missionary Journey as well ([Act 18:23](#)).

C. Early character.

1. Refer to the notes under Antioch of Pisidia regarding the Galatian letter's response to the character of the churches in this region.

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. The church in Iconium retained some influence over time, even holding (a) council(s) (Frend refers specifically to one supporting Firmilian, bishop of Cappadocia, who was known for being at odds with Rome, demonstrating "that the opinions of Rome's bishops were not always in accordance with tradition", p. 356, 342).
2. Frend puts a large number of Christians in Iconium well into the third century and probably beyond (p. 445).

E. Miscellany.

1. Iconium, like Antioch, was also a Roman colony; the ISBE records, "It was Hadrian who raised the city to colonial rank; this is proved by its new title, *Colonia Aelia Hadriana Iconiensium*."
2. According to William M. Ramsay (*The Church in the Roman Empire, Before 1870* [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979], pp. 66, 376), Onesiphorus is connected to Iconium "in the romance of St. Thekla."
 - a. Scripture does not give the home of Onesiphorus, but he is referred to twice in II Timothy ([2Ti 1:16](#); [2Ti 4:19](#)) which was written to a native of the area, Timothy.
 - b. Onesiphorus was in Rome and Ephesus based on

[2Ti_1:17-18](#), but that does not preclude his being from Iconium originally.

3. Modern Konieh marks the spot of ancient Iconium (Easton), which has not yet been the subject of archaeological activity (Gary Young).

IX. THE CHURCH AT LYSTRA.

A. Establishment.

1. Paul and Barnabas, fleeing from the stoning threatened in Iconium, preached the Gospel in Lystra and surrounding areas ([Act_14:6-7](#)).
2. In Lystra Paul healed a cripple who mistook Paul for Mercury (messenger of the Roman gods, equivalent of the Greek Hermes; "Hermes was the god of eloquence (and also of theft), the attendant, messenger and spokesman of the gods" [ISBE]) and Barnabas for Jupiter (chief of the Roman gods, equivalent of the Greek Zeus; "the highest god in the developed Greek pantheon, and Zeus in turn, in accord with the syncretism of the period, was identified with countless deities in the local cults of Asia Minor and elsewhere" [ISBE identifies under "Jupiter" this Mercury and this Jupiter with such local deities; however, under "Mercury" does not so identify them, but references attributes of the gods of the real pantheon]) which identification spread as far as to the very priest of Jupiter who "would have done sacrifice with the people" ([Act_14:8-13](#)).
 - a. Why the confusion here? "The temple of Jupiter was before Lystra, and to him the Lycaonians paid their chief worship" (ISBE); what is the "superstitious" Lycaonian to think when he sees genuine miracles done in this Jupiter-oriented community.
 - b. The ISBE speaks of "Two inscriptions found in the neighborhood of Lystra in 1909 run as follows: (1) 'Kakkan and Maramoas and Iman Licinius priests of Zeus'; (2) 'Toues Macrinus also called Abascantus and Batasis son of Bretasis having made in accordance with a vow at their own expense (a statue of) Hermes Most Great along with a sun-dial dedicated it to Zeus the sun-god.'"
3. Paul and Barnabas denied their deity, very emphatically--ripping their clothes, and used the occasion to preach the Gospel "among the people" ([Act_14:14-17](#)); however, their efforts "scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them" ([Act_14:18](#)).
4. At this point, Antiochan and Iconian Judaizers "persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew *him* out of the city, supposing he had been dead" ([Act_14:19](#)).
 - a. Like the persecution at Antioch and Iconium, this was referred to in [2Ti_3:11](#).
5. The presence of disciples in Lystra ([Act_14:20](#)) implies that there

was a congregation there, but no indication in the text demonstrates whether the church was established at this time or earlier; the amount of time implied in the text suggests that the church had already been established.

B. Early history.

1. When Paul and Barnabas were on the return leg of the journey "[c]onfirming the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith," they ordained elders and continued homeward ([Act 14:21-23](#)).
2. In Lystra on the Second Missionary Journey, Paul enlisted Timothy as an aid ([Act 16:1](#); the population of Jews influenced Paul's decision to have Timothy, whose "father was a Greek," circumcised [[Act 16:3](#)]).
 - a. Regarding Timothy's connection to Paul prior to this event, Easton poses an interesting thought: "Timothy, who was probably born here, was no doubt one of those who were on this occasion witnesses of Paul's persecution and his courage in Lystra."
3. Apparently, on the Third Missionary Journey Paul again travelled to Lystra ([Act 18:23](#)).

C. Early character.

1. Based upon the desire of Paul to circumcise Timothy--undoubtedly so as to not offend the Jews, likely the Judaizers bore a strong influence on the church there in the first century and beyond.
2. Likewise this congregation would have had to face strong pressure from the followers of Zeus, especially given the very public introduction of the missionaries Paul and Barnabas into the city.
3. As with the Iconium, so the letter to the Galatians likely indicates things regarding the church in Lystra.

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. Of things historical beyond Scripture or speculation, nothing could be found regarding Lystra.

E. Miscellany.

1. Lystra, also a Roman colony in the first century, "may be identified with the ruins called *Bin-bir-Kilisseh*, at the base of a conical mountain of volcanic structure, named the *Karadagh*" (Smith).

X. THE CHURCH AT DERBE.

A. Establishment.

1. No indication is given regarding the establishment of the church in Derbe just as none was given of the church in Lystra; the question hinges upon whether the disciples of [Act_14:20](#) were specifically of Lystra or of the region or of the next destination, Derbe.
2. Whether a congregation was already established there or not, Paul and Barnabas "preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many" ([Act_14:21](#)).

B. Early history.

1. Paul again went to Derbe on the Second Missionary Journey ([Act_16:1](#)), although nothing of his efforts at that time is recorded.
2. If ideas regarding the signification of Derbe on the Third Missionary Journey includes this region, then Paul again travelled to Derbe ([Act_18:23](#)).

C. Early character.

1. Perhaps a missionary zeal is exemplified by Gaius of Derbe's accompanying Paul and others into Asia toward the end of the Third Missionary Journey ([Act_20:4](#)).
2. The ISBE indicates that Derbe "was one of those Lycaonian cities honored with the title 'Claudian' by the emperor Claudius; [and-DFC] its coins bear the legend 'Claudio-Derbe'"; therefore, it is possible that this city would ultimately embrace emperor worship for "[t]his implied considerable importance and prosperity as well as strong pro-Roman feeling."
3. As with the Iconium and Lystra, so the letter to the Galatians likely indicates things regarding the church in Derbe.

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. The ISBE mentions that "[a] bishop, Daphnus of Derbe, was present at the Council of Constantinople in 381" at which, Frend says, a "debate on the nature of the Trinity that began c. 200" finally found its end.

E. Miscellany.

1. An interesting modern testament to the work of Paul is found in ISBE which says, "Its territory touched the foothills of Taurus on the South, and the site commands a fine view of the great mountain called *Hadji Baba* or the Pilgrim Father. The Greeks of the district say that the name is a reminiscence of Paul, 'over whose travels' the mountain 'stood as a silent witness.'"
2. Smith says, "L. H. Adams, a missionary, identifies it with the modern *Divle*, a town of about 4500 inhabitants, on the ancient road

between Tarsus and Lystra," while Fausset says that Derbe was "[i]dentified by Hamilton with Dirle, near the roots of Taurus near lake Ak-gol"--likely, these are different forms of the same name.

XI. OTHER CHURCHES IN GALATIA.

A. Establishment.

1. Ancyra, also known as Ankara, was a city in northern Galatia which likely would either have been established by Jewish-Christians returning home after the church was established ([Act 2:5-11](#); note that Pontus was north of Galatia, and Cappadocia east of Galatia, while Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia were each west of Galatia) or by missionaries sent out by churches in these areas or in other parts of Galatia.

a. Michael Grant proposes different: "Ancyra was visited by St. Paul, whose *Epistle to the Galatians* was written to strengthen the faith of its Christian inhabitants. He may have founded a church there (though its first attestation dates from 192)" (p. 37).

2. Of other locations in northern Galatia, to which some theorize Paul wrote the Galatian epistle (e.g., see Grant, quoted above), such as Pessinus and Tavium, nothing regarding the church could be found (other than a mention in Grant, p. 489, of "a sacred grotto and a number of early Christian funerary inscriptions" found on Mount Dindymus overlooking Pessinus); the same was true regarding other cities in southern Galatia, particularly ones the ISBE mentions: "the important cities of Heracleia-Cybistra and Laranda" as ones "Paul must have . . . visited"; likely there were churches in these areas, and their establishment would probably have been the same as with Ancyra for those in the north while the southern cities likely were the result of Paul's efforts ([Act 14:6-7](#)) if not the return of Jewish-Christians from Jerusalem after the establishment of the church.

a. Regarding the southern region, Ramsay recorded, "Lightfoot names Ancyra, Juliopolis, Tavium, and Pessinus as probably the earliest Galatian churches in the this district" and regarding the northern region he wrote about a city called Colonia Germa (p. 82).

(1). That said above regarding the establishing of churches in this region applies here as well.

B. Early history.

1. Nothing is known of the early history of the churches in Galatia other than those in Scripture aside from Ramsay's and Grant's aforementioned statements--the churches in this section are not specifically or individually found anywhere in Scripture.

C. Early character.

1. Only if the letter to the Galatians was written to some of these

churches would the character of them be reasonably sure.

2. It is reasonable to assume that there would be a mixture of Greco-Roman mythology, emperor worship, and Judaizing--likely in that order--affecting the churches of Galatia.

- a. An example is found in Grant, p. 488: "Pessinus owed its fame to its great shrine of the mother goddess (Meter Dindymene) Agdistis (identified with Cybele), whose cult stone was said to have fallen from heaven, so that Greek etymologists fancifully derived the place name from *piptein*, to fall."

3. A pressure which would effect the character later, specifically in Ancyra, would be that exerted by Julian the Apostate's supporters (see Grant below).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. Ancyra.

- a. Ancyra hosted a council in A.D. 314 which was presided over by Antioch's Vitalis (Freund, p. 403).

- (1). The purpose of the council is shown by Guy who wrote, "Later in the third century, however, the church began to appoint presbyters rather than bishops to newly evangelized rural areas. In keeping with this, the Synod of Ancyra in Asia Minor about 315 forbade the ordination of bishops for small villages and prescribed that presbyters should be assigned to them" (p. 100).

- (a). Note three main problems: first, men were presuming to rule where God already had; second, Scripturally there is no distinction between presbyters and bishops; and, third, what had worked for Paul ([Act 14:23](#)) should work elsewhere as well.

- (2). Effects from the council lasted, for "the Canons of Ancyra c. 314-319 specified that deacons could marry after their ordination only if they indicated at the time of their ordination that they would later do so. If they did not give that indication and subsequently married, their ministry was to be terminated" (Guy, pp. 142-143; Guy goes on to say that the East never enforced such other than among bishops while the West centuries later made it "an absolute

blanket rule" for clergy).

- (3). The council also ruled regarding restoration--a ten year process involving being "a 'hearer' for three years, a 'prostrator' for a further six years, and then a further year being present at the Eucharist without participation, prior to full readmission" (Guy, p. 245).
 - (a). Note two things: first, the placing of burdens far greater than those borne in Scriptural restoration; and, second, the elevating of the Eucharist to a separate and higher level--as opposed to being one among five equal acts of worship.
- b. In A.D. 325 in Ancyra, Eusebius "was to appear to exculpate himself from a charge of heresy" (Freund, p. 403).
 - (1). Details are not obvious, but perhaps this was tied to "'false prophecy'" answered by another whose words Eusebius preserved (Eusebius, p. 169).
 - (2). If so, then the "heresy" of Eusebius was in his responding to the false prophecy seen in Ancyra.
 - (3). Paul L. Maier's introduction may give a clue as he speaks of Arianism in connection with Ancyra and speaks of Eusebius' supporting the Council of Nicea (Eusebius, p. 12).
- c. Apparently the Council of Nicea held in A.D. 325 was originally scheduled to be held in Ancyra (Freund, p. 498).
 - (1). Grant says this was moved by "Constantine the Great, who did not want either of the extreme factions [Arian nor anti-Arian] to triumph completely" (p. 37).
- d. Marcellus of Ancyra was an ally of Athanasius of Alexandria who fought Arianism (who thought the Son was "not co-eternal and co-equal with the Father") and promoted monasticism (Guy, p. 300).
- e. A council in Ancyra in A.D. 358 was overseen by Marcellus' supplanter Basil (c. 300-379) in whom "Eastern bishops . . . had found a leader" (Freund, p. 540).
- f. "In 362 the powerful non-Christian community in Ancyra

gave a triumphal welcome to Julian the Apostate when he visited the place" (p. 37).

- g. In A.D. 376 another council was held in Ancyra which exiled "some of the prominent Nicenes"; whether this was over political or doctrinal matters is not indicated (Frend, p. 647).

E. Miscellany.

1. It is interesting how influential Ancyra became while the churches of the missionary journeys waned in their influence; sadly, the Galatians were soon removed from the Gospel ([Gal 1:6](#)), the Ancyrans later.

XII. THE CHURCH AT TROAS.

A. Establishment.

1. Scripture does not address any the founding of any congregations in Troas, though it speaks of Paul's staying there for a week ([Act 20:5-13](#)) and does name two Christians there ([Act 20:9](#); [2Ti 4:13](#)); rather, Troas is pictured as a spring-board to Macedonia, doorway to Europe ([Act 16:8-11](#); [2Co 2:12](#)).
 - a. On the Second Missionary Journey, Paul retraced a portion of the First Missionary Journey's steps ([Act 15:40](#) ~[Act 16:5](#); cf, [Act 15:36](#)), went into Phrygia ([Act 16:6](#)), and then Mysia, but were not allowed by the Holy Spirit to go into Bithynia ([Act 16:7](#)).
 - b. While in Troas, a city of Mysia--and, apparently, Asia as well, Paul received the famed "Macedonian call" ([Act 16:8-9](#)).
 - c. Immediately upon having seen the vision, Paul and his fellow-missionaries (including Luke) made plans to go into Europe and departed Troas ([Act 16:10-11](#)).
2. What is known is this: There was a congregation in Troas by the time Paul passed through on the return from Philippi on the Third Missionary Journey ([Act 20:7](#)).

B. Early history.

1. Troas was the location of Paul's "long preaching" which put Eutychus to sleep, who, sleeping, fell from the third story to his death but was raised by Paul ([Act 20:9-12](#)).
2. It was at Troas that Paul had left his cloak with Carpus ([2Ti 4:13](#)), the language is unclear, but perhaps Carpus was also the holder of the "books" and "parchments"--though Timothy could have had them.
 - a. Fausset tells us that according to Hippolytus, Carpus was "Bishop of Berytus in Thrace subsequently."

C. Early character.

1. Perhaps the willingness of the Christians at Troas to hear the Gospel long preached and Paul's apparent trust in Carpus show something regarding the character of the church there.
 - a. If these examples were characteristic of the church there, then this was a congregation that loved Truth and loved to hear Truth preached.
 - (1). Note the heart problem characteristic of those that perish: "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved" ([2Th 2:10](#)).

- (2). Note the root of the Romans' obedience: "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you" ([Rom 6:17](#)).
- (3). Note the path of the giving of wisdom: "My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, *and* apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, *and* liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as *for* hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God" ([Pro 2:1-5](#)).
- (4). Note the imperative regarding wisdom's preserving of man: "Get wisdom, get understanding: forget *it* not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee" ([Pro 4:5-6](#)).

b. If these examples were characteristic of the church there, then this was a hospitable congregation.

- (1). Note some admonitions to hospitality:
 - (a). [Rom 12:13](#), "Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality."
 - (b). [Heb 13:1-2](#), "Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."
 - (c). [1Pe 4:8-9](#), "And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging."
- (2). Note some examples of hospitality:
 - (a). Phebe, who "hath been a succourer of many" ([Rom 16:1-2](#)).
 - (b). Gaius, whose faithful charity was done "to the brethren, and to strangers" and whose example made its way "before the church" ([3Jo 1:5-6](#)).
- (3). Church leaders ([1Ti 3:2](#); [Tit 1:7-8](#)) and worthy widows ([1Ti 5:9-10](#)) were to be characterized

by their hospitality.

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. "During the reign of Augustus, it was made a Roman *colonia*,"so it can be reasoned that secular Troas was likely favorable to emperor worship (ISBE).
2. The ISBE mentions that "[d]uring Byzantine times Troas was the seat of a bishopric," indicating that it was a relatively important religious city, though nothing else could be found of its religious history.

E. Miscellany.

1. Troas was built in the late part of the fourth century B.C. by Alexander's general Antigonos, but was named after Priam's Troy which had lain about five miles from where Troas was founded.
2. Modern Troas, in ruins, is called "Eski Stamboul i.e., Old Constantinople" (Easton) because there "Constantine meditated" making Troas "the seat of his empire" (Fausset).

XIII. THE CHURCH AT SAMOTHRACIA.

A. Establishment.

1. Samothracia was just a point on Paul's First Missionary Journey ([Act 16:11](#)).
 - a. Scripture sheds no light on Samothracia apart from this one night layover.
2. There are a number of possibilities for the beginning of any congregation on Samothracia--which was actually a small island with a city and port on its northern coast (Fausset).
 - a. One could have been established, though doubtfully, by Paul during the recorded brief visit.
 - b. One could have been established by Jews returning from Jerusalem after Pentecost.
 - c. One could have been established by mission-minded converts from other locations.

B. Early history.

1. It is assumed that at some point the Gospel was preached on Samothracia, but this may be the first location mentioned in the Acts that did not hear the Gospel preached in its simplicity.
2. How many today, even with whom the righteous come into contact, never hear the Gospel preached or are never even given an opportunity!
 - a. This is why it is imperative that every one who fancies himself a Christian be interested in carrying the Gospel to the lost at home and abroad ([Rom 10:13-14](#)).

C. Early character.

1. Barnes tells us that this island was "was an asylum for fugitives and criminals"--as such it might not seem to have been suitable ground for planting a congregation; however, Jesus was a friend of sinners ([Mat 11:19](#)) who came to save the lost ([Luk 19:10](#))--this is why the Word has such a profound effect among those who are incarcerated when those humbly having the mind of Christ ([Php 2:5-7](#)) will conduct prison ministry ([Mat 25:36](#); cf, [Phi 4:10-14](#); [2Ti 1:16-18](#); [Heb 10:34](#), [Heb 13:3](#)).
2. There were other factors too regarding Samothracia, for "this island was famous for the worship of the Cabiri, or chief deities of the Gentiles, particularly Ceres, Proserpina, Pluto, Mercury, and the two brothers Castor and Pollux, Neptune, and all the sea gods; insomuch that it was called 'the holy island' [by Attilius according to a footnote in Gill-DFC], and persons of other nations, and even of the greatest figure, were initiated into the mysteries of the Samothracians, which Pliny [the elder-DFC]

calls the most holy; for speaking of Venus, Potho, and Phaeton, adds, who are worshipped with the most holy ceremonies of Samothracia" (Gill).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. Gill recorded a sad note: "The apostle did not stay to preach the Gospel in this place, nor do we read of its being preached here by him at any other time, or by any other, nor of any church in this place in after ages in ecclesiastical history."

E. Miscellany.

1. Clarke tells us that Samothracia "is now called Samandrachi by the Turks, who are its present masters."

XIV. THE CHURCH AT NEAPOLIS.

A. Establishment.

1. Like Samothracia, Neapolis was just a point on Paul's First Missionary Journey ([Act 16:11](#)).
 - a. The difference is that not even a layover is mentioned regarding Neapolis; this was simply the location of the port at which Paul and his company disembarked.
 - b. That this was Philippi's sea-port implies that it was a part of the travelling in [Act 20:6](#).
2. Likewise as with Samothracia, it is not known if a congregation was even located at Neapolis, much less who would have started such.

B. Early history.

1. No knowledge exists regarding an early congregation in Neapolis.

C. Early character.

1. If there were a church there it would have the disadvantage of being a location of itinerants, who could encourage immorality in the sea-port town; an advantage would be the cities being a location from which the Gospel could easily spread--not only was it a sea-port town, but lay at the head of the well-travelled Egnation Way.

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. Gill wrote, "[T]hough we have no account of the apostles preaching in this place, and of making converts, neither now nor at any other time; yet it appears even in after ages that here was a church in this place: in the 'sixth' century the bishop of it was sent to the fifth Roman synod; and in the 'seventh' century one Andreas was bishop of this place, who was in the sixth synod at Constantinople."

E. Miscellany.

1. Either modern Kavalla (Easton) or Christopolis (Gill) lies on the location of this Neapolis.

XV. THE CHURCH AT PHILIPPI.

A. Establishment.

1. Having briefly touched Samothracia and Neapolis ([Act_16:11](#)), Paul and his fellow-workers made their way into "Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, *and* a colony:" ([Act_16:21](#)).
2. Philippi did not have a significant enough Jewish population to have a synagogue, so Paul "on the sabbath . . . went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made" ([Act_16:13](#)); there Paul met Lydia whom, with her household (which, οἶκος, means "the inmates of a house" not simply family--not justifying infant baptism as some have tried to do with this passage), he converted ([Act_16:14-15](#)).

B. Early history.

1. For many days during their stay at Philippi, Paul and those with him were followed by a "certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination" who continually cried, "These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation"; Paul, tired of her persistence, cast the demon out and thereby brought upon himself and Silas the wrath of the inhabitants and rulers of Philippi who ultimately imprisoned them ([Act_16:16-24](#)).
 - a. An interesting wording is seen in the Greek for "spirit of divination": πνεῦμα πύθωνος ("spirit of python").
 - b. This is a reference to the oracle at Delphi, at times referred to as the Pythian oracle.
 - c. The implication is that the inhabitants of the city saw this girl in the same light as they saw the Delphic oracle.
 - d. Some might use this as an avenue of attacking the validity of Scripture since the Delphic oracle was not possessed but subject to hallucinations brought on by a vapor, was not authentic but misunderstood.
 - (1). Really, this girl was authentic in the same way that the witch at Endor had a moment of authenticity ([1Sa_28:7-20](#)) in a world of fraudulent mystics ([1Sa_28:3](#))--note the apparent surprise of the witch at her success ([1Sa_28:12](#)).
 - (2). Hers was authentic in that the demon was allowed of God to possess the girl as other demons were allowed to possess in that day--to show the power of Christ and genuine miracle workers over the demonic world ([Mat_4:24](#); [Mat_8:16](#), [Mat_8:29](#); [Luk_4:41](#); [Mat_10:1](#);

[Mar_16:17](#); [Act_19:15](#)).

(3). A difference between this woman and the oracle was her specificity ([Act_16:17](#)) as opposed to the oracle's generality.

(a). As an example of the latter, consider

Tisamenos confusion as related by Herodotus in his *History* IX.33

(translated by G.C. Macaulay): ". . .

when Tisamenos was seeking divination at Delphi concerning issue, the Pythian prophetess made answer to him that he should win five of the greatest contests. He accordingly, missing the meaning of the oracle, began to attend to athletic games, supposing that he should win contests of athletics; and he practised for the 'five contests' and came within one fall of winning a victory at the Olympic games, being set to contend with Hieronymos of Andros. The Lacedemonians however perceived that the oracle given to Tisamenos had reference not to athletic but to martial contests, and they endeavoured to persuade Tisamenos by payment of money, and to make him a leader in their wars together with the kings of the race of Heracles."

2. It was during their imprisonment that Paul and Silas were able to convert their jailor and his household having been *released* from their bonds miraculously and yet not having escaped ([Act_16:25-34](#)); Paul and Silas were released the next day ([Act_16:35-39](#)) and having seen the brethren ([Act_16:40](#)), they departed.

C. Early character.

1. The fact that Paul had such opposition in Philippi demonstrates that the Philippians had to rise above some strong pressures; over time, they were proven to be equal to the challenge.

a. Among the ones putting pressure on the church at Philippi were ones who put stock in the Pythians and other such mythical gods and forces (of whom there were enough to provide "much gain" for the exploiters of the demon-possessed girl according to [Act_16:16](#)).

- (1). Grant speaks of extant "remains of temples of Apollo Komaios [associated with the aforementioned Python-DFC] and Artemis [also called Diana and worshipped in Ephesus-DFC] . . . and open air shrines of Artemis Bendis, Cybele [according to WordWeb, "Great nature goddess of ancient Phrygia in Asia Minor; counterpart of Greek Rhea and Roman Ops"-DFC], Bacchus [the god of wine-DFC] and Silvanus [according to e-Sword's Latin to English Dictionary v1.97, Sylvani were "gods (pl.)associated with forest and uncultivated land"-DFC]. A sanctuary of a group of Egyptian gods" also is extant (p. 497).
 - b. Judaizers also would have put pressure on the church ([Php 3:2](#)).
 - c. According to Vincent, "those of Epicurean tendencies" were the ones pressuring the church in [Php 3:18-19](#).
 - d. Polycarp would warn concerning those who were the Docetae (ones holding docetism, "[t]he heretical doctrine (associated with the Gnostics) that Jesus had no human body and his sufferings and death on the cross were apparent rather than real" [WordWeb]) in ch. vii of his letter to Philippi.
 - (1). He wrote, "[F]orsaking the vanity of many, and their false doctrines, let us return to the word which has been handed down to us from the beginning."
2. Paul's epistle reveals some things regarding the virtually sterling character of the church in Philippi.
 - a. Testimony enough to their character is found in the church at Philippi's being Paul's "joy and crown" ([Php 4:1](#)).
 - b. Like the other churches of Macedonia, this one was well known for its sincerity in giving itself and generosity in giving its goods ([Phi 4:18](#); [2Co 8:1-5](#); [2Co 11:9](#)).
 - c. It is not insignificant to note that this congregation was recognized for its Scriptural organization ([Php 1:1](#)).
3. Polycarp, the famed student of John, also wrote an epistle to the church at Philippi (in the early A.D. 100s) which confirms what was already evident from Paul's letter.
 - a. What is most striking is the fact that Polycarp in writing to Philippi would quote or allude to Scripture upwards of seventy times in his relatively short epistle; if their

valuing of Scripture rivaled Polycarp's, then the Philippians truly had a love of and hunger for "book, chapter, and verse" preaching!

1. In chapter xii he wrote, ". . . I trust that ye are well versed in the Sacred Scriptures, and that nothing is hid from you [perhaps this latter clause is along the thought of [Heb_5:12-14](#)]."
- b. Polycarp also spoke of the organization of the church, referring to the elders (presbyters) and deacons.
 - (1). It must be said that Polycarp may have given the deacons too much authority, writing in chapter v about "being subject to the presbyters and deacons"; however, in the same chapter he refers to these men as "servants."
 - (2). Also significant are these two points: first, the elders are spoken of in terms showing there was a plurality; second, there was no room for any authoritative body like elders other than the elders themselves.
- c. Polycarp expressed regarding the love for brethren, especially ones in bonds, at Philippi, saying, "[Y]e have followed the example of true love, and have accompanied, as became you, those who were bound in chains" (ch. i).
- d. Polycarp encouraged the Philippians (ch. xii), "Pray for all the saints. Pray also for kings, and potentates, and princes, and for those that persecute and hate you, and for the enemies of the cross"; if the church could utter that prayer, how great their character *truly* was!
 - (1). [1Ti_2:1-2](#), "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and *for* all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."
 - (2). [Mat_5:43-48](#), "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil

and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others*? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

- (3). If these could, and for that matter were expected to, pray for those who were their rulers, how shameful it is when men today feel that their civil leaders are not worthy of their prayers!

4. There were two notable exceptions to the otherwise sterling character in the church in Philippi.

a. Paul wrote concerning two women who were at odds ([Php 4:2](#)).

b. Polycarp wrote in his epistle with an otherwise Paul-like view of this church being a strong one that he was "greatly grieved for Valens, who was once a presbyter" in Philippi, but who had with his wife had some difficulty with covetousness--or based upon another translation with a lack of chastity ("The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians," ch. xi).

- (1). Polycarp, moved by and mourning over the sin of Valens--whatever it was--wrote, "[B]e ye then moderate in regard to this matter, and 'do not count such as enemies,' ([2Th 3:15](#)) but call them back as suffering and straying members, that ye may save your whole body" (ibid.).

- (2). Regarding a weakness of Polycarp--and perhaps of the church in Philippi--it is notable that Polycarp held the *Apocrypha* in high enough esteem that he quoted from it in his letter (ch. x), writing, "'alms delivers from death'" ([Tob 4:10](#), "Because that alms do deliver from death, and suffereth not to come into darkness"; [Tob 12:9](#), "For alms doth deliver from death, and shall purge away all sin. Those that exercise alms and righteousness shall be filled with life:") which represented a Pharisaic doctrine which would be carried over into the Catholic Church.

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. Very little is known of the church in Philippi beyond the connections

with Paul and Polycarp.

a. One might wonder who men referred to by Polycarp were.

b. In chapter ix, Polycarp wrote of Ignatius, Zosimus, and Rufus--all martyrs.

(1). We are aware of Ignatius, but know nothing of Zosimus nor of Rufus (unless this Rufus were equivalent to Rufus of [Mar_15:21](#) and/or [Rom_16:13](#), which is doubtful because among other reasons the ISBE wrote, "The name, meaning 'red,' 'reddish,' was, however, one of the commonest of slave names").

c. In chapter xiv, Polycarp wrote, "These things I have written to you by Crescens."

(1). It is remotely possible, although commentators virtually universally ignore the possibility, that this is the Crescens of [2Ti_4:10](#) ("For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.").

2. Grant speaks of the Philippic "importance of local Christianity after the empire's conversion by Constantine I the Great"; among that showing its importance were "elaborate and imposing premises" which housed the bishop of Philippi, represented three phases of construction, and housed "four important early churches" which have been identified; also in Philippi have "reliefs bearing numerous Christian symbols" been found (p. 497).

E. Miscellany.

1. In his *Book of Martyrs*, Fox wrote that in A.D. 44

(contemporaneous with the martyrdom of James spoken of in [Act_12:2](#)) a Timon was martyred in Philippi; this is doubtful, at least date-wise, for that would put Christians in Philippi prior to the Macedonian call which occurred over half a decade later.

XVI. THE CHURCH AT AMPHIPOLIS.

A. Establishment.

1. Scripture contains no indication that the church ever existed in Amphipolis; Amphipolis was simply a waypoint of Paul as he journeyed to where a synagogue was located ([Act 17:1](#), "Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:").
 - a. Regarding the transit of Paul on his way to Thessalonica, Clarke wrote, "It does not appear that St. Paul stopped at any of these cities: and they are only mentioned by the historian as places through which the apostles passed on their way to Thessalonica. It is very likely that in these cities there were no Jews; and that might have been the reason why the apostles did not preach the Gospel there, for we find them almost constantly beginning with the Jews; and the Hellenist Jews, living among the Gentiles, became the medium through which the Gospel of Christ was conveyed to the heathen world."
 - b. Henry said regarding the itinerary of Paul, "[D]oubtless he was under divine direction, and was told by the Spirit (who, as the wind, bloweth where he listeth) what places he should pass through, and what he should rest in."
 - (1). However, Henry went on to say, "[W]e may suppose though he is said only to *pass through* these cities, yet that he staid so long in them as to publish the gospel there, and to prepare the way for the entrance of other ministers among them, whom he would afterwards send."
 - (2). Calvin says that either Paul did not stop in Amphipolis or Apollonia, or he stopped there but did not have noteworthy success: "We know not why Paul attempted nothing at Amphipolis and Appollonia, which were, notwithstanding, famous cities, as appeareth by Pliny; save only because he followed the Spirit of God as his guide; and took occasion by the present matter, as occasion he did also essay to do some good there, but because it was without any good success, therefore Luke passeth over it."

B. Early history.

1. There is no way to know of there was a church in Amphipolis in the first century.

C. Early character.

1. A congregation in Amphipolis may have faced worship of the gods of mythology as evidenced by the circulation of coins bearing Apollo's image much earlier in the city's history and by the "[r]emains of a temple of Clio ("the Muse of history" [WordWeb])" (Grant, p. 32,33).
2. Shear speculation would say that if there were a church in Amphipolis it may have existed in an environment characterized by philosophy, for this city had been established as a colony by Athens--though that was half a millenium earlier (Grant, p. 32).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. Gill wrote, "The apostle only passed through this place; it does not appear that he at all preached in it, or at any other time, nor do we read of it in ecclesiastical history."
2. Grant tells of the findings of "Christian basilicas" and "[a]n early hexagonal church" (p. 33).

E. Miscellany.

1. Gill connects Amphipolis with modern Empoli; while Fausset and Smith connect it with "the village Neokhorio" or Neochori (ISBE).

XVII. THE CHURCH AT APOLLONIA.

A. Establishment.

1. Like Amphipolis, Apollonia was simply a waypoint of Paul as he journeyed to apparently more fertile pastures ([Act 17:1](#), "Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:").
2. Matthew Henry says that among the locations "round about unto Illyricum" that Paul preached ([Rom 15:19](#)) was likely this location implying that Paul stopped and preached here and perhaps that a church was established here.
 - a. Robertson disagreed, saying that this was "[n]ot the famous Apollonia in Illyria."

B. Early history.

1. No record of an early congregation in Apollonia exists in Acts, but there may have been one, for Gill passed on that "Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, is said to be bishop of Apollonia. . . . but whether the same place with this, or whether fact, is not certain."

C. Early character.

1. If there were a congregation in Apollonia, she would likely have faced much pressure from worshippers of the Greco-Roman gods as is evidenced by the town's bearing the name of Apollo.

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. It is not known whether a congregation *ever* existed in Apollonia.

E. Miscellany.

1. ISBE suggests--perhaps regarding only the name and not the location, "The name seems to have survived in the modern Pollina"; Gill connects the city itself to modern Ceres.
2. As with some of the other locations considered, is it not sad that there were locations, even in the first century, that had little if any exposure to the Truth?

