

Who Is Jesus? VII Canonization of the New Testament

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The Apostle John finalized the canon of the New Testament, which means that the Apostle John finished writing the important books of the New Testament. This becomes critical for us to understand if we're going to understand about Jesus and His ministry and who He was before He became human.

Let's just review a little bit, and some of this will be in the way of a broad look at things without necessarily getting into too much detail. Other parts of it we will get into very great detail. Let's talk, first of all, about the canon of the New Testament. We start out with the four Gospels, and let's analyze for a little bit who wrote those. Let's also talk about the other three writers of the New Testament, including the Apostle Paul who wrote 14 of the New Testament epistles or letters, and they are called the Epistles of Paul.

- Matthew—written by Matthew to the Jews

Because the New Testament was to the Jews first and then to Gentile, Matthew was probably the very first one written.

- Mark—written by the one called *John Mark* under the direction of the Apostle Peter.

We know that the Apostle Peter was one of the leading apostles. We have Peter, James and John, and later we find that Paul is added and given the hand of fellowship by Peter, James and John.

- Luke—written under the direction of the Apostle Paul.

Luke wrote the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts. There is some indication, by the style of writing, that he helped write the book of Hebrews, which is understood to be under the authorship of the Apostle Paul.

- James and Jude—brothers of Jesus Christ.

James, *the brother of John*, has no writings that we have in the New Testament at all, and was, in fact, the first apostolic martyr, in other words, he was the first apostle who was martyred (Acts 12).

- John—very different, indeed! He wrote a Gospel, three epistles and the book of Revelation.

This puts John's writings in a broader category than Matthew, because Matthew only wrote the Gospel.

Mark and 1st and 2nd Peter—we can attribute all of those to Peter. Then we have Luke who wrote the history as we have it in the book of Acts.

- Epistles of Paul

We see that Paul did not have very much of a revelation as far as prophecy was concerned, outside of several incidents that we find in several of the epistles. Paul was more concerned with teaching people *how to live by the Word of God* in the New Testament and to teach *about the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the grace of God*.

Let's review a little bit about James and John, particularly John; we're going to focus everything in and narrow it down to the Apostle John. When Jesus called John, He called James and John, the sons of Zebedee. It shows in one part of the New Testament that they were also partners with Peter in the fishing business on the Sea of Galilee. That's why they were all called *fishermen*. It is also indicated that the mother of James and John was Salome, who was possibly one of the sisters of Mary, which means that from a physical human standpoint, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were actually the cousins of Jesus.

After the 12 apostles were ordained by Jesus—one of whom we know was Judas Iscariot who fell—we know that the leading apostles were Peter, James and John. There were occasions of high importance where Jesus left the other apostles and took with Him Peter, James and John for certain specific things that He did. One of them was the healing of the ruler of the synagogue whose name was Jairus, whose daughter was near death. When He went in to pray, to raise her from the dead, He took the mother and the father and Peter, James and John; put all the rest out. Jesus lifted her by the hand and said, 'Maiden arise!' She rose and everyone was amazed!

Now let's go to another account that is very important (Matt. 17). Here is an account that Peter alludes to later that has to do with the canonization of the New Testament. Through this we are going to begin to analyze why the Apostle John finished writing the New Testament and why his writings were different than the other accounts of Matthew, Mark and Luke. This becomes important, because there are many people who say that we need to go by Matthew, Mark and Luke:

Because those three agree; John we're not too sure of because he puts a lot of things in there that we don't find in Matthew, Mark and Luke. Besides, we need to return.

so the argument goes, to be an *early* New Testament Church. If you want to return to the '*early* New Testament Church:

- Do you want to return to the time when Gentiles were excluded? *That's early!*
- Should we want to have the fullness of the message of God, which is complete, and was completed by the Apostle John?

I would say that we should take the *complete* New Testament and not use the argument that is spurious, taking John and putting him aside because

We don't like John and he doesn't agree with the others, so therefore, we are intelligent and we are going to make the decision that we will look upon John as being 'very suspicious'; as Anthony Buzzard wrote in his booklet: *Who Is Jesus?*

We're going to see that Peter, James and John had a special standing with Jesus because they were going to do special things, different from the rest of the apostles.

Matthew 16:28—Jesus said: "Truly I say to you, there are some of those standing here who shall not taste of death until they have seen the Son of man coming in His Kingdom."

We're going to see that in this vision and transfiguration that they did see how Jesus was going to be in coming to His kingdom. They actually saw it ahead of time through this vision, before it actually took place. This becomes something that Peter strongly references when he talks about 'the sure word of prophecy.'

Matthew 17:1: "And after six days, Jesus took with *Him* Peter and James and his brother John, and brought them up into a high mountain by themselves." *That is separately, privately, away from the rest of the apostles and disciples!*

Verse 2: "And He was transfigured before them; and His face shined as the sun, and His garments became white as the light. Then behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah talking with Him" (vs 2-3). *This was a vision that appeared!*

A lot of people read this and say, 'Moses and Elijah are in heaven, therefore, we believe in heaven.' *They didn't go to heaven!* Jesus was on a mountain on earth, not in heaven. This is a vision. We, today, understand that because on our 'tele-vision' everyday we watch dead people as if they are

still living. If you like the *I Love Lucy* series, sorry about that, you're watching a dead person. If you like John Wayne movies, sorry about that, you're watching a dead person. I could go on and on. It was a vision as we will see, but they saw them talking with Jesus.

Verse 4: "And Peter answered *and* said to Jesus, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here. If You desire, let us make three tabernacles here: one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.'"

