

BIBLE - Background

The 12 Disciples: Mark 3:13 – 19 Luke 6:13 - 16

The 4 Fishermen:

Peter, also called Simon Peter (Gospel of Peter)] brother of Andrew
Andrew] brother of Peter
James	} brother of John, son of Zebedee
John (Gospel of John)	} brother of James, son of Zebedee

Philip - friend of Peter and Andrew

Bartholomew, also known as Nathaniel - friend of Philip

Matthew, also known as Levi (Gospel of Matthew) - Tax collector for Rome

Thomas - the 'Doubting Thomas'

James, son of Alphaeus, also known as Clophas **

Thaddaeus, also known as Judas or Jude (Gospel of Jude) *

Simon *

Judas Iscariot



Mary bore 6 more children after the birth of Jesus: Mark 6:3, Mark 15:40

James (Gospel of James) **

Joses (Joseph Jr.)

Judas, or Jude *

Simon*

Mary

Salome

** There is some question these two might be one and the same. Scholars claim Joseph, who disappears from all text before Jesus is 12, had a brother named Alphaeus / Clophas. If Mary only bore Jesus before Joseph died, it would have been custom for Alphaeus to take his widowed sister-in-law as wife to perpetuate his brother's line. But I can't substantiate any of this biblically or via other resources. Interesting slant on things, though.

Jesus lived approximately 32 yrs: Circa 4B.C. to 29 A.D.

Palestine was conquered by the Romans in 63B.C. and Antipater was appointed ruler of all Judea. He was then succeeded by his son, Herod the Great (37- 3B.C.) who rebuilt