XVIII. THE CHURCH AT THESSALONICA.

A. Establishment.

1. In [Act 17:1](#) Paul and Silas, continuing to answer the "Macedonian Call" ([Act 16:9-12](#)) received on the Second Missionary Journey (which began in [Act 15:36-40](#)) and having established under duress a congregation in Philippi ([Act 16:13-40](#)), moved southwest into the principle Macedonian town of Thessalonica.
2. There was no congregation in Thessalonica at the time, for Paul in the synagogue "three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead" and that Jesus was the Christ ([Act 17:2-3](#)).
3. The reception of this Gospel message was mixed; some believed--especially among those who were not Jewish but were in the synagogue ([Act 17:4](#)), while others disbelieved--specifically Jews who raised a dangerous ruckus ([Act 17:5-9](#)) which expedited Paul and Silas' fleeing "by night unto Berea" ([Act 17:10](#)).

B. Early history.

1. Shortly after the events in Thessalonica, the envious Jews followed Paul and his fellow-missionaries into Berea ([Act 17:13](#)), again causing Paul to move further in this Second Missionary Journey while Silas and Timothy remained in Berea ([Act 17:14](#)).
2. The church at Thessalonica faced persecutions in the first century ([2Th 1:4-5](#)).
3. The ISBE says regarding later trips of Paul to Thessalonica, "Almost certainly Paul returned there on his 3rd missionary journey, both on his way to Greece ([Act 20:1](#)) and again while he was going thence to Jerusalem ([Act 20:3](#)) . . . Probably Paul was again in Thessalonica after his first imprisonment. . . . and [1Ti 1:3](#) records a subsequent journey to Macedonia, in the course of which the apostle may well have made a longer or shorter stay at Thessalonica."
4. When Demas forsook Paul, he went to Thessalonica ([2Ti 4:10](#))--some therefore feel Demas may have been a Thessalonian.

C. Early character.

1. Like other congregations of her day, the church at Thessalonica faced the likely perpetual hostility of the aforementioned unbelieving Jews and the influence of Greco-Roman mythology (to the southwest, within about sixty miles, stood Mount Olympus)--in fact Paul said that in obeying Christ, the Thessalonians "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God" ([1Th 1:9](#)).

- a. Albert Barnes, speaking of Mount Olympus' influence, wrote, "It adored many gods, but particularly Jupiter, as the father of Hercules, the alleged founder of its ancient royal family."
 - b. The church faced another influence which was likely especially strong "[u]nder Trajanus Decius (249-251) [when-DFC] it became a Roman colony, striking coins that display four temples connected with the imperial cult" (Grant, p. 649).
2. This church also faced an exceptional influence due to the city's gross immorality; Barnes quoting Lucian wrote, "The females, particularly, could claim little credit on the score of modest, retiring demeanour; for this virtue was in so low estimation in the city, that the place was selected as the scene of the wanton fancies of the satirist."
3. Their character is shown in Paul's epistles addressed to them ([1Th 1:1](#); [2Th 1:1](#)).
 - a. This congregation shined her proverbial Christian light ([Mat 5:13-16](#)) even in the face of affliction ([1Th 1:6](#))--undoubtedly including persecution ([1Th 2:14](#); [Mat 5:10-12](#)), as Paul wrote, "So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia" ([1Th 1:7](#)).
 - b. The Thessalonian congregation was likewise remarkable due to her love that was shown toward all of the Macedonian Christians ([1Th 4:9-10](#)).
 - c. Apparently, the Thessalonians did have some difficulty recognizing what death meant for the Christian as contrasted with what death meant for the non-Christian ([1Th 4:13-18](#)).
 - d. While not perfect, without a doubt this congregation was one that was faithful, for Paul was "bound to give thanks alway to God for . . . [these] brethren beloved of the Lord" ([2Th 2:13](#)) whom Paul would have "stand fast, and hold the traditions" which originated with God ([2Th 2:15](#)) and to be comforted and to be stablished "in every good word and work" ([2Th 2:17](#)).
 - e. Evidently, some of the Thessalonians were putting their lives in "cruise control" thinking that Jesus' was imminently to return ([2Th 2:1-2](#); [2Th 3:6-12](#); cf [2Th 3:4-5](#)) having misconstrued what Paul had written ([1Th 4:15](#), [1Th 4:17](#); [1Th 5:6](#)).
4. As with Gaius of Derbe's accompanying Paul, perhaps a missionary

zeal is exemplified by "the Thessalonians, Aristarchus (who likewise accompanied Paul on the Journey to Rome [[Act 27:](#)]) and Secundus," who likewise went into Asia with Paul toward the end of the Third Missionary Journey ([Act 20:4](#)).

- a. Is not such a spirit evidenced by Paul's saying, "For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing" ([1Th 1:8](#)).
- b. Thessalonica was a fitting place for mission efforts to originate, for she lay on the Thermaic Gulf as its chief port and on the Egnation Way as "the chief station on the great Roman road called the *Via Egnatia*, which connected Rome with the whole region to the north of the Aegean Sea" (Smith).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. Under the emperor Galerius in the early 300s, a man named Demetrius was martyred; today a basilica dedicated to him years ago remains the largest church in Greece (Grant, p. 651).
2. In 324, the emperor Constantine exiled a rival, Licinius, to Thessalonica only to have him "executed on a charge of rebellion" the next year (Maier in Eusebius, p. 307).
3. An interesting episode occurred in the late 300s which demonstrates the power of bishops; Grant speaks of Theodosius I the Great who from Thessalonica fought the Germans and who increased Thessalonica's position as an "important ecclesiastical vicariate" and who issued an edict attacking "pagans and supporters of the Arian Church"; but who, after one of his military commanders had been lynched by Thessalonians due to his inability to control his troops ultimately responded by massacring "between seven and fifteen thousand" inhabitants of Thessalonica at a supposed "special performance in the hippodrome," could be and "was compelled to do penance by St. Ambrose, Bishop of Mediolanum (Milan)" (p. 650; c.f., Frend, pp. 624-626).
4. Note again ISBE as the subsequent days of the church in Thessalonica are summarized: "For centuries the city remained one of the chief strongholds of Christianity, and it won for itself the title of "the Orthodox City," not only by the tenacity and vigor of its resistance to the successive attacks of various barbarous races, but also by being largely responsible for their conversion to Christianity."
5. Following the Third Ecumenical Council of Ephesus' recognition of

the "Virgin Mary's" being *Theotokos* ("the Bearer of God" [Frend, p. 635]--note the use of the capitals representing deity; that is, meaning Mary was not just Jesus' mother, but was herself Divine) a basilica in Thessalonica, the *Akheiropoiotos*, was dedicated to her (Grant, p. 651).

a. Note the elevation of Mary, an elevation not supported by Scripture; in fact, were she Divine, how would one explain Jesus' saying, "Who is my mother? . . . Behold [pointing toward His disciples-DFC] my mother . . . !" ([Mat 12:47-50](#))--she was no God; and at this point she apparently was not even among those who were doing the will of God.

6. Regarding Thessalonica's later history and "Christianity" Fausset wrote, "It was taken by the Saracens in 904 A.D., by the Crusaders in 1185 A.D., and by the Turks in 1430."

E. Miscellany.

1. Today Saloniki, or Salonica, marks the spot of ancient Thessalonica.
2. Thessalonica retains evidence of her varied religious past, for "The city is rich in examples of Byzantine ecclesiastical architecture and art, and possesses, in addition to a large number of mosques, 12 churches and 25 synagogues" (ISBE; Grant describes some of these buildings, pp. 650-651).

XIX. THE CHURCH AT BEREIA.

A. Establishment.

1. Leaving Thessalonica by night, Paul and Silas went to Berea, where there was a synagogue ([Act 17:10](#)).
2. The Gospel met with good success in Berea where many of the Jews "believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few" ([Act 17:12](#)).
3. Shortly after the Gospel was preached in Berea, the Thessalonian Jews found out and, coming to Berea, "stirred up the people" ([Act 17:13](#)).
4. Paul left Berea immediately ([Act 17:14](#)), while Silas and Timothy followed soon after ([Act 17:15](#)); evidently these departings were accomplished covertly.

B. Early history.

1. The only other mention in Scripture of Berea is regarding one of Paul's co-laborers, Sopater, who was from Berea ([Act 20:4](#)).
 - a. Reasoning like the Barnes, Clarke, Fausset, and the ISBE, Easton says that this was "probably the same as Sosipater, a kinsman of Paul ([Rom 16:21](#))."
 - b. In the American Standard Version of [Act 20:4](#), one reads "Sopater of Beroea, *the son* of Pyrrhus"; however, who Pyrrhus was or whether this is even an accurate translation is not known although the latter appears likely.
 - (1). If the former is the case, then Pyrrhus may also have been one of the brethren from Berea.
 - (a). Gill says regarding Pyrrhus, "He is reckoned among the seventy disciples, and is said to be bishop of Iconium."
 - (2). Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown support the translation and include regarding the mention of Sopater's father's name, "Some think this mention of his father was to distinguish him from Sosipater (the same name in fuller form), mentioned in [Rom 16:21](#). But that they were the same person seems more probable."

C. Early character.

1. The only mention of the character of the church in Berea in Scripture is a reference to their nobility ([Act 17:11](#)); actually this is a reference to the Jews of Berea as opposed to the Jews of Thessalonica--note that the antecedent of "these" is "Jews" of [Act 17:10](#).
 - a. "Noble" was an odd word for Luke to use, for it ([εὐγένης](#),

yoo-jeh-nayce) means "*well born*, that is, (literally) *high* in rank, or (figuratively) *generous*: - more noble, nobleman."

(1). Thayer actually defines this word as indicating "noble minded."

(2). This is one of only three uses of this word in Scripture.

(a). In [Luk 19:12](#) it is used of a nobleman who parabolically represented God.

(b). In [1Co 1:26](#) it is a reference to social status, "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*."

b. Luke was not describing their state *socially*, but was using this term to show that these were of a higher rank *spiritually* as he explained in defining his own term: "in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."

(1). The use of this particular word may have been employed due to the presence in Berea, even in the church there, "of honourable [[εὐσχημων](#), *yoo-skay-mohn*, that is, "*well formed*, that is, (figuratively) *decorous*, *noble* (in rank): - comely, honourable"-Strong] women which were Greeks" ([Act 17:12](#)).

c. True nobility is not found in who one's physical father might be, but in whether he is a child of the spiritual Father.

(1). Jesus motivated those present for His Sermon on the Mount to love, do good to, and pray for their enemies, saying, "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. . . . Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" ([Mat 5:45](#), [Mat 5:48](#)).

(2). [Mat 5:9](#), "Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."

(3). [Mat 5:16](#), "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

- (4). [Mat_6:9](#), "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."
- (5). [Mat_23:9](#), "And call no *man* your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven."
- (6). [Eph_5:1-2](#), "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour."
- (7). [Phi_2:15-16](#), "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."
- (8). [1Pe_1:14-16](#), "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."

d. What Christians today can gain from the Bereans is this: Be interested in God's Word; moreover, become so familiar with it that you can tell when it is being ignored ([Gal_1:8-9](#)), abused ([Hab_1:4](#); [2Co_4:2](#)), misrepresented ([Mat_15:9](#)), misquoted ([Gen_3:3-4](#)), or twisted ([Psa_56:5](#); [2Pe_3:16](#))!

- (1). [2Ti_2:15](#), "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
- (2). [1Pe_3:15](#), "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:"
- (3). [Isa_8:20](#), "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them."
- (4). [Joh_5:39](#), "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."

2. One might feel that the church in Berea had a missionary zeal due to Paul's being accompanied into Asia by, among others, the aforementioned "Sopater of Berea" ([Act 20:4](#)) on his Third Missionary Journey.
 3. Obstacles facing the church in Berea included opposition from Thessalonica following Paul in Berea ([Act 17:13](#)).
- D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.
1. The ISBE says that Onesimus is traditionally believed to have been "the first bishop of the church."
 2. The ISBE gives a bit of information regarding the church in Berea in later days: "[Berea-DFC] early became a bishopric under the metropolitan of Thessalonica and was itself made a metropolis by Andronicus II (1283-1328)."
- E. Miscellany.
1. Berea is equated with modern Verria or Kara-verria (Fausset, et al.).

XX. THE CHURCH AT ATHENS.

A. Establishment.

1. Paul arrived in Athens before Silas and Timothy, but he did not wait on them in order to begin working, for "his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry" ([Act 17:15-16](#)); "[T]herefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him" ([Act 17:17](#)) which aroused the attention of "certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks" ([Act 17:18](#)) who carried Paul to the Areopagus ([Act 17:19](#)), i.e., Mars' Hill ([Act 17:22](#)).
2. There Paul preached a notable sermon ([Act 17:22-31](#)) with mixed response ([Act 17:32-34](#)).

B. Early history.

1. Timothy and Silas ultimately met up with Paul at Corinth ([Act 18:5](#)) after he sent Timothy to Thessalonica ([1Th 3:1-2](#)); it is assumed that Silas remained in Berea, which was in southwestern Macedonia.
2. Shortly after his arrival, Paul left Athens for Corinth ([Act 18:1](#)).

C. Early character.

1. What would seem to have posed the greatest threat to the early church in Athens is the preponderance of human philosophy, specifically, that of the Epicureans and Stoics whose founders, Epicurus and Zeno, respectively, in the third century B.C. "established their schools in the city" (Grant, p. 83).
 - a. Simply, epicureanism is a philosophy which elevates the receiving of pleasure as the highest good.
 - (1). Easton recorded, "This philosophy was a system of atheism, and taught men to seek as their highest aim a pleasant and smooth life."
 - (2). Regarding the attraction of epicureanism, Smith wrote, "True pleasure and not absolute truth was the end at which he aimed; experience and not reason was the test on which he relied. It is obvious that a system thus formed would degenerate by a natural descent into mere materialism; and in this form, Epicurism was the popular philosophy at the beginning of the Christian era."
 - b. Stoicism is the antithesis of epicureanism, for it is elevates indifference, both pleasurable and otherwise.
 - (1). Regarding the Stoics' reception of Paul, the ISBE records, "[I]t is no improbable inference that the

Epicureans mocked, while the Stoics desired to hear more. For they would find much in the apostle's teaching that harmonized with their own views. Paul's quotation from the classics in his Athenian speech was from the Stoic poet, Aratus of Soli in Cilicia: 'For we are also his offspring.' His doctrine of creation, of divine immanence, of the spirituality and fatherhood of God, would be familiar and acceptable to them. His preaching of Christ would not have been unwelcome to them, who were seeking for the ideal wise man."

- (2). Ironically, one of the greatest haters of Christianity and persecutors of the church was the Stoic emperor Marcus Aurelius.
 - (3). Smith made this interesting observation: "The ethical system of the Stoics has been commonly supposed to have a close connection with Christian morality; but the morality of stoicism is essentially based on pride, that of Christianity is based on humility; the one upholds individual independence, the other upholds absolute faith in another . . ."
2. Paul's observation regarding the "devotions" and "superstition" of the Athenians ([Act_17:22-23](#)) indicates that the church would be threatened by those favoring a Greco-Roman pantheon, especially Athena Parthenos (a.k.a. Minerva Promachus [Fausset]) meaning Athena "the virgin," Zeus (a.k.a. Jupiter), Ares (a.k.a. Mars), Dionysus (a.k.a. Bacchus), Nike, et al.
 - a. Regarding the profusion of such mythology, Easton tell us, "It was a sarcastic saying of the Roman satirist that it was 'easier to find a god at Athens than a man.'"
 - b. Hero worship, or at least veneration, apparently was also practiced in Athens for there was a temple to Theseus (Fausset), a former Athenian king who "killed Procrustes and the Minotaur and defeated the Amazons and united Attica" (WordWeb).
 3. Regardless of their philosophical or religious backgrounds, many would simply listen, never concerning themselves enough to obey, only to "either to tell, or to hear some new thing" ([Act_17:21](#)).
- D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.
1. Like others, Fausset says, "Dionysius the Areopagite convert of Paul

was, according to tradition, the first bishop of an Athenian church" (Dionysius and Damaris are the only named converts from Athens [[Act 17:34](#)]).

a. The ISBE expounds on the traditional options thus:

"According to one account he was the first bishop of the church at Athens; according to another he suffered martyrdom in that city under Domitian. We are even told that he migrated to Rome and was sent to Paris, where he was beheaded on Montmartre (Mount of the Martyr)."

(1). Eusebius holds that Dionysius "became the first Bishop of Athens, according to another Dionysius, pastor of the parish in Corinth" (3.4, p. 82).

b. Incidentally, Easton says that "Some have supposed that she may have been the wife of Dionysius the Areopagite," though the ISBE says that such is "probably in error" and that "[t]he singling out of her name with that of Dionysius may indicate some personal or social distinction."

(1). Smith says that the former was a theory of John Chrysostom.

2. Fox wrote that the emperor Trajan who began persecuting the church in A.D. 108 was succeeded by Adrian under whom, "Many other similar cruelties and rigors were exercised against the Christians, until Quadratus, bishop of Athens, made a learned apology in their favor before the emperor, who happened to be there and Aristides, a philosopher of the same city, wrote an elegant epistle, which caused Adrian to relax in his severities, and relent in their favor"--Fox does not supply a date, but Adrian died in A.D. 138.

3. Eusebius reported that Origen "[d]uring a visit to Athens, . . . finished the *Commentary on Ezekiel*, as well as five books on the *Song of Songs*" (6.32, p. 210).

a. It is not surprising that Origen should have been found in Athens, for Origen believed "that 'true religion was impossible to one who did not philosophise'" (Freund, p. 312).

(1). It is appropriate to note at this point that human philosophy has no place as foundation for Christianity ([1Co 1:19-31](#); [1Co 2:1-7](#); [1Co 3:18-19](#); [2Co 1:12](#))!

b. Tertullian, around the same time in the third century or a hair

earlier, held the opposite view, for "if he took a large part of his pagan intellectual inheritance with him into Christianity, he did so not to build bridges, but to turn that heritage against its adherents, and to make more effective and more telling his defense of the Christian sect" (Freund, p. 349).

E. Miscellany.

1. Athens remains Athens to this day.

XXI. THE CHURCH AT CORINTH.

A. Establishment.

1. On his Second Missionary Journey, Paul went to Corinth after he left Athens ([Act 18:1](#)).
2. There Paul met Aquila and Priscilla who had been among the Jews exiled from Rome by Claudius Caesar ([Act 18:2](#)) and with whom he would abide as one practicing the same vocation: Tent-making ([Act 18:3](#)).

a. Concerning that exile Robertson wrote, "This was about a.d. 49, done, Suetonius says (*Claudius* C. 25), because 'the Jews were in a state of constant tumult at the instigation of one Chrestus' (probably among the Jews about Christ so pronounced). At any rate Jews were unpopular in Rome for Tiberius had deported 4,000 to Sardinia. There were 20,000 Jews in Rome. Probably mainly those implicated in the riots actually left."

(1). The date is disputable, for possibilities range from A.D. 49 to A.D. 54; see ISBE's suggestion of A.D. 50 or Gill's suggestions of A.D. 51 or A.D. 54 or Fausset's A.D. 50-52 or Smith's not even venturing a guess--for reference sake, it should be known that Claudius ruled A.D. 41-54.

b. Johnson more plainly implied that this Chrestus was Christ; he wrote, "The Roman historian Suetonius, who lived about fifty years later, alludes to this decree, but states that the Jews made disturbances at the instigation of one *Chrestus*, a form the ancients often used for spelling *Christus*; a mistake of the historian, showing that they did not comprehend the spiritual nature of Christ's reign."

(1). Though Clarke admitted this probably was Jesus, he could not personally justify that idea, arguing, "Who this Chrestus was we cannot tell; probably Suetonius means Christ; but this I confess does not appear to me likely. There might have been a Jew of the name of Chrestus, who had made some disturbances, and, in consequence, Claudius thought proper to banish all Jews from the city. But how could he intend Christ, who was never at Rome? nor did any one ever personate him in that city; and it is evident he could not refer to any spiritual

influence exerted by Christ on the minds of the people. Indeed he speaks of Chrestus as being the person who was the cause of the disturbances. It is no fictitious name, no name of an absent person, nor of a sect; but of one who was well known by the disturbances which he occasioned, and for which it is likely he suffered, and those of his nation were expelled."

- c. John Calvin, regarding the Jews in general being exiled, explained that "they were expelled through hatred of the name of Christ, and so calamity might have more provoked and angered a great part, because they were wrongfully accused for that religion which they did detest."
 - d. Perhaps this was due to Christ, for some of Rome had been present at Pentecost ([Act 2:5](#), [Act 2:10](#)) and doubtless returned there with the Gospel--technically, these would have been the first to preach the Gospel on European soil, though it is often taken for granted that such followed the Macedonian Call of [Act 16:9-10](#).
 - e. Gill said that "others say the reason [for the Jews' exile from Rome-DFC] was, that the Jews had contracted an acquaintance with Agrippina, the wife of Claudius, and had drawn her into Judaism."
3. As was his norm, Paul "reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks" ([Act 18:4-5](#)).
4. Generally, the Jews of Corinth rejected Paul's message, so Paul "shook *his* raiment, and said unto them, Your blood *be* upon your own heads; I *am* clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles" ([Act 18:6](#)).
- a. This calls to mind what happened in Antioch of Pisidia: "But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying*, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." ([Act 13:45-47](#)).
 - b. Their blood being upon their own heads reminds us of [Mat 27:25](#) in a spiritual sense; in the same way that the

physical sufferings of the Jews, especially in this past century with its Holocaust, reminds us of this in a physical sense--the Jews asked for what they have received though it be extreme and inhumane for the cold-blooded ([Mat_27:4](#); [Mat_27:24](#); [Joh_19:4](#)), envy induced ([Mat_27:18](#)) murder of Jesus was equally so!

- (1). Consider this political side note: How terrible it is that a nation should be so influenced by a desire to return the Jews to their homeland to be God's people once again that it makes such premillennial, Zionist dogma national policy!
- (2). Why would any nation want to elevate a people whom God abandoned!

c. Paul's shaking his raiment is an odd mental picture in this day, but Robertson describes the picture thus: "Vivid and dramatic picture here like that in [Neh_5:13](#) ["Also I shook my lap, and said, So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labour, that performeth not this promise, even thus be he shaken out, and emptied. And all the congregation said, Amen, and praised the LORD. And the people did according to this promise."-DFC], 'undoubtedly a very exasperating gesture.'"

- (1). Clarke wrote, "St. Paul's act on this occasion seems to have been the same with this of Nehemiah, and with the same signification; and it is likely that he was led by a Divine impulse to do it - thus signifying the shaking and emptying out of this disobedient people, which took place about sixteen years afterwards [a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem which occurred in A.D. 70-DFC]."

(a). Accordingly, Barnes wrote, "He shook his raiment to show that he was resolved henceforward to have nothing to do with them; perhaps, also, to express the fact that God would soon slake them off, or reject them (Doddridge)."

- (2). Johnson likens this to [Act_13:51](#), in which "they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium" after "the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them

out of their coasts" ([Act 13:50](#)).

- (3). Similarly, Gill refers to [Mat 10:14](#), "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet."

(a). Note what follows that instruction:

[Mat 10:15](#), "Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city."

- (4). The College Press refers to this with reference to [Eze 33:1-7](#).

5. Leaving the Jews, Paul "departed thence, and entered into a certain *man's* house, named Justus, *one* that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue" ([Act 18:7](#)).

- a. It is interesting that Paul "set up shop" right next to the synagogue; because, while he was done with the Jews in general, there were still converts, including the ruler of the synagogue, Crispus, and many other Corinthians ([Act 18:8](#); cf., [1Co 1:14](#)).

- (1). Regarding the conversion of Crispus, McGarvey wrote, "It was very seldom that men of high position in the Jewish synagogues were induced to obey the gospel. It is greatly to the credit of Crispus, therefore, that he was among the first in Corinth to take this position, and this, too, at the moment when the opposition and blasphemy of the other Jews were most intense. He must have been a man of great independence of spirit and goodness of heart-the right kind of a man to form the nucleus for a congregation of disciples."

- (2). Regarding the conversion of the Corinthians in general, McGarvey added, "The conversion of these Corinthians is not detailed so fully as that of the eunuch, of Saul, or of Cornelius, yet enough is said to show that it was essentially the same process. 'Many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed, and were immersed.' They heard what Paul preached, 'that Jesus is the Christ.' This, then, is what they believed. That they repented of their sins is implied in the fact that they turned to the Lord by being immersed.

To hear the gospel preached, to believe that Jesus is the Christ, and to be immersed, was the entire process of their conversion, briefly expressed."

B. Early history.

1. The church thus established in Corinth, Paul received encouragement from God Who comforted Paul and assured him that God had "much people in this city" ([Act 18:9-10](#)).
2. So encouraged, Paul remained in Corinth another "year and six months, teaching the word of God among them" ([Act 18:11](#)).
 - a. Some suggest that Paul wrote I Thessalonians from Corinth on this first missionary journey (e.g., ISBE, Frend [p. 101]).
 - b. Romans also was likely written from Corinth, as the uninspired postscript says, "*Written to the Romans from Corinthus, and sent by Phebe servant of the church at Cenchrea.*"
 - (1). [Rom 16:23](#) seems to support this rather plainly; "Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother."
3. Ultimately, Paul was taken before the deputy of Achaia Gallio, brother of the philosopher Seneca (Smith), who refused to hear the case the Jews sought to bring against Paul ([Act 18:12-16](#)).
 - a. Afterward (Gill would say immediately, "before he and his friends could get out of court:"), Crispus successor Sosthenes was beaten, but Gallio did not concern himself with Sosthenes' defense.
 - (1). Reconciling this wild turn of events, McGarvey wrote, "For once, the heart of the unconverted multitude was with the apostle, and so indignant were they at the unprovoked attempt to injure him, that when it was fully exposed, they visited upon the head of the chief persecutor the very beating which he had laid up for Paul. Sosthenes was most probably the successor of Crispus, as chief ruler of the synagogue, and may have been selected for that position on account of his zeal in opposing the course which Crispus had pursued. The beating which the Greeks gave him was a riotous proceeding, which Gallio, in strict discharge of his duty, should have suppressed. That he did not do so,

and that Luke says, 'Gallio cared for none of these things,' has been generally understood to indicate an easy and yielding disposition, which was averse to the strict enforcement of the law. This, however, is inconsistent with the promptness of his vindication of Paul, and his indignant dismissal of the accusers. I would rather understand it as indicating a secret delight at seeing the tables so handsomely turned upon the persecutors, prompting him to let pass unnoticed a riot, which, under other circumstances, he would have rebuked severely. The rage and disappointment of the Jews must have been intense; but the rough handling which their leaders experienced admonished them to keep quiet for a time."

(2). Robinson humorously, though not by intention, wrote, "The beating did Sosthenes good for he too finally is a Christian ([1Co_1:1](#)), a co-worker with Paul whom he had sought to persecute."

4. After tarrying "*there* yet a good while," Paul "took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila" ([Act_18:18](#)).
5. Apollos who had known "only the baptism of John" went to Corinth after being instructed by Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus; there he "helped them much which had believed through grace: For he mightily convinced the Jews, *and that* publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ" ([Act_18:24~Act_19:1](#)).
 - a. It is interesting that his focus was upon the very element from whom Paul had turned--all will not be heard by everyone; sometimes another may be able to lead others to Christ where one has tried but failed.
6. Titus made a trip to Corinth, but no details are known aside from his having a Pauline spirit ([2Co_8:16-17](#); [2Co_12:18](#)).
7. Paul made a second trip to Corinth and had plans for a third ([2Co_12:14](#); [2Co_13:1](#); [1Co_16:5-7](#); [2Co_1:16](#); cf, [Act_20:2-3](#)).
8. Archaeologically, it is important to note that an inscription concerning a patron named Erastus has been found in Corinth; likely this is the Erastus of [Act_19:22](#); [2Ti_4:20](#); [Rom_16:23](#) who was a Corinthian convert of Paul.

C. Early character.

1. There were numerous external influences affecting the congregation in Corinth.

a. Jews.

(1). Such is exemplified by the events surrounding [Act_18:5-6](#) and [Act_18:12-16](#).

(2). This would further be the case with the influence of Judaizers, among whom were false teachers who sought to undermine the work of Paul ([2Co_11:1~2Co_12:21](#)).

b. Immorality.

(1). The ISBE refers to Corinth as "the city of vice *par excellence* in the Roman world."

(2). Grant wrote of Corinth's "widespread reputation for commercialized sex" (p. 188).

(3). Fausset showed the extent of Corinth's immorality, saying, "The immorality was notorious even in the pagan world; so that 'to Corinthianize' was proverbial for playing the wanton [{"Noun} Lewd or lascivious woman . . . {Adj.} Casual and unrestrained in sexual behaviour"-WordWeb]."

(4). Fausset comparing the reputation of Crete with that of Corinth wrote in his dictionary under the entry Crete, "'To Cretanize' was proverbial for to lie, as 'to Corinthianize' for to be dissolute [{"Unrestrained by convention or morality"-WordWeb]" and he wrote under the entry Titus, "To Cretanize was proverbial for 'to lie', as to 'Corinthianize' for 'to be licentious [{"Lacking moral discipline; especially sexually unrestrained"-WordWeb}]."

c. Mythology.

(1). Grant tells of "the city's famous myths, cults and monuments" (p. 188) which included "the shrine of Apollo Pythios [{"Greek god of light; god of prophesy and poetry and music and healing; son of Zeus . . . "-WordWeb] on 'Temple Hill' . . . [and-DFC] sanctuaries of Zeus, Athena Hellotis [{"goddess of wisdom and useful arts and prudent warfare"-WordWeb], Demeter [{"goddess of fertility and protector of marriage in ancient mythology"-WordWeb] and Persephone (Kore) [{"daughter of Zeus and

Demeter; made queen of the underworld by Pluto in ancient mythology"-WordWeb], Asclepius ["Son of Apollo; a hero and the Roman god of medicine and healing"-WordWeb], and Aphrodite ["Goddess of love and beauty and daughter of Zeus in ancient mythology; identified with Roman Venus"-WordWeb] (on Acrocorinth)" (p. 189).

- (2). Those to whom Paul would write in [1Co_12:2](#) that those who were converted had been "carried away unto these dumb idols."
- (3). A great deal of the immorality of the Corinthians could actually be traced to their religion, for "[t]he worship of Venus, whose temple was on Acrocorinthus, was attended with shameless profligacy ["Dissolute indulgence in sensual pleasure"-WordWeb], 1,000 female slaves being maintained for the service of strangers" (Fausset).

d. Philosophy.

- (1). Fausset wrote that "Its people had the Greek love of philosophical subtleties."
- (2). It is no wonder that Paul should have contrasted the wisdom of God with that of man; which wisdom in the impossible least state of foolishness would still be greater than the most prolific of man's ([1Co_1:19-27](#); [1Co_2:5-6](#); [1Co_3:19](#); [2Co_1:12](#)).

2. This congregation was far from perfect.

- a. Rex A Turner, Sr., spoke of three groups comprising the church in Corinth: "The three distinct groups were: (1) The faithful majority that Paul gave so much comfort; (2) the license party whose way of life was the way of uncleanness, fornication, and lasciviousness; and (3) the Judaizing party that sought to bind circumcision and certain tenets of the law of Moses on the Gentile Christians."
- b. This diverse group, as expected, had among other problems division ([1Co_1:10~1Co_4:21](#)) and immorality ([1Co_5:1-13](#)).

3. All was not lost, however, for there was some good in Corinth.

- a. Paul wrote this tribute to the general character of the church in Corinth: "I thank my God always on your behalf, for

the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and *in* all knowledge; Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall also confirm you unto the end, *that ye may be* blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" ([1Co 1:4-8](#)).

b. Later Paul could confidently write, "And our hope of you *is* stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so *shall ye be* also of the consolation" ([2Co 1:7](#)).

c. Among the good in or from Corinth were Stephanas ([1Co 1:16](#); [1Co 16:15](#)), Fortunatus ([1Co 16:17](#); incidentally, note Smith: "There is a Fortunatus mentioned in the end of Clement's first Epistle to the Corinthians, who was possibly the same person"), Achaïacus ([1Co 16:17](#)), Gaius ([1Co 1:14](#); [Rom 16:23](#)), and Quartus ([Rom 16:23](#); again, note Smith: "said to have been one of the seventy disciples, and afterward, bishop of Berytus").

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. Clement of Rome, as opposed to Clement of Alexandria--who also produced some early works though roughly a century later, wrote a letter to Corinth called "The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians" (a "Second Clement" would be produced, but no one knows who was the author; Guy wrote, "Despite the use of the term *first*, there is no 'second' epistle by the same author" [p. 35]) which Eusebius called "one recognized epistle, long and wonderful . . . This letter was read publicly in many churches both in days of old and in our own" (3.16, p. 93).

a. Clement made great reference to "Hebrews and indeed makes verbal quotations from it--proving that it was not of recent origin--and for this reason too it has seemed natural to include it among other writings of the apostle" (Eusebius, 3.38, p. 111).

(1). Eusebius included thoughts regarding Paul's writing the epistle in Hebrew and its being translated into Greek by either Luke or, even, Clement (Eusebius, 3.38, p. 111).

(2). Eusebius effectively disclaimed II Clement (Eusebius, 3.38, p. 111).

(3). Guy actually does not give Clement unquestioned

credit for I Clement, finding in the book a "sense of communal authorship (although the historical figure Clement may have been its primary scribe)" (p. 36).

(a). I Clement has no claim to authorship.

(b). Note, "The Church of God which sojourns at Rome, to the Church of God sojourning at Corinth" (I Clement I).

(c). Throughout the book are constant references to "we" and "us."

(d). Note also, "Send back speedily to us in peace and with joy these our messengers to you: Claudius Ephebus and Valerius Bito, with Fortunatus" (I Clement LIX).

b. Guy makes an interesting statement: "At this time [around the turn of the first century to the second-DFC], various congregations had no formal linking into a unified universal church. However, the very fact that the Corinthian church (or some of its members) sought assistance from Rome, and that the Roman church then sought to guide this relatively distant church as it faced turmoil, shows some sense of catholicity and interlinking between churches from the beginning. While the letter seeks simply to persuade Corinth of the steps they must take, rather than laying down the law, it is perhaps a hint of Rome's subsequent emerging leading role among the churches" (p. 36).

(1). The statement "some sense of catholicity and interlinking between churches from the beginning" may be making too great an assumption depending on how "beginning" is defined.