I'm not going to get into the explanation of that, because that will deter us from the point we want to make. The point is, this is an important event and Jesus didn't take Judas Iscariot. He didn't take Andrew, Bartholomew, any of the other apostles that He called. ***He took Peter, James and John!***

Verse 5: "While he was speaking, a bright cloud suddenly overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, 'This is My Son, the Beloved, in Whom I delight. Listen to Him!' And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces in extreme terror" (vs 5-6). *Which is what you always do in the presence of God!*

What did Moses do? *He fell on his face and worshiped God!* Meaning that *you bow down with your face to the ground.*

Verse 7: "But Jesus came *and* touched them, and said, 'Arise, and do not be terrified.' And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus alone. Now as they were descending from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, 'Tell the vision to no one until the Son of man has risen from *the* dead'" (vs 7-9). We know that the apostles didn't understand what He meant.

In Matt. 16 He said He was going to be crucified, Peter said, 'O Lord, I'm not going to let that happen!' They didn't understand. This was all part of the learning process until they received the Holy Spirit. Again, in a very important event in the life of Jesus Christ, He left the other apostles and took with Him Peter, James and John:

Mark 14:32: "Then they came to a place that was *called* Gethsemane... [this is just before Jesus' arrest and subsequent crucifixion] ...and He said to His disciples, 'Sit here while I pray.' And He took Peter and James and John with Him; and He began to be deeply troubled and heavy-hearted. And He said to them, 'My soul is filled with anguish, even to death; remain here and watch.' Then He went forward a little, dropped to the ground and prayed, that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him" (vs 32-35). *We know that it was three times that He prayed!*

Who was the one that wrote this prayer? *John!* (John 17). Nowhere else is it recorded, even though He took Peter, James and John. John was the only one that was inspired to write this last final prayer that Jesus gave. Let's see about James and John; let's get some information on them.

Luke 9:51: "Now it came to pass, when the days were being fulfilled that He should be received up... [go for the crucifixion] ...that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem. And He sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they came to a village of Samaritans to prepare for Him; but they did not receive Him, because His face was *as if He were* going to Jerusalem. And seeing *this*, **His disciples James and John**... [the sons of Zebedee] ...said, 'Lord, will You have us call fire to come down from heaven and consume them, as Elijah did?'" (vs 51-54).

So, this event of the transfiguration had an impact on John. I want you to notice, and let's think on this; let's look at this verse for what it says. They didn't say, 'Lord, why don't *You* call fire down on them because they don't receive You?' They said, "...Lord, will You have **us** call fire to come down..." on them because they don't receive You.

- they knew that they were going to have some kind of power
- they knew that they were going to have some kind of authority

Otherwise, why ask the question?

That tells you that they knew a little something about what was going to happen, and why they were being called. We'll see a little later that they were called the 'sons of thunder.' John wasn't the mealy-mouthed little wimpy apostle that just talked of love. *He had to come to understand love from being very aggressive, determined*—and people would say, 'You have murder in your heart if you're going to call fire down and kill those people.' Jesus almost said that, so it shows you what kind of attitude and personality that James and John had.

Verse 55: "But He turned *and* rebuked them, and said, 'You do not understand of what spirit you are. For the Son of man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save *them*.'..." (vs 55-56). *Just put that in your passel and carry it around for a while!*

Here's another account where John also did something, v 46: Then an argument arose among them *which was* this: who would be *the* greatest among them. And when Jesus perceived the thoughts of their hearts, He took hold of a little child *and* set it by Him, and said to them, 'Whoever shall receive this little child in My name receives Me; and

whoever shall receive Me receives Him Who sent Me. For the one who is least among you all shall be great.' Then **John** answered *and* said, 'Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we forbad him because he does not follow with us.'" (vs 46-49).

John was gun-ho! John was ready for action! Yes, he was calling fire down, going out and policing people, and stopping them from doing this, that and the other thing.

Not only was it James and John, but this ran in the family. If Salome were the mother of James and John, and she was the sister of Mary—the mother of Jesus—when you understand what Mary may have understood about Jesus, you will understand why her sister came up to Jesus and asked:

Matthew 20:20: "Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Him with her sons... [James and John] ...worshiping Him and asking a certain thing from Him.... [How can you turn down your mother's sister?] ...And He said to her, 'What do you desire?' She said to Him, 'Grant that these **my two sons** may sit one at Your right hand and one at *Your left hand* in Your Kingdom.'" (vs 20-21).

Mommy is going to take care of her boys and make sure that they get position in the Kingdom. I want you understand about the aggressiveness here of James and John.

Verse 22: "But Jesus answered *and* said, 'You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and to be baptized *with* the baptism that I am baptized *with*?' They said to Him, 'We are able.'"

Right there they signed their own death warrant by martyrdom, both James and John.

Verse 23: "And He said to them, 'You shall indeed drink of My cup, and shall be baptized *with* the baptism that I am baptized *with*; but to sit at My right hand and at My left *hand* is not Mine to give, but *shall be given to those* for whom it has been prepared by My Father.' And after hearing *this*, the ten were indignant against the two brothers" (vs 23-24). *It was starting a real row!*

We also know that when it came time for preparing the Passover (Luke 22:8), who did He send to prepare the Passover? *He sent Peter and John!* Now we find Peter and John working together a great deal at this particular time. We know that in keeping this Passover there was the foot-washing and the whole thing, but let's see a little bit more about John.