(a). When Paul spoke of cooperation, it was in the form of financial support ([1Co 16:1-3](#); [2Co 8:11-14](#)).

(2). Generally, Guy is correct, for Rome was beginning to concern herself in the matters of others; furthermore, with her foot in the door, she was on the cusp of reigning.

c. Regarding the church in Corinth in Clement's day (a half century after Paul's ministry there), I Clement speaks of the following:

- (1). The problems of the Corinthians were similar to what they had been in Paul's day (though briefly they had changed [[2Co_2:1-4](#); [2Co_7:1-16](#)]), "[f]or this reason righteousness and peace are now far departed from you, inasmuch as every one abandons the fear of God, and is become blind in his faith, neither walks in the ordinances of his appointment, nor acts a part becoming a Christian . . ." (I Clement III).
 - (2). Clement had to answer "pride and sedition" (I Clement XIII,XIV), hypocrisy (I Clement XV), "sinful conduct" (I Clement XXII), double-mindedness (I Clement XXIII), "self-conceit" (I Clement XXXIX), contention (I Clement XLV), etc.
 - (3). A lack of respect of congregational authority is evident from I Clement XLIV, "But we see that ye have removed some men of excellent behaviour from the ministry, which they fulfilled blamelessly with honour."
- d. I Clement played other roles as well.
- (1). Demonstrating that Domitian persecuted the church (Guy, p. 63).
 - (2). Pointing "to 'elders' and 'bishops' being interchangeable terms for the leaders of the congregation (Guy, pp. 86,87).
 - (3). Distinguishing between "clergy" and "laity" (Guy, p. 93,96).
 - (a). On this which is from I Clement XL, Guy wrote, "The implicit thought says that laypeople should stick to their designated functions and not attempt to meddle in church leadership" (p. 96).
2. Perhaps later faithfulness is hinted at by a later fall, for commenting on I Clement, Hegesippus--an early church historian--wrote, "The Corinthian church remained in the true doctrine until Primus became bishop" (Eusebius, 4.21, p. 139), this likely is, however, be a remark on what prompted I Clement.
 3. Eusebius mentions a Dionysius serving as "pastor of the parish in Corinth," but no date is given--it is assumed that this was early as it is in the same context as mention of Paul, Peter, Clement, et al (3.4, p. 82); this Dionysius, not the Areopagite of Athens ([Act_17:34](#)), was a faithful Christian, busy writer, and apt

encourager who made sure the letters from Clement and others were continually read (4.22,23, p. 140-142).

4. Near the end of the second century there was a Corinthian Bishop named Bacchylus, described by Eusebius as among "those whose orthodoxy is preserved for us in writing" (5.22, p. 178).
 - a. This Bacchylus voted, in 189 when "[s]ynods and conferences of bishops were held" in various places, in favor of the popular opinion "that the mystery of the Lord's resurrection from the dead should be celebrated on no other day than Sunday, and only on that day should we observe the end of the paschal feast" (Eusebius, 5.23, p. 179).
 - (1). "[T]hat the mystery of the Lord's resurrection from the dead should be celebrated on no other day than Sunday" had already been determined by God ([Act 20:7](#)).
 - (2). Observing "the end of the paschal feast" was a vote in favour of making Easter a religious holy day.
5. Perhaps around this time took place something recorded by Hippolytus concerning "a Christian woman denounced to the authorities on the grounds that 'she had blasphemed both the tiems and the emperors and spoken ill of the idols.' Her indiscretions cost her her life" (Frend, p. 294).
6. That Corinth remained important religiously through history is exemplified by the fact that, archaeologically, "at least three basilicas can be traced" in the city of Corinth (Grant, p. 189).
7. Perhaps this would be a better fit under history, perhaps not; whichever, "in 521 the city was destroyed by a further earthquake, which the historian Procopius saw as proof that God was abandoning the empire" (Grant, p. 189).
8. Smith recorded that "Corinth is still an episcopal see."

E. Miscellany.

1. Corinth exists to this date, a city of distinction but not of its former grandeur.

XXII. THE CHURCH AT CENCHREA.

A. Establishment.

1. Nothing is known of the founding of the church in Cenchrea; in fact, the congregation is only mentioned twice in Scripture ([Act_18:18](#); [Rom_16:1-2](#)).
2. Any ideas concerning this congregation's founding would be purely speculation; the ISBE speculates, "A local church must have been established there by Paul, since Phoebe, the deaconess of Cenchrea, was entrusted with the Epistle to the Romans, and was commended to them in the highest terms by the apostle, who charged them to 'assist her in whatsoever matter she may have need' ([Rom_16:1-2](#))".

B. Early history.

1. Cenchrea was the home congregation of Phebe ([Rom_16:1-2](#)).
2. No other details are known concerning the church in Cenchrea.

C. Early character.

1. Having an effect upon the church in Cenchrea were the following factors.
 - a. Judaism.
 - (1). There was likely a synagogue there, given that Paul went to Cenchrea to have his head shorn with reference to a vow he had made ([Act_18:18](#)).
 - b. Worldliness.
 - (1). Cenchrea was a harbor of Corinth, so the normal types of surroundings associated with any well-travelled port city would have been found at Cenchrea.

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. Cenchrea is not noted for any events or persons relative to church history.

E. Miscellany.

1. Cenchrea was the eastern port for Corinth; the western was Lechaum (Smith).
2. Fausset records that the city is "[n]ow Kikries; from Greek *Kenchri*, "the millet," a grain abounding there."

XXIII. THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS.

A. Establishment.

1. Paul visited and left Ephesus before there was a congregation there, or so can be supposed based on [Act 18:19-21](#) wherein Paul went to the synagogue and then left for Jerusalem and [Act 18:24-26](#) wherein Apollos went to the synagogue where were Aquila and Priscilla.
 - a. It is not entirely unreasonable to assume that the church met in the synagogue for some time, which would support an early establishment for the congregation there.
 - (1). When Paul returned to Ephesus in [Act 19:1](#) he found "certain disciples."
 - (2). In [Act 19:8](#) he entered the synagogue and later departed it and "separated the disciples" ([Act 19:9](#)) implying that at least by this point there was a congregation there.

B. Early history.

1. Ephesus is the location where "when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took" Apollos "and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly" ([Act 18:26](#)).
 - a. Apollos, of Alexandria, was "an eloquent man, *and* mighty in the scriptures . . . [and] was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John" ([Act 18:24-25](#)).
 - (1). The problem of knowing only John's baptism was one that later was confronted by Paul when about twelve men ([Act 19:7](#)) who had "not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost" ([Act 19:2](#)) indicating that they were unaware of the establishment of the church and the associated events of [Act 2:1-38](#), et al.
 - (2). These, who evidently had been baptized with John's baptism after the establishment of the church (or else they would not have needed to be baptized again; one wonders of they had been taught by Apollos or one of his fellow-laborers), were told by Paul "John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus"

([Act 19:4-5](#)).

2. One of the more humerous--and, more importantly, one of the more impressive--of the early events in Ephesus is recorded in [Act 19:13-16](#), wherein "certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were seven sons of *one* Sceva, a Jew, *and* chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded."
 - a. Notice the results of this taking place: "And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all *men*: and they counted the price of them, and found *it* fifty thousand *pieces* of silver. So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed" ([Act 19:17-20](#)).
3. Whatever the exact time of the church's establishment, what is sure is that the preaching of the Gospel met with strong opposition early on.
 - a. Demetrius, a silversmith who made his living, like others of Ephesus, making and selling shrines of Diana ([Act 19:24-25](#)), saw his livelihood and object of worship threatened by the preaching of Paul ([Act 19:26-27](#)); Demetrius instigated a riot which resulted in a packed theatre's chanting for two hours, "Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians" ([Act 19:28-41](#)).
 - b. While Paul avoided the danger caused by Demetrius ([Act 19:30-31](#)), some have supposed, based on [1Co 15:32](#), that Paul must have faced beasts in Ephesus.
 - (1). First, this ignores the subjunctive "if" which indicates that he had not faced beasts there.
 - (2). Johnson wrote that this meant, "Encountered furious opposition, like the rush of wild beasts. The allusion is hardly to be taken literally. If he had been thrown to wild beasts at Ephesus, some record would have been made of it in the

record in Acts of his sojourn at Ephesus.
Besides, a Roman citizen was preserved from that manner of death."

(a). Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown throw in this tidbit: "Heraclitus, of Ephesus, had termed his countrymen "wild beasts" four hundred years before."

4. Ephesus knew a number of great servants in her day including Paul (for the space of three years at one point [[Act 20:31](#)]), Aquila and Priscilla, Apollos, Gaius and Aristarchus ("Paul's companions in travel" [[Act 19:29](#)]), Timothy ([1Ti 1:3](#)), Tychicus ([2Ti 4:12](#); [Eph 6:21](#)), Trophimus ([Act 21:29](#)), and Onesiphorus ([2Ti 1:16-18](#)).
5. Irenaeus wrote, "John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia" (*Against Heresies*, III. i. 1).
 - a. According to Eusebius, Apollonius recorded that John raised a man from the dead in Ephesus (V. 18).
 - b. Tradition has both John and the apostle Philip both buried in Ephesus (Polycrates in Eusebius, V. 24).

C. Early character.

1. Influences upon the church in Ephesus included the following:
 - a. Judaism.
 - (1). That a synagogue was to be found in Ephesus is explicitly stated in [Act 18:19](#).
 - (2). Paul's leaving Timothy at Ephesus was, to a degree, done as a response to Judaism ([1Ti 1:3-4](#)).
 - (a). Paul even mentioned "the lying in wait of the Jews" in [Act 20:19](#).
 - b. Greco-Roman mythology.
 - (1). A temple of Diana was found in Ephesus as is shown in [Act 19:24](#); [Act 19:27-28](#); [Act 19:35](#).
 - (a). Of this temple, Grant wrote, "[Ephesus] owed by far its great distinction to its Temple of Artemis, preserving, in amended form, an ancient cult of the Anatolian [Anatolia is basically another name for Asia Minor-DFC] mother-goddess, whose memory was perpetuated by her curious cult statue, displaying twenty-four breast-like, egg

shaped, protuberances and animals carved in high relief" (p. 239).

- (b). The ISBE records, "The Cayster river, overflowing its banks, gradually covered with its muddy deposit the spot where the temple of Diana had once stood, and at last its very site was forgotten."

c. Gnosticism.

- (1). The Gnostics influencing the church at Ephesus were a sect called the Nicolaitans.

- (a). "According to Irenaeus (*Adv. Haer.*, i. 26, 3; iii. 10, 7), followed by Hippolytus (*Philos.*, vii. 36), they were founded by Nicolaus, the proselyte of Antioch, who was one of the seven chosen to serve at the tables ([Act 6:5](#))" (ISBE).

- [a]. "In explanation of the apparent incongruity of such an immoral sect being founded by one of 'good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom' (compare [Act 6:3](#)), Simcox argues that their lapse may have been due to reaction from original principles of a too rigid asceticism" (ISBE).

- (b). "Their doctrine was similar to that of Balaam, 'who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication' ([Rev 2:14](#), [Rev 2:15](#)). Their practices were strongly condemned by John [actually, Jesus-DFC], who praised the church in Ephesus for 'hating their works' ([Rev 2:6](#)), and blamed the church in Pergamum for accepting in some measure their teaching ([Rev 2:15](#)). Except that reference is probably made to their influence in the church at Thyatira also, where their leader was 'the woman Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophetess' ([Rev 2:20](#); compare

[Rev_2:14](#)), no further direct information regarding them is given in Scripture" (ISBE).

- (c). "The Nicolaitans abused Paul's doctrine of the grace of God into lasciviousness; such seducers are described as followers of Balsam [Balaam-DFC], also in [2Pe_2:12-13](#); [2Pe_2:15-19](#); [Jud_1:4](#); [Jud_1:7-8](#); [Jud_1:11](#) (*'the son of Bosor' for Beor, to characterize him as 'son of carnality': bosor 'flesh'*). They persuaded many to escape obloquy by yielding as to 'eating idol meats,' which was then a test of faithfulness (compare 1 Corinthians 8 and [1Co_10:25-33](#)); they even joined in the 'fornication' of the idol feasts, as though permitted by Christ's 'law of liberty.' The 'lovefeasts' ([Jud_1:12](#)) thus became pagan orgies. The Nicolaitans combined evil 'deeds' which Jesus 'hates' with evil 'doctrine'" (Fausset).
- (d). "In a time of persecution, when the eating or not eating of things sacrificed to idols was, more than ever, a crucial test of faithfulness, they persuaded men, more than ever, that was a thing indifferent. [Rev_2:13-14](#). This was bad enough, but there was a yet worse evil. Mingling themselves in the orgies of idolatrous feasts, they brought the impurities of those feasts into the meetings of the Christian Church. And all this was done, it must be remembered, not simply as an indulgence of appetite, but as a part of a system, supported by a 'doctrine,' accompanied by the boast of a prophetic illumination, [2Pe_2:1](#)" (Smith).

- (2). That these were known in Ephesus, and--more importantly--that their influence was not accepted, is evident from [Rev_2:6](#).

2. Paul's meeting with the elders of Ephesus at Miletus ([Act_20:17-18](#))

reveals that the church in Ephesus was under sound leadership in his time, which leadership was to be tested.

a. Even from the church at Ephesus would "men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" ([Act 20:30](#)).

b. Their compassionate care for Paul was seen in that "they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship" ([Act 20:37-38](#)).

3. Paul's letter to Ephesus (if it truly was written to the Ephesians) reveals that she was building character.

a. Paul's thankfulness for the Ephesian brethren was due to their faith and love ([Eph 1:15-16](#)).

b. This was a church composed of those who had overcome lives of worldliness ([Eph 2:1-3](#); [Eph 5:8](#)).

c. If the "henceforth"s of [Eph 4:14](#) and [Eph 4:17](#), the "put off" of [Eph 4:22](#), the "put on" of [Eph 4:24](#), the "putting away" of [Eph 4:25](#), the "no more" of [Eph 4:28](#), and "be put away" of [Eph 4:31](#) are an indication, then the church was slowly outgrowing some of her former ways, thus showing that this congregation was not "there yet" and that even sound congregations may exhibit shortcomings.

4. Jesus' letter to Ephesus reveals that she, in heart, had wandered from Him in the near half century since Paul had written.

a. To their credit, the Ephesians could "not bear them which [were] evil," specifically false apostles ([Rev 2:2](#)), and hated the deeds of the Gnostic Nicolaitans ([Rev 2:6](#)); furthermore, they had not fainted in their present circumstances, but had patiently labored ([Rev 2:3](#)).

b. While their actions were right, their hearts were wrong; Jesus followed the aforementioned commendation thus: "Nevertheless I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast left thy first love" ([Rev 2:4](#)).

(1). The seriousness of their condition is shown in the warning of Jesus: "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent" ([Rev 2:5](#)).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. It was in Ephesus that the following event, recorded in Irenaeus' *Against Heresies*, III. iii. 4, took place: "There are also those

who heard from him [Polycarp-DFC] that John, the disciple of the Lord, going to bathe at Ephesus, and perceiving Cerinthus within, rushed out of the bath-house without bathing, exclaiming, 'Let us fly, lest even the bath-house fall down, because Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within.'"

a. This Cerinthus a 'Jewish Gnostic' and an opponent of St. John" (Freund, p. 143).

- (1). Eusebius wrote regarding "Cerinthus the Heresiarch," "About the same time, we have understood, appeared Cerinthus, the leader of another heresy. Caius, whose words we quoted above, in 'The Disputation' [or 'Dialogue'-DFC] attributed to him, writes thus respecting him: 'But Cerinthus, by means of revelations which he pretended were written by a great apostle, also falsely pretended to wonderful things, as if they were showed him by angels, asserting, that after the resurrection there would be an earthly kingdom of Christ, and that the flesh, i.e. men, again inhabiting Jerusalem, would be subject to desires and pleasures. Being also an enemy to the divine Scriptures, with a view to deceive men, he said that there would be a space of a thousand years for celebrating nuptial festivals.' Dionysius also, who obtained the episcopate of Alexandria in our day, in the second book 'On Promises,' where he says some things as if received by ancient tradition, makes mention of the same man, in these words: 'But it is highly probable that Cerinthus, the same that established the heresy that bears his name, designedly affixed the name (of John) to his own forgery. For one of the doctrines that he taught was, that

Christ would have an earthly kingdom. And as he was a voluptuary, and altogether sensual, he conjectured that it would consist in those things that he craved in the gratification of appetite and lust ; i.e. in eating, drinking, and marrying, or in such things whereby he supposed these sensual pleasures might be presented in more decent expressions; viz. in festivals, sacrifices, and the slaying of victims" (III. 28, as translated by Cruse).

2. Ignatius, and early self-promoting martyr from Antioch, sent a letter to the church in Ephesus.
3. Around A.D. 135 Justin Martyr debated Trypho in Ephesus (Freund, p. 163, 239,240) which indicted Trypho and the Jews with undermining the doctrine of Christ (Eusebius IV. 18)--Trypho appears to have been a Judaizer.
4. At some point while Commodus was Caesar (A.D. 180-192, specifically around A.D. 189), there was a Polycrates serving as Bishop in Ephesus (Eusebius, V. 22).
 - a. Polycrates sided with those who wished to observe Easter on 14 Nisan (as the Jews) rather than on the resurrection day (as Pope Victor), saying, "Therefore we keep the day undeviatingly, . . . for in Asia great luminaries sleep . . . Philip . . . John . . . Polycarp . . . All these kept the fourteenth day of the passover according to the gospel . . ." (Freund, p. 342, c.f. 341).
5. As the second century ended and the third century began, "[t]here were now four (or five) main centers of Christianity--Rome, Carthage, Alexandria, (Antioch), and Ephesus--long-established communities whose bishops dominated their subordinates over very wide areas" (Freund, p. 338).
6. Neo-Platonism, or Neoplatonism, was promoted by Maximus of Ephesus in the middle of the fourth century (Freund, p. 596).
 - a. Neoplatonism was "[a] system of philosophical and theological doctrines composed of elements of Platonism and Aristotelianism and oriental mysticism; its most distinctive doctrine holds that the first principle and source of reality transcends being and thought and is naturally unknowable" (WordWeb).
 - b. Such mysticism is foreign to Scripture, as is the idea that the

metaphysical is unknowable ([Joh_14:7](#), [Joh_14:17](#); [Joh_8:32](#)).

7. A Bishop of Ephesus named Antoninus was confronted by "seven articles of grievance" by a synod in May, 400--these concerned, among other things, corruption; Antoninus died before an investigation could take place (Freund, p. 750).
 - a. Undoubtedly as a side effect of the treatment of Antoninus, "[t]he enmity of the see of Ephesus throughout the fifth century was to cost the archbishops of Constantinople dear" (Freund, p. 751).
 - b. In A.D. 403, Ephesus backed Theophilus of Alexandria over John Chrysostom of Constantinople (Freund, p. 760); this was apparently a power struggle rather than a doctrinal one.
8. In the early fifth century, the false doctrine of original sin taught by Augustine (pre-John Calvin; incidentally, Calvinism is largely based upon false doctrines prominent for many years prior to Calvin) was supported by Ephesus who was "sympathetic toward him" (Freund, p. 678).
 - a. Even Freund says this doctrine was based on a "mistranslation of [Rom_5:12](#) ('in whom' instead of 'on account of whom')" (p. 679).
9. "In A.D. 431 the Third Ecumenical Council, held at Ephesus, reconfirmed her [Mary's-DFC] worship as *theotokos*, the Mother of God" (Grant, p. 239).
 - a. Regarding the location of this council, Grant wrote, "The Council Church at Ephesus, the location of the Third Ecumenical Council, is a triple-aisled columnar basilica of the fourth century A.D., built over earlier structures" (p. 240).
10. Another council of Ephesus, the second, was held in A.D. 449; it was concerned with the nature of the Christ (Freund, p. 768).
 - a. This latter council of Ephesus went further than the first, resolving these things:
 - (1). "The Son is truly God and truly man.
 - (2). "Jesus had a rational soul as well as a body.
 - (3). "The divine natures coexist without confusion (rejecting Eutychianism) and without separation (rejecting Nestorianism).
 - (4). "The natures are separate principles of operation but they always act in harmony with each other.
 - (5). Mary is *Theotokos*, which also means that *communicatio idiomatum* language--saying,

for example, that the Son of Man came down from heaven and that the Son of God was crucified--is valid" (Guy, pp. 292,293).

E. Miscellany.

1. Ephesus was the first of the seven churches of [Rev_1:11](#) to be mentioned in Scripture (Thyatira as a city, not a church, was mentioned in [Act_16:14](#); Laodicea, mentioned in [Col_2:1](#); [Col_4:13](#), [Col_4:15-16](#), was the only other of the seven mentioned outside of Revelation).
2. Michael Grant wrote, "According to one version [tradition-DFC], Ephesus was also the last home of the Virgin Mary, who had supposedly been lodged nearby by the apostle St. John" (p. 239).
3. Smith wrote, "The whole place is now utterly desolate, with the exception of the small Turkish village at *Ayasaluk*. The ruins are of vast extent."

XXIV. THE CHURCH AT CAESAREA MARITIMA.

A. Establishment.

1. The establishment of the church in Caesarea probably should be traced to the conversion of Cornelius and his household ([Act 10:1~Act 11:18](#)) though apparently Philip preached there before Cornelius was converted ([Act 8:40](#)).
 - a. Philip, of the seven of [Act 6:5](#), lived in Caesarea by the time of [Act 21:8](#); however, had he been there when Cornelius was converted, he--not Peter--may have been called upon to preach to Cornelius.

B. Early history.

1. By [Act 21:16](#), not only is Philip in Caesarea, but there are other Christians there as well.
2. Paul was no stranger to Caesarea; he was sent to Tarsus through Caesarea shortly after his conversion ([Act 9:30](#)) and Paul's second ([Act 18:22](#)) and third ([Act 21:8](#)) missionary journeys took him through Caesarea.
3. Paul was in bonds in Caesarea for two years ([Act 23:23~Act 27:2](#)) as a result of his being threatened by the Jews of Jerusalem ([Act 21:16~Act 23:22](#)).

C. Early character.

1. The primary influence on the church in Caesarea would have been due to the presence of Rome's government there and the associated emperor worship.
 - a. Josephus wrote concerning Pilate's tenure as procurator that he had been involved in setting up "Caesar effigies" in Jerusalem (Josephus, *Antiquities*, XVIII. iii. 1); however, due to public sentiment and the threat of punishment from Rome, Pilate ultimately had the images moved to Caesarea.
 - b. The following indicates that the Jews would not have been too overpowering an influence in spite of Caesarea's being a city of Judea: "Gentiles outnumbered Jews in it; and in the synagogue accordingly the Old Testament was read in Greek [the Septuagint-DFC]" (Fausset).
 - (1). That having been said, Grant wrote that Caesarea became "an important center of both Jewish and Christian learning" (p. 135)--no time frame was given by Grant, but Frend speaks in vague terms of this being in the mid-100s (p. 163).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. Caesarea's "cathedral stood on the site of a temple built by Herod" (ISBE).

2. "Origen settled at the place in 231, and his *Exhortation to Martyrdom* describes the effect of the persecutions of Christians upon its life (235)" (Grant, p. 135).
3. "Eusebius [who wrote a church history-DFC] was bishop of Caesarea (313-40 ad)" (ISBE).
 - a. Grant added that Eusebius was born there around 260 (p. 135).
4. A fourth century monastic, Basil (not to be confused with Basil of Ancyra), was born in Caesarea; and, returning to Caesarea from Athens in A.D. 356, he wrote--apparently--a work called *Rules* in which he dealt with a modified monasticism having monks in groups of thirty or forty serving as servants to each other and society (Freund, pp. 630,631).
 - a. Basil sought "that the contemplative life might not be cut off from society, nor the active life be uninfluenced by contemplation" (Gregory of Nazianus in Freund, p. 631) .
 - b. Basil served "first as presbyter from 362 and then from 370 as metropolitan of Caesarea" and appeared at 381 A.D.'s Council of Constantinople on the nature of the Son in which he defended Jesus equality with the Father and the Spirit (Freund, p. 632).
5. "In 548 ad a massacre of the Christians was organized and carried out by the Jews and Samaritans" (ISBE).
6. "The city passed into Moslem hands in 638" (ISBE).
7. Smith wrote, "Caesarea continued to be a city of some importance, even in the time of the Crusades;" "In the time of the Crusades it fell, now to the Christians and now to the Moslems; and was finally overthrown by Sultan Bibars in 1265 ad" (ISBE).

E. Miscellany.

1. Caesarea, built by Herod the Great, served as the Roman seat of government--or as Grant wrote, "capital, official mint and principal garrison-town" (p. 135)--during the days of their rule in Judea; it was there that Herod Agrippa I "was eaten of worms" for accepting acclaim as a god ([Act 12:21-23](#)).
2. Today "the name still lingers on the site (*Kaisariyeh* [or similarly spelled forms-DFC]), which is a complete desolation" (Smith); in spite of its being "described as the most desolate city of all Palestine" (Easton), the town itself has become very important in the field of Biblical archaeology.

XXV. THE CHURCH AT ASSOS.

A. Establishment.

1. On the third missionary journey, Paul and his party met after leaving Troas; all had been in Troas together, but Paul had gone on foot to this town south of Troas, while Luke and the rest of the company had traveled between the two on ship ([Act 20:13-14](#)).
 - a. Whether a church met in Assos at this time is speculative; at least as far as is shown in Scripture, the focus of the efforts of the labourers was elsewhere.
 - b. Matthew Henry left the door open for a church there or at least some conversions along the way; for he reasoned that Paul went by foot, among other possibilities, "That he might call on his friends by the way, and do good among them, either converting sinners or edifying saints."

B. Early history.

1. Assos is not found again in Scripture, making this brief stay--only long enough to meet and then to leave for Mitylene--the only recorded activity in Assos.
 - a. Such rush was necessary given Paul's desire to be in Jerusalem by Pentecost ([Act 19:21](#); [Act 20:16](#)).

C. Early character.

1. If there were a church in Assos, it likely would have dealt with strong Greco-Roman mythology, for this town had at one time been known as Apollonia and had from 530 B.C. (Grant, p. 77) or 470 B.C. (ISBE) been home to a temple of Athena.
2. Philosophy had also an influence in Assos--though perhaps too early for the church, for in the 300s B.C., Hermias, Erastus, and Scorpius, followers of Plato, founded "a philosophical school at Assus [same name, different spelling-DFC]"; they were soon joined by Aristotle, Xenocrates, Callisthenes, and Theophrastus; in addition, "Assus was the birthplace of Cleanthes (331), who became head of the Stoic school" (Grant, p. 77).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. The ISBE spoke of "a Byzantine church which has been converted into a mosque" which remained at the 700' summit of a "steep volcanic cone rising sharply from the sea" (Grant, p. 76) which was Assos.
 - a. This indicates that at some point there was a church in Assos, but not show whether it was home to disciples in the first century.
 - b. Regarding such a congregation, Gill wrote, "No mention is made of the Gospel being preached here, or of any church until the eighth century, when John, bishop of

Assos, is said to be in the Nicene council."

E. Miscellany.

1. Johnson could remark of the town's state in his day, "Vast ruins now mark the site of the seaport of Assos."

XXVI. THE CHURCH AT MITYLENE.

A. Establishment.

1. Like Assos, Mitylene [or Mytilene] is not mentioned for its housing disciples, only for its being a stop on the journey of missionaries ([Act 20:14](#)); accordingly, it is not known if a congregation were there, or if it were, when it was established.
 - a. Of Paul's journey through, the ISBE recorded, "There is no record that a Christian church had been established in Mitylene at this time."

B. Early history.

1. Likewise as with Assos, Mitylene is not found again in Scripture; the rush of those passing through it being necessary given Paul's determination to be in Jerusalem by Pentecost ([Act 19:21](#); [Act 20:16](#)).
 - a. Smith says, "Paul stopped for the night" at Mitylene; actually, these missionaries may not have even left the ship--no Biblical mention is made of going into the town or of changing ships.
 - (1). Such records as the "He was there on a dark moonless night; . . ." of Fausset must surely be speculation!

C. Early character.

1. Undoubtedly, mythology held sway in Mitylene, for there human sacrifices offered to Dionysius (Gill).
2. Perhaps philosophy played a role in Mitylene, for "[i]t was famous for being the native place of Pittacus, one of the seven wise men of Greece, a great philosopher and legislator" (Gill).
 - a. A century before Paul, Mitylene was home to a philosopher named Lesbonax (Grant, p. 415).
3. Hero worship also played a role, as Mitylene was home to "the deified Theophanes" (Grant, p. 415).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. Gill provides the most concise, but best, information regarding the role of Mitylene in church history: "[N]o mention is made of it in ecclesiastical history until late: in the 'second' century Heathenism prevailed in the island, the Lesbians sacrificed a man to Dionysius. In the 'fifth' century we read of a bishop of this island in the Chalcedon council: in the 'sixth' century there was a bishop of Mitylene, in the fifth Roman synod: in the seventh century, Gregory, bishop of Mitylene, assisted in the sixth council at Constantinople, and Theodorus of the same place: in the eighth century Damianus, bishop of the same place, was present in the Nicene council."

2. The ISBE spoke concerning the city in its day, "It contains 14 mosques, 7 churches, and has a population of about 15,000."
3. Today, Mytilene serves as "the seat of a metropolitan bishop of the Orthodox church" (Wikipedia).

E. Miscellany.

1. By Smith's day this was "a place of no importance, called *Mitelin*" or Metelin (Easton) or Metelino (Gill).
2. It remains Mytilene, capital of Lesbos (Wikipedia).

XXVII. THE CHURCH AT CHIOS.

A. Establishment.

1. Chios [or Coos-Barnes], an island in the Aegean, is literally only mentioned in passing as Paul's company sailed against it on the Third Missionary Journey ([Act 20:15](#)).
 - a. Robertson, focusing upon the Greek, wrote, "They probably lay off the coast (anchoring) during the night instead of putting into the harbour."

B. Early history.

1. No other reference is found in Scripture regarding this island.

C. Early character.

1. Mythology would have influenced any congregation on the island, for there was "a very old sanctuary of Cybele, the Mother of the Gods" on Chios (ISBE).
 - a. As with Mitylene, so in Chios was Dionysius worshipped through human sacrifice (Gill).
2. Another influence would have been such given the island's view of Rome, for Rome was celebrated on Chios, particularly Romulus and Remus were honored; needless to say, Chios was treated well by Rome (Grant, p. 166).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. Gill also provides, as with Mitylene, the most concise, but best, information regarding the role of Chios in church history: "We read nothing of the apostle's stay and preaching here, nor of any Gospel church here, till ages after: in the 'fourth' century, Heathenism prevailed to such a degree in it, that Dionysius Omadius was worshipped here with human sacrifice; and yet, in the fifth century, a bishop of Chios was present in the council of Chalcedon; and in the 'sixth' century another assisted in the fifth Roman synod; and in the 'seventh' century there was a bishop of this place at the sixth synod at Constantinople; and in the 'eighth' century, Leon, bishop of Chios, was in the Nicene synod."

E. Miscellany.

1. This island now is known as Scio (Barnes, Easton, Fausset, Smith).

XXVIII. THE CHURCH AT SAMOS.

A. Establishment.

1. Samos was another island at which Paul and his company stopped during the Third Missionary Journey ([Act 20:15](#)).
 - a. Considering the Greek translated "arrived" (is from the same compound word as "parable" which means "to cast beside") Robertson wrote, "It is not stated whether a stop was made here or not"
 - b. The A.S.V. translated this "we touched at Samos."

B. Early history.

1. No other reference is found in Scripture regarding this island; Gill simply says, "The apostle stayed not here to preach the Gospel; nor do we read of its being preached here by any."

C. Early character.

1. That any church in Samos would have been influenced by mythological beliefs is likely as Samos was and had been strongly rooted in such.
 - a. Paraphrasing Pausanius, Gill tells us that local beliefs held this as the birthplace of Juno ("queen of the Olympian gods who protected marriage; wife and sister of Jupiter; counterpart of Greek Hera" [WordWeb]) and that there was a temple in Samos dedicated to her.
 - (1). Grant speaks of the "stress on the goddess Hera" in the coinage of Samos (p. 558).
 - (2). Gill tells us that the largest temple Herodotus ever saw was in Samos--probably it was the temple of Juno/Hera, which was called the Heraeum (Grant, p. 558).
 - (a). In the mid-late 500s B.C., the shrine measured "290 by 150 feet" (Grant, p. 558).
 - b. A Greek prophetess, seeress, oracle, or sibyl was from Samos; "The second Sibyl, referred to by Pausanias, and named 'Herophile', seems to have been based ultimately in Samos, but visited other shrines, Delphi, etc. and sang there, but that at the same time, Delphi had its own sibyl" (Wikipedia).
 - c. Gill wrote, "[I]dolatry greatly prevailed in this place in the 'second' century; and so it did in the 'fourth.'"
2. Perhaps philosophy would have an influence, for Epicurus, the founder of the Epicureans who were mentioned in [Act 17:18](#), was born in Samos (Wikipedia).
 - a. Grant indicates that Pythagoras, philosopher known better as

a mathematician, also was a native of Samos (p. 557).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. Gill tells us that Christianity was ultimately found in the place for there were in the fourth century "some Christians here that suffered persecution; and so low as the 'eighth' century, Heraclius, bishop of this place, was in the Nicene synod."
2. Grant reveals regarding the archaeological finds in Samos, "A circular building with a cruciform interior may be a baptistery or martyr's shrine belonging to an adjacent Christian basilica. Another basilica (*c* AD 500) replaced the ruins of the shrine of Hera, and there are remains of a Christian funerary building with a vaulted roof; partly cut out of the rock" (p. 559).

E. Miscellany.

1. Samos remains into this day.

XXIX. THE CHURCH AT TROGYLLIUM.

A. Establishment.

1. Like Assos and Mitylene, Trogyllium was at most only a layover on the Third Missionary Journey ([Act 20:15](#)); whether a congregation was established there is left to speculation.
 - a. Regarding whether any time was spent at this place, the ISBE recorded, "Several of the early manuscripts omit the words, 'tarried at Trogyllium' (Westcott and Hort omit as 'Western' interpolation [something inserted by another-DFC]); yet, whether the words belonged to the text or not, Paul evidently passed the promontory, and probably stopped there."

B. Early history.

1. In Scripture, no other mention is made of Trogyllium.

C. Early character.

1. While nothing concrete is known, what influenced the area would likely have influence upon any congregation in Trogyllium as well.

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. Trogyllium, apparently, played little or no role with regard to the church itself, though a Catholic influence may be seen in the names of the port (St. Paul's) and promontory (Santa Maria).

E. Miscellany.

1. In Smith's day, there remained "an anchorage, which [was] still called St. Paul's port."
 - a. The ISBE added, "The promontory now bears the name of Santa Maria."

XXX. THE CHURCH AT MILETUS.

A. Establishment.

1. Miletus was another stop on the hurried ([Act 20:16](#)) tail-end of the Third Missionary Journey of Paul and his company ([Act 20:15](#)).
2. The establishment of a congregation in Miletus is not mentioned in Scripture, but some have assumed that one was there; "Paul's previous successful three-year [at least two plus-DFC] ministry in nearby Ephesus resulted in the evangelization of the entire province of Asia (see [Act 19:10](#), [Act 19:20](#); [1Co 16:9](#)). It is safe to assume that at least by the time of the apostle's second visit to Miletus, a fledgling Christian community was established in Miletus" (Wikipedia).
 - a. Gill wrote, "by the apostle's sending from hence to Ephesus, for the elders of the church there to meet him at this place, as is afterwards related, and taking no notice of any brethren, elders, or church here, it looks as if there were none at this time."

B. Early history.

1. It was at Miletus that Paul sent for and met with the elders of the church at Ephesus ([Act 20:17-38](#)).
2. Miletus was also the place where Paul left sick Trophimus ([2Ti 4:20](#)) at, necessarily ([Act 21:29](#)), a later time.
3. Fausset wrote, "There are ruins . . . of a church building lying in ruins said to have been preached in by John (?)."

C. Early character.

1. Philosophy could have played a role in influencing a congregation in Miletus, for "Miletus is famous for being the birthplace of Thales, one of the seven wise men of Greece, and founder of the Ionic sect of philosophers. Anaximander [another early philosopher-DFC] was also born here" (Clarke).
 - a. Gill added "Anaximenes, and the famous Democritus, philosophers."
2. With regard to a possible mythological influence, Gill wrote, "it seems it had its name Miletus from Miletus, the son of Apollo, who is said to build it; and Apollo himself is sometimes called Apollo Milesius, and who had a famous temple in this place."
3. According to Frend, there was a population of Jews at Miletus; he wrote, "At Miletus Jews were among spectators at games, which their stricter counterparts would shun, but they had their special seats" (p. 39).
 - a. Whether these would have been orthodox enough to have posed a great opposing influence on an early

congregation of the Lord's church in Miletus is not known.

4. Barnes wrote, "It was originally composed of a colony of Cretans"; accordingly, a societal Cretan lifestyle ([Tit 1:12](#)) may have influenced a congregation there.

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. "In the history of early Christianity it plays but a little part" (ISBE).
2. "During the Byzantine age Miletus became a residence for archbishops" (Wikipedia).
 - a. Fausset commented, "Miletus was for a long period the seat of a bishopric."
3. Gill , giving a bit more detail, wrote, "[I]n the 'fifth' century we read of a church here, a bishop of this place being in the Chalcedon council; in the 'seventh' century a bishop of this church assisted at the sixth council at Constantinople, whose name is said to be George; and in the 'eighth' century Epiphanius, bishop of Miletus, was present in the Nicene council."

E. Miscellany.

1. "As the harbour became silted up, the city was abandoned. Today the ruins of city lie some 10 kilometres from the sea" (Wikipedia).
 - a. Fausset made note of this having begun prior to Paul's time, for the elders of Ephesus "accompanied him unto the ship" ([Act 20:38](#)).
2. "All that is left now is a small Turkish village called *Melas*, near the site of the ancient city" (Smith).

XXXI. THE CHURCH AT COOS.

A. Establishment.

1. Coos, also called Cos, was another island visited by Paul and his company during the Third Missionary Journey ([Act 21:1](#)).
 - a. Paul was there no more than one night during this trip, and no mention of a congregation--either being established or already in existence--is made.

B. Early history.

1. Nothing is known of the early church being represented in Coos.

C. Early character.

1. Mythologically, the city had a history of such influence having been found over a millennium before Paul by followers of Asclepius ("Son of Apollo; a hero and the Roman god of medicine and healing; his daughters were Hygeia [the goddess of health-WordWeb] and Panacea [the goddess of healing; . . . Hypothetical remedy for all ills or diseases; once sought by the alchemists-WordWeb]" (WordWeb); Fittingly, Hippocrates, of the Hippocratic oath, was of Coos (ISBE).
 - a. Grant added that the founders of Coos were reputed to have been descended from the hero Heracles, a.k.a. Hercules (p. 192).
 - (1). Gill wrote that actually "[t]his island was taken by Hercules, and Eurypylus, the king of it, was slain by him."
 - b. Clarke added that the island was famous for worshipping Juno [queen of the Olympian gods who protected marriage; wife and sister of Jupiter; counterpart of Greek Hera-WordWeb] as well.
 - c. From Coos, "a temple of Aphrodite Pandemos [literally, "all people"-DFC] and Pontia struck the eye of all who arrived by sea" (Grant, p. 193).
2. In Paul's day, "like Corinth, it was one of the Jewish centers of the Aegean" (ISBE).
 - a. "Herod the Great conferred many favors on the island" (Smith).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. Coos "contains a series of early Christian basilicas, constructed during the years between the two earthquakes (469-554), and decorated with handsome mosaic floors" (Grant, p. 193).
2. Regarding the earliest records of a church there, Gill wrote, "[I]n the beginning of the 'fourth' century there was a church here, and a bishop of it was present at the council of Nice; and in the 'fifth' century, a bishop of the church here assisted in the council of

Chalcedon; and in the 'sixth' century, a bishop of the same place was in the fifth synod at Constantinople."

3. "The main religion practiced is Greek Orthodoxy. Kos has one of the four cathedrals in the entire Dodecanese [the group of islands in which it is found-WordWeb]. There is also a Roman Catholic Church on the island as well as a Mosque catering to the Muslim community of Kos. The Synagogue is no longer used for religious ceremonies as the Jewish community of Kos was practically wiped out by the Nazis in World War II" (Wikipedia).

E. Miscellany.

1. For a while it was known in English as "Stanchio" (Easton) or "Stancho" (Fausset) or "Stancora [by Turks]; but by others Lango" (Gill); however, it is in modern Greek "Kos" and modern Turkish "Istankoy."

XXXII. THE CHURCH AT RHODES.

A. Establishment.

1. The island of Rhodes was but a waypoint on the Third Missionary Journey ([Act 21:1](#)).
 - a. It is not sure that the ship containing Paul and his fellow-laborers even stopped at Rhodes.
2. Gill wrote, "When the Gospel was first preached here, and a church state formed, cannot be said."

B. Early history.

1. Nothing concrete is known of any early church in Rhodes.
2. The island of Rhodes was home to one of the famed seven wonders of the ancient world (along with the Giza's great pyramid of Khufu or Cheops--the only wonder still extant, Babylon's hanging gardens, Ephesus' temple of Diana, Halicarnassus' tomb of Mausolus, Olympia's statue of Zeus, and Alexandria's lighthouse), a massive statue (a "brazen colossus, which was seventy cubits high"-Gill) known as the Colossus of Rhodes which showed the god Helios ("ancient god of the sun; drove his chariot across the sky each day; identified with Roman Sol"-WordWeb); Gill wrote, "few men with their arms stretched out could embrace the thumb, and the fingers were bigger than most statues: and from this statue the Rhodians have been sometimes called Colossians; and some have fancied, that these are the persons the Apostle Paul wrote his epistle to under that name."
 - a. While the idea that these were the Colossians is an intriguing one, few commentators even mention such speculation and there is little to support the idea regardless--especially given that the Colossus was destroyed by earthquake in 227 B.C. (Grant, p. 540), 226 B.C. (Wikipedia), 224 B.C. (Clarke), or 223 B.C. (ISBE), over two and a half centuries before Paul stopped at the island or wrote to the Colossians.

C. Early character.

1. The giant statue to Helios shows that this island, too, was steeped in mythology.
 - a. Gill said that some maintained that the island "took its name from Rhodia, a fair and beautiful maid beloved by Apollo" (Grant refers to her as a nymph ["a minor nature goddess usually depicted as a beautiful maiden"-WordWeb] and as Aphrodite's daughter [539]).
 - (1). Apollo ("Greek god of light; god of prophecy and

poetry and music and healing; son of Zeus and Leto; twin brother of Artemis"-WordWeb), "as the sun" appeared on the obverse side of Rhodian coins (Fausset), meaning that he must have been associated with Helios--light and light giver.

- b. Other Rhodian coins featured "Poseidon Asphaleois, the god who presided over the safety of ships and harbors" (Grant, p. 540).
 - c. Remains "of temples of Aphrodite and Dionysus ["god of wine and fertility and drama; the Greek name of Bacchus"-WordWeb], " . . . "a shrine of Zeus and Athena, a precinct of Pythian Apollo," and "ruins of a temple of Apollo Erethimios" can be found on Rhodes today (Grant, p. 540).
- 2. "The leading Stoic philosopher Panaetius (c 185-109) was a Rhodian" (Grant, p. 140).
 - 3. Something not seen with reference to most of the locations mentioned in Scripture is that mentioned by Fausset: "The people were honorable, upright, and prudent."
 - a. At least, the early church could have thrived, or, perhaps, even did, thrive in such an environment on Rhodes.
 - 4. Over times there have been Jews on Rhodes, in fact, the ISBE said that "In 672 AD the Saracens sold the ruins [of the Colossus-DFC] to a Jew."

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

- 1. Gill wrote, "[I]n the beginning of the 'fourth' century there was a bishop of this place in the council of Nice; and in the 'fifth' century there was a church here, and it was a metropolitan [just higher than a bishopric-DFC]; and in the 'sixth' century a bishop of this place was in the fifth Roman synod under Symmachus; and in the 'seventh' century a bishop of Rhodes assisted in the sixth council at Constantinople; and in the same century it was taken by the Saracenes [generally at this time this meant Arabs, but later, during the crusades, specifically it meant "a Muslim who opposed the Crusades"-WordWeb], as before observed, when the church here was the metropolitan of the Cyclades: and yet in the 'eighth' century, Leo, bishop of this place, was in the Nicene synod; and even though in the ninth century it was grievously harassed by the Saracens, yet its church state was not quite destroyed."
- 2. Fausset wrote that Rhodes "was the last spot where the Christians of the East held out against the advancing Saracens, and was

subsequently noted as the home and fortress of the knights of John."

3. "In 1949, Israel signed an armistice agreement with Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria on the island of Rhodes" (Wikipedia).
4. Today, "[t]he predominant religion is Greek Orthodox. There is a significant Catholic minority on the island . . . [and] a Muslim minority, a remnant from Ottoman Turkish times. . . . The Ladino-speaking Jewish community was mostly wiped out in the Holocaust. The main synagogue, Kahal Shalom, the oldest synagogue in Greece, is still standing in the Jewish quarter of the Old Town of Rhodes. It has been renovated with the help of foreign donors but there are very few Jews who live year-round in Rhodes today, and services are not held on a regular basis" (Wikipedia).

E. Miscellany.

1. Rhodes sided with Rome when she faced Antiochus III Magnus, or Megas, and was rewarded for it by being given Caria (ISBE) and Lycia (Grant, p. 539)--regions on the mainland of Asia Minor--this was the time of the battle of Magnesia after which the to-be Antiochus III Epiphanes (prophesied about in [Dan_8:23-25](#) and [Dan_11:21-36](#), and written about in the Apocryphal I and II Maccabees) was sent as hostage to Rome.
2. Rhodes remains to this day an island of Greece.

XXXIII. THE CHURCH AT PATARA.

A. Establishment.

1. Patara was yet another location nearly ignored in Scripture, but mentioned in connection with the Third Missionary Journey ([Act 21:1](#)).
2. Gill wrote, "How long the apostle stayed in this place is not known, nor whether he preached here, nor if he did, what success he had."

B. Early history.

1. Patara is not seen again in Scripture, and it is not known whether the early church existed in Patara; however, Wikipedia says, "The city was Christianized early"--how early is the question.

C. Early character.

1. Gill wrote that Patara "was famous for the temple of Apollo, which was in it, in which answers [by an oracle-DFC] were given six months [winter-ISBE] in the year, and were on equal credit with the oracle at Delphos."
 - a. Also, Gill noted that "[s]ome say it had its name Patara from Paturus, the son of Apollo."
 - b. Gill mentioned the presence of "statues of Jupiter and Apollo" being present in second century Patara.

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. Wikipedia, citing Le Quien (*Oriens Christianus*, I, 977), mentions several bishops of Patara: Eudemus, present at the Council of Nicaea (325); Eutychianus, at the Council of Seleucia (359); Eudemus, at the Council of Constantinople (381); Cyrinus, at the Council of Chalcedon (451); Licinius, at the Synod of Constantinople (536); and Theodulus, at the Photian Council (879).
2. Gill wrote, "[I]n the 'fourth' century, there was a church here, and a bishop of it: and in the 'sixth' century, a bishop of the church at Patara was in the fifth synod at Rome and Constantinople: and in the 'eighth' century, Anastasius, bishop of this place, was in the Nicene synod."
3. Regarding the idea of "patron saints," ISBE indicated that Patara was "the birthplace of Nicholas, the patron saint of the sailors of the East."
 - a. The ISBE added, "Though born at Patara, Nicholas was a bishop and saint of Myra, a neighboring Lycian city, and there he is said to have been buried."
 - (1). This is the Myra of [Act 27:5-6](#) from which Paul and other prisoners sailed toward Italy on an Alexandrian grain ship.

(2). Rarely, versions of [Act 21:1](#) have Myra as the next stop on the Third Missionary Journey (e.g., the Wycliffe New Testament: "And whanne it was don, that we schulden seile, and weren passid awei fro hem, with streiyt cours we camen to Choum, and the day suyng to Rodis, and fro thennus to Patiram, and fro thennus to Myram.").

4. "The city remains a titular see of the Roman Catholic Church, Patarensis; the seat [as of February, 2009-DFC] has been vacant since the death of the last titular bishop on February 3, 2006" (Wikipedia).

E. Miscellany.

1. The ISBE identified Patara with the modern ruins called Gelemish; however, Wikipedia indicates that "[t]he name Patera is still attached to the numerous ruins of the city."

XXXIV. THE CHURCH AT TYRE.

A. Establishment.

1. Tyre, a Phoenician city known and important to both Old (including [Jos_19:29](#); [2Sa_24:7](#); [1Ki_5:1-11](#); [1Ki_9:10-11](#); [2Ch_2:3-16](#); [Psa_45:12](#); [Psa_87:4](#); [Isa_23:1-18](#); [Jer_25:22](#); [Jer_27:1-11](#); [Jer_47:4](#); [Eze_26:1~Eze_28:19](#); [Joe_3:4-8](#); [Amo_1:9-10](#); [Zec_9:2](#); and [Eze_29:18](#)) and New (including during Jesus' ministry [Mat_15:21-28](#); [Mar_7:24-31](#); [Mar_3:8](#); [Luk_6:17](#); [Mat_11:21-22](#); [Luk_10:13-14](#)) Testaments, was mentioned twice in the church age; aside from Luke's brief note regarding the displeasure of Herod Agrippa "with them of Tyre and Sidon" and their desire for peace [[Act_12:20](#)], Tyre is mentioned--as city and location of brethren--in connection with the Third Missionary Journey ([Act_21:3-7](#)).
 - a. The church had been established prior, for "finding disciples, [the missionaries-DFC] tarried there seven days" ([Act_21:4](#)).
 - (1). Easton wrote, "Here a church was founded soon after the death of Stephen."

B. Early history.

1. In Scripture, there is no mention of Tyre after Paul and his company departed to proceed toward Jerusalem ([Act_21:7](#)).

C. Early character.

1. Regarding the influences upon any congregation in Tyre, a number of things are known.
 - a. The many prophecies against Tyre indicate that she had been an exceedingly ungodly people ([Eze_28:18](#)) in the centuries before the church was established; however, *that* Tyre had been wiped off the map both on the mainland location by Nebuchadnezzar ([Eze_29:18-19](#)) and on the subsequent island location by Alexander the Great (a prophecy regarding Alexander's causeway is found in [Eze_26:12](#)).
 - (1). Much of her wickedness was due to worldliness and excess ([Zec_9:3](#)); that did not change easily, for Tyre "continued to maintain much of its commercial importance till the Christian era" (Easton).
 - (2). Tyre had also been characterized by her worship of the false god Baal and others for whom many of her kings were named, e.g.

Baal-azar, Abd-ashtoreth, and Astartus--not unlike her neighbor Sidon's ([1Ki 16:31](#)).

(a). Their trust in their superstitions is revealed in [Jer 27:9](#).

(b). "Coins refer to the festivals of Actia Heraclia, Heraclia Olympia and Actia Commodiana; and they also illustrate a lavish range of local mythological traditions, as well as depicting temples of Melkart (Heracles) and Ashtoreth (Astarte-Tyche) and portable shrines fitted with carry-bars" (Grant, p. 674).

(3). Also, Tyre's pride had been great ([Isa 23:9](#); [Eze 28:2-5](#); [Eze 28:17](#)).

(a). Perhaps as a side effect of her pride was her disdain for God's people whom she could have and should have aided ([Eze 26:2](#); [Amo 1:9](#)).

b. Gill spoke of Tyre's housing "four hundred Jews, and some of them skilful in the Talmud."

2. Regarding the actual character demonstrated in Scripture, a couple of things can be ascertained.

a. That the brethren in Tyre were concerned for the well-being of Paul, and likely other brethren as well, is evident from their warning Paul about his proceeding to Jerusalem--it should be noted that their warning was an inspired one, for it was "through the Spirit" ([Act 21:4](#)).

b. Judging by Luke's writing "they all brought us on our way, with wives and children" ([Act 21:5](#)), the church at Tyre was composed of members who were family oriented, were concerned that their families knew and obeyed the truth, and who saw the need to be around other Christians and Christian families.

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. "Christianity was accepted by the people of Tyre, so that the 2nd century AD saw a bishopric established there, and in the 4th a council was held there to consider charges against Athanasius, by the party of Arius; he was condemned, a decision which brought the Tyrian church into disrepute. Tyre was already obnoxious to Christians because the anti-Christian philosopher Porphyry was from there" (ISBE).

2. In the late second century, the church in Tyre observed Easter as a religious holiday to the extent that her bishop Cassius and other bishops communicated with each other so they could be sure to observe it on the same day (Eusebius, V.25, p. 181).
3. Origen, who was an ascetic and who viewed Scripture allegorically (Guy, p. 302), died in Tyre around A.D. 254 or 255 (Grant, p. 674).
3. A bishop of Tyre, Tyrannion, was an early martyr (perhaps in the late third century).
4. In the beginning of the fourth century, petitions were made in various places in the empire, including Tyre "demanding that 'the atheists' (Christians) should be should be made to sacrifice [to false gods-DFC] or be expelled from their midst" (Grant, pp. 480,481).
 - (a). A reply "from the tablet at Tyre" is included in Eusebius (IX.7, pp. 290,291).
5. In July, A.D. 335, there was a "Council of Tyre . . . as important as that of Nicea" (Freund, p. 527) by which Athanasius was condemned before over three hundred attendees; he was cleared by a Roman council five or six years later (Freund, p. 529).
6. A second council was held in Tyre in A.D. 449 "which dealt with the cause of Ibas, Bishop of Edessa" (Wikipedia), who was rumored to have "said that 'Hell was only a threat,' and that the 'Jews crucified a man' (Freund, p. 765).
7. A third council was held in Tyre in A.D. 514 or 515 "which rejected the Council of Chalcedon" (Wikipedia) of A.D. 451 (also called the Fourth Ecumenical Council) which had concerned Monophysitism and the religious authority possessed by Constantinople.
8. "It was of considerable importance in the Crusades and continued so until toward the end of the 13th century" (ISBE).
 - a. "[I]t surrendered to the Christians, on the 27th of June 1144" (Smith).
 - b. "It continued more than a century and a half in the hands of Christians, but was deserted by its inhabitants, in A.D. 1291, upon the conquest of Acre, (Ptolemais), by the sultan of Egypt and Damascus. This was the turning-point in the history of Tyre, which has never recovered from the blow" (Smith).
9. "In Hasselquist's day (*Voyages in Levant*, A.D. 1751) there were 'about ten inhabitants, Turks and Christians, living by

fishing" fulfilling the prophecy of [Eze_26:4-5](#) (Fausset).

E. Miscellany.

1. Tyre has been restored, though not to its former glory, and "is the fourth largest city in Lebanon" (Wikipedia).

XXXV. THE CHURCH AT PTOLEMAIS.

A. Establishment.

1. There was a congregation in Ptolemais when Paul and his company stopped there on the Third Missionary Journey ([Act 21:7](#)).
2. When the congregation had been established is a matter of speculation, though likely it was the product of those who fled Jerusalem at the stoning of Stephen ([Act 8:4](#)).
 - a. McGarvey wrote, "The fact that Paul found brethren in Tyre and Ptolemais on the coast of Phenicia, where he had never preached before, reminds us once more of the dispersion of the Church in Jerusalem, and the fact that 'they who were scattered abroad upon the persecution which arose about Stephen, traveled as far as Phenicia, speaking the Word to none but the Jews'" ([Act 11:19](#)).

B. Early history.

1. Nothing is known of the church in Ptolemias aside from that shown in [Act 21:7](#).

C. Early character.

1. As the city--north of Mount Carmel, it lay just just a bit further south of Tyre than Tyre lay south of Sidon--was largely composed of Phoenician inhabitants, it is no surprise that her people would be influenced by mythology.
 - a. Grant wrote, "Coins show the river-god Belos or Bel, and an array of Greco-Roman and Egyptian deities. Other coin types include a flat-roofed shrine of the Semitic god Hadad with carry-bars . . ." (p. 526).
2. Hellenism's (the spread of Greek culture) influence is seen in Herod the Great's having built a gymnasium in Ptolemais (Grant, p. 526).
3. The early church would have been influenced primarily by Judaism; ironically, Robinson wrote, "It was never taken by Israel [presumably this is a reference to [Jdg 1:31](#) -DFC]"
 - a. Grant also mentioned a coin which "recalls the story in the *Mishnah*, recounting that the rabbi Gamaliel [under whom Paul studied ([Act 22:3](#))-DFC] saw no objection to bathing in the city's public baths beneath a statue of Aphrodite" (p. 527).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. Gill provided a concise church history for Ptolemais: "[T]here was a church here in the 'second' century, and Clarus was bishop of it; and in the beginning of the 'fourth' century, there was a bishop present in the synod at Nice; and in the 'fifth' century there was a church here; in the time of Arcadius, the Emperor Antiochus was bishop of Ptolemais, a very eloquent man, called therefore by some Chrysostom; in the 'sixth' century there was a bishop of this church, who assisted at the synod held both at Rome and Constantinople. The bishops of this church are reckoned up, as Reland says, as he found them thus; Clarus, who was in the council at Caesarea, held in the year 198; Aeneas, who was in the council at Nice, in the year 325, and in another at Antioch, in the year 341; Nectabus, who subscribed in the first council at Constantinople, held in the year 381; Paulus, who was present in the Chalcedon council in the year 451: and Joannes, who was in the council at Jerusalem, in the year 536: and perhaps these brethren might be Jews, since those who first preached the Gospel in Phoenicia preached only to Jews . . ."
2. Since its capture "by King Baldwin I of Jerusalem in 1104 in the First Crusade," Acre (as it would be called by Crusaders who "mistakenly identified it with the Philistine city of Ekron") was controlled by both sides several times in the period of the Crusades; ultimately, "[i]t was the final stronghold of the Crusader state, and fell to the Mameluks of the Ayyubid Sultanate in a bloody siege in 1291" (Wikipedia).
 - a. Regarding its being named Acre, one can learn more from Barnes who wrote, "The Christian crusaders gave it the name of Acre, or John of Acre, from a magnificent church which was built in it, and which was dedicated to the apostle John."
3. Here is an interesting tid-bit from modern times: "There are many Bahá'í ["A religion founded in Iran in 1863; emphasizes the spiritual unity of all humankind; incorporates Christian and Islamic tenets; many adherents live in the United States"- WordWeb] holy places in and around Acre. They originate from Bahá'u'lláh's [the founder-DFC] imprisonment in the Citadel during Ottoman Rule. The final years of Bahá'u'lláh's life were spent in the Mansion of Bahjí, just outside Acre, even though he was still formally a prisoner of the Ottoman Empire.

Bahá'u'lláh died on May 29, 1892 in Bahjí, and his shrine is the most holy place for Bahá'ís — their Qiblih, the location that Bahá'ís should face when saying their daily obligatory prayers. It contains the remains of Bahá'u'lláh and is near the spot where he died in the Mansion of Bahjí.

Other Bahá'í holy places in Acre include the House of `Abbúd (where Bahá'u'lláh and his family resided) and the House of `Abdu'lláh Páshá (where later 'Abdu'l-Bahá resided with his family), and the Garden of Ridván where Bahá'u'lláh enjoyed spending the later part of his life" (Wikipedia).

E. Miscellany.

1. Ptolemais, Accho of the Old Testament ([Jdg 1:31](#)), is modern day Acre.

XXXVI. THE CHURCH AT DAMASCUS.

A. Establishment.

1. When the Lord's church was started in Damascus would be a matter of conjecture, but there was a church there when Paul was baptized ([Act 9:19](#), [Act 9:25](#); [Act 22:12-13](#)).
 - a. Is it not ironic that Paul could be baptized where Naaman could not dip? ([2Ki 5:10-14](#)).
2. "By whom the gospel was preached there, or how they had been converted to Christianity, is unknown. The presumption is, that some of those who had been converted on the day of Pentecost had carried the gospel to Syria [[Act 2:9-11](#)]" (Barnes).
3. Gill, commenting on [Act 9:19](#), suggested that the birth of the church in Damascus centered around the Jews "who came from Jerusalem upon the persecution raised against them there; with these Saul continued some few days after his conversion and baptism, for quickly after he went into Arabia, as appears from [Gal 1:17](#). These disciples, with the new converts afterwards, it is highly probable, formed a church state in Damascus."

B. Early history.

1. Ananias lived in Damascus ([Act 9:10](#); [Act 22:12](#)).
 - a. "In late tradition, he is placed in the list of the seventy disciples of Jesus, and represented as bishop of Damascus, and as having died a martyr's death" (ISBE).
2. Christians were targeted in Damascus ([Act 9:1-2](#); [Act 22:5](#)) "[a]s if no disciples of importance (outside the apostles in Jerusalem) were left in Judea" (Robertson on [Act 9:2](#)).
 - a. "Here might be many Christians before, and others might flee hither upon this persecution; and Saul, not content with driving them from their native place, persecuted them, as he himself says, to strange cities: and that he might do this with safety to himself, and with the greater force and cruelty to them, he got letters from the high priest, and sanhedrim, at Jerusalem; either recommending him to the Jews at Damascus, and exhorting them to assist him in what he came about; or empowering him to act under his authority, or both: and these were directed to be delivered **to the synagogues**; to the rulers of them; for the Jews being numerous in this place, they had more synagogues than one. Josephus says, that under Nero

the inhabitants of Damascus killed ten thousand Jews in their own city: and Benjamin Tudelensis in his time says, there were about three thousand Jews (Pharisees), besides two hundred Karaites (or Scripturarians) [a sect of Jews "characterized by the recognition of the Tanakh as its scripture, and the rejection of Rabbinic Judaism and the Oral Law (the Mishnah and the Talmud) as binding"-Wikipedia], and four hundred Samaritans, who lived in peace together" (Gill on [Act 9:2](#)).

3. Paul was baptized there ([Act 22:11-16](#)) and preached in Damascus([Act 9:20](#), [Act 9:22](#); [Act 26:20](#)).
 - a. There was, in Damascus, an inhabitant named Judas (with whom Paul had stayed while blind [[Act 9:11](#)]); it is not known whether he was a Christian, but it appears that Ananias at least knew of him.
 - b. After a foray into Arabia, Paul made a subsequent trip to Damascus ([Gal 1:17](#)) at which time he stayed there three years ([Gal 1:18](#)).
 - c. Paul had to flee Damascus, being threatened ([Act 9:23-25](#); [2Co 11:32-33](#)) as he had threatened ([Act 9:21](#)).

C. Early character.

1. Influences upon early Christians.
 - a. There was a significant population of Jews in Damascus in the earliest days of the church for, as Gill had said from Josephus, ten thousand were there to be killed by their neighbors (Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, II.xx,2).
 - (1). Grant attested, "The *Zadokite Fragment* or *Damascus Document* refers to the migration of an austere, quasi-monastic group of Jews to the city, which may have taken place at this period [early first century B.C.-DFC]: however, the reference to Damascus in the document could be purely metaphorical" (p. 208).
 - b. Worship of false gods had been part of Damascus long history; that worship extended to Greek forms of their gods as well, for "[t]he shrine of Zeus Damascenus--the Semitic storm-god Hadad [who was important in Syria's king's names or titles ([1Ki 15:18-20](#); [2Ch 16:2-4](#); [2Ki 8:7-15](#); [2Ki 13:3](#); [2Ki 13:24-25](#);

[Amo_1:4](#))-DFC]--was the largest of all Syrian sanctuaries" (Grant, p. 209).

2. When Paul was threatened, the church in Damascus did not give in to the hunters, but aided in Paul's escape ([Act_9:25](#)); accordingly, her apparent resolve is a testimony to her character.

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. "Magnus was its bishop at the council of Nice, A.D. 325" (Fausset).
2. "In the catalogue of the council of Nice, which was held in the beginning of the 'fourth' century, Damascus is mentioned as the seat of a church; in the 'fifth' century a bishop of Damascus was in the council at Ephesus; and in the same century it was reckoned a metropolitan church in Asia; in the seventh century it appears there was a church in this place; and even in the 'eighth' century, though the Arabians ravaged in those parts, yet still a church continued here for some time, till Ulid, the prince of the Saracens, took away the temple from the Christians of this place, and dedicated it to Mahomet; after which we hear no more of the church at Damascus" (Gill).
3. "Theodosius I [Roman Emperor-DFC] (379-395) and Arcadius [Byzantine Emporer-DFC] built a church in honor of St. John" (Grant, p. 209).
 - a. In this context, and in harking back to the preponderance of icons in the religious world, the following is worthy of note: "The Umayyad Mosque, also known as the Grand Mosque of Damascus, is one of the largest mosques in the world, and one of the oldest sites of continuous prayer since the rise of Islam. A shrine in the mosque is said to contain . . . the body of St. John the Baptist" (Wikipedia).
4. "[U]nder the early Byzantine emperor, Damascus, though important as an outpost of civilization on the edge of the desert, continued to be second to Antioch both politically and ecclesiastically" (ISBE).
5. In A.D. 634 the Arabs took Damascus so that "it passed out of Christian hands" (ISBE).
6. John of Damascus (A.D. 676-749) who "is sometimes called the last of the Church Fathers by the Roman Catholic Church," is regarded by the Catholic Church "as a Doctor of the Church, often referred to as the Doctor of the Assumption due to his writings on the Assumption of Mary" (Wikipedia).
7. "Christianity has again found a firm footing within its walls"

(Easton).

E. Miscellany.

1. Damascus, which is recognized as the oldest continually inhabited city of the world, remains to this day a city of importance, capital of Syria and home to 4,000,000 (Wikipedia).

XXXVII. THE CHURCH AT ADRAMYTTIUM.

A. Establishment.

1. It is not known if there was ever a church in Adramyttium, but as Paul's first ship from Capernaum was a ship of Adramyttium ([Act_27:2](#)), one cannot help but wonder if any of the sailors were influenced by Paul--there can be little doubt that they knew his story and at least a little of the doctrine he preached.
 - a. Its proximity to some Biblical places is notable, for it was "on the Roman route between Troas and the Hellespont, and Pergames, Ephesus and Miletus" (Fausset).

B. Early history.

1. Nothing is known of any early congregation in Adramyttium.

C. Early character.

1. Adramyttium was a poor town--that would in no way have been a hindrance to her inhabitants' receiving or accepting the Gospel or to their being accepted of God!
 - a. "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them" ([Mat_11:5](#)).
 - b. "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" ([Jam_2:5](#)).
 - c. "As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and *yet* possessing all things" ([2Co_6:10](#)).
 - d. "For all those *things* hath mine hand made, and all those *things* have been, saith the LORD: but to this *man* will I look, *even* to *him that is* poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" ([Isa_66:2](#)).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. Adramyttium, at least the one in the Aegean, is of--at most--little note in church history; however, Gill suggests enigmatically (it is hard to be sure exactly which he was referring to in this) that this could be an Adramyttium in North Africa which did have some importance in church history.
 - a. "The former of these is most likely to be the place here meant; and though we nowhere read of the apostle being here, nor of the Gospel being preached here in the early times of Christianity; yet in the 'fourth' century there was a church in this place, and Philologus was bishop of it, who subscribed at a council held at Carthage in this century; and in the 'fifth' century we read of several bishops of this

place, as Aurelius, who was in the Chalcedon council, Flavianus in that at Ephesus, which was reckoned an infamous one, and Helladius, who was in the first Ephesine council, and Felix, who was banished by Gensericus" (Gill).

E. Miscellany.

1. "The modern *Adramyti* is a poor village" (Smith) but "is a place of some traffic" (Easton).

XXXVIII. THE CHURCH AT SIDON.

A. Establishment.

1. Sidon as home to a church is so mentioned only once in the Bible ([Act_27:3](#)), and that not definitively; however, it is likely the case that there was a church there, for Paul was at "liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself."

a. "Paul had frequently traveled in that direction in going to and returning from Jerusalem, and it is not improbable, therefore, that he had friends in all the principal cities" (Barnes).

b. It is not the case that these were necessarily Christians, but is likely--and the general consensus among commentators is that these were Christians.