John 13:20: "Truly, truly I tell you, the one

who receives whomever I send is receiving Me; and the one who receives Me is receiving Him Who sent Me.’ As *He* was saying these things, Jesus was troubled in spirit, and testified, saying, ‘Truly, truly I tell you, one of you shall betray Me.’ Then the disciples looked at one another, wondering of whom He was speaking. Now one of His disciples, the one whom Jesus loved, was leaning on Jesus’ chest” (vs 20-23)—*that was John!*

There was a special relationship between John and Jesus. That relationship goes clear on down through to the canonizing of the New Testament.

Verse 24: “And so, Simon Peter motioned to him...” *In this particular case, Peter was kind of on the outside of this*; whereas, in most cases, Peter was the leading one and on the inside.

“...Simon Peter motioned to him to ask who was the one of whom He was speaking. Then he leaned back on Jesus’ chest *and* asked Him, ‘Lord, who is it?’ Jesus answered, ‘It is the one to whom I shall give a sop after I have dipped *it*.’ And when He had dipped the sop, He gave *it* to Judas Iscariot, Simon’s *son*” (vs 24-26). And then Jesus was betrayed.

This was when Jesus was on the cross, John 19:25: “And Jesus’ mother stood by the cross, and His mother’s sister, Mary the *wife* of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene.”

Salome is brought in a little later as we understand from the account in Mark, and she could have been one of the sisters of Jesus’ mother.

Verse 26: “When Jesus saw *His* mother, and the disciple **whom He loved** [John] standing by, He said to His mother, ‘Woman, behold your son.’ Then He said to the disciple, ‘Behold your mother.’...” (vs 26-27).

You can understand this now when you understand the relationship; that John was the cousin of Jesus and that was in fact Mary’s nephew.

This is after they had been told that Jesus was resurrected, John 20:3: As a result, Peter and the other disciple... [John; John writes of himself as ‘the other disciple’] ...went out and came to the tomb. Now the two ran together, but the other disciple [John] ran faster than Peter and came to the tomb first” (vs 3-4). *There was this little on-going competition throughout their lives!*

Speaking of Peter when Jesus said, ‘Do you love Me?’; and after you go through the three places when Peter said, ‘Yes, Lord, I love you.’ Jesus said that when you’re old you’re going to have someone carry you about and you’re going to be martyred.

John 21:19: “Now, He said this to signify by

what death he would glorify God. And after saying this, He said to him, ‘Follow Me.’ But when Peter turned, he saw the disciple whom Jesus loved [John] following, who also had sat at the supper and *leaned* on His chest, and had said, ‘Lord, who is it that is betraying You?’ Seeing him, Peter said to Jesus, ‘Lord, what *shall happen* to this one?’ Jesus said to him, ‘If I desire that he remain alive until I come, what *is* it to you? You follow Me’” (vs 19-22).

In reality, John did live to see the coming of Christ in the prophecies given to him in the book of Revelation. The rest of the story is that it was said that John would remain alive until Jesus returned.

Acts 3—here again we see Peter and John. After we pass Acts 12—with the martyrdom of James, the brother of John—it goes into all of what the Apostle Paul did. There’s hardly anything about Peter. There’s nothing about the other apostles at all that we know of. Yet, we will see buried in the epistles and book of John there are indications that tell us something about more than just the Apostle John.

Acts 3:1: “Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, *which was* the ninth *hour*; and a certain man who was lame from his mother’s womb was being carried, whom they placed daily at the temple door which is called Beautiful, to beg alms from those who were going into the temple. When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. But Peter and John, intently observing him, said, ‘Look on us.’ And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, ‘Silver and gold I do not have; but what I do have, this I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarean, rise up and walk’” (vs 1-6).

I just wanted bring out that it was Peter and John who were there. After Philip went down to Samaria, was baptizing people and Simon Magus was baptized and immediately when Jerusalem heard the word they knew there was a problem. So, who did they send down to straighten out the problem?

Acts 8:14_[transcriber’s correction]: “Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent **Peter and John** to them.” This is not to make Peter the pope. This is not to make John the pope’s assistant. *No man can serve two masters!* There was one who was the leader: Peter. John was next. Now we’re going to see where James was killed.

Acts 12:1: “Now about that time, Herod the king stretched forth *his* hands to persecute some of those of the Church; and he killed James, the brother of John, with the sword” (vs 1-2). *True to the prophecy, James was martyred!*

Then after that, beginning with Acts 13 it all has to do with the Apostle Paul and preaching to the Gentiles.

Now let's talk a little bit about the canonization of the New Testament; bringing together the writings of the different ones that we have that we know of. We know that there are certain things missing from the New Testament, because Paul alludes to letters that he wrote, which are not included here. These were included in the New Testament because these taught the basic substance, as inspired by the Holy Spirit what God wanted us to have today.

The apostles themselves did the canonizing of the New Testament. In Gal. 2 we will see about Peter, James, John—before the death of James—who were pillars and the Apostle Paul.

Galatians 2:7: “But on the contrary, after seeing that I had been entrusted with the Gospel of the uncircumcision, exactly as Peter *had been entrusted with the Gospel* of the circumcision; (for He Who wrought in Peter for *the* apostleship of the circumcision wrought in me also toward the Gentiles;) and after recognizing the grace that was given to me, James... [the brother of Jesus] ...and Cephas... [Peter] ...and John—those reputed to be pillars—gave to me and Barnabas *the* right hands of fellowship, *affirming* that we *should go* to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcision” (vs 7-9).

This brings Paul into the sphere with James—the brother of the Lord—Peter and John. From that time on not much is heard at all of them. Let's see a little bit about what the Apostle Paul has to say that gives us an inkling concerning the canonization of the New Testament by the writings of the Apostle Paul.

2-Timothy 4:9: “Be diligent to come to me quickly; for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present age, and has gone to Thessalonica; Crescens, to Galatia; Titus, to Dalmatia. **Only Luke is with me....**” (vs 9-11).

Luke was with the Apostle Paul all the time. Luke wrote the Gospel of Luke; he also wrote the book of Acts. This is very important for us to understand and realize.

“...Get Mark *and* bring him with you, because he is profitable to me for *the* ministry of *the* Word” (v 11).

What a turnaround from what we find in Acts 15, where Barnabas and Paul had an argument over John Mark, because Paul didn't think he was profitable. As it turns out, Mark was a relative of Barnabas. That's why Barnabas took Mark at that

time. Now Mark is profitable to the ministry of the Apostle Paul.

Verse 12: “But I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus. When you come, bring the chest that I left in Troas with Carpus, and the books—especially the parchments” (vs 12-13).

Why does Paul mention the ‘chest’ [cloak (KJV)]. It is the covering that they would put around—heavy cloth covering around a codex.

A codex is what they called the book at that time, because they had scrolls like the Hebrews did and they had a codex where they would take single pages and open the codex and they would put these into the codex or *the book*. Codex mean *a book* where they would put in the loose pages. They didn't have binding by machinery like we have today; they had to do it by hand. The books, or parchments, were the velum on which he was writing and compiling what we know as the New Testament today. I'll show that to you in a little bit.

Verse 14: “Alexander the coppersmith did many evil things against me. May the Lord reward him according to his works.” *That's still loving your enemy! Let the Lord take care of him!*

Verse 15: “You also be on guard against him because he vehemently opposed our words. During my first defense, no one stood with me; instead, everyone deserted me. (*I pray that God will not lay it to their charge.*) But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully made, and all the Gentiles might hear *the Gospel*; and I was delivered out of *the lion's mouth*” (vs 15-17).

Why was he delivered out of the mouth of lions? *So he could finish writing his epistles!* There is evidence that the book of Romans was edited slightly after it was written, and the Apostle Paul was probably the one who did the editing.

Verse 18: “And the Lord will deliver me from every wicked deed and will preserve *me* for His heavenly kingdom; to Whom *be* the glory into the ages of eternity. Amen.”

Let's see how important that transfiguration was. We know that Peter was a Jew, John was a Jew, Paul was a Jew and the only one who may not have been a Jew was Luke—but he wrote under the tutelage and the direction of the Apostle Paul.

So, in fact, when you read Rom. 3, that unto the Jews were committed the oracles of God, may not necessarily be talking about the Old Testament. Unfortunately, there have been so many Jews subsequent to Jesus Christ, who have been enemies of the Gospel—as they were at the beginning of the

Gospel—that a lot of people overlook that. But it was, in fact, to the Jews that these things were committed.

When we read in the Gospel of John that salvation is of the Jews, it has reference to the writings. Not that salvation would come from Judaism. See how people twist the words?

2-Peter 1:14: “Knowing that shortly the putting off of my tabernacle *will come*, even as our Lord Jesus Christ has signified to me”—*which was by the baptism that Jesus said, and ‘the drink that I drink with, you will be martyred.’*

Verse 15: “But I will make every effort *that*, after my departure, you may always have a *written* remembrance of these things *in order* to practice *them* for yourselves.”

How are you going to have them always in remembrance? *By having them written down!*

Verse 16: “For we did not follow cleverly concocted myths *as our authority*, when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His magnificent glory.”

He’s referring to the authority of the transfiguration of Jesus Christ as the basis for this whole epistle. As you go through it, it is God’s way vs the false prophets and the way that they were teaching.

Verse 17: “Because He received glory and honor from God *the* Father when *the* voice came to Him from the Majestic Glory, ‘This is My Son, the Beloved, in Whom I am well pleased.’ And this *is the* voice from heaven that we heard when we were with Him on the Holy mountain. We also possess the confirmed prophetic Word...” (vs 17-19).

Lots of times we say, ‘Okay, this prophecy of the Old Testament. *No!* This word from the Greek ‘kerusso’—which means *to preach; the more sure word of preaching by the inspired preaching of God!*

“...to which you do well to pay attention...” (v 19). *Not just the prophecies in the Old Testament alone!* He will draw to that in another verse, but this is the *more sure word of the inspired preaching than the fables cunningly devised by men!* That’s what the comparison is.

“...as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and *the* morning star arises in your hearts... [until the return of Christ] ...knowing this first...” (vs 19-20)—*talking about the prophecy of Scripture, or the preaching of Scripture!* Whether it is prophecy or preaching, *it is always preaching!* Whether the preaching is instruction or prophesying.

“...that no prophecy of Scripture originated as anyone’s own *private* interpretation; because prophecy was not brought at any time by human will, but the Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by *the* Holy Spirit” (vs 20-21).

Then he goes on about false prophets, 2-Peter 2:1: “But there were also false prophets among the people, as indeed there will be false teachers among you...”

Let’s see a strong indication of the assembling of the Epistles of Paul by Peter. We know that he wrote 1st and 2nd Peter. We know that that was preserved. We know that he understood what he was doing when he wrote it.

2-Peter 3:15: “And bear in mind that the long-suffering of our Lord *is* salvation, exactly as our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, **has also written to you; as he has also in all his epistles...**” (vs 15-16).

They had all the Epistles of Paul there, perhaps even Paul was dead at this point, we don’t know. If he were not dead, then he got all the epistles there, and we will see that these were brought there by John Mark.