(1). Gill took for granted that these were Christians, for "as there were disciples at Tyre, [Act_21:3](#) so it seems there were at Sidon, both which cities were in Phoenicia, and are often mentioned together; and the apostle was allowed to go ashore, and visit his friends, and be refreshed by them, both in body and spirit, and be provided for by them with things convenient for his voyage. ... It is highly probable that there was here a Gospel church, ... and that there were brethren there, appears from note on ... [Act_15:3](#), in which country Sidon was."

(2). Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown had no doubt these were Christians: "no doubt disciples, gained, it would seem, by degrees, all along the Phoenician coast since the first preaching there ..."

(3). McGarvey, likewise, took these to be Christians: "Here we learn that Paul found friends, who were, doubtless, brethren, in the city of Sidon. Thus we find that both the Phenician cities, Tyre and Sidon, to whose wickedness the Savior once so significantly alluded, had, ere now, received the gospel. With the brethren in the former place Paul had spent a week on his voyage to Jerusalem, and now the beginning of another voyage, not much less mournful, is cheered by the hospitality of those in the latter."

(4). Clarke took for granted that these were Christians, and added a note which most would not consider: "It appears that Julius permitted him to go ashore, and visit the Christians which were then at Sidon, without using any extraordinary precautions to prevent his escape. He was probably accompanied with the soldier to whose arm he was chained; and it is reasonable to conclude that this soldier would fare well on St. Paul's account."

(a). [Act_24:23](#) shows Paul's being kept by a centurion and [Act_28:16](#) refers to his being "with a soldier that kept him"; whether he was chained to a soldier at this point is speculation.

[1]. On the former passage, Johnson wrote, "Paul was not put in confinement, but under the charge of an officer who was responsible for him. Usually in this kind of imprisonment the prisoner was bound to a soldier."

[2]. On the latter, Robertson wrote, "Probably a new soldier every day or night, but always with this soldier chained to his right hand day and night."

(b). One cannot help but wonder what sort of impression Paul would have had on this guard if he were so chained, or at the very least on the guards who would be close to him in the future.

(c). Of particular note is that written by Henry: "And that which is observable here is, that *Julius the centurion* was extraordinarily civil to Paul. It is probable that he knew his case, and was one of the *chief captains, or principal men*, that heard him plead his own cause before Agrippa ([Act_25:23](#)), and was convinced of his innocence, and the injury done him;

and therefore, though Paul was committed to him as a prisoner, he treated him as a friend, as a scholar, as a gentleman, and as a man that had an interest in heaven: He *gave him liberty*, while the business of the ship detained it at Sidon, *to go among his friends* there, *to refresh himself*; and it would be a great refreshment to him. Julius herein gives an example to those in power to be respectful to those whom they find worthy of their respect, and in using their power to make a difference. A Joseph, a Paul, are not to be used as common prisoners. God herein encourages those that suffer for him to trust in him; for he can put it into the hearts of those to befriend them from whom they least expect it - can cause them to be pitied, nay, can cause them to be prized and valued, even in the eyes of those that carry them captive, [Psa 106:46](#). And it is likewise an instance of Paul's fidelity. He did not go about to make his escape, which he might have easily done; but, being out upon his parole of honour, he faithfully returns to his imprisonment. If the centurion is so civil as to take his word, he is so just and honest as to keep his word."

- c. It is possible that these were Christians from Tyre, for "according to R. Benjamin it was a day's journey from hence to Tyre" (Gill); however, how would those in Tyre know to travel there to meet him?
- 2. Taking for granted the existence of a church there, when and by whom might it have been established?
 - a. "It is highly probable that there was here a Gospel church, but by whom planted cannot be said; our Lord himself was at the borders of this place, [Mat 15:21](#) and the ministers of the word scattered at the death of Stephen, went as far as Phoenicia preaching the

Gospel, [Act_11:19](#)" (Gill).

B. Early history.

1. Nothing else is known of the church in Sidon in Bible times.

C. Early character.

1. Sidon, like her neighbor Tyre, had a history of worshiping false gods.
 - a. Solomon married a "Zidonian" and as if it were a dowry got her false goddess, Ashtoreth, as well ([1Ki_11:1](#), [1Ki_11:4-5](#), [1Ki_11:33](#); [2Ki_23:13](#)).
 - b. Ahab likewise worshipped baal after he took Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, to wife ([1Ki_16:31](#)).
 - (1). Note "bel" and "baal" in their names--tributes to their false gods.
 - c. In the valley in which Sidon is located has been found "remains of a shrine of the healing god Eshmun (Asclepius, Aesculapius)" (Grant, p. 589).
2. Along with worship of false gods, philosophy could have had an influence upon the early church, for "[i]t was noted for its school of philosophy under Augustus and Tiberius" (ISBE).
 - a. That such could influence God's people was shown a millenium and a half earlier ([Jdg_10:6](#), "And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the LORD, and served not him.").
3. Like Tyre, Sidon had been the object of numerous ominous prophesies ([Jer_25:15-22](#); [Jer_27:3-11](#); [Jer_47:4](#); [Eze_28:21-23](#); [Eze_32:30](#); [Joe_3:4-8](#)).
 - a. Her former character is exhibited in [Jdg_18:7](#); [Jer_27:9](#); [Mat_11:21-22](#).
4. Two verses show the Bible student that the people of Sidon were interested in Truth, for many of her inhabitants sought to hear Jesus ([Mar_3:8](#); [Luk_6:17](#)).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. Gill wrote, "in the 'third' century there was a church in this place, and Zenobius was presbyter of it, who suffered martyrdom under Dioclesian [i.e., Diocletian who reigned 284-305 and whose persecution lasted 303-311-Wikipedia; of this persecution, Fox wrote, "Racks, scourges, swords, daggers, crosses, poison, and famine, were made use of in various parts to dispatch the Christians; and invention was exhausted to

devise tortures against such as had no crime, but thinking differently from the votaries of superstition" (chapter 2)]; in the 'fourth' century there was a bishop of the church here, at the synod held at Nice; in the 'fifth' century the bishop of the Sidonians, in the council of Chalcedon, declared his opinion with others against Dioscorus [who tried to elevate Jerusalem above Antioch-DFC], whose name was Damianus; in the 'sixth' century, mention is made of a bishop of Sidon, in the acts of the council held at Rome and Constantinople, and in the same century a synod met at Sidon, in the 20th year of Anastasius the emperor: the account of the bishops of Sidon, as given by Reland, is as follows; Theodorus bishop of Sidon subscribed in the first Nicene council, in the year 325; Paulus subscribed in the first council at Constantinople, in the year 381; Damianus was in the council held at Chalcedon, in the year 451; Megas is mentioned in the acts and epistles subjoined to the Chalcedon council; Andreas, bishop of this place, is taken notice of in a letter of John of Jerusalem."

2. "On December 4, 1110 Sidon was sacked in the First Crusade by King Baldwin of Jerusalem and King Sigurd of Norway. It then became the centre of the Lordship of Sidon, an important seigneury in the Kingdom of Jerusalem. During the Crusades it was sacked several times: it was finally destroyed by the Saracens in 1249" (Wikipedia).

E. Miscellany.

1. One of Jesus' two trips out of Judaea was "into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon" ([Mat_15:21-28](#); [Mar_7:24-31](#)).
2. Traditionally, Sidon was the daughter of Tyre; "On a coin of the age of Antiochus IV Tyre claims to be 'mother of the Sidonians,' being at that time the capital city" (Fausset); additionally, "[f]rom a biblical point of view, this city is inferior in interest to its neighbor **Tyre**" (Smith).
 - a. Grant actually stated it the other way: "Sidon was known as the 'mother' of its neighbor Tyre, whose King Hiram was for a time the ruler of both cities" (p. 588).
 - (1). It is possible that "Zidonians" is a term fitting the Phoenicians in general (Smith referring to [Jos_13:6](#) and [Jdg_18:7](#)), showing her supremacy; however, Tyre is always first when the two are listed together (e.g., [Joe_3:4](#); while true of the exact expression "Tyre and Sidon" or "Tyre and Zidon," the two are seen in [Ezr_3:7](#) and [1Ch_22:4](#) with Sidon

first), showing her supremacy.

- (2). Perhaps the discrepancy is due to the time element, with Sidon then Tyre being seen as the greater of the two (e.g., "Tyre and Sidon" appears ten times in the New Testament, Tyre and Zidon only once in the Old Testament).

- (a). Antiochus Epiphanes IV would have been minting coins closer to the New Testament age than the Old Testament age.

- 3. Today, Sidon or Saida is the third largest city in Lebanon; having grown from 10,000 in 1900 to 200,000 today (Wikipedia).

XXXIX. THE CHURCH AT MYRA.

A. Establishment.

1. Myra was the location of a change of ship during Paul's trip to Rome ([Act 27:5](#)); no church is alluded to in Scripture and whether any significant time was spent off-ship by Paul would be conjecture.
 - a. However, as the harbor of Myra (which was "about 2 1/2 miles from the coast"-Easton, ISBE) was Andriace (Grant, p. 413) or Andriake (Wikipedia), Paul may have left the harbor area and actually entered Myra--or Myra could have been a term applied to both city and harbor.
 - (1). Accordingly, Fausset wrote, "A large Byzantine church in the gorge leading to the mountains testifies of the Christianity probably first introduced by Paul."
 - (2). Gill was of the same mind; he wrote, "[H]ere the apostle staying some time, though it cannot be said how long, no doubt opened the box of the precious ointment [myrrh, from which some feel the city took its name-DFC] of the Gospel, and diffused the savour of it in this place."

B. Early history.

1. Myra is not seen congregation-wise in Scripture.

C. Early character.

1. Greco-Roman mythology was given importance through worship of the city's goddess Artemis Eleuthera ("an ancient and modern Greek term for, and personification of, liberty"-Wikipedia), whose image in her temple was "accompanied by a figure of winged Nike" (Grant, p. 413).
 - a. The gods Pluto ("the god of the underworld in ancient mythology; brother of Zeus and husband of Persephone"-WordWeb) and Serapis (a Greco-Egyptian god--apparently connected in some way with death, perhaps as protector of the dead--who in the first century, and perhaps beyond, was worshipped even by some professed Christians in Egypt-Wikipedia) have also been found in reliefs in Myra (Grant, p. 413).
 - (1). That Pluto or Serapis (if Serapis be connected with death) should be gods of Myra is not surprising, for Myra was home to two

necropoli--cities of the dead--which were cut into the city's cliff-side (Wikipedia).

- b. Zeus, Athena, and Tyche ("the goddess of fortune; identified with Roman Fortuna"-WordWeb) were also honored in Myra (Wikipedia).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. In the fourth century the Bishop was St. Nicolaus Orphanos, "renowned for miraculously saving the lives of travelers and shipwrecked sailors, and for bringing the dead back to life. He was also the protector of prisoners, and gained special fame as the children's patron, Santa Claus" (Grant, p. 413).
 - a. Nicolaus was "was an ardent opponent of Arianism at the First Council of Nicaea in 325" (Wikipedia).
 - b. Gill indicated that Nicolaus was persecuted; he wrote, "[T]here showed the scars and marks upon him, because of his constant confession of Christ under Maximinus."
 - c. Until the eleventh century, Nicolaus' bones were in Myra's church of St. Nicolaus, but they were stolen and ended up in Bari, in Italy, where they remain to this day (Wikipedia).
2. Regarding the following centuries, Gill wrote, "[I]n the 'fifth' century there was a bishop of this place, whose name was Romanus, and was in two synods, in the infamous one at Ephesus, where he favoured Eutyches, and in that at Chalcedon; in the 'sixth' century mention is made of a bishop of this church in the acts of the synod at Rome and Constantinople; in the 'seventh' century, Polyeuctus, bishop of Myra, was in the sixth synod at Constantinople, and in this century Myra was the metropolitan church of Lycia; in the 'eighth' century, Theodorus, bishop of it, was in the Nicene synod; and in the ninth century this place was taken by the Saracens."

E. Miscellany.

1. Myra of ancient days was modern Kale, but became Demre in 2005 (Wikipedia).

XL. THE CHURCH AT FAIR HAVENS.

A. Establishment.

1. Fair Havens was the harbor of Lasea in Crete; in this area Paul spent a great deal of time during his trip to Rome ([Act_27:8-9](#)).
2. The existence of or establishment of a congregation in Fair Havens is not explicitly stated; however, given the time ashore, such establishment by Paul at this time is by not means unreasonable.
3. A congregation could have already been in existence when Paul arrived, for there were Cretans in Jerusalem on Pentecost ([Act_2:11](#)).
4. At the very least, Crete in general and every Cretan city in particular was an area in which focus was placed by the missionaries of the first century, particularly Titus ([Tit_1:5](#)).

B. Early history.

1. Nothing is known of an early congregation in Fair Havens.

C. Early character.

1. The inhabitants were Cretans who "*are* alway liars, evil beasts, slow bellies" ([Tit_1:12](#)).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. Nothing is known of a congregation in the Fair Havens historically.

E. Miscellany.

1. Fair Havens remained Fair Havens in Fausset's day (nineteenth century); it was called "Kalus Limeonas" according to Robertson (twentieth century).
2. Smith wrote that Fair Havens was "not mentioned in any other ancient writing"; accordingly, its use in Scripture is interesting.
3. Barnes wrote, "It is called in ancient Dutch and French Sailing Directions 'the beautiful bay.'"

XLI. THE CHURCH AT LASEA.

A. Establishment.

1. Lasea was a city in which area Paul spent a great deal of time during his trip to Rome ([Act 27:8-9](#)).
 - a. Though not immediately at the harbor, "[i]f Paul's ship was detained long at this anchorage, it would be necessary to purchase stores from Lasea" (ISBE).
2. As with Fair Havens, the existence of or establishment of a congregation in Lasea is not explicitly stated; however, given the time ashore, such establishment is by not means unreasonable.
3. Likewise, as with Fair Havens, a congregation could have already been in existence when Paul arrived, for there were Cretans in Jerusalem on Pentecost ([Act 2:11](#)).
4. Again, at the very least, Crete in general and every Cretan city in particular was an area in which focus was placed by the missionaries of the first century, particularly Titus ([Tit 1:5](#)).

B. Early history.

1. Nothing is known of an early congregation in Lasea.

C. Early character.

1. Again, the inhabitants were Cretans who "*are* alway liars, evil beasts, slow bellies" ([Tit 1:12](#)).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. Nothing is known of a congregation in the Fair Havens historically.

E. Miscellany.

1. Lasea is no longer around, although its "ruins were examined in 1856 by G. Brown" (ISBE) "a few miles to the eastward of Fair Havens" (Smith).
2. As with Fair Havens, no ancient writer spoke of Lasea (Robertson).

XLII. THE CHURCH AT MELITA.

A. Establishment.

1. After Paul's wrecking ship was abandoned, those on board--all of them ([Act 27:34](#), [Act 27:44](#))--found themselves on the island of Melita among barbarous (non-Greek speaking-Mosher; "The natives are called 'barbarians' ([Act 28:2](#)) not as savages, but as speaking neither Greek nor Latin ([Rom 1:14](#)), but a Phoenician or Punic dialect corrupted by foreign idioms of the mixed population"-Fausset) people ([Act 28:1-11](#)).
- a. It is assumed that the church was established on Melita at this time; Grant wrote, "St. Paul was shipwrecked off the coast of the island c AD 60, and according to tradition its Christianity dates from this time" (p. 388).
- b. Gill wrote, "[V]ery likely many of them were converted under the apostle's ministry; for it can hardly be thought that the apostle should be on this island three months, as he was, and not preach the Gospel to the inhabitants of it, in which he always met with success, more or less; and the great respect shown him at his departure seems to confirm this; though we meet with no account of any church, or churches, or preachers of the word in this place, in ecclesiastical history, until the 'sixth' century ..."

B. Early history.

1. Nothing is known, Scripture-wise, of the early church in Melita.

C. Early character.

1. The inhabitants of Melita were superstitious.
 - a. This was demonstrated by their assumption of Paul's guilt, for while he had escaped shipwreck, fate had not given up and now conspired against him to kill him nonetheless ([Act 28:3-4](#)).
 - b. Their worship of gods is illustrated by their temples of Juno ["queen of the Olympian gods who protected marriage; wife and sister of Jupiter; counterpart of Greek Hera"-WordWeb] and Hercules.
 - (1). The first temples on Melita were actually from "the Neolithic period" (Grant, p. 387), specifically 3600-3000 B.C. (Wikipedia).
 - (a). One may actually see pictures of these temples at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Megalithic_Temples_of_Melita

[Malta.](#)

- c. This was further shown in their presuming Paul a god following his survival ([Act 28:5-6](#)).
 - (1). In this way they were not unlike the inhabitants of Lystra who when they saw the healing of the cripple "called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius" and "brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice" ([Act 14:8-13](#)).
 - d. Note Fausset who commented that "the Christianity which [Paul] introduced has continued since, though sadly corrupted by superstition."
2. The inhabitants of Melita were by no means "barbarians" in modern terms--McGarvey wrote, "The term had not the same sense of reproach which it bears now; yet those to whom it was applied were regarded as comparatively uncivilized. Their kindness to the shipwrecked strangers was true philanthropy, being prompted by the simple fact that they were men in distress."
- a. They showed Paul and his companions "no little kindness" ([Act 28:2](#)).
 - (1). "The 'unusual kindness' ... of the islanders showed itself in their willingness to build a huge fire around which the passengers could warm themselves in the cold November rain" (College Press).
 - b. They were trusting enough to allow a prisoner to wander around gathering sticks ([Act 28:2](#)); incidentally, we learn something of the character of Paul who, even in this position, busied himself with what his hands found to do (would we expect any less of Paul who wrote in [2Th 3:8-10](#), "Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.").
 - (1). "Paul could have been disgruntled because of this further delay in reaching Rome. Instead he took the disaster in stride. He didn't sit on the beach grumbling with the survivors about

why this difficulty had happened.

Note the human dimension of active helpfulness shown us as the great apostle gathers firewood to help warm and dry the soaked and weary travelers. He could have ordered Aristarchus to do that, or held back waiting for others to serve him." (*The Preacher's Commentary*).

- c. "[T]he chief man of the island, whose name was Publius" welcomed Paul and his company into his home where they were "lodged ... three days courteously" ([Act 28:7](#)).

(1). Already these--who may have been and probably were the first converts on Melita--had an understanding of hospitality which would translate into their Christian service.

- (a). [Lev 19:33-34](#), "And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex [*"maltreat: ... oppress"-Strong*] him. *But* the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God."

- (b). [Rom 12:13](#), "Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality."

- (c). [Rom 16:1-2](#), "I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also."

- (d). [1Ti 5:10](#), "Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently

followed every good work."

(e). [Heb 13:2](#), "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

(f). [1Pe 4:9-10](#), "Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, *even so* minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

(g). [3Jo 1:5-8](#), "Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth."

d. Those among whom Paul worked miracles "also honoured [the company] with many honours; and when [the company] departed, they laded [*the company*] with such things as were necessary" ([Act 28:10](#)).

(1). Probably, as Gill noted, the whole shipload of people benefitted.

3. Reading Smith one may find another attribute of the inhabitants of Melita: They were hard workers, for "[i]t is naturally a barren rock, with no high mountains, but has been rendered fertile by industry and toil."

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. "There is evidence dating to the 3rd century CE of Christian burials and rituals having taken place" (Wikipedia).

2. To finish the earlier quote of Gill, consider that "we meet with no account of any church, or churches, or preachers of the word in this place, in ecclesiastical history, until the 'sixth' century, when mention is made of a bishop of the island of Melita."

3. "The knights of John flourished here in later times" (Fausset).

a. Clarke gives an explanation of how that came to be:

"Charles V., emperor of Germany, took possession

of it by his conquest of Naples and Sicily; and he gave it in 1525 to the knights of Rhodes, who are also called the knights of St. John of Jerusalem."

4. Inhabitants today are allowed to worship as they please, but the state and dominant (98%) religion is Roman Catholicism (Wikipedia).

E. Miscellany.

1. Melita is modern Malta and is home to St. Paul's Bay (Easton).
2. Of note given the presence of a "chief man" ([Act 28:7](#)) on the island is this from Fausset: "Two inscriptions, Greek and Latin, in Civita Vecchia in Malta record the title 'the chief (*protos, primus*) of the Maltese.'"
 - a. Smith expounded, "Its chief officer, (under the governor of Sicily), appears from inscriptions to have had the title of **Protos Melitaion**, or **Primus Melitensium**, and this is the very phrase which Luke uses."
3. Also of note, another demonstration of the agreement between Scripture and observation: "A bay 2 1/2 miles Northwest of Valetta, the mouth of which is held by tradition to be the place where the vessel that bore Paul ran ashore, tallies admirably with the description of the locality in Acts. The Admiralty charts indicate places near the west side of the entrance to the bay, where the depth is first 20 ft. [fathoms; note [Act 27:28](#)] and then [fathoms] 15 ft., while the rush of the breakers in front of the little island of Salmoneta and behind it suit the reference to a place 'where two seas met' ([Act 27:41](#))" (ISBE).
 - a. Moreover, consider this from Fausset: "They then turned the ship's head to the N. on the starboard tack. the only course whereby to escape falling into the Syrtis. Thus, for 13 days they drifted through Adria, i.e. the middle of the Mediterranean between Crete and Sicily. If we deduce the ship's course from that of the wind, from the angle of the ship's head with the wind, and from the leeway, she must have drifted nearly W. by N., the precise bearing of the N. of Malta from the S. of Clauda. The rate of drift would average a mile and a half an hour, so that in 13 days she would pass over 468 miles; and Malta is from Clauda, just 476 miles. The striking coincidence at once identifies Malta as the scene, and confirms Luke's accuracy."
4. Finally, consider this concerning the integrity of the Scriptures: "The objection that there are no vipers in Malta is overruled

by the fact that Mr. Lewin saw such a serpent there, and that there may have been vipers in the wilder ancient times, even were none found there now" (Smith).

XLIII. THE CHURCH AT SYRACUSE.

A. Establishment.

1. Three days were spent in Syracuse by Paul and his traveling companions during the Journey to Rome ([Act 28:12](#)).
 - a. Given the length of the stay, it is not improbable that Paul preached the Gospel in Syracuse.
 - b. Whether he preached to brethren who were already there, converted the first disciples there at that time, or had no success whatsoever is not known.
2. Clarke seems to have been of the opinion that the church was planted there by Paul; he wrote, "Christianity, in some form or other, has existed here ever since St. Paul spent the three days in it ..."
 - a. Grant, by all means more of a secular than religious historian, speaks of Paul's "staying with the Christian community" during the three day stay at Syracuse (p. 615).

B. Early history.

1. There is no other mention of Syracuse in Scripture.

C. Early character.

1. Clarke indicated that the people of Syracuse were warrior-like; not exactly the population one would expect to provide fertile soil for the preaching of the Gospel; however, some Bible warriors were spoken of as worthy examples character-wise (e.g., Cornelius and virtually every other centurion of Scripture).
 - a. Hitchcock indicates that Syracuse means "that draws violently."
2. Mythological influence.
 - a. Numerous sources speak of "an abundant freshwater spring, Arethusa, named after the nymph ["a minor nature goddess usually depicted as a beautiful maiden"- WordWeb] who, according to the Greek mythology, had escaped from Greece to avoid the attentions of the river-god Alpheus; but she fled in vain, since he flowed under the Ionian Sea and rejoined her" (Grant, p. 614)--this spring was at the original location of Syracuse on an island called Ortygia which lay just off of Sicily.
 - b. Temples of Zeus, Apollo, and Athena were found in what was the original location of Syracuse (Grant, p. 616).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. "It is certain there were churches in Sicily very early; we read of them in the 'second' and 'third' centuries; in the time of Constantine, at the beginning of the 'fourth' century, there was a

church at Syracuse, of which Chrestus was bishop, to whom the emperor wrote a letter himself, which is still extant in Eusebius: in the 'fifth' century, Hilarius, a teacher at Syracuse, wrote from thence to Augustine, concerning the Pelagian heresy, to whom he gave an answer: in the 'sixth' century, Maximinianus, bishop of this church, had the inspection of all the churches in Sicily committed to him, by Gregory; who was wonderfully preserved in a shipwreck, as he was returning from Rome; in this same age lived John, bishop of Syracuse, and Trajanus a presbyter, and Felix a deacon of the same church: in the seventh century there was one George bishop of this place, to whom Pope Vitalian wrote a letter; and in the same century a bishop of this church was in the sixth council at Constantinople" (Gill).

a. The aforementioned letter from the emperor to Chrestus was an invitation from Constantine Augustus to be a part of a council ("the Church Council of Arelate (Arles, 314)" [Grant, p. 616] in the month of August) designed to deal with differences between churches in Gaul and Africa; interestingly, the emperor even dictated what sort of company was to travel with Chrestus.

b. The "aforementioned Pelagian heresy" involved what would later be especially associated with John Calvin, specifically original sin and predestination.

(1). Pelagius lived A.D. 354-c420 or 440, while Calvin lived A.D. 1509-1564; indeed, "there is no new thing under the sun" ([Ecc_1:9](#)).

2. Grant added, "Early Christianity is represented by extensive catacombs (large areas of which have been methodically explored), including those named after St. John the Evangelist, beside his church in which St. Marcian, the first bishop, martyred under Valerian (A.D. 253-260), is believed to have been buried. St. Lucia (or "Saint Lucy, she was born in Syracuse and her feast day, Saint Lucy's Day, is celebrated on 13 December"- Wikipedia), the city's patron saint, died in the persecutions of Diocletian (c305)" (p. 616).

E. Miscellany.

1. "This city [called Saragossa in Gill's day-DFC] was almost totally destroyed by an earthquake in 1693: its present population amounts to but about 18,000" (Clarke).

XLIV. THE CHURCH AT RHEGIUM.

A. Establishment.

1. Rhegium receives a very brief acknowledgment during Luke's account of the Journey to Rome ([Act 28:13](#)).

- a. There a day was spent by the travelers as they apparently waited on the wind to change.

- (1). "By curious coincidence the figures on its extant coins are the 'twin brothers, Castor and Pollux,' from whom Paul's ship was named [[Act 28:11](#) -DFC]" (Fausset).

B. Early history.

1. Rhegium received no other attention in Scripture.

C. Early character.

1. Religiously, temples and shrines show that Apollo, Artemis [Diana], Isis ["Egyptian goddess of fertility"-WordWeb], and Serapis were venerated in Rhegium (Grant, p. 537).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. "Reggio Calabria is known as the location of the first dated Hebrew book, a Rashi commentary on the Pentateuch, printed in 1475; however, scholars consider Rome as the city where Hebrew printing began" (Wikipedia).

- a. Aside from a couple of saints having been from Rhegium, it is not of much religious note.

E. Miscellany.

1. It is today called Reggio Calabria, capital of the province of the same name (Wikipedia).

XLV. THE CHURCH AT PUTEOLI.

A. Establishment.

1. In Puteoli Paul and the fellow travelers journeying to Rome found members of the church ([Act 28:13-14](#)).
 - a. Christianity came to be in Puteoli perhaps because these had been converted in Jerusalem ([Act 2:5](#)).
 - b. Whatever the background of the church, it is interesting that the wish of the brethren that Paul and the others stay dictated what all did--how often have those associating with a prisoner been given the privilege of planning the captors' itinerary?
 - c. Of the brethren, Gill wrote, "Christians; which is not to be wondered at, since it was a port much frequented, and where many came and went, of different countries and nations; particularly there were many Jews here, to whom the Gospel was first preached, and to some of them it was the power of God unto salvation in many places, and doubtless was so here: Josephus speaks of Jews in this place, who were deceived by a false Alexander, who pretended to be the son of Herod, a prince of their nation."

B. Early history.

1. No other mention of Puteoli is made in Scripture, unless a connection exists in "Patrobulus, the same with Patrobas in [Rom 16:14](#); who is reckoned one of the seventy disciples, is said to be bishop of this place" (Gill).

C. Early character.

1. Religiously, apparently Neptune ("god of the sea; counterpart of Greek Poseidon"-WordWeb) and Diana were worshipped in Puteoli (Grant, p. 528).
 - a. In connection with volcanic activity in the Phlegraean Fields north of Puteoli, Grant mentioned, "To the ancients, the subterranean rumblings from the hot and viscous ground suggested the underworld horrors of Tartarus, and prompted many mythological tales" (p. 529).
 - (1). Some seeking to have the Bible be the product of man would say this was an origin of the Christian concept of hell; however, the Jews had a concept of hell long before the church was established.

b. "It is famous for its temple of Jupiter Serapis" (Clarke).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. "[W]e have no account of its church state until the 'fifth' century,

when a bishop of the church at Puteoli is said to be in the council held at Ephesus against Eutyches, and sustained the place of Leo, pope of Rome: in the 'sixth' century, a bishop of this church was in a council held at Rome, under Symmachus: in the seventh century, the bishop of Puteoli was in the sixth council at Constantinople" (Gill).

E. Miscellany.

1. Puteoli is modern Pozzuoli (Wikipedia).
2. Ironically, Puteoli is the volcanic area from which the volcanic ash, "called *pozzolana* today" (ISBE), used to produce hydraulic concrete was gathered--that concrete was used to build the port at Caesarea from which Paul had sailed ([Act 25:4](#); [Act 27:2](#)).

XLVI. THE CHURCH AT APPII FORUM.

A. Establishment.

1. Having made progress from sea onto the famed Appian Way ([Act 28:14](#)), Paul and his fellow-travelers were met by supporting brethren in various locations, such as Appii Forum.
 - a. "It was 43 miles from Rome. Here Paul was met by some Roman [given the fact that "from thence" pointed back to "we went toward Rome"-DFC] Christians on his way to the capital. It was natural that they should halt here and wait for him, because from this place there were two ways by which travelers might journey to Rome" (Easton).
 - (1). Clarke wrote, "About 52 miles from Rome; a long way to come on purpose to meet the apostle!"
 - b. Given that these met Paul in this place, this passage does not necessarily indicate a church was in this place.

B. Early history.

1. No other is mention is made of Appii Forum in Scripture.

C. Early character.

1. That this was basically a market town would not indicate much aside from perhaps its being materialistic ([Luk 12:15](#)).
2. Robertson reported on the reputation of Appii Forum, "Appii Forum had a bad reputation, the haunt of thieves, thugs, and swindlers. What would this motley crowd think of Paul chained to a soldier?"
 - a. "Horace ["the leading Roman lyric poet during the time of Augustus"-Wikipedia] mentions it as the usual halt at the end of the first days journey from Rome, and describes it as full of boatmen and cheating innkeepers" (Wikipedia).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. Concerning Appii Forum, there is no evidence of any religious activity aside from this Biblical mention.

E. Miscellany.

1. Though Appii Forum is not extant, "[t]here is no difficulty in identifying the site with some ruins near *Treponti*" (Smith).

XLVII. THE CHURCH AT THREE TAVERNS.

A. Establishment.

1. Like Appii Forum, Three Taverns was no more in Scripture, and little more apart from Scripture, than a place where Paul was met by brethren from Rome ([Act_28:15](#)).
 - a. This was actually the last waypoint on the journey to Rome ([Act_28:16](#)).
 - b. More of a tribute to Rome than Appii Forum or Three Taverns, the Preacher's Commentary aptly commented, "The church at Rome had looked forward to Paul's visit. They needed his encouragement as much as he needed theirs. The church had grown from a small nucleus of Jews who had been in Jerusalem at Pentecost when the church was born. The fellowship grew as Hebrew-Christian merchants and travelers settled in the Roman capital. A significant portion of the church was made up of the Liberti, slaves who had purchased their freedom. And then there were converts from among the population of Jews. Added to all these were Romans, many of whom were secret followers of Christ, some in fact, from Caesar's household. Christianity was alive and well in Rome. And now the apostle Paul had come to them. We can imagine the sheer delight and exuberance expressed that day along the Appian Way to Rome"--note especially that last thought!
2. It is not known when the early church may have been established in Three Taverns--if at all.
 - a. As it was on the road to Rome, it is not too much of a stretch to think that many early converts ([Act_2:10](#)) and missionaries passed through Three Taverns "preaching the word" ([Act_8:4](#)).

B. Early history.

1. No mention is made in Scripture of any early congregation in Three Taverns.

C. Early character.

1. As with Appii Forum, nothing can even be suggested than that perhaps the inhabitants of Three Taverns, an economic outpost, were materialistic ([Luk_12:15](#))--that they were merely would be speculation.

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. "It became an episcopal see, but this was united with that of Velletri in 592 owing to the desertion of the place" (Wikipedia).

2. "[A]mong the bishops assembled on account of Donatus [apparently at the Church Council of Arelate of August, A.D. 314-DFC], mention is made of one 'Felix a Tribus Tabernis', or Felix bishop of Tres Tabernae, the same place we call 'the Three Taverns'" (Gill).
 - a. Donatus and his followers taught that Christians who renounced Christ, called "betrayers" or "traitors" or *traditores*, to avoid persecution could not subsequently simply repent and be pardoned (Freund, p. 489).
 - (1). "A schismatic Christian religion in northern Africa from the 4th to the 7th century; held that only those who led a blameless life belonged in the church or could administer the sacraments" ("Donatism" in WordWeb).
 - (2). Donatus actually "was said to be rebaptizing clergy who had lapsed and 'causing a schism' ..." (Freund, p. 489).
 - b. Such a simple matter might seem to have been of little consequence, but with the battle of the Donatists, "[t]he unity of Western Christendom was no more" (Freund, p. 492).

E. Miscellany.

1. Three Taverns should be called Three Shops, for it "took its name from the three shops there, the general store, the blacksmith's, and the refreshment-house" (Forbes, *Footsteps of Paul*, p. 20, in Wikipedia); coincidentally--or more likely not, it was the meeting place of three roads at what was the last station on the road to Rome from the south.
2. "The distances, reckoning southward from Rome are given as follows in the Antonine Itinerary: 'to Aricia, 16 miles; to Three Taverns, 17 miles; to Appii Forum, 10 miles;' and, comparing this with what is still observed along the line of road, we have no difficulty in coming to the conclusion that 'Three Taverns' was near the modern *Cisterna*" (Smith).