“...speaking in them concerning these things; in **which are some things that are difficult to understand...**” (v 16).

(go to the next track)

That’s why you never want to start understanding Christianity by reading the book of Romans. That’s the last place to study. The first is to study Matthew, Mark and Luke. In the actual order of the New Testament is:

- Matthew
- Mark
- Luke
- John
- Acts
- James
- 1st & 2nd Peter
- 1st, 2nd, 3rd John
- Jude

Then the Epistles of Paul. In the *King James Version* Romans is first. That is not the correct inspired order of the New Testament. And last of all the book of Revelation.

2-Peter 3:16: “...**things that are difficult to understand**, which the ignorant and unstable are twisting... [pervert] ...*and distorting...*”

We’re inundated today with false prophets, with people who insist on destroying the Word of

God, who insist on wiping John out of the Bible. There are actually some old Bibles that do not have the Gospel of John, 1st, 2nd, 3rd John and Revelation. We'll see why.

“...as *they also twist and distort the rest of the Scriptures*, to their own destruction” (v 16). **What is this telling us?** *The Epistles of Paul are Scriptures!* He didn't say as they do *the Scriptures*; but the other Scriptures, which means that the Apostle Paul's epistles are Scripture!

Who canonized them? *Paul did; Peter did;* they put it together and we will see that Peter passed these on to John, and John then finished writing the New Testament. *This becomes powerfully important in understanding Who Jesus was before He was human!*

Verse 17: “Therefore, beloved, since you know this in advance, be on guard against *such practices*, lest you be led astray with the **error of the lawless ones...**”—*from the Scriptures!*

How do they have the error? *By twisting, perverting the Scriptures of the Bible and the Epistles of Paul.* Don't we have that going on to this very day? *Yes!*

“...and you fall from your own steadfastness; rather, be growing in *the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.* To Him *be glory both now and into the day of eternity.* Amen” (vs 17-18).

Jesus in inspiring the New Testament and the apostles in writing it *knew what they were doing!*

- Do you think that Jesus was going to leave it to the Catholic Church?
- Do you think that Jesus was going to leave it to the renegade Jews?

That's why the New Testament is not preserved in Hebrew!

Anyone who says it is, *is a liar!* It's preserved in Greek, because God knew what would happen to the New Testament if it was preserved in Hebrew and turned over to the Hebrew experts who were not the followers of Christ. They would destroy it. That's why He didn't leave the canonization to chance. Who finalized the New Testament? *The apostle whom Jesus loved!*

I'm going to read to you quite extensively from this book: *The Original Bible Restored* by Ernest Martin. As an historian he is very good; in putting these things together he is excellent. However, he also believes that we don't have to keep anything; the only thing we need to do is love

God. That's unfortunate, but what he has here in bringing these things out, and I might explain to you that his original work on this book was done in the 1970s, because I have his original outline. This goes through the whole Bible, Old Testament and New Testament:

Restoring the Original Bible by Dr. Ernest Martin (pdf version: askelm.com)

Chapter 24:

John Mark was a very prominent person in the early history of Christianity. And in the matter of canonization, he significantly appears at a crucial time. We are told he was a cousin of Barnabas (Colossians 4:10), which may indicate he was a Jew with Levitical prestige (Acts 4:36).

In other words, Barnabas was a Levite—remember that. John Mark being his cousin may have also been of a priestly line of Levite.

At any rate, he occupied a prime social position in the Jerusalem congregation and his mother's home was the place where it was common for the apostles to meet (Acts 12:12–17). And though there was a disagreement between Paul and Mark in their early careers (Acts 15:36–41), this was not a permanent thing and Paul later called John Mark his “**fellow-laborer**” (Colossians 4:10–11). Paul's appeal was for John Mark to accompany Timothy to Rome so John Mark could perform a special service (ministry) for Paul. What was this service?

This is where the apostle Peter enters the picture. Though John Mark was often an associate of the apostle Paul in his ministry among the Gentiles, history and tradition attest to his closer relationship with the apostle Peter. In his first epistle, Peter refers to Mark as “**my son**” (1 Peter 5:13). Peter must have been a frequent visitor to the home of John Mark in Jerusalem (that is, his mother's home). Peter no doubt took Mark under his wing while he was a young man and he became a close assistant of Peter.

Papias of the late 1st century said that John Mark was Peter's “interpreter” or his official secretary and the writer of the second Gospel... [Gospel of Mark] ...As we have pointed out in a previous chapter, the Gospel of Mark really has the earmarks of being the Gospel of Peter. And indeed, it was. This means that John Mark was the one who helped Peter in his literary efforts and other ministerial duties. We find him with Peter in

“**Babylon**” (a cipher for Jerusalem, not Rome or the Babylon on the Euphrates) (1 Peter 5:13). But we also find him in attendance with the apostle Paul just a little earlier in time (Colossians 4:10–11).

These indications may show that John Mark was a type of liaison between Peter and Paul—one time he was with Peter and the other with Paul. And just before his death, Paul made his urgent request for Timothy to bring John Mark with him to Rome. He also wanted Timothy to bring along some important items that Paul called “**the cloak, the books, and especially the parchments.**”

I explained what the cloak was. That was the covering for that.

In effect, Paul was asking for Peter’s right hand man to come immediately to Rome for a special service. Though Paul did not ask Peter himself to journey to the capital of the Empire, the fact that he asked for John Mark was practically tantamount to the same thing. Paul knew that the apostles Peter and John were the only remaining witnesses to the Transfiguration, and this gave them a special commission for the preservation of divine truth, which would last the Christian community of believers through the spiritual corruption prophesied to take place in the future.

The Role of John Mark

John Mark was Peter’s assistant, Peter’s right hand man. He was also his secretary—the one who wrote literary documents for Peter. The service that Paul wanted John Mark to perform may have concerned the retention (or a collection) of some of Paul’s writings.

We already saw that Peter had in his possession after the death of the Apostle Paul, or slightly before his death.

This is as good a reason as any why Paul wanted John Mark in Rome. If it was not to take Paul’s letters to Peter, then it was to talk over the matter of the letters and have Peter come to Paul in Rome.

Since it seems that Paul wrote Second Timothy in the late Summer or Autumn of 65 C.E., then John Mark’s journey to Rome, and back to Jerusalem where Peter probably was, could have been accomplished by late spring of 66 C.E. And with the miraculous events concerning the Temple starting to

happen just before Passover 66 C.E. and continuing until Pentecost 66 C.E. (when God abandoned the Temple at Jerusalem)...

Which is when those who were at the temple heard a voice saying, ‘Let us leave here.’ That is recorded in the book of *Josephus*.

...it would have been possible for Peter reach Rome by the late summer of 66 C.E. If this is the case, Peter’s only reason for going to Rome was to see the apostle Paul relative to the matter of the New Testament canonization. This could have been the main reason that John Mark was involved in the issue since he was the literary assistant to Peter. And recall, Paul urgently admonished Timothy to bring the written documents with John Mark....

...With both Peter and Paul in Rome in the final weeks of 66 C.E. or in early 67 C.E. they could have selected and canonized the New Testament scriptures in their possession...

...it seems that Paul was given the opportunity to edit his own letters for inclusion into the sacred canon of the New Testament. An example of this are the last three verses of Romans in our present versions. These verses are very close to the writing style of Ephesians and Colossians, and they contain a reference that Paul’s teachings were then being called “**the prophetic scriptures**” (verse 26, Greek).

These indications are enough to show that Paul edited his own Book of Romans. Since this was done to the ABC book of his collection, he may have done it to others. But what was the purpose for such editing? It was clearly to provide something for a later or different audience, and to bring the earlier documents up-to-date in the teaching of the Gospel. It is sensible that Paul wanted the Book of Romans to be of universal application. In adapting Romans to this need, Paul simply added his brief reference to the advanced teaching of “**the Mystery,**” which he later fully revealed in Ephesians and Colossians. And importantly, he was now saying that his writings were a part of “**the prophetic scriptures**” (Romans 16:26). Paul was actually preparing his epistles for canonization.

We know that they had to be active in doing it. We know that they had to have these things done. After the formulization of the cannon by Paul and Peter:

The formation of the canon remained the responsibility of the apostle John.

And not for another 30 years or so would it reach it's final and completed status to be positioned alongside the Old Testament and the full revelation of God to man.

Then it talks about some very interesting things concerning the writings of the Apostle John. Remember, from basically the destruction of the temple in 70_{A.D.} until the death of John nothing new was added to the New Testament. That's why there are some old copies with the Gospels, the Acts and missing the Gospel and Epistles of John and the book of Revelation.

Chapter 25:

Historical and biblical evidence points to two time periods for the composition of this prophetic book. The first writing of it (in its initial form) was about 56 to 60 C.E. It was revealed again (perhaps with more material added to the original text) in the last part of the 1st century. Irenaeus, who was a native of Asia Minor and who knew Polycarp, who in turn was a personal acquaintance of the apostle John, said that the Book of Revelation “**was seen not such long time ago, but almost in our own generation, at the end of the reign of Domitian.**”

Domitian was one of the emperors of the Roman Empire.

This means that sometime between 70 C.E. and his death about 98 C.E. (or thereabouts, since John lived to the time of the emperor Trajan)...

Trajan began his reign 98_{A.D.}-117_{A.D.} We know that John was alive in 98_{A.D.}

According to Papias (Bishop of Hierapolis near Ephesus and a contemporary of John), John was martyred by the Jews.

Why was he martyred by the Jews? *I can't prove it here, but will state it dogmatically:* He said that Jesus was God before He was human! That's why! We will see in the Gospel of John when we get there.

The final New Testament did not have its origin in Jerusalem or in Rome. History makes it clear that it had its formulation where the Apostle John made his abode for the last 35 years of his life. It came directly out of Ephesus.

The only book in the entirety of the New Testament that does not seem to have any

connection with Ephesus—or a 500-mile radius around it—was the Gospel of Matthew. The Gospel seems to have been written to the Jews in Jerusalem and Palestine. However, the principle ‘to the Jew first’ makes this reasonable.

The Canonization by the Apostle John

John did not create the New Testament on his own. He had helpers. If one will read the writings of John carefully, these assistants can be recognized, and they played a very important part in the overall canonization. References to them are found from time to time cropping up within the contexts of John's compositions. The best place to start is to begin observing some of these things here.

We're going to see some very interesting things concerning the writing of the Apostle John. We want to find out who these people are. The Bible tells us rather clearly who they are.

John 21:24: “**This is the disciple** who testifies concerning these things and *who* wrote these things... [first person singular] ...and **we know that his testimony is true.**”

Who are the *we*? We find this cropping up in the writings of the Apostle John. This becomes very important in the canonization.

1-John 4:14: “**And we have seen for ourselves and bear witness** that the Father sent the Son *as the* Savior of the world.” Who are **we**?