XLVIII. THE CHURCH AT ROME.

A. Establishment.

1. There is no reason to doubt that the church in Rome had its beginning when Jewish proselytes converted in Jerusalem on Pentecost in A.D. 29 ([Act 2:10](#)) returned home bearing the Gospel seed ([Luk 8:11](#)) and producing fruit.
 - a. "On the day of Pentecost there were in Jerusalem 'strangers from Rome,' who doubtless carried with them back to Rome tidings of that great day, and were instrumental in founding the church there" (Easton).
2. The ISBE was not quite so confident: "The date of the introduction of Christianity into Rome cannot be determined. A Christian community existed at the time of the arrival of Paul ([Act 28:15](#)), to which he had addressed his Epistle a few years before (58 AD). It is commonly thought that the statement regarding the expulsion of the Jews from Rome under Claudius on account of the commotion excited among them by the agitation of Chrestus (Suetonius *Claudius* 25: *Iudaeos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantis Roma expulit*), probably in 49 AD, is proof of the diffusion of Christian teaching in Rome, on the ground that Chrestus is a colloquial, or mistaken, form of Christus. It has been suggested that the Christian faith was brought to the capital of the empire by some of the Romans who were converted at the time of Pentecost ([Act 2:10](#), [Act 2:41](#)). It would be out of place to discuss here the grounds for the traditional belief that Peter was twice in Rome, once before 50 AD and again subsequent to the arrival of Paul, and that together the two apostles established the church there. Our present concern is with the attitude of the government and society toward Christianity, when once established. It may suffice, therefore, to remind the reader that Paul was permitted to preach freely while nominally in custody ([Phi 1:13](#)), and that as early as 64 AD the Christians were very numerous (Tacitus *Ann.* xv. 44: *multitudo ingens*)."
3. Neither was Smith: "Nothing is known of the first founder of the Christian Church at Rome. Christianity may, perhaps, have been introduced into the city not long after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the **Day of Pentecost**, by the 'strangers of Rome,' who were then at Jerusalem, [Act 2:10](#). It is clear that there were many Christians at Rome before St. Paul visited the city. [Rom 1:8](#); [Rom 1:13](#); [Rom 1:15](#); [Rom 15:20](#). The names of twenty-four Christians at Rome are given in the salutations at the end of the Epistle to the Romans."

B. Early history.

1. Expulsion of the Jews--Christians?

a. Is it possible that the Jews who were expelled from Rome were actually Jewish Christians?

(1). It has been noted that very probably the first Christians in Rome were ones returning from Jerusalem after the establishment of the church.

(2). Aquila and Priscilla were likely Christians before they first appeared in Scripture ([Act 18:2](#)); they could have been converted in Jerusalem (note Pontus in [Act 2:9](#) and that Aquila was from Pontus) and returned to or moved to Rome after a period in Jerusalem.

(a). It is also possible that Paul could have converted them at this time--they were spoken of as Jews showing their relation to Paul nationality-wise and tent-makers showing their relation to Paul vocation-wise and showing why Paul "abode with them."

(3). As mentioned previously, Tacitus wrote of the reason for expulsion as being due to Chrestus--if this be Christ, then why not have at least some of those expelled be Christians?

2. Paul and Rome.

a. By the time Paul reached Rome, [Act 28:15](#), he had already written the church there a letter ([Rom 1:1](#), [Rom 1:7](#)) and expressed his desire to evangelize among them ([Rom 1:15](#), c.f., [Act 23:11](#)).

3. Consider the Christians named in Romans.

a. Phebe ([Rom 16:1](#)), who was from Cenchrea but traveled to Rome as the one carrying Paul's epistle, is described as a "servant of the church."

b. The aforementioned Aquila and Priscilla ([Rom 16:3](#)) who personally apparently were persecuted ([Rom 16:4](#)) yet continued to host worshipping Christians in their home ([Rom 16:5](#)).

(1). Note that Rome was home to multiple congregations of the Lord's church--some have argued that no city should have more than one, but Rome is an example, in a larger city at least, of a location where there were multiple churches!

- c. Epaphroditus ([Rom 16:5](#)) who was one of the firstfruits in Asia.
- (1). Note the ISBE: "*Textus Receptus of the New Testament* has "firstfruits of Achaia" but this wrong reading is due to [1Co 16:15](#). He was one of the first Christians in the Roman province of Asia."
 - (2). Almost certainly not a reference to the one in this text, "An interesting discovery was made in Rome of an inscription in which was the name of Epenetus, an Ephesian" (ISBE).
 - (3). "There is one of this name, said to be one of the seventy disciples, and bishop of Carthage" (Gill).
- d. Mary ([Rom 16:6](#)) who was a hard-worker on Paul's and the Lord's behalf.
- (1). "Her name Mary is the same with Miriam in Hebrew; whether she was of Jewish extract is not certain, and who she was is not known: some have conjectured her to be the same that Ignatius wrote an epistle to; not Mary of Castabilis, but of Naples, who was at Rome in the time of Linus, the Latin version reads 'Cletus', and of Clement, on whom he bestows very great characters; calling her most faithful, worthy of God, and a bearer of Christ, and in all things wise: and in another letter of his he represents her as exceeding learned, an exemplar of godly women, and having a church in her house. But both these epistles are thought, by learned men, to be falsely ascribed to him, and so not to be depended on" (Gill).
- e. Andronicus and Junia ([Rom 16:7](#)) who were kinsmen and fellowprisoners of Paul and who actually predated Paul as far as their conversions were concerned and who were "of note among the apostles."
- (1). Regarding their being Paul's kinsmen, "They were Jews. Paul calls the Jews 'my brethren,' 'my kinsmen according to the flesh' ([Rom 9:3](#)). Because Prisca and Aquila, a Jew and Jewess, are not designated as kinsfolk, Conybeare and Howson suppose 'the epithet to denote that the persons mentioned were of the tribe of Benjamin'" (ISBE).
 - (2). Of their being fellow prisoners of Paul, "They had

been companions of Paul in some unrecorded imprisonment. The phrase denotes more than the fact that they, like Paul, had suffered imprisonment for the sake of Christ" (ISBE).

- (3). Regarding the meaning of the last clause, the ISBE suggested an alternate possible meaning: "... or as reckoning them in the number of apostles. The latter is the sense, if 'apostle' be understood here in the more general meaning, used in [Act 14:14](#) of Barnabas, in [2Co 8:23](#) of Titus, in [Phi 2:25](#) of Epaphroditus, and in the *Didache* of 'the traveling evangelists or missionaries who preached the gospel from place to place' (Schaff, *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, 67; see also Lightfoot on *Philippians*, 196). On this assumption, Andronicus was one of the most prominent and successful of the traveling missionaries of the early church."

- (4). One might wonder if these were instrumental in establishing the church in Rome.

f. Amplias ([Rom 16:8](#)) who was conceivably of "Caesar's household," perhaps even alluded to in [Php 4:22](#).

- (1). "It is a common name and is found in inscriptions connected with the imperial household. The name is found twice in the cemetery of Domitilla. The earlier inscription is over a cell which belongs to the end of the 1st century or the beginning of the 2nd century. The bearer of this name was probably a member of her household and conspicuous in the early Christian church in Rome" (ISBE).

- (a). This Domitilla may have been Vespasian's wife or daughter--both were named Domitilla (Wikipedia).

- (2). Holman offered another, less glamorous possibility: "Amplias was a common name often given to slaves. Paul referred to this individual as 'my beloved in the Lord,' which may suggest a particularly warm and affectionate relationship between Amplias and the apostle."

- (a). It should be noted that being a slave would not disqualify Amplias from being in "Caesar's household."

- g. Urbane ([Rom 16:9](#)) who was a helper of all the church; "The 'our' (as opposed to 'my,' [Rom 16:3](#)) seems to suggest that all Christian workers had a common helper in Urbanus" (Denney in ISBE).
- (1). "This also was a Roman name, and which many of the popes of Rome have since taken to themselves; he is said to be one of the seventy disciples, and to be a bishop in Macedonia; ... which is not very probable: others have conjectured him to be one of the pastors of the church of Rome, which is more likely; and if he was, but few of his successors have deserved the character given of him, an 'helper in Christ'; in spreading the Gospel, and enlarging the kingdom and interest of Christ:" (Gill).
 - (2). Appropriately, this Latin name meant, among other things, "courteous."
 - (3). Interestingly, "Gifford says that [the name Urbanus-DFC] is found 'as here, in juxtaposition with Ampliatus, in a list of imperial freedmen, on an inscription, 115 AD'" (ISBE).
- h. Stachys ([Rom 16:9](#)) who also could conceivably have been of Caesar's household (ISBE).
- (1). "[H]e is said to be one of the seventy disciples, and bishop of Byzantium; ... According to the Roman martyrology, he was ordained bishop of the Byzantine church, by Andrew the apostle, but this is not to be depended on" (Gill).
- i. Apelles ([Rom 16:10](#)) who "in some way unknown to us ... had been tested and ... had proved faithful" (ISBE).
- (1). "Approved in Christ" "may mean he had been tested by persecution and proved faithful" (Holman).
 - (2). "A common Jewish name, probably not, as Origen thought, Apollos. Said to have been afterward bishop of Smyrna" (Fausset) "or Heraclea" (Smith).
 - (3). "[S]ome say he was one of the seventy disciples" (Gill).
- j. Aristobulus' (and his?) household ([Rom 16:10](#)) who "was probably a grandson of Herod and brother of Herod Agrippa, a man of great wealth, and intimate with the emperor Claudius. Lightfoot (*Philippians*, 172) suggests

that "the household of Aristobulus" were his slaves, and that upon his death they had kept together and had become the property of the emperor either by purchase or as a legacy, in which event, however, they might, still retain the name of their former master. Among these were Christians to whom Paul sends greeting" (ISBE).

(1). "Tradition makes him one of the 70 disciples and reports that he preached the gospel in Britain" (Smith).

(2). On the other end of the spectrum, Fausset reasoned, "Himself not being greeted, it is likely either he was not a Christian or was absent from Rome. The family would hardly be called after him, if he were dead."

k. Herodion ([Rom_16:11](#)) who was a kinsman of Paul; "The name seems to imply that he was a freedman of the Herods, or a member of the household of Aristobulus, the grandson of Herod the Great" (ISBE).

(1). "[T]his man is reckoned among the seventy disciples, and said to be bishop of Tarsus" (Gill).

(2). Smith sees him as related to Paul, while the ISBE sees him as being kin as a Jew.

l. Narcissus (and his?) household ([Rom_16:11](#)) who were perhaps of civil importance.

(1). "The last words may suggest that, though only the Christians in this household have a greeting sent to them, there were other members of it with whom the church had relations" (Denney in ISBE).

(2). "Narcissus is a common name, especially among freedmen and slaves. But, as in the case of Aristobulus, some famous person of this name must be meant. Conybeare and Howson mention two, one the wellknown favorite of Claudius, the other a favorite of Nero. The latter, who was put to death by Galba (Dio Cass. lxiv. 3), they think to be the Narcissus meant here (*Paul*, chapter xix). On the other hand, Bishop Lightfoot (*Phil*, 175) holds that 'the powerful freedman Narcissus, whose wealth was proverbial (Juv. *Sat.* xiv. 329), whose influence with Claudius was unbounded, and who bore a chief part in the intrigues of this reign, alone satisfies this

condition.' Shortly after the accession of Nero, he had been put to death by Agrippina (Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 1; Dio Cass. lx.34) in 54 AD. As this occurred three or four years before the Epistle to the Romans was written, some think another Narcissus is meant. However, as was usual in such cases, his property would be confiscated, and his slaves, becoming the property of the emperor, would swell 'Caesar's household' as Narcissiani" (ISBE).

(a). "Some have assumed the identity of this Narcissus, with the secretary of the emperor Claudius; but this is quite uncertain" (Smith).

m. Tryphena and Tryphosa ([Rom 16:12](#)) who were Christian workers.

(1). "They were probably sisters or near relatives, for "it was usual to designate members of the same family by derivatives of the same root" (Lightfoot, *Phil*, 175)" (ISBE).

(2). "The columbaria of Caesar's house in the Vigna Codini near Porta S. Sebastiano contain the names Tryphena, Philologus, Amplias, and Julia, mentioned in this chapter (Wordsworth, *Tour in Italy*, 2:17)" (Fausset).

(a). "Both names are found in inscriptions connected with the imperial household, 'Tryphosa' occurring more frequently than 'Tryphaena'" (ISBE).

n. Persis ([Rom 16:12](#)) who was likewise a Christian worker.

(1). "[S]he is said by the Syriac scholiast to be the wife of Rufus, mentioned in [Rom 16:13](#)" (Gill).

o. Rufus and his mother ([Rom 16:13](#)) who were perhaps of the family of Simon of Cyrene ([Mar 15:21](#)).

(1). "Rufus was well known among those for whom Mark primarily wrote his Gospel, and according to tradition this was the Christian community at Rome. There seems no reason to doubt, therefore, that the Rufus of Mark and the Rufus of Paul are the same person" (ISBE).

(2). "Now if 'Rufus (*whom Paul salutes as at Rome*) chosen in the Lord' ([Rom 16:13](#)) be the same Rufus as Mark mentions in writing a Gospel for

the Romans, the undesigned coincidence will account for what otherwise would be gratuitous information to his readers, that Simon was 'father of Rufus,' which the other evangelists omit, and which Mark himself seemingly turns to no advantage.

Rufus according to Paul was a disciple of note at Rome; how natural then to designate Simon, who was unknown, to the Romans by his fatherhood to one whom they well knew, Rufus! Mark gives the Romans whom he addresses a reference for the truth of the narrative of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection to one who was accessible to them all, and who could attest the facts on the authority of his own father, the reluctant bearer of the Lord's cross ([Luk 23:26](#)). The 'compelling' of him to bear the cross issued in his voluntarily taking up his own cross to follow Jesus; then through Simon followed his wife's conversion, and that of Rufus whose mother by nature she was, as she was Paul's mother by kindnesses bestowed for Christ's sake" (Fausset).

- p. Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren with them ([Rom 16:14](#)) who were likely another congregation.
 - (1). "Asyncritus is said to be bishop of Hyrcania" (Gill).
 - (2). Regarding Phlegon, Smith wrote, "Pseudo-Hippolytus makes him one of the seventy disciples and bishop of Marathon."
 - (3). Regarding Hermas, the ISBE recorded, "Origen and some later writers have identified him with the author of The Pastor [Shepherd-DFC] of Hermas, but without sufficient reason. According to the Canon of Muratori, the author of The Pastor wrote when his brother Pius was bishop of Rome (140-55 ad). He speaks of himself, however, as a contemporary of Clement of Rome (chapter 4) (circa 100 ad). The name Hermas is very common, and Origen's identification is purely conjectural."
 - (a). "Hermas is said to be bishop of Philippi, or Aquileia" (Gill).

- (b). "According to tradition, he was one of the seventy disciples, and afterward, bishop of Dalmatia. ... Irenaeus, Tertullian and Origen agree in attributing to him the work called *The Shepherd* ..." (Smith).
 [1]. The similarity of his name with that of Hermes has undoubtedly clouded both in speculation and misidentification.
- (4). Regarding Patrobas, the ISBE recorded, "There was a wealthy freedman of Nero of the same name who was put to death by Galba (Tacitus, *History* i. 49; ii. 95). The Patrobas of Paul may have been a dependent of his."
 - (a). "[H]e is said to be of the seventy disciples, and to be bishop of Puteoli" (Gill).
- (5). Regarding Hermes, Gill wrote, "[H]e is also mentioned among the seventy disciples, and said to be bishop of Dalmatia."
- q. Philologus, Julia, Nereus, Nereus' sister, Olympas, and the saints with them ([Rom_16:15](#)) who apparently likewise composed another congregation.
 - (1). Regarding Philologus, Fausset wrote, "Mentioned in the columbarium 'of the freedmen of Livia Augusta' at Rome. Probably of the imperial household, as a Julia (*an imperial name*) is connected with him. He was the center of a knot of Christians."
 - (a). "[T]his man is reckoned among the seventy disciples, and is said to be bishop of Sinope" (Gill).
 - (2). Regarding Nereus and his sister, the ISBE recorded, "The name of the sister is not given, but the name Nereis is found on an inscription of this date containing names of the emperor's servants (Lightfoot, *Phil*, 176). Among the *Acta Sanctorum* connected with the early church in Rome are the 'Acts of Nereus and Achilleus' which call them chamberlains of Domitilla, the niece of Vespasian, and relate their influence over her in persuading her to remain a virgin."
 - (a). "Of Philologus' and Julia's household, Origen guesses. Tradition makes him to

have been beheaded at Terracina under Nero, and his ashes deposited in the church of Nereo and Archilleo at Rome" (Fausset).

- (3). Regarding Olympas, Gill wrote, "[S]aid to be of the seventy disciples, and a Roman martyr."
- r. It is worthwhile to note that Timotheus (Timothy), Lucius (Luke), Jason, Sosipater, Tertius, Gaius, Erastus, and Quartus ([Rom_16:21-23](#)) who were with Paul in Corinth were acquainted enough with the Roman Christians that they were named as ones who saluted these brethren.
- s. Here is an overlooked, but important thought from Gill: "It deserves some notice, that among all the persons here mentioned by name, known by the apostle to be at Rome, that he takes no notice of Peter; which surely he would have done, had he been, as the Papists say, bishop of Rome, and resided there."

C. Early character.

- 1. According to Acts ([Act_28:15-31](#)).
 - a. A great tribute to the church in Rome is her desire to travel great distances to meet one who would just end up in their midst anyway; their concern was not unappreciated by Paul! ([Act_28:15](#)).
 - b. Though Paul was in bonds, he was granted opportunities to have hearers into his house so he could teach them ([Act_28:23](#), [Act_28:30-31](#)); undoubtedly this is a tribute to Paul's attitude, but also the demeanor of those Christians who were the lights in the community ([Mat_5:14-16](#)) leading people to Paul.
- 2. According to Romans.
 - a. The church in Rome, with its numerous congregations, was known throughout the world for her faith and obedience ([Rom_1:8](#); [Rom_16:19](#)).
 - b. The church in Rome was troubled by division ([Rom_16:17-18](#)).
- 3. In general, Eldred Stevens noted these seven things concerning the character of the church at Rome:
 - a. "[I]ts membership was extremely cosmopolitan."
 - b. There was an "apparent lack of central organization."
 - c. "[T]he church in Rome was one in which women enjoyed some prominence."
 - d. "[T]he church in Rome was remarkably steadfast under persecution."

- e. "[I]t was a self-edifying church."
- f. "[T]he Rome church had its internal problems" including hypocrisy, legalism, racism, rationalizing and justifying of sins, etc.
- g. "[T]he church at Rome was a missionary-minded church" ("The Church in Rome," in *Churches of the New Testament*, Foy Kirkpatrick, ed., (Fort Worth, TX: Fort Worth Christian College, 1963), pp. 186-194.
- h. It should be noted that six "beware's" followed from Stevens based upon the Romans' character and faults:
 - (1). "Beware of complacency and self satisfaction."
 - (2). "Beware of dangerous trends!"
 - (3). "Beware of prosperity!"
 - (4). "Beware of vesting authority in, and bestowing honor upon, men."
 - (5). "Beware of imitating your neighbors!"
 - (6). "Beware of 'mother churches!'" (pp. 195-197).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

- 1. "Linus, who is mentioned [2Ti 4:21](#), and Clement, [Phi 4:3](#), are supposed to have succeeded St. Peter as bishops of Rome" (Smith).
 - a. This assumes first, that Peter founded the church in Rome; and, second, (if by bishops the meaning is popes as one would assume) that the church in Rome had rejected a plurality of elders/bishops in each of her congregations as early as the latter part of the first century--the Catholics make the assumption that Peter did that very thing, which thing was never authorized in his day!
- 2. Ignatius, an early self-promoting martyr from Antioch, sent a letter to the church in Rome.
- 3. "There were at least ten major persecutions [of the early church-DFC] emanating from Rome" (Keith A. Mosher, Sr., "The Church at Rome," in *The Lord's Church: Past, Present, Future*, B.J. Clarke, ed., (Southaven, MS: Southaven Church of Christ Power Publications, 1999), p. 204).
- 4. Keith A. Mosher, Sr., wrote in the 1999 Power Lectures regarding the place of Rome as progenitor of error, "The heretical doctrines that have arisen out of the apostate Roman church are legion. In A.D. 120 the inane doctrine of 'Holy Water' was introduced. In A.D. 157 the doctrine of 'Penance' (paying some amount or work for one's sins) was formalized. This latter teaching led to the doctrine of 'Indulgence' (A.D. 1190) which allowed one to pay (financially) for sins ahead of time!

"Purgatory became 'official' in A.D. 593 and the doctrine was based on a gross misunderstanding of [1Pe 3:18-20](#). Catholics believe one can be burned 'just for a while' and thus cleansed of this world's sin in the next world.

"In A.D. 666 instrumental music was authorized. (The author, with [Rev 13:18](#) in mind, has always been amazed at that date!) Kissing the pope's toe became an official doctrine in A.D. 709, and transubstantiation followed in A.D. 1000. The latter teaching is that the bread and fruit of the vine actually become Christ's body during communion.

"In A.D. 1215 auricular confession as a practice of the church was incorporated and, at the Council of Ravenna in A.D. 1311, sprinkling was legalized as a proper form of baptism. In A.D. 1870, the doctrine of papal infallibility was officially recognized. (One wonders how many mistakes popes made until then.) And in A.D. 1953, Peter's bones (mentioned above) were 'found' in the Basilica on Christmas day. Just this year, the pope has considered making Mary a co-mediator with Christ!" (p. 206).

E. Miscellany.

1. "When Judea was conquered, about 60 years before Christ, vast numbers of Jews were taken captive and carried to Rome. But they had much difficulty in managing them as slaves. They pertinaciously adhered to their religion, observed the Sabbath, and refused to join in the idolatrous rites of the Romans. Hence, they were freed, and lived by themselves across the Tiber" (Barnes).

II. THE CHURCH AT COLOSSE.

A. Establishment.

1. There is no way to know for sure how the church in Colosse was started; some say Paul started it.
 - a. "St. Paul is supposed, by some, to have visited Colosse and founded or confirmed the Colossian church, on his third missionary journey [[Act 18:23](#); [Act 19:1](#)]" (Smith).
2. Others say that, given the tenor of the letter to Colosse, Paul likely had never even been there, much less planted the church there.
 - a. "It does not appear that Paul had visited this city when he wrote his letter to the church there ([Col 1:2](#))" (Easton).
 - b. "To the Christians there was addressed Paul's epistle, before he had seen their face ([Col 2:1](#); [Col 1:4](#); [Col 1:7-8](#)). ... Hence, as in the epistle to the Romans, so in the epistle to Colosse there are no allusions to his being their father in the faith, such as there are in [1Co 3:6](#); [1Co 3:10](#); [1Co 4:15](#); [1Th 1:5](#); [1Th 2:1](#)" (Fausset).
 - (1). "[Col 2:1](#) shows Paul had not in person visited Colosse, though he must have passed near it in going through Phrygia on his second missionary tour ([Act 16:6](#))" (Fausset).
3. If Paul did not start this congregation, who did?
 - a. "From [Col 2:1](#) it is not likely that Paul visited the place in person; but its Christianization was due to the efforts of Epaphras and Timothy ([Col 1:1](#), [Col 1:7](#)), and it was the home of Philemon and Epaphras" (ISBE).
 - b. "From [Col 1:7](#); [Col 4:12](#) it has been concluded that Epaphras was the founder of the Colossian church" (Easton).
 - c. "Epaphras probably founded the Colossian church ([Col 1:7](#); [Col 4:12](#)). ... Probably during Paul's "two years" stay at Ephesus, when "all which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus" ([Act 19:10](#); [Act 19:26](#)), Epaphras, Philemon ([Phm 1:2](#); [Phm 1:13](#); [Phm 1:19](#)), Archippus, Apphia, and other natives of Colosse (which was on the high road from Ephesus to the Euphrates), becoming converted at Ephesus, were subsequently the first preachers in their own city" (Fausset).
 - d. "Epaphras seems to be named ([Col 1:7](#)) as the founder, or at least the evangelist, of the church. Yet, since Epaphras must have been one of his own converts, and was working under his general supervision, Paul held himself responsible for its condition, and looked after its welfare,

as after all the churches planted within the sphere of his labors" (Johnson).

4. Here is reasonable conjecture:

- a. "The foundation of the church must have been subsequent to Paul's visitation, "strengthening in order" all the churches of Galatia and Phrygia ([Act 18:24](#)), for otherwise he must have visited the Colossians, which [Col 2:1](#) implies he had not" (Fausset).

5. Here is what is known:

- a. "That a church was established there early is evident from [Col 4:12](#), [Col 4:13](#); [Rev 1:11](#); [Rev 3:14](#)" (ISBE).

B. Early history.

1. Colossae was the home of Philemon and Onesimus ([Col 4:9](#)) and Apphia and Archippus ([Phm 1:2](#)); it was in Philemon's house that the church met ([Phm 1:2](#)).

C. Early character.

1. Religious influences on Colossian Christians.

- a. "The Phrygians' original tendency had been to a mystic worship, namely, that of Cybele; so, when Christianized, they readily gave heed to the incipient gnosticism of Judaizers" (Fausset).

- (1). "The leading worship was that of Cybele, the great Mother of the Gods, which was spread over Asia Minor generally, and especially prevailed in Mysia and Galatia. It was orgiastic, accompanied with frenzied dances, howlings, and self-mutilations" (Vincent).

- b. "There were many Jews living there" (ISBE).

- (1). "Under Antiochus the Great, two thousand Jewish families had been transplanted into Phrygia and Lydia [from Babylon-Fausset]; and while the staple of the church was Gentile, the epistle distinctly recognizes the presence and operation of Jewish influences ([Col 2:16-21](#))" (Vincent).

- c. "In religion the people were specially lax, worshipping angels. Of them, Michael was the chief, and the protecting saint of the city. It is said that once he appeared to the people, saving the city in time of a flood. It was this belief in angels which called forth Paul's epistle ([Col 2:18](#))" (ISBE).

- (1). "The angel worship noticed in [Col 2:18](#) is mentioned by Theodoret as existing in his days" (Fausset).

- (2). "A legend connected with an inundation was the ground of erecting a church to the archangel Michael near a chasm, probably the one noticed by Herodotus. 'The river Lycus, sinking into a chasm in the town, disappears under ground, and, emerging at five stadia distance, flows into the Maeander'" (Fausset).
- (3). "In the 4th century the council of Laodicea (in the same region) in its 35th canon prohibited calling upon angels" (Fausset).

d. Philosophy.

- (1). "Some Alexandrian Jews may have visited Colosse and taught Philo's Greek philosophy, combined with the rabbinical angelology and mysticism, afterward embodied in the Cabbala" (Fausset).

- e. "Phrygia was a favorable soil for the development of error. 'Cosmological speculation, mystic theosophy, religious fanaticism, all had their home there.' ... Phrygia was also the home of Ophitism, or serpent-worship. Montanism, with its ecstasy and trance, its faith-cures, its gloomy asceticism, its passion for martyrdom, and its savage intolerance, owed to Phrygia its leader; and the earlier name of the sect was 'the Sect of the Phrygians'" (Vincent).

- f. "The form of error which prevailed at Colossae included three elements: Jewish formalism; speculative mysticism, representing the germs of what afterward developed as Gnosticism; and Essenism, the medium through which the Jewish and Gnostic elements came into combination" (Vincent).

- (1). "The false teaching opposed in this epistle ([Col 2:16](#); [Col 2:18](#), 'new moon ... sabbath days') is that of Judaizing Christians, mixed up with eastern theosophy, angel worship, and the asceticism of the Essenes ([Col 2:8-9](#); [Col 2:16-23](#)). The theosophists professed a deeper insight into the world of spirits and a greater subjugation of the flesh than the simple gospel affords" (Fausset).
- (2). "Essenism, in the apostolic age, had established itself in Asia Minor. The Essenes combined the ritualism of the Jew with the asceticism and mysticism of the Gnostic. They rigorously

observed the Mosaic ritual, except in the matter of slain sacrifices, which they refused to offer, regarding their ordinary meals as sacrificial rites. They discountenanced marriage, and foreswore oil, wine, and animal food. Their theology revealed traces of sun-worship. Holding the immortality of the souls they denied the resurrection of the body. They also held some mystical doctrine of emanations, as agents in creation, akin to that of the Gnostic aeons. Like the Gnostics, they maintained the evil of matter" (Vincent).

2. The Christians themselves.

a. Those identified as composing the church.

- (1). Philemon.
- (2). Onesimus.
- (3). Apphia.
- (4). Archippus.
- (5). Epaphras.

(a). He was from Colossae, but was a co-laborer with Paul ([Col 4:13](#)).

b. Indications from Paul's letter.

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. "The church at Colossae was the least important of any to which Paul's epistles were addressed" (Vincent).
2. It is important note the spread of the "Colossian Heresy."

E. Miscellany.

1. "That this city perished by an earthquake, a short time after the date of this epistle, we have the testimony of Eusebius" (Clarke).
2. "As the neighboring cities, Hierapolis and Laodicea, increased in importance, Colosse declined" (ISBE).
3. "This town afterwards fell into decay, and the modern town of Chonas or Chonum occupies a site near its ruins" (Easton).

L. THE CHURCH AT LAODICEA.

A. Establishment.

1. "Little is known of the early history of Christianity there; Timothy, Mark and Epaphras ([Col_1:7](#)) seem to have been the first to introduce it" (ISBE).
2. What about Paul?
 - a. "Christianity was introduced into Laodicea, not, however, as it would seem, through the direct agency of St. Paul. We have good reason for believing that when, in writing from Rome to the Christians of Colossae, he sent a greeting to those of Laodicea, he had not personally visited either place. But the preaching of the gospel at Ephesus, [Act_18:19](#); [Act_19:41](#), must inevitably have resulted in the formation of churches in the neighboring cities, especially where Jews were settled; and there were Jews in Laodicea" (Smith).
 - b. One would do well not to rule out the possibility of Paul's having a role in the start of the church there, for while Paul was in Ephesus, "all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks" ([Act_19:10](#)).

B. Early history.

1. "At a very early period it became one of the chief seats of Christianity ([Col_2:1](#); [Col_4:15](#); [Rev_1:11](#), etc.)" (Easton).
2. The church in Sardis was recipient of Jesus' seventh of seven letters to churches in Roman provincial Asia ([Rev_3:14-22](#)).
3. "The angel of the Laodicean church [[Rev_3:14](#)] is supposed to be Archippus whom Paul 30 years before had warned to be diligent in fulfilling his ministry ([Col_4:17](#))" (Fausset).

C. Early character.

1. Externally, the church at Laodicea faced the same pressures as the church at Colossae (which is among the reasons the letter to the Colossians was to be read there [[Col_4:16](#)]), especially early Judaziers and subsequently false teachers of Gnostic doctrines.
 - a. Paul "endured a sore conflict, striving in anxious prayer in behalf of the churches of Ephesus and Laodicea that they might be delivered from Judaizing teachers, who blended Eastern theosophy and angel worship with Jewish asceticism and observance of new moons and sabbaths, professing a deeper insight into the world of spirits and a nearer approach to heavenly purity and intelligence than the simple gospel afforded ([Col_2:8-9](#); [Col_2:16-23](#))" (Fausset).
2. Internally, the church herself had a number of character flaws.

- a. The church at Laodicea is described in the Revelation as lukewarm ([Rev 3:15-16](#), "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.").
- (1). "The 'lukewarm' state, if the transitional stage to a warmer, is desirable (*for a little religion, if real, is better than none*), but fatal when an abiding state, for it is mistaken for a safe state ([Rev 3:17](#)). The danger is of disregarded principle; religion enough to lull the conscience, not to save the soul; halting between two opinions ([1Ki 18:21](#); [2Ki 17:41](#); [Eze 20:39](#); [Mat 6:24](#)). The hot (at Hierapolis) and cold springs near Laodicea suggested the simile" (Fausset).
- (2). "Laodicean" was actually an adjective in dictionaries of former days; in 1828, Webster defined it thus: "Like the christians of Laodicea: lukewarm in religion."
 - (a). Similarly, the noun form, Laodiceanism, signified "[l]ukewarmness in religion."
- b. The church did not rely enough upon God, relying instead upon her self-sufficiency ([Rev 3:17](#), "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: ")!
 - (1). "As worldly poverty favors poverty of spirit ([Mat 5:3](#), compare [Luk 6:20](#)), so worldly riches tend to spiritual self sufficiency ([Hos 12:8](#))" (Fausset).
 - (2). "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" ([1Co 10:12](#)).
- c. While the faults of the church were evident and dangerous, God's love was still shown toward them; nonetheless, His blessings were contingent upon their response to His love ([Rev 3:19](#), "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent").

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. Gill wrote, "There was a church here in the second century, for Sagaris, bishop of it, suffered martyrdom in the times of Antoninus Verus; and in the 'fourth' century, this church was famous for two eminent bishops, Theodorus and Gregory; and in the 'fifth' century, it was the metropolitan church of Phrygia, as it

was in the 'seventh' century, in which age Tyberius, bishop of this place, was in the sixth synod at Constantinople."

a. "Laodicea was early the chief bishopric of Phrygia, and about 166 AD Sagaris, its bishop, was martyred" (ISBE).

2. "Subsequently the church was flourishing, for it was at a council at Laodicea, A.D. 361, that the Scripture canon was defined" (Fausset).
3. "In 1071 the city was taken by the Seljuks; in 1119 it was recovered to the Christians by John Comnenus, and in the 13th century it fell finally into the hands of the Turks" (ISBE).
4. Among other ruins in Laodicea are "the ruins of three early Christian churches" (ISBE).

E. Miscellany.

1. "It is now a deserted place, called by the Turks Eski-hissar or 'old castle'" (Easton).

LI. THE CHURCH AT HIERAPOLIS.

A. Establishment.

1. Many suppose, due to his zeal for the church in Hierapolis ([Col 4:12-13](#)), that Epaphras likely started the congregation there.
 - a. The ISBE mentions the tradition "that Philip was the first evangelist to preach there."
2. Barnes suggested there were Christians, but no congregation: "From the allusion to it here, it would seem that there were Christians there in the time of Paul, though there is no mention of a church there."
 - a. He bases that idea on the specific mention of a church in Laodicea but not Hierapolis in [Col 4:16](#).