3-John 2:2: “Beloved, **I**... [he's writing of himself] ...personally am praying for you, that in all respects...”

Verse 3: “For **I** rejoiced exceedingly...”

Verse 4: “**I** do not have any greater joy than these *testimonies* that **I** am hearing—that my children are walking in Truth.”

Verse 9: “**I** wrote to the Church, but Diotrephes...”

Verse 10: “Because of this very thing, if I come, I will call him to account for the actions that he is practicing with evil words—maliciously berating **us**...” Who are the **us**?

Verse 12: “We have received testimony from everyone on behalf of Demetrius, and from the Truth itself; and **we** also bear witness, and you know that **our** witness is true.” Who are **we** and **our**? Then John says, ‘I trust that I will shortly come.’

We have I, we, us and our!

1-John 1:1: “That which was from *the* beginning, that which **we** have heard, that which **we** have seen with **our** own eyes, that which **we** observed for ourselves and **our own hands handled**, concerning the Word of life.”

- *Who touched Christ? **Had to be the apostles!***
- *Who else handled Him? **Had to be the apostles!***

Paul said in 1-Cor. 15 that Jesus was seen of over 500 brethren at once. It could have been that He mingled among them and He hugged each other, so it could have had as many as 500. The **we** has to be from the apostles and that 500 and none other!

Verse 2: “(and the life was manifested, and **we have seen, and are bearing witness...** [more than one witness] ...that which **we have seen and have heard** we are reporting to you in order that you also may have fellowship with us; for the fellowship—indeed, our fellowship—*is* with the Father and with His own Son Jesus Christ. These things **we** are also writing to you, so that your joy may be completely full” (vs 2-4).

1-John 2:1: “My little children, **I am writing these things to you...**”

We have here in the first chapter of the First Epistle of John may have been written by the **we**, the ones who were helping John, the elders of John. This was probably an editorial comment after the death of John, or just before his death. Then you go through all the rest of the way in 1-John 2 and he says, ‘I write, I write, I wrote...’ Read all of chapter two and see.

If you’ve never recognized *we* and *our* before. That shows you how long you can read and study the Bible and you miss what’s in it! I have to say I’m more guilty than people who are not ministers. I’ve been a minister for many years and I study the Bible everyday and I didn’t see that. Others have seen it before, and I’m thankful that I was able to get this book and see it. It’s just like when you discover something like that, it’s like the gongs go off and the lights go on and you say, ‘Oh, why didn’t I see that before?’ We did a whole two-year study of every verse in the Gospel of John and we missed it!

John 1:14: “And the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among **us** (and **we ourselves** beheld His glory, *the* glory as of *the* only begotten with the Father), full of grace and Truth. John testified concerning Him, and proclaimed, saying, ‘This was He of Whom I said, “He Who comes after me has precedence over me because He was before me.”’ And of His fullness **we** have all received... [not I,

John] ...**we** received, and grace upon grace” (vs 14-16).

John 3:13: “And no one has ascended into heaven, except He Who came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man, Who is in heaven”—*which had to be written after He ascended into heaven!* This is right in the middle of the conversation that Jesus is having with Nicodemus. This is added by the **we**.

John 4:19: “The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, but you say that the place where it is obligatory to worship is in Jerusalem.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you shall neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem worship the Father. You do not know what you worship. We know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews’” (vs 19-22). *That does not mean **Judaism!***

Notice this parenthetical statement, v 23: “‘But the hour is coming,’ and now is...” That means that Jerusalem had to be destroyed; the temple had to be gone at the time that was written.

“...‘when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth...’” (v 23).

It is essential that we keep in mind that in Ephesus and the area of the province of Asia from A.D. 67-A.D. 98, the headquarters of apostolic authority within the Christian Church.

It’s recorded in the *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*. There is little doubt that after the destruction of Jerusalem and it’s temple in A.D. 70 if not before. The Romans province of Asia was the chief center of Christian tradition outside of Palestine.

The foundation for this had been outlined by Paul with Ephesus as the base of influence and hither were attracted a few of the leading personal disciples of Jesus, including perhaps some of the original apostles. Chief of all, we must recognize John, the son of Zebedee, whose presence at Ephesus for a period of years cannot be explained away by any confusion with another John.

That’s establishing it there. After Jerusalem was destroyed, then the Church had to go someplace; it went to Ephesus. Martin brings this out and substantiates with many different historical writings. I’ll give you one:

Back to the book *Restoring the Original Bible*:

Written by Papias: I shall not hesitate also

“But I shall not hesitate also to put down for you along with my interpretations whatsoever things I have at my time *learned from the Elders...*”

Who were taught personally by John!

...and carefully remembered, guaranteeing their truth. For I did not, like the multitude, take pleasure in those that speak much, but in those that speak the truth; not in those that relate strange commandments, but in those that deliver the commandments given by the Lord to faith and springing from the truth itself. If, then, anyone came who had been a follower *of the Elders*, questioned him in regard to the words of the Elders, what Andrew or what Peter said, or what was said by Philip, or by Thomas, or by James, or by John, or by Matthew, or by any other of the disciples of the Lord...”

This shows that it gives a good indication of who those elders were.

When John was a very old man, it was written that people were accusing John of not being able to remember the real teachings of Jesus.

Since John was a very old man when his Gospel was written, there were people accusing him of not being able to remember the real teachings of Christ. This is why John invoked the witness of the Holy Spirit to counter this. But John was also, in his Gospel and epistles, constantly appealing to the truth provided by competent witnesses from Palestine. In his Gospel alone, John stressed the word “witness” (or its cognates) 47 times. This was a most unusual emphasis.

None of the other writings in the New Testament stressed that. They just didn’t do it; they were not that kind of witness, and he states so right here very clearly.

It should be recalled that there were many “Gospels” of Christ already circulating by the time John wrote his works (Luke 1:1), and that both Peter and Paul warned of the fables that were destined to be put forth as the truth (2 Peter 1:16; 2 Timothy 4:4). John (even in his old age) felt that it was incumbent upon him to clear the air with the truth. He thus asked the witnesses of Christ’s earthly life who were still living (the *Elders*) to cooperate with him in the production of the final Gospel....

And the epistles and the book of Revelation. When we read the Gospel of John, these very sayings of Jesus, and Who He was before He was the Son of man, becomes very important and profound.

Since John’s Gospel, his three epistles, and the Book of Revelation were not canonized for almost another 30 years or so... [after the destruction of the temple] ...it meant that the Christian communities did not have in their possession a complete New Testament until the last decade of the 1st century.

And perhaps the last two years of that decade. When a person says that ‘we need to return to the early New Testament Church, before 70_{A.D.}, what they’re trying to do is exclude all of the writings of John so that they can show that what they have in Matthew, Mark and Luke are essentially Jewish, and say very little or nothing at all about Who Jesus was before He became human. We’ll have more to say about that later in this series. I call you attention to:

1-John 2:18: “Little children, it is *the* last time [hour]...” *That was probably just after he was finishing his writings.*

While all of this may show an early “first draft” to John’s Gospel and epistles, the inclusion of the “WE sections” into their texts makes it probable that their final positioning within the divine canon only became a reality when the Book of Revelation was revealed again to the apostle John not long before his death. Actually, the “WE sections” seem to be editorial remarks which were added by John’s assistants [who were still living].

Conclusion:

It is sometimes thought that because the New Testament has come down to us in Greek, that the Gentiles from Greek speaking areas were the ones who had authority to preserve the new canon. There is no scriptural warrant to sustain this belief. Indeed, of the apostles themselves only Peter and John had “**the prophetic word more confirmed**” (2 Peter 1:19). These two apostles along with James the Lord’s brother were the “pillar” apostles in the Christian communities and even the apostle Paul found it necessary to gain an approbation from them for his work among the Gentiles (Galatians 2:1–10). In a particular sense, they were the only apostles specifically commissioned to go to the circumcised (Galatians 2:7–9). As far as Holy Scripture was concerned, it was a well known

principle among the Jews that it was they who had been authorized to preserve and protect (and to teach) the Word of God. Paul acknowledged this.

“What advantage then has the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because unto them were committed the oracles of God.”

Romans 3:1–2

The word “committed” signifies an entrustment — an official commission. The apostle Paul reckoned that his own ministry among the Gentiles had the same type of authority, and the identical word was used in Greek to describe it (1 Corinthians 9:17; Galatians 2:7; 1 Timothy 1:11; Titus 1:3). Since the Old Testament had been placed into the hands of the Temple priests for its teaching and preservation (Deuteronomy 31:9–11), the apostles must have looked on safeguarding the New Testament in a similar way. Recall that the apostle John and his brother James were of priestly descent...

At any rate, Peter told the Jewish exiles in Asia Minor that he and John were going to leave them with a New Testament canon and that only these two apostles had **“the word of prophecy more confirmed”** (2 Peter 1:19). To accomplish his role in canonization, the apostle John gathered around him near the end of the 1st century a body of Jewish elders... [Christians] ...who helped him in writing (and no doubt preserving) that canon. No one knows how long the original group of men assisted John, but at the time John wrote his Gospel and his three epistles, those men were still giving witness to the accuracy of John’s teaching.

The point that needs to be emphasized is that the center of canonization for 30 years after 67 A.D. was Ephesus. The people who performed the task of completing the canon were Jewish Christians under the direction of the Apostle John. It is certain that the New Testament did not have its origins in Jerusalem, in Antioch of Syria, in Alexandria in Greece, in Carthage or in Italy.

If those areas had been supplied with the final New Testament when the book of Revelation came into existence, and that came from the central area of Ephesus, it is from this area that we should look for the original New Testament.

We will get into the book of John and see how important this was, in preserving for us the fact that Jesus was God before He became human.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 16:28
- 2) Matthew 17:1-9
- 3) Mark 14:32-35
- 4) Luke 9:51-56, 46-49
- 5) Matthew 20:20-24
- 6) John 13:20-26
- 7) John 19:25-27
- 8) John 20:3-4
- 9) John 21:19-22
- 10) Acts 3:1-6
- 11) Acts 8:14
- 12) Acts 12:1-2
- 13) Galatians 2:7-9
- 14) 2 Timothy 4:9-18
- 15) 2 Peter 1:14-21
- 16) 2 Peter 2:1
- 17) 2 Peter 3:15-18
- 18) John 21:24
- 19) 1 John 4:14
- 20) 3 John 2-4, 9-10, 12
- 21) 1 John 1:1-4
- 22) 1 John 2:1
- 23) John 1:14-16
- 24) John 3:13
- 25) John 4:19-23
- 26) 1 John 2:18

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 17
- Luke 22:8
- Acts 13; 15
- Romans 3
- 1-Corinthians 15

Also referenced:

Booklet: *Who Is Jesus?* by Anthony Buzzard
(christianmonotheism.com/media/text/WhoIsJesusBook.pdf)

Books:

- *Restoring the Original Bible* by Dr. Ernest Martin
(pdf version: askelm.com)
- *Josephus*

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