B. Early history.

1. As seen, there was a church in Hierapolis, which, ironically, means "holy city."
2. Biblically, little is known of the church there, other than her apparently being the fruit of Paul and his fellow-laborers' efforts.
3. "Tradition claims that Philip was the first evangelist to preach there, and it also claims that he and his two unmarried daughters were buried there; a third who was married, was buried at Ephesus" (ISBE).
 - a. "Great luminaries sleep in Asia ... such as Philip, one of the twelve apostles, who sleeps at Hierapolis, with two of his aged, virgin daughters, while a third daughter lived in the Holy Spirit and rests in Ephesus" (Eusebius, III.31, quoting "Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, [writing-DFC] to Victor, Bishop of Rome").
 - (1). F.F. Bruce saw it probable that "this Philip is 'Philip the evangelist' of [Act 21:8](#) (rather than 'Philip, one of the twelve apostles', with whom Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus c. A.D. 190, identified him)" (*New Testament History*, p. 376).
 - b. Tradition, as reported on Wikipedia, holds that "[i]n 80 AD he was martyred by crucifixion and was buried here. His daughters remained active as prophetesses in the region. The Martyrium [dated to the fifth century-David Padfield, "The Biblical Cities of Laodicea, Colosse, and Hierapolis"] was built on the spot where the apostle was crucified."
 - (1). Foxe's entry on Philip reads, "Was born at Bethsaida, in Galilee and was first called by the

name of 'disciple.' He labored diligently in Upper Asia, and suffered martyrdom at Heliopolis [not Hierapolis-DFC] in Phrygia. He was scourged, thrown into prison, and afterwards crucified, A.D. 54 [not A.D. 80-DFC]" (p. 3).

C. Early character.

1. The silence of Scripture does not give definitive evidence of the character of the church in Hierapolis; however, Epaphras' care for them and the lack of any negative mention may indicate that while they were not remarkable for their support of Paul or their faithfulness neither were they remarkable for their opposition to him or for apostasy--essentially, they appear to have been an average congregation made up of those who were trying to be faithful to the Lord in a typical Asian environment.
2. Like other Asian churches, Hierapolis' community was in an area influenced by and well immersed in Greco-Roman mythology.
 - a. "Apollo ["Greek god of light; god of prophecy and poetry and music and healing"-WordWeb], Diana ["goddess of the hunt and the Moon"-WordWeb], Esculapius [Aesclepius?-DFC], and Hygeia [Aesclepius' daughter who was the goddess of health], were all worshipped here, as appears by the coins of this city still extant" (Clarke).
 - (1). "The principal deity worshipped there was Apollo" (Barnes).
 - (2). "A temple was raised to Apollo Lairbenos, the principal god of Hierapolis, during the Hellenistic [Greek-DFC] period (as can be seen on coins from Hierapolis). Apollo was linked to the ancient Anatolian sungod Lairbenos and the god of oracles Kareios. But pagan worship also centered on Cybele ["Great nature goddess"-WordWeb], Artemis [same as Diana-DFC], Pluto [god of the underworld-DFC] and Poseidon ["the god of the sea and earthquakes"-WordWeb]. Now only the foundations of the Hellenistic temple remain" (Wikipedia).
 - b. "The Phrygian god Sabazios was worshipped there under the name Echidma, and represented by the symbol of the serpent. Other local deities were Leto [Apollo's mother-WordWeb] and her son Lairbenos [Apollo-DFC]" (ISBE).
 - c. Hot water springs which flowed over travertine terraces down

to the Maeander River "brought about the worship of Heracles, the god of health and hot waters" (Padfield).

- (1). Heracles is another name for Hercules; whether Padfield intended that Heracles or another is unknown; however, it would appear that he could have meant Apollo or even Aesclepius, the god of medicine and healing, who is likely the same as Clarke's Esculapius.

d. Superstition likewise played a role in Hierapolis.

- (1). "Though called the holy city, Hierapolis was peculiarly regarded as the stronghold of Satan, for there was a Plutonium [for Pluto, god of the underworld-DFC], or a hole reaching far down into the earth, from which there issued a vapor, even poisoning the birds flying above. It is supposed that upon a stool, deep in the Plutonium, a priest or priestess sat, and, when under the influence of the vapor, uttered prophecies valuable to those who sought them" (ISBE).

- (a). "During the early years of the town, castrated priests of Cybele descended into the Plutonium, crawled over the floor to pockets of oxygen or held their breath. Carbon dioxide is heavier than air and so tends to settle in hollows. They then came up to show that they were immune to the gas. People believed a 'miracle' had happened and that therefore the priests were infused with superior powers and had divine protection" (Wikipedia).

- (b). Regarding the priests of Cybele, Vincent wrote, "It was a center of the worship of the Phrygian goddess Cybele, whose rites were administered by mutilated priests known as Galli, and of other rites representing different oriental cults."

- (c). "Visitors could ask, on payment of large sums, questions to the oracle of Pluto. This provided a considerable source of income for the temple" (Wikipedia).

- (d). One cannot help but be reminded of the

oracle of Delphi--Apollo's Pythian priestesses under the influence of similar fumes.

[a]. Pliny the Elder wrote in a chapter of his *The Natural History*, "Of Vents in the Earth," "They are generally called vents, and, by some persons, Charon's sewers, from their exhaling a deadly vapour. Also at Amsanctum, in the country of the Hirpini, at the temple of Mephitis, there is a place which kills all who enter it. And the same takes place in Hierapolis in Asia, where no one can enter with safety, except the priests of the great Mother of the Gods. In onther places there are prophetic caves, where those who are intoxicated with the vapour which rises from them predict future events, as at the most noble of all oracles, Delphi. In which case, what mortal is there who can assign any other cause, that the divine power of nature, which is everywhere diffused, and thus bursts forth in various places" (II.95).

[b]. One might remember the great offerings made to and on behalf of the Delphic oracle and picture the same being done on a smaller scale in Hierapolis.

(2). Fausset recorded, "A mephitic ["Of noxious stench from atmospheric pollution"-WordWeb] cavern, Plutonium, was in ancient times connected with the worship of Cybele, from from whence the city was designated Hierapolis, 'the sacred city.'"

(a). Regarding the name, Barnes differs slightly, for "on account of the numerous temples erected there, it received the name of Hierapolis, or the holy city."

3. Jews likely bore an influence on the church in Hierapolis; "There grew a Jewish congregation in Hierapolis with their own more or less independent organizations. It is estimated that the Jewish population in the region was as high as 50,000 in 62 BC. Several sarcophagi in the necropolis attest of their presence" (Wikipedia).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. Robertson wrote, "Probably ... all three cities ... were in peril from the Gnostics."
2. Papias was Bishop of Hierapolis in the beginning of the second century.
 - a. Wrote "five books called *Expositions of Oracles of the Lord*" (G. Salmon in *Dictionary of Early Christian Biography*, p. 799).
 - b. Claimed to have heard John in person, perhaps as a disciple of John (Salmon, p. 800; Mattox, p. 63).
 - c. Claimed that Philip raised a man from the dead in Hierapolis (Salmon, p. 800) and that Justus Barsabas ([Act 1:23](#)) "drank poison but by the Lord's grace suffered no harm" (Eusebius, III.39).
 - d. "Papias evidently lived after the rise of Gnosticism and was not unaffected by the controversies occasioned by it" (Salmon, p. 800).
 - e. Papias wrote that Matthew originally wrote in Hebrew; he also wrote that Mark wrote based on what he had learned from Peter (Salmon, p. 800)--this latter thought might indicate that he had no appreciation for these, especially Mark, having been verbally inspired; however, "[T]hree times in this short fragment he attests St. Mark's perfect accuracy" (Salmon, p. 801) and is even referred to as "the first to harmonize" the Gospels (Salmon, p. 802).
 - f. Papias had (like Cerinthus) some premillennial views, causing Eusebius to say of Papias' millennial thoughts, "I suppose that he got these notions by misunderstanding the apostolic accounts, not realizing that they had used mystic and symbolic language. For he was a man of very limited intelligence, as is clear from his books" (III.39).
- (1). Frend wrote that Papias "combined a conscientious study of the oral and written traditions of the faith with the millenarian hopes that he shared with Jewish and pro-Gnostic contemporaries. He believed in a millennium in which the Messianic

kingdom would be established and the saints would enjoy the fruits of the earth in magnificent abundance. Both the idea and the imagery in which it was expressed, such as the grapes producing a thousandfold [sic.], were paralleled in contemporary Jewish prophetic works, such as the *Apocalypse of Baruch*" (p. 143).

- (2). Describing Papias view, Eusebius wrote, "Papias supplies other stories that reached him by word of mouth, along with some strange parables [such as that quoted by Irenaeus: "The days will come in which vines having ten thousand branches will grow. In each branch, there will be ten thousand twigs, and in each shoot there will be ten thousand clusters. Each cluster will have ten thousand grapes, and every grape will give twenty-five metretes [200 gallons-Mattox, p. 117] of wine, when pressed. ... In like manner, a grain of wheat will produce ten thousand ears" {*Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs*, p. 450}] and unknown teachings of the Savior, as well as other more legendary accounts. Among them, he says that after the resurrection of the dead there will be a thousand-year period when the kingdom of Christ will be established on this earth in material form" (III.89).
- (3). Here are some problems with Papias' doctrine:
 - (a). The kingdom has been established ([Col 1:13](#), "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son:").
 - (b). Jesus' kingdom is spiritual not physical ([Joh 18:36](#), "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.").
 - (c). The kingdom would of necessity have no king, else the prophecy of [Jer 22:30](#) would be violated ("Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a

man *that* shall not prosper in his days:
for no man of his seed shall prosper,
sitting upon the throne of David, and
ruling any more in Judah"; cf.,
[Mat_1:11-12](#), "And Josias begat
Jechonias and his brethren, about the
time they were carried away to Babylon:
And after they were brought to Babylon,
Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel
begat Zorobabel;").

- (d). The thousand years of [Rev_20:1-7](#) must be made literal in the heart of a figurative context--such an interpretation violates standards of hermeneutics regarding the translation of symbolic language.
- g. Papias may have been martyred in A.D. 163 (Salmon, P. 799) which would have been the persecution under Marcus Aurelius.
- 3. From A.D. 171, around or shortly after the death of Papias, the Bishop of Hierapolis was Apollinarius Claudius (Salmon, p. 32).
 - a. Apollinarius wrote numerous books including one against the Montanist Phrygian heresy (Eusebius, IV.27).
 - (1). As has been noted elsewhere, Montanism taught an inspiration of its originator Montanus--though inspiration had ended, an imminent second coming--though no such time element was given in Scripture, and an impossibility of a second law of pardon--though the apostate could be restored.
 - (a). Sarapion, Bishop of Antioch, used Apollinarius' writings in fighting Montanism (Eusebius, V.19).
 - (2). Eusebius called Apollinarius a "strong, invincible weapon" (V.16) against Montanism.
 - b. Salmon suggests that Apollinarius was pro-Catholicism (though it is not clear in what area) and writes that Socrates the historian said that Apollinarius (as well as Irenaeus and others) believed "that our Lord when he became man had a human soul" (p. 33).
 - c. While the year of his death is not known, his martyrdom was commemorated as being on February 7--he likely died before the end of the second century (Salmon, p. 33).
 - (1). A persecution under Severus began in A.D. 192.

4. Some Catholic rites were set by A.D. 200, for Frend wrote, "The Phrygian merchant, Avircius Marcellus, who became bishop of Hierapolis [sic.] c. 200, found the same orthodoxies, the same eucharist, and the same welcome among Christians all the way from Nisibis (on the Euphrates frontier) to Rome" (p. 250).
5. "Several of the early Christians suffered martyrdom at Hierapolis, yet Christianity flourished, other churches were built, and during the 4th century the Christians filled the Plutonium with stones, thus giving evidence that the paganism had been entirely supplanted by the church" (ISBE).
6. "In 531 the Byzantine emperor Justinian raised the bishop of Hierapolis to the rank of metropolitan. The town was made a see of Phrygia Pacatiana. The Roman baths were transformed to a Christian basilica. During the Byzantine period the city continued to flourish and also remained an important centre for Christianity" (Wikipedia).
7. Regarding its role in the crusades, Wikipedia records, "In the 12th century, the area came under the control of the Seljuk sultanate of Konya.
In the year 1190 crusaders under Frederick Barbarossa fought with the Byzantines and conquered the town of Philip the Apostle.
About thirty years later, the town was abandoned and the Seljuks built a castle in the 1220s."

E. Miscellany.

1. "The modern town is called *Pambuk Kalessi*, or cotton castle, not because cotton is raised in the vicinity, but because of the white deposit from the water of the calcareous springs. The springs were famous in ancient times because they were supposed to possess Divine powers" (ISBE).
2. "The ruins, which are extensive, stand on a terrace, commanding an extensive view, and though they are partly covered by the deposit, one may still trace the city walls, the temple, several churches, the triumphal arch, the gymnasium and baths, and the most perfect theater in Asia Minor. Outside the walls are many tombs" (ISBE).
 - (a). "It is now utterly forsaken and desolate, but the ruins are so magnificent as to show that it was once one of the most splendid cities in the East" (Barnes).
 - (b). Tacitus tells that Laodicea of the first century, Paul's day, was destroyed by an earthquake (*Annals*, xiv.27)--that region is quite subject to seismic, geo-thermal, and volcanic events; Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown observed

that Hierapolis was also destroyed in that A.D. 62 earthquake.

LII. THE CHURCH AT NICOPOLIS.

A. Establishment.

1. It is evident that Paul preached the Gospel in Nicopolis, though [Tit 3:12](#) does not *expressly* say such, for [Rom 15:19](#) says that Paul preached to the north of Nicopolis "*unto* [emphasis added] Illyricum."
 - a. Regarding Nicopolis, Vincent wrote, "There were several cities of this name, one in Cilicia, one in Thrace, and one in Epirus [there was another in eastern Pontus]. It is uncertain which one is meant here"; nevertheless, many commentators virtually take for granted that this is the Nicopolis in Epirus--references in Paul's writing to Dalmatia ([2Ti 4:10](#)) and the surrounding Illyricum ([Rom 15:19](#)) also seem to indicate textually that Nicopolis in Epirus is meant.
 - (1). "The one here referred to was most probably that in Epirus" (Easton).
 - (2). "[This Nicopolis] is probably the city of that name situated on the southwest promontory of Epirus" (ISBE).
 - (3). "[T]here is little doubt that Jerome's view is correct, and that the Pauline Nicopolis was the celebrated city of *Epirus*." (Smith).
 - (4). "[Nicopolis of Epirus] is supposed to be the place here intended" (Clarke).
 - (5). "The most likely location is the one which served as the capital of Epirus" (College Press).
 - (6). "A town on the west coast of Greece in Epirus" (Johnson).
 - (7). "Probably in Epirus" (Robertson).
 - (8). But ...
 - (a). "[This Nicopolis] was a city, not in Epirus, but in Thrace, situated by the river Nessus, and had its name from a victory obtained there" (Gill).
 - (b). "[A] city of Thrace, as is reckoned, on the borders of Macedonia" (Henry).
2. Given that Paul evidently preached the Gospel in Nicopolis, was the first Gospel preacher in many areas, and apparently stayed in Nicopolis over a winter; it is not much of a stretch to imagine that Paul established the Lord's church in Nicopolis.
 - a. Curiously, however, Barnes wrote, "There is no evidence that he organized a church there, though it may be presumed

that he preached the gospel, and that he did not do it without success."

B. Early history.

1. Tradition holds that Paul wrote to Titus from Nicopolis; however one might note that Paul said, "I have determined there to winter" not "I have determined here to winter" ([Tit 3:12](#)).
 - a. In the King James Version, the *uninspired* postscript reads,
"It was written to Titus, ordained the first bishop of the church of the Cretians, from Nicopolis of Macedonia."
 - (1). "Very probably not the Nicopolis in Macedonia, as the vulgar [common-DFC] subscription asserts: (indeed, none of those subscriptions at the end of St. Paul's epistles are of any authority:) rather it was a town of the same name which lay upon the sea - coast of Epirus" (John Wesley).
 - (2). "The subscription to the epistle to Titus calls it 'Nicopolis of Macedonia', i.e., of Thrace. This is, however, probably incorrect" (Easton).
 - (a). It also calls Titus "the ... bishop" when no where in Scripture is anyone "the bishop."
 - (3). "[Tit 3:12](#) was written from Corinth in the autumn, Paul then purposing a journey through Aetolia and Acarnania into 'Epirus, there 'to winter'" (Fausset).
 - (4). "It was probably now pretty late in the autumn, and the apostle was now drawing near to Nicopolis; for he certainly was not yet arrived, else he would not have said, I have determined [εκει](#), There, to winter" (Clarke).
2. "[I]t was in this very city of Nicopolis, probably, that he was arrested and taken to Rome for trial - during one of the winters between 64-67 AD" (ISBE).
 - a. "History seems to make it probable that Paul did go there to winter, was again arrested, and carried to Rome to die" (Smith).

C. Early character.

1. Religion.
 - a. The founder of the town, who shall be identified later, consecrated the location of his military headquarters there to "Apollo ["Greek god of light; god of prophecy and poetry and music and healing" (WordWeb)] and

Mars ["Roman god of war and agriculture" (WordWeb)], according to Strabo and Dio Cassius, but in Suetonius' version, the selected deity was Neptune [Roman "god of the sea" (WordWeb)], to whom a fragmentary inscription refers" (Grant, p. 433).

(1). "Nicopolis was the location of the emperor's Actian Games in honor of Apollo" (Grant, p. 433).

2. Philosophy.

a. "The stoic [one may remember Paul on Mars Hill ([Act 17:18](#))-DFC] philosopher Epictetus, expelled from Rome by Domitian (A.D. 89), established his residence at Nicopolis, attracting a great number of followers" (Grant, p. 434).

3. It is very possible that this congregation was very evangelistic, for Nicopolis would serve as "a good center for missionary tours N. to Illyricum ([Rom 15:19](#)) and Dalmatia ([2Ti 4:10](#))" (Fausset).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. Origen, who collected early translations of the Scriptures in various languages, claimed "that he had found one at Nicopolis near Actium" (Eusebius, VI.16).

2. At one point the church in Nicopolis dominated the community in a sense, for probably in the late 300's one "Paula owned most of the town of Nicopolis in Illyricum" (Frend, p. 724).

3. "Christianity was strongly established, and a number of churches are to be seen"--this in spite of the influence of Julian the Apostate (Grant, p. 434).

E. Miscellany.

1. This Nicopolis received its name for its proximity to the camps of the forces fighting in the Battle of Actium, in which Mark Antony and Cleopatra were defeated by Octavian (who would be Caesar Augustus) in 31 B.C.; remnants of that battle are seen today and justify its having been named "Victory City."

a. "Octavian also dedicated *rostra* (the beaks of Antony's captured ships) and set them in a wall, which has now been cleaned and studied" (Grant, p. 433).

2. "It is the modern Paleoprevesa, i.e., 'Old Prevesa'" (Easton).

LIII. THE CHURCH AT BABYLON.

A. Establishment.

1. There is no indication in Scripture of who established the church, but likely the church at Babylon, like many others, was established by Jewish converts to Christianity at the beginning of the church, for among those who heard the first Gospel sermon were "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia" ([Act 2:9](#)).

B. Early history.

1. All known of the church at Babylon is found in [1Pe 5:13](#); that is, there was a church there, which had working with her Peter and Mark.

C. Early character.

1. Like any congregation, the church in Babylon would have had some outside forces bearing on her character.
 - a. Babylon was, like the cities of Greece and Italy, steeped in idolatry, mythology, and the worship of false gods.
 - (1). In the days of the Seleucids, the temple of Marduk had been restored (Grant, p. 96).
 - b. Hellenism, the permeation of Greek culture, would also have played a role in this area, for Alexander had made Babylon a center of his efforts and home to a mint (Grant, p. 96), and the Seleucid/Antiochid successors of Alexander bore rule over this area as part of what might be called Syria.
 - c. Science and astrology were also major interests of the people of Babylon, even after her being a part of the Parthian breaking away from the Seleucids in the third century B.C.
2. I Peter and II Peter give some insight to the character of the early church given that what these letters were teaching Jewish-Christians elsewhere was likely preached in Babylon as well.
 - a. These were taught that trial could be beneficial ([1Pe 1:6-9](#); [1Pe 2:21-23](#); [1Pe 3:14-17](#); [1Pe 4:12-16](#); [1Pe 5:10](#)).
 - b. These were taught that being the proper example could win souls ([1Pe 3:1-2](#)).
 - c. These were taught that one must have the mind of Christ ([1Pe 4:1](#)).
 - d. These were taught about Scriptural organization ([1Pe 5:1-3](#)).
 - e. These were taught that men must grow spiritually ([2Pe 1:5-8](#)).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. Given the force of Rome exhibited in the area--and to a lesser extent the Parthians, it is likely that the church in Babylon was small and perhaps dispersed, especially by the early second century; however, as shall be seen, there were many other places where Christianity would thrive in Babylonia/Mesopotamia.

E. Miscellany.

1. When "Trajan visited [Babylon] in A.D. 116, there was little left to see" (Grant, p. 96).
 - a. This is not surprising given that nearby Seleucia was "[b]urned down by Trajan's army" (Grant, p. 577).
 - (1). Perhaps the statement on Babylon was based on a post-destruction view, or perhaps Babylon had been deserted by those who realized a Roman attack would imminently come.
2. This study has taken for granted that the church at Babylon was at the location of the Mesopotamian Babylon on the Euphrates River; is that a valid assumption?
 - a. It seems that there is ample evidence to accept Mesopotamia as the location of this Babylon--much evidence will be revealed in answering the challenge that this is actually Rome.
 - (1). This view, though, is not without its detractors.
 - (2). "That the statement is to be taken literally and that the Mesop Babylon is meant. Many good scholars hold to this view, and among these are Weiss and Thayer, but there is no evidence that Peter was ever in Babylon, or that there was even a church there during the 1st century. Mark and Silvanus are associated with Peter in the letter and there is no tradition that connects either of them with Babylon. According to Josephus (*Ant*, XVIII, ix, 5-9), the Jews at this time had largely been driven out of Babylon and were confined to neighboring towns, and it seems improbable that Peter would have made that his missionary field" (ISBE).
 - (a). What of the argument from Josephus?
 - [1]. Indeed, Jews were fought against in Babylon, for "the king [Parthia's Artabanus-DFC] would not be at rest till he had made a great slaughter of the Jews that dwelt at Babylon" (Josephus, *Antiquities*, XVIII. ix. 6); however, these Jews "gathered themselves together, and went to Neerda and Nisibis" (Josephus, *Antiquities*, XVIII. ix. 9) while others had gone to Seleucis (Josephus, *Antiquities*,

XVIII. ix. 8).

[2]. What and where were Neerda and Nisibis and Seleucia?

[a]. The ISBE itself calls these "neighboring towns"!

[b]. "There was a city of Babylonia called Neerda ... the river Euphrates encompassing it all round. There was also the city Nisibis, situate on the same current of the river" (Josephus, *Antiquities*, XVIII. ix. 1).

[c]. Grant calls Nisibis the "capital of Rome's Mesopotamian province" (p. 435)--though this may be a different Nisibis, for it was nearer the Tigris.

[d]. Seleucia "was situated ... on a natural lake at the narrowest point between the Euphrates and the Tigris" (Grant, P. 576)--just north of Babylon!

[e]. Could not Peter have made the rounds in an area of Mesopotamia that was at most the size of provincial Asia and more easily travelled due to a delta-like topography [especially noting that each of Paul's journeys--including that between his Roman imprisonments--would have dwarfed these efforts land area-wise]?

(b). Note what Josephus also wrote, and what the Alexandrian Jew Philo wrote.

[1]. In Babylon there had been many Jews in Herod's day (Josephus,

Antiquities, XV.III.1) and were still Jews of great number when Josephus wrote *Against Apion* (I.7).

[2]. Philo wrote, "I say nothing of the countries beyond the Euphrates, for all of them except a very small portion, and Babylon, and all the satrapies around, which have any advantages of whatever of soil or climate, have Jews settled in them. So that my native land is, as it reasonably may be, looked upon as entitled to a share in your favour, it is not one city only that would be benefitted by you, but ten thousand of them in every region of the habitable world ..." (*On the Embassy to Gaius*, 282,283).

- (c). "The most natural supposition of all is that by Babylon is intended the old Babylon of Assyria, which was largely inhabited by Jews at the time in question" (Smith)
- (d). Clarke called this "the ancient celebrated Babylon in Assyria, which was, as Dr. Benson observes, the metropolis of the eastern dispersion of the Jews."
- (e). "It is best therefore to understand it literally, of Babylon in Assyria, the metropolis of the dispersion of the Jews, and the centre of it, to whom the apostle wrote; and where, as the minister of the circumcision, he may be thought to reside, here being a number of persons converted and formed into a Gospel church state, whereby was fulfilled the prophecy in [Psa_87:4](#) perhaps this church might consist chiefly of Jews, which might be the reason of the apostle's being here, since there were great numbers which continued here, from the time of the captivity, who returned not with Ezra; and these are said by the Jews to be of the

purest blood: many of the Jewish doctors lived here; they had three famous universities in this country, and here their Talmud was written, called from hence Babylonian" (Gill).

(f). "Peter, being at Babylon in Assyria, when he wrote this epistle (whither he travelled, as the apostle of the circumcision, to visit that church, which was the chief of the dispersion), sends the salutation of that church to the other churches to whom he wrote ([1Pe_5:13](#)), telling them that God had *elected* or chosen the Christians at Babylon out of the world, to be his church, and to partake of eternal salvation through Christ Jesus, together with them and all other faithful Christians, [1Pe_1:2](#). In this salutation he particularly joins Mark the evangelist, who was then with him, and who was his son in a spiritual sense, being begotten by him to Christianity. Observe, All the churches of Jesus Christ ought to have a most affectionate concern one for another; they should love and pray for one another, and be as helpful one to another as they possibly can" (Henry).

b. Some have suggested that the Babylon of [1Pe_5:13](#) is actually Rome--whose possession of churches was being veiled in coded language.

(1). "That Rome was the city that was designated as Babylon. The Apocalypse would indicate that the churches would understand the symbolic reference, and it seems to have been so understood until the time of the Reformation. The denial of this position was in line with the effort to refute Peter's supposed connection with the Roman church. Ancient tradition, however, makes it seem quite probable that Peter did make a visit to Rome (see Lightfoot, *Clement*, II, 493ff).

Internal evidence helps to substantiate theory that Rome was the place from which the letter was written. Mark sends greetings ([1Pe_5:13](#)), and we know he had been summoned

to Rome by the apostle Paul ([2Ti_4:11](#)). The whole passage, 'She that is in Babylon, elect together with you, saluteth you,' seems to be figurative, and that being true, it is natural that Babylon should have been used instead of Rome. The character of the letter as a whole would point to Rome as the place of writing. Ramsay thinks this book is impregnated with Roman thought beyond any other book in the Bible (see *The Church in the Roman Empire*, 286)" (ISBE).

(2). Not all agree with the assumptions of the ISBE.

(a). "The Babylon mentioned in [1Pe_5:13](#) was not Rome, as some have thought, but the literal city of Babylon, which was inhabited by many Jews at the time Peter wrote" (Easton).

(b). "A friendly salutation is hardly the place wherein to find mystical phraseology. The whole epistle, moreover, is remarkably plain, and contains none of the imagery of prophecy. Moreover the literal Babylon was the center from which the Asiatic 'dispersion' (dispersed Jews), whom Peter addresses, was derived. Babylon contained many Jews in the apostolic age ('one of the greatest knots of Jews in the world:' Lightfoot, quoted in Smith's Dictionary), and doubtless 'the apostle of the circumcision,' Peter, who had among his hearers on Pentecost (Acts 2) 'the dwellers of Mesopotamia,' would visit the Jews there. 'Bosor,' which Peter uses for Pethor ([Num_22:5](#); [1Pe_5:13](#)), is the Aramaic pronunciation moreover; Josephus contra Apion, 1:7, Ant. 15:3, section 1, also favors the Aramaic Babylon" (Fausset).

(3). It is important to leave preconceptions and biases out of Bible study; the same is true of context study; Catholicism, with its doctrine that Peter was in Rome and started the church there, has influenced many who would try to make this Rome!

(a). "It is opposed to all the facts of history to

contend that there was not, at the date of this epistle, a great Jewish population on the banks of the Euphrates, and an indefinite passage of Josephus belonging to a period a generation earlier, would never have been used for this purpose had it not been that it is essential to the argument of the Papacy to give Peter a long residence at Rome" (Johnson).

- (b). Gill wrote, "Some, by 'Babylon', understand Rome, which is so called, in a figurative sense, in the book of the Revelations: this is an ancient opinion; so Papias understood it, as Eusebius relates; but that Peter was at Rome, when he wrote this epistle, cannot be proved, nor any reason be given why the proper name of the place should be concealed, and a figurative one expressed."
- (c). "The earliest distinct authority for Peter's martyrdom *at Rome* is Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, in the latter half of the second century. The desirableness of representing Peter and Paul, the two leading apostles, as together founding the Church of the metropolis, seems to have originated the tradition. Clement of Rome [*First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 4.5], often quoted for, is really against it. He mentions Paul and Peter together, but makes it as a *distinguishing* circumstance of Paul, that he preached both in the East and West, implying that Peter never was in the West. In [2Pe_1:14](#), he says, 'I must *shortly* put off this tabernacle,' implying his martyrdom was near, yet he makes no allusion to Rome, or any intention of his visiting it" (Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown).
- (4). In summary, note what Vincent wrote: "Some understand in a figurative sense, as meaning Rome; others, literally, of Babylon on the Euphrates. In favor of the former view are the drift of ancient opinion and the Roman Catholic interpreters, with Luther and several noted modern expositors, as

Ewald and Hoffmann. This, too, is the view of Canon Cook in the *Speaker's Commentary*. In favor of the literal interpretation are the weighty names of Alford, Huther, Calvin, Neander, Weiss, and Reuss. Professor Salmond, in his admirable commentary on this epistle, has so forcibly summed up the testimony that we cannot do better than to give his comment entire: 'In favor of this allegorical interpretation it is urged that there are other occurrences of *Babylon* in the New Testament as a mystical name for Rome ([Rev_14:8](#); [Rev_18:2](#), [Rev_18:10](#)); that it is in the highest degree unlikely that Peter should have made the Assyrian Babylon his residence or missionary centre, especially in view of a statement by Josephus indicating that the Emperor Claudius had expelled the Jews from that city and neighborhood; and that tradition connects Peter with Rome, but not with Babylon. The fact, however, that the word is mystically used in a mystical book like the Apocalypse - a book, too, which is steeped in the spirit and terminology of the Old Testament - is no argument for the mystical use of the word in writings of a different type. The allegorical interpretation becomes still less likely when it is observed that other geographical designations in this epistle ([1Pe_1:1](#)) have undoubtedly the literal meaning. The tradition itself, too, is uncertain. The statement in Josephus does not bear all that it is made to bear. There is no reason to suppose that, at the time when this epistle was written, the city of Rome was currently known among Christians as Babylon. On the contrary, wherever it is mentioned in the New Testament, with the single exception of the Apocalypse (and even there it is distinguished as 'Babylon, *the great*'), it gets its usual name, Rome. So far, too, from the Assyrian Babylon being practically in a deserted state at this date, there is very good ground for believing that the Jewish population (not to speak of the heathen) of the city and vicinity was very considerable. For these and other reasons a succession of distinguished interpreters and historians, from Erasmus and Calvin, on to

Neander, Weiss, Reuss, Huther, etc., have rightly held by the literal sense."

- c. Still others argue "[t]hat the Egyptian Babylon, or Old Cairo; is meant. Strabo (XVII, 807) who wrote as late as 18 ad, says the Egyptian Babylon was a strong fortress founded by certain refugees from the Mesop Babylon. But during the 1st century this was not much more than a military station, and it is quite improbable that Peter would have gone there. There is no tradition that connects Peter' in any way with Egypt" (ISBE).
- d. Some have even urged Jerusalem.

LIV. THE CHURCH AT SMYRNA.

A. Establishment.

1. Who started the church in Smyrna is unknown, though a congregation could have existed shortly after the first Gospel sermon, for there were Asians (Roman provincial) in Jerusalem on Pentecost ([Act 2:9](#)).
2. "That there was a church of Christ here is not to be doubted, though by whom it was founded is not certain; very likely by the Apostle Paul, who was in those parts, and by whose means all Asia heard the Gospel of Christ, [Act 19:10](#)" (Gill).
3. "The history of its planting is unknown, but it was probably founded by some of the evangelists under Paul's supervision" (Johnson).
4. "In all probability, from its close proximity and commercial relations with Ephesus, the Gospel first reached Smyrna from that city. ... Some Christians who were merchants or who had been led to settle in the city may have formed the nucleus of a congregation there ..." (James M. Tolle, *The Seven Churches of Revelation*, (Fullerton, CA: Tolle Publications, 1968), p. 36)
5. The church in Smyrna was perhaps established during the years A.D. 53-56--the period of [Act 19:10](#) and [1Co 16:19](#) (J.T. Marlin, *The Seven Churches of Asia*, (Nashville, TN: Williams Printing Company, 1980), p. 54).
6. Regardless of exactly how or when the church in Smyrna was established, "Christianity had come early to Smyrna" (Grant, p. 596).

B. Early history.

1. "We do not find it visited by any of the apostles or mentioned in any of the New Testament books except Revelation" (Tolle, p. 36).
2. Smyrna was the second church whose angel/messenger received an epistle from Christ in the Revelation ([Rev 1:11](#); [Rev 2:8-11](#)).
3. "[T]oward the end of the first century, [Smyrna] had become eminent for its fidelity in the face of persecution" (Tolle, p. 36).
 - a. Accordingly, "[t]he congregation here was known as the suffering church" (Marlin, p. 55).
 - b. It was to this church that the popular refrain "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" was written ([Rev 2:10](#)), for Jesus knew their "works, and tribulation, and poverty" ([Rev 2:9](#)).

C. Early character.

1. Hellenism would have had a place in Smyrna, for the building of the city

"was attributed to Alexander the Great" who was in myth directed by two Nemeses in the form of griffins (a mythological creature with an eagle's head and wings on a lion body) to build the city on Mount Pagos (Grant, p. 596)--it actually spread from this mountain to what was made a harbor.

a. Regarding these nemeses, note "At Smyrna there were two manifestations of Nemesis, more akin to Aphrodite than to Artemis. The reason for this duality is hard to explain; it is suggested that they represent two aspects of the goddess, the kindly and the implacable, or the goddesses of the old city and the new city refounded by Alexander" (Wikipedia).

b. Showing another element of Hellenism, Smyrna claimed of "holding the 'First Games of Asia'" (Grant, p. 596).

2. As hinted at above, mythology played a role in Smyrna, with Cybele and Zeus holding prominent positions, having temples in the city devoted to them (Marlin, p. 54)--these were connected by "The Golden Street [which-DFC] is said to have been the best in any city of the ancient world" (Tolle, p. 35).

a. There were also a shrine to "Tyche (Fortune) and the two Nemeses" in Smyrna (Grant, p. 596).

b. "Smyrna was a center for the worship of Dionysius (the god of wine)" (Marlin, p. 52).

(1). "The idol Dionysus at Smyrna was believed to have been killed and come to life; in contrast to this lying fable is Christ's title, 'the First and the Last, which was dead and is alive' ([Rev 2:8](#))" (Fausset).

c. "It seems not impossible that the message to the church in Smyrna contains allusions to the ritual of the pagan mysteries which prevailed in that city" (Smith).

3. Roman culture and emperor worship were also permeating, for there were temples of Tiberius, Hadrian, and Rome [the goddess according to Marlin (p. 51)] herself in the city (Grant, p. 596).

4. The Jews played a role as well which might have influenced the church in Smyrna.

a. "It seems that the Jews of Smyrna were more antagonistic than were the Romans to the spread of Christianity, for it is said that even on Saturday, their sacred day, they brought wood for the fire in which Polycarp was burned" (ISBE)--this event will be expounded upon below.

b. The ultra-contrary Jewish population undoubtedly prompted the reference to "the synagogue of Satan" ([Rev 2:9](#)).

5. As for the character of the church, this is certain: They were rich

([Rev_2:9](#))!

- a. In heavenly terms ([Mat_6:19-21](#), "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also," [Mat_6:33](#), "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.").
- b. In godliness ([1Ti_6:6-11](#), "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.").
- c. Poor ("Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" [[Mat_5:3](#)], "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" [[Jas_2:5](#)]); but "rich toward God" ([Luk_12:21](#)).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. An anecdote of Clement, "The Rich Man Who Is Saved," revolves around a post-exilic visit of John to Smyrna (Eusebius, *The Church History*, III.23).
2. "According to the *Apostolical Constitutions*, the first bishops of Smyrna were Aristo Strataeas and Aristo the second, and Apelles, of whom mention is made in [Rom_16:10](#); and who is reckoned among the seventy disciples" (Gill).
3. One of the few early Christians whose name is known is Tavia whose house was mentioned in a letter from Ignatius to Polycarp (Freund, p. 132).
4. Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna [Fausset suggests he may have been Smyrna's "angel" ([Rev_2:8](#))] and writer of a letter to the church in Philippi was martyred in Smyrna (Marlin, p. 52) on February 22, A.D. 156 or perhaps February 23, A.D. 155 (Mattox, p. 64); Fox actually puts this in the persecution by Marcus Aurelius which he has beginning in A.D. 162 (pp. 8,9) while the ISBE indicates it was

"without the sanction of the Roman government"--Vincent's and Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown's dates are similar: A.D. 166 and 168, respectively.

- a. Regardless of the date, Polycarp's faith and conviction are stirring!
- b. The following is a part of a traditional (some of the letter is quite fanciful) account of his martyrdom credited to the church as Smyrna as writing to the church in Philomelium ["Philomelion was probably a Pergamenian foundation on the great Graeco-Roman Highway from Ephesus to the east, and to its townsmen the Smyrniotes wrote the letter that describes the martyrdom of Polycarp"-Wikipedia]:

Chap. IX. — Polycarp Refuses to Revile Christ.

Now, as Polycarp was entering into the stadium, there came to him a voice from heaven, saying, "Be strong, and show thyself a man, O Polycarp!" No one saw who it was that spoke to him; but those of our brethren who were present heard the voice. And as he was brought forward, the tumult became great when they heard that Polycarp was taken. And when he came near, the proconsul asked him whether he was Polycarp. On his confessing that he was, [the proconsul] sought to persuade him to deny [Christ], saying, "Have respect to thy old age," and other similar things, according to their custom, [such as], "Swear by the fortune of Caesar; repent, and say, Away with the Atheists." But Polycarp, gazing with a stern countenance on all the multitude of the wicked heathen then in the stadium, and waving his hand towards them, while with groans he looked up to heaven, said, "Away with the Atheists." Then, the proconsul urging him, and saying, "Swear, and I will set thee at liberty, reproach Christ;" Polycarp declared, "Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He never did me any injury: how then can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour?"

Chap. X. — Polycarp Confesses Himself a Christian.

And when the proconsul yet again pressed him, and said, "Swear by the fortune of Caesar," he answered, "Since thou art vainly urgent that, as thou sayest, I should swear by the fortune of Caesar, and pretendest not to know who and what I am, hear me declare with boldness, I am a Christian. And if you wish to learn what the doctrines of Christianity are, appoint me a day, and thou shalt hear them." The proconsul replied, "Persuade the people." But Polycarp said, "To thee I have thought it right to offer an account [of my faith]; for we are taught to give all

due honour (which entails no injury upon ourselves) to the powers and authorities which are ordained of God. (Comp. [Rom_13:1-7](#); [Tit_3:1](#)-Added in the *Ante-Nicene Fathers*-DFC) But as for these, I do not deem them worthy of receiving any account from me.”

Chap. XI. — No Threats Have Any Effect on Polycarp.

The proconsul then said to him, “I have wild beasts at hand; to these will I cast thee, except thou repent.” But he answered, “Call them then, for we are not accustomed to repent of what is good in order to adopt that which is evil; and it is well for me to be changed from what is evil to what is righteous.” But again the proconsul said to him, “I will cause thee to be consumed by fire, seeing thou despisest the wild beasts, if thou wilt not repent.” But Polycarp said, “Thou threatenest me with fire which burneth for an hour, and after a little is extinguished, but art ignorant of the fire of the coming judgment and of eternal punishment, reserved for the ungodly. But why tarriest thou? Bring forth what thou wilt.”

Chap. XII. — Polycarp Is Sentenced to Be Burned.

While he spoke these and many other like things, he was filled with confidence and joy, and his countenance was full of grace, so that not merely did it not fall as if troubled by the things said to him, but, on the contrary, the proconsul was astonished, and sent his herald to proclaim in the midst of the stadium thrice, “Polycarp has confessed that he is a Christian.” This proclamation having been made by the herald, the whole multitude both of the heathen and Jews, who dwelt at Smyrna, cried out with uncontrollable fury, and in a loud voice, “This is the teacher of Asia, the father of the Christians, and the overthrower of our gods, he who has been teaching many not to sacrifice, or to worship the gods.” Speaking thus, they cried out, and besought Philip the Asiarch to let loose a lion upon Polycarp. But Philip answered that it was not lawful for him to do so, seeing the shows of wild beasts were already finished. Then it seemed good to them to cry out with one consent, that Polycarp should be burnt alive. For thus it behooved the vision which was revealed to him in regard to his pillow to be fulfilled, when, seeing it on fire as he was praying, he turned about and said prophetically to the faithful that were with him, “I must be burnt alive.”

Chap. XIII. — The Funeral Pile Is Erected.

This, then, was carried into effect with greater speed than it was spoken, the multitudes immediately gathering together wood and fagots out of the shops and baths; the Jews especially, according to custom, eagerly assisting them in it. And when the funeral pile was ready, Polycarp, laying aside all his garments, and loosing his girdle, sought also to take off his sandals, — a thing he was not accustomed to do, inasmuch as every one of the faithful was always eager who should first touch his skin. For, on account of his holy life, he was, even before his martyrdom, adorned with every kind of good. Immediately then they surrounded him with those substances which had been prepared for the funeral pile. But when they were about also to fix him with nails, he said, “Leave me as I am; for He that giveth me strength to endure the fire, will also enable me, without your securing me by nails, to remain without moving in the pile.”

Chap. XIV. — The Prayer of Polycarp.

They did not nail him then, but simply bound him. And he, placing his hands behind him, and being bound like a distinguished ram [taken] out of a great flock for sacrifice, and prepared to be an acceptable burnt-offering unto God, looked up to heaven, and said, “O Lord God Almighty, the Father of thy beloved and blessed Son Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the knowledge of Thee, the God of angels and powers, and of every creature, and of the whole race of the righteous who live before thee, I give Thee thanks that Thou hast counted me, worthy of this day and this hour, that I should have a part in the number of Thy martyrs, in the cup (Comp. [Mat 20:22](#), [Mat 26:39](#); [Mar 10:38](#)-Added in the *Ante-Nicene Fathers*-DFC) of thy Christ, to the resurrection of eternal life, both of soul and body, through the incorruption [imparted] by the Holy Ghost. Among whom may I be accepted this day before Thee as a fat and acceptable sacrifice, according as Thou, the ever-truthful God, hast fore-ordained, hast revealed beforehand to me, and now hast fulfilled. Wherefore also I praise Thee for all things, I bless Thee, I glorify Thee, along with the everlasting and heavenly Jesus Christ, Thy beloved Son, with whom, to Thee, and the Holy Ghost, be glory both now and to all coming ages. Amen.”

5. Frend records that "some forty-eight Christians perished in prison or in the amphitheater on 1 August 177" (p. 183).
6. There were some churches of the Gnostic Marcion in Smyrna in the

second century (Freund, p. 215).

7. "Noetus, a native of Polycarp's see of Smyrna, had been proclaiming (c. 200) that 'Christ was the Father himself and the Father himself was born, suffered and died.' He was reprimanded by the presbyters at Smyrna, but expostulated, 'What evil then am I doing in glorifying Christ?'" (Freund, p. 343).
 - a. Note, "presbyters"--plural!
8. "The martyrology *Acts of Pionius*, set in the 'Decian persecution' of AD 250–51, mentions a lapsed Smyrnan Christian who was attending to the sacrifices at the altar of the temple of [Smyrna's-DFC] Nemesis" (Wikipedia).
9. Apparently dates to the mid-third century, "[t]he *Acts of Pionius* records how a certain mistress in Smyrna (?) had driven out her slave and left her bound on the mountains because she was a Christian, and she had been looked after secretly by 'the brethren'" (Freund, p. 318).
10. "[T]here was a bishop from hence in the council at Nice" (Gill).
11. "In the 'fifth' century, mention is made of several bishops of this place; as of Cyrus, a native of Constantinople; and Protherius, who, it is thought, succeeded him, and was present in the synod at Chalcedon; and Aethericus, who assisted at three synods in this century, at Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon" (Gill).
12. "[I]n the 'sixth' century, there was a bishop of Smyrna in the fifth synod held at Rome and Constantinople" (Gill).
13. "[I]n the 'eighth' century, one Antony, a monk, supplied the place of the bishop of Smyrna in the Nicene synod" (Gill).
14. "During the Middle Ages the city was the scene of many struggles, the most fierce of which was directed by Timur against the Christians. Tradition relates that there he built a tower, using as stones the heads of a thousand captives which he put to death, yet Smyrna was the last of the Christian cities to hold out against the Mohammedans; in 1424 it fell into the hands of the Turks" (ISBE).
15. The city remained continued to have a good-sized population of "Christians" through the years, even up to the 1960s, for paraphrasing McGarvey and others, Wyatt Sawyer wrote, "This is one of the four Asian cities which apparently have lived through the ages, and in which some vestige of Christianity has survived" ("the Church in Smyrna," in *Churches of the New Testament*, (Fort Worth, TX: Fort Worth Christian College Bookstore, 1963), p. 223).
 - a. "Christianity has held on here better than in any city of Asia" (Robertson).

E. Miscellany.

1. As noted in one of the quotes above, there were actually two Smyrnas; an earlier Smyrna five miles to the north of this one was supposedly the birthplace of Homer and the poet Mimnermus and home to "a large temple of Athena" and possessor of coinage bearing "the emblem of the mother-goddess Cybele" (Grant, p. 595); it fell into disrepair and Smyrna was rebuilt at the new location a couple of centuries later.
2. Smyrna is modern Izmir, Turkey (Marlin, p. 53).
 - a. Paraphrasing the *Pulpit Commentary*, Sawyer wrote, "Today the city of Smyrna is called Giaour Izmir of Infidel Smyrna, so called by the Turks, because of the large number of professed Christians there" (pp. 223,224).

LV. THE CHURCH AT PERGAMOS.

A. Establishment.

1. Who started the church in Pergamos is unknown, though a congregation could have existed shortly after the first Gospel sermon, for there were Asians (Roman provincial) in Jerusalem on Pentecost ([Act 2:9](#)).
2. Frensd succinctly states that this church was not started by Paul (p. 127).
 - a. Tolle adds, "Some have supposed that Paul, during his extensive work in that part of the world must have visited a place of such importance, but that is mere conjecture" (p. 44).
 - b. One would do well not to rule out the possibility of Paul's having a role in the start of the church there, for while Paul was in Ephesus, "all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks" ([Act 19:10](#)).

B. Early history.

1. The church in Pergamos was recipient of Jesus' third of seven letters to churches in Roman provincial Asia ([Rev 2:12-17](#)).
2. There was an early Christian, Antipas, martyred in Pergamos ([Rev 2:13](#)).
3. The church in Pergamos was not without fault, for there were false doctrines accepted there.
 - a. There were some holding "the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication" ([Rev 2:14](#); cf [2Pe 2:15](#); [Num 25:1-3](#); [Num 31:16](#)).
 - (1). "In the same way there were false teachers at Pergamos who taught that Christians might join the idol feasts and in heathen fornication" (Johnson).
 - (2). "In [2Pe 2:15](#) Balaam's example is used as a means to illustrate the pernicious influence of insincere Christian teachers. The author might have alluded to Balaam in the passage immediately preceding [2Pe 2:15](#) because of his abominable counsel. This is done in [Rev 2:14](#). Here, of course, Balaam is the type of a teacher of the church who attempts to advance the cause of God by advocating an unholy alliance with the ungodly and worldly, and so conforming the life of the church to the spirit of the flesh" (ISBE).
 - (3). While Gill may have been right in principle, he was probably wrong in his application of this passage thus: "By Balaam may be meant the pope of

Rome, for that name signifies, 'the lord of the people'; and is very appropriate to him, who in this interval took upon him to be universal bishop, and lorded it over both church and state, in a most haughty and tyrannical manner; and the Balaamites were those who submitted to his power and authority, and received his doctrines; and by Balak, king of Moab, may be intended the secular powers, the emperors, kings, and princes of the earth, who were instructed by the popes of Rome, to draw their subjects into idolatry, which is spiritual fornication, to eat the bread of God, to worship the host, images, and saints departed; and which proved a snare, and a stumbling to some of this church, as to the Israelites of old, to do the same things."

b. Others were Nicolaitans ([Rev 2:15](#); cf [Rev 2:6](#)).

- (1). "Reference to them is frequent in post-apostolic literature. According to Irenaeus (*Adv. Haer.*, i. 26, 3; iii. 10, 7), followed by Hippolytus (*Philos.*, vii. 36), they were founded by Nicolaus, the proselyte of Antioch, who was one of the seven chosen to serve at the tables ([Act 6:5](#)). Irenaeus, as also Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.*, ii. 20), Tertullian and others, unite in condemning their practices in terms similar to those of John; and reference is also made to their Gnostic tendencies. In explanation of the apparent incongruity of such an immoral sect being founded by one of 'good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom' (compare [Act 6:3](#)), Simcox argues that their lapse may have been due to reaction from original principles of a too rigid asceticism. A theory, started in comparatively modern times, and based in part on the similarity of meaning of the Greek 'Nikolaus,' and the Hebrew 'Balaam,' puts forward the view that the two sects referred to under these names were in reality identical. Yet if this were so, it would not have been necessary for John to designate them separately.

"The problem underlying the Nicolaitan controversy, though so little direct mention is made of it in Scripture, was in reality most important, and

concerned the whole relation of Christianity to paganism and its usages. The Nicolaitans disobeyed the command issued to the Gentile churches, by the apostolic council held at Jerusalem in 49-50 AD [note the idea that doctrine was formed at the "Jerusalem council"-DFC], that they should refrain from the eating of 'things sacrificed to idols' ([Act 15:29](#)). Such a restriction, though seemingly hard, in that it prevented the Christian communities from joining in public festivals, and so brought upon them suspicion and dislike, was yet necessary to prevent a return to a pagan laxity of morals. To this danger the Nicolaitans were themselves a glaring witness, and therefore John was justified in condemning them. In writing to the Corinthians, Paul gives warning against the same evil practices, basing his arguments on consideration for the weaker brethren (compare [1Co 8:1-13](#))" (ISBE).

- (2). "In a time of persecution, when the eating or not eating of things sacrificed to idols was, more than ever, a crucial test of faithfulness, they persuaded men, more than ever, that was a thing indifferent.

[Rev 2:13-14](#). This was bad enough, but there was a yet worse evil. Mingling themselves in the orgies of idolatrous feasts, they brought the impurities of those feasts into the meetings of the Christian Church.

"And all this was done, it must be remembered, not simply as an indulgence of appetite, but as a part of a system, supported by a 'doctrine,' accompanied by the boast of a prophetic illumination, [2Pe 2:1](#). It confirms the view, which has been taken of their character to find that stress is laid, in the first instance on the 'deeds' of the Nicolaitans. To hate those deeds is a sign of life in a Church, that otherwise is weak and faithless. [Rev 2:6](#) To tolerate them is well nigh to forfeit the glory of having been faithful under persecution.

[Rev 2:14-15](#)" (Smith).

- (3). Again, Gill may have overanalyzed the passage: "These impure heretics sprung up in the time of the apostolic church, but their doctrines were not

received, and their deeds were hated, see [Rev_2:6](#). This seems to design the doctrines of the church of Rome, which in this period took place; which forbid marriage to the priests, and recommended celibacy and virginity to others also; which were the source of all uncleanness and abominable lusts; for which pardons and indulgences were given, and, in process of time, brothel houses were set up, and licensed and encouraged by authority."

C. Early character.

1. Undoubtedly, Greco-Roman mythology had an influence on early Christians, for "[o]n a hill a thousand feet high behind the city were temples to Zeus, the chief of gods, to Dionysus, the god of wine, to Athena, the goddess of wisdom, and to Aesculapius, the god of medicine" (Tolle, p. 43); also were there "temples of Demeter ["goddess of agriculture, productive soil, fruitfulness of mankind, and guardian of marriage" (J.E. Zimmerman, *Dictionary of Classical Mythology*, p. 84)] and Hera ["goddess of women and childbirth" (Zimmerman, p. 121)]"; in fact, Pergamos "probably had in it more idols than any other place in Asia" (Tolle, p. 44).

a. Some have suggested that the worship of Aesclepius (Jamieson, Fausset, Brown, and Robertson) or idolatry in general (Johnson) is referred to in Jesus' speaking of "Satan's seat."

(1). Gill wrote, "Pergamos was a city very much given to idolatry, here Satan reigned while it was Pagan, and so was a fit emblem of the idolatrous church of Rome. Pausanias says, the country the Pergamenes inhabited was sacred to the Cabiri, the chief gods of the Heathens. And the same writer observes, that Aesculapius particularly was worshipped at Pergamos; and hence he is called by Martial the Pergamean god; to his temple here, men used to go from different parts of the world for cure of diseases; hither Antoninus the emperor went for such a purpose, as Herodian relates; and this being a common thing, hence Lucian scoffingly says, that Aesculapius had an apothecary's shop at Pergamos. As Rome, and its dominions, were the principal seat of the church in this period of time, it may well be called Satan's seat or throne; not only because it had been the seat of the Roman emperors, the ten horned and seven headed beast, [Rev_13:2](#); but because it was the seat of antichrist,

which the great dragon Satan gave him, whose coming was after the working of Satan, and he was influenced by him; and who, like Satan, exalted himself above all that is called God; yea, placed himself in the temple of God, the church, as God, showing himself to be God, assuming that power to himself which only belonged to God. Moreover, he may be called so for his enmity and malice against the saints, and for his art and subtlety, and insidious methods to ensnare and destroy them. Now to dwell where such an one has his seat, his throne, has a kingdom, power, and authority, must be very uncomfortable, as well as dangerous; and required great care, circumspection, and prudence how to behave: ..."

- (a). Regarding Aesclepius' temple, Grant wrote that "after Constantine I the Great's conversion, a Christian altar was established in the temple of Asclepius, and a baptistry in the gateway to its precinct" (pp. 485,486).
- (2). Clarke added a comment which is a bit mystical: "It was a maxim among the Jews, that where the law of God was not studied, there Satan dwelt; but he was obliged to leave the place where a synagogue or academy was established."
- (3). Whatever "Satan's seat" may have been, posterity has saved the great altar of Zeus which had been at Pergamos--though it is no longer freestanding over that ancient sight, but is housed in Berlin, Germany.
- b. Eugene W. Clevenger in the 1963 Fort Worth Christian College lectureship book added, "The city was famed also for the Nicephorium, a grove of great beauty which contained a complex of heathen temples to various gods. This grove was 'the glory of the city.' ... Aphrodite (the Roman Venus), the goddess of love and beauty, was also worshipped here" (pp. 136,137).
- 2. There was a great Roman influence on the city as it gave itself to emperor worship, and contained temples to "Roma and Augustus" in the first century B.C. [29 B.C. (Grant, p. 484)], and later ones dedicated to Trajan and Severus (Tolle, p. 43).
 - a. Clevenger saw the Caesar worship as being the point of Satan's seat's being in Pergamos (p. 136).

3. Perhaps education would have borne and influence on early Christians there, for Pergamos was a seat of learning, perhaps containing a library of 200,000 volumes (Tolle, p. 43).

a. The library actually precipitated the invention of parchment when a jealous Alexandria refused to ship any more papyrus to this library due to its coercing Alexandria's librarian to relocate (Wayne Jones, "The Church at Pergamum," in B.J. Clarke, ed., The Lord's Church: Past, Present, Future, (Southaven, MS: Power Publications, 1999), p. 238).

4. As for the character of the church itself, that there was strength in the face of persecution has been mentioned ([Rev 2:13](#)) as has their apparently compromising acceptance of false doctrine ([Rev 2:14-15](#)).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. "[A]ccording to the Apostolical Constitutions, Caius was the first bishop of it;" (Gill).

2. Eusebius noted from the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* that there were eleven martyrs from Pergamos killed before Polycarp was and names as martyrs in Pergamos "Carpus, Pappylas, and a woman, Agathonice--who found glorious fulfillment after many noble confessions of faith" (IV.15).

a. Fox dates the latter deaths to A.D. 162.

3. Eusebius, quoting a letter from Gaul on martyrs, spoke of one martyr named "Attalus, who had always been a pillar among the Christians in Pergamum" (V.1).

4. "In the 'fifth' century there was a bishop of Pergamos in the council at Ephesus" (Gill).

5. "[I]n the 'sixth' century, there was one in the 'fifth' synod at Constantinople" (Gill).

6. "[I]n the 'seventh' century, Theodorus, bishop of the church here, was in the sixth synod held at the same place" (Gill).

7. "[I]n the 'eighth' century one Pastilas was bishop of Pergamos; and in the same age, Basil, bishop of this place, was in the Nicene synod" (Gill).

E. Miscellany.

1. Pergamos and Pergamum/Pergamon are names for the same place; the difference is in the former being feminine in the Greek (ἡ Πέργαμος) and the latter being neuter (τὸ Πέργαμον)--why they are both employed could not be ascertained.

a. Vincent wrote, "The proper form of the name is *Pergamum*."

LVI. THE CHURCH AT THYATIRA.

A. Establishment.

1. Frend succinctly states that this church was not started by Paul (p. 127).
 - a. One would do well not to rule out the possibility of Paul's having a role in the start of the church there, for while Paul was in Ephesus, "all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks" ([Act 19:10](#)).

B. Early history.

1. The church in Thyatira was recipient of Jesus' fourth of seven letters to churches in Roman provincial Asia ([Rev 2:18-29](#)).
2. Aside from the letter of Jesus, the only other mention of Thyatira is in connection with Lydia whom Paul met in Philippi--she was from Thyatira ([Act 16:14](#)).

C. Early character.

1. The typical pressures would have existed in Thyatira, with these being some of the more notable:
 - a. Materialism would have been a threat due to Thyatira's commercial importance; accordingly, as Marlin noted, "The problem at Thyatira was members of the church urging their fellow Christians to compromise with the world and the ring leader was a woman named Jezebel [he makes a great point regardless of whether the name were real or symbolic--the latter of which I hold-DFC]" (p. 94).
 - b. Mythology played a role as well, for in Thyatira Tyrimnos (a manifestation of Apollo-Hailey in Cozort), Sibyl, and Artemis were venerated (Keith Cozort in 1999 Power Lectures, p. 277).
2. The letter of Jesus revealed a number of things regarding Thyatira's many strengths and one primary weakness.
 - a. She was known for her "works, and charity, and service, and faith, and ... patience, and ... works; and the last *to be* more than the first" ([Rev 2:19](#)).
 - b. On the other hand, though, she allowed her "Jezebel" to have an influence ([Rev 2:20](#)).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. In the second century the church in Thyatira "was overrun with the Cataphrygian heresy" (Gill referring to Epiphanius).
 - a. It is assumed that this is a reference to a Montanism which had come "down from" Phrygia.
2. Specifically noting this location, Frend wrote, "Where evidence exists, for instance from Thyatira, it is clear that there continued to be strong Christian communities in the 'Seven Churches' during the third century" (p. 444).

3. "[I]n the 'fourth' century there was a bishop from Thyatira in the council of Nice" (Gill).
4. "[E]ven in the 'eighth' century there was one Esaias a presbyter, who supplied the place of the bishop of Thyatira in another council at Nice" (Gill).

E. Miscellany.

1. Thyatira is modern Akhisar (Marlin, p. 90).

LVII. THE CHURCH AT SARDIS.

A. Establishment.

1. Frend succinctly states that this church was not started by Paul (p. 127).
 - a. One would do well not to rule out the possibility of Paul's having a role in the start of the church there, for while Paul was in Ephesus, "all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks" ([Act_19:10](#)).

B. Early history.

1. The church in Sardis was recipient of Jesus' fifth of seven letters to churches in Roman provincial Asia ([Rev_3:1-6](#)).

C. Early character.

1. Many of the typical Asian threats would be seen at Sardis; here is an additional notable threat:
 - a. Judaism may have been a threat to the early church in Sardis, for there was a significant Jewish population as early as "the fifth century B.C. (which may have numbered between 5,000 and 10,000 in imperial times)" (Grant, p. 562).
2. Sardis was the worst of the churches in Jesus' perfect estimation; He referred to the church as dead ([Rev_3:1](#))--one may wonder if the "few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments" ([Rev_3:4](#)) were able to right the proverbial ship--it would be nice to think so; and I do.

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. A well-known early Christian in Sardis was a bishop Melito who accepted Christianity, Judaism, and the rule of Rome as all being able to inter-relate, arguing reasonably with an appreciation of all three viewpoints for the goal of harmony (Frend, pp. 240-241).
 - a. He only saw the persecuting Caesars as bad (Frend, p. 240)--he must not have read Suetonius!
 - (1). He even appealed to the emperor Verus on behalf of what Eusebius called "our faith" (IV.13) and defended it in a letter to the ironically stoic persecutor of Christians, Marcus Aurelius (IV.26).
 - b. He celebrated Easter on the 14th of Nisan as the Jews celebrated the Passover, and even wrote *Homily on the Passion* (Frend, p. 240).
 - (1). This was just one of many writings from the pen of Melito (Eusebius, IV.26) among which was a book on the Revelation (Gill).
 - c. He blamed "ungrateful Israel," not Pilate, for the crucifixion of Christ (Frend, p. 241).
 - (1). Paul L. Maier, translator and commentator of Eusebius, seems surprised and upset that

Eusebius, like Melito, would repeatedly make "references to God' punishing the Jews with the destruction of Jerusalem for their 'crime against Christ" and sees this attitude as "[u]nfortunately ... rather typical of early Christian polemic" (p. 115)-- he must have forgotten or simply ignored the refrain of the Jews, "His blood *be* on us, and on our children" ([Mat 27:25](#)), in which statement that people asked for every atrocity ever committed against them regardless of the morality or immorality of such!

(2). One might be reminded of the oft-repeated warning,
"Be careful what you ask for, you just might get it."

d. Some think he was the angel/messenger of the church in Sardis (Gill).

2. In the fifth century, Sardis "was the metropolitan church of the Lydians" (Gill).

3. "[I]n the 'sixth' century there was a bishop of this church in the fifth synod at Constantinople" (Gill).

4. "[I]n the 'seventh' century, Marinus bishop of Sardis assisted at the sixth synod in" Constantinople (Gill).

5. "[I]n the 'eighth' century, Euthymius bishop of it was present in the Nicene synod" (Gill).

6. "[I]n the 'ninth' century mention is made of an archbishop of Sardis" (Gill).

E. Miscellany.

1. Sardis is modern Sart (Grant, p. 561).

LVIII. THE CHURCH AT PHILADELPHIA.

A. Establishment.

1. Frend succinctly states that this church was not started by Paul (p. 127).
 - a. One would do well not to rule out the possibility of Paul's having a role in the start of the church there, for while Paul was in Ephesus, "all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks" ([Act_19:10](#)).

B. Early history.

1. The church in Philadelphia was recipient of Jesus' sixth of seven letters to churches in Roman provincial Asia ([Rev_3:7-13](#)).

C. Early character.

1. Among the influences on the church in Philadelphia would have been these:
 - a. Caesar worship would have been a natural part of Philadelphian life, for Tiberius had rebuilt the city after an A.D. 17 earthquake and Vespasian was later honored--hence other names for the city included Neocaesarea and Flavia (Grant, p. 495).
 - (1). There was also a shrine honoring Caligula's father Germanicus (Grant, p. 495).
 - b. Mythology played a role, for Philadelphia hosted festivals honoring Zeus Helios and Asclepius (Grant, p. 495).
 - c. There was a substantial Jewish population ([Rev_3:9](#)).
2. Jesus letter reveals this of the character of the church in Philadelphia:
 - a. She was concerned about souls--others and her own ([Rev_3:8](#)).

D. Historical influences on later days with notable events and persons.

1. Grant writes that Philadelphia's "Christian population suffered numerous martyrdoms" (p. 495).
 - a. "[T]welve Philadelphians suffered martyrdom at the same time Polycarp did" (Gill).
2. Ignatius, an early self-promoting martyr from Antioch, sent a letter to the church in Philadelphia.
3. Writing in the context of mid-second century Rome, Frend penned, "Even Philadelphia, the church most favored by the Seer of Patmos [actually by the Lord Himself-DFC] and later to be near the Montanist centers of the New Prophecy, was ruled by a bishop with presbyters and deacons under him" (p. 140 [he based this upon Ignatius' letter, p. 158 and perhaps "the Apostolical Constitutions, [in which] one Demetrius was ordained bishop of this church by the Apostle John" (Gill)]).
 - a. Regarding Montanism and Philadelphia, around A.D. 172 three Montanistic, self-proclaimed prophet-messengers of the Holy Ghost (Montanus himself with Prisca and Maximilla)

claimed that the Second Coming would take place "some fifteen miles east of Philadelphia"; interestingly, not unlike such premillennial nonsense just under two millenia later, their message "was heard gladly" while "[w]ars and rumors of wars were freely foretold" (Freund, pp. 253,254).

(1). If only ones would appreciate that wars and rumors of wars characterize all of post-Jesus history!

4. "[I]n the 'fourth' [century] a bishop of this church was in the council at Nice" (Gill).
5. "[I]n the 'fifth' century, a presbyter of Philadelphia was in the synod at Ephesus under Celestine" (Gill).
6. "[I]n the 'sixth' century, a bishop of this place assisted at the fifth synod at Constantinople" (Gill).
7. "[I]n the 'eighth' century, Stephen, bishop of the church here, was in the Nicene synod" (Gill).

E. Miscellany.

1. Philadelphia is modern Alashehir (Marlin, p. 124).

LIX. CITIES UNSEEN IN THE CHURCH AGE.

1. It is interesting to consider some of the great cities of the Old and New Testaments which are not at all even given a mention in the Gospel era.
 - a. Cities prized by Israel and/or Judah such as Bethel, Hebron, Beersheba, Dan, Shiloh, and Gilgal are not seen at all in the New Testament.
 - b. Bethlehem is not seen again after Jesus' youth.
 - c. Nazareth is never mentioned in the church age, and is seen only once after Jesus' resurrection ([Luk_24:19](#)).
 - d. Cana is not seen in the church age.
 - e. Nain is not seen in the church age.
 - f. Bethsaida is not seen in the church age.
 - g. Chorazin is not seen in the church age.
 - h. Capernaum is not seen in the church age.
 - i. Jericho is only seen in the church age with reference to Rahab ([Heb_11:31](#)).
 1. This is in spite of Zacchaeus' ([Luk_19:1-10](#)), Bartimaeus' ([Mar_10:46](#)), and the other blind man's ([Mat_20:29-34](#)) being there.
 - j. Bethany is not seen in the church age.
 - k. Emmaus is not seen after the establishment of the church.
2. Why would these cities not be mentioned?
 - a. The church never was established there; assuredly, the Gospel had been preached there ([Luk_9:6](#); [Mar_16:20](#); [Act_8:4](#))!
 - (1). It is possible that the Gospel was preached and received but that the church simply was not mentioned by the Spirit.
 - (2). It is possible that some of the cities of the Old Testament simply did not survive into the church age.
 - b. The cities had forfeited their opportunities.
 - (1). Considering Nazareth see [Luk_4:16-30](#).
 - (2). Considering Bethsaida and Chorazin see [Mat_11:21](#).
 - (3). Considering Capernaum see [Mat_11:23](#).
 - c. More fertile fields could be found ([Act_13:46](#); [Mat_7:6](#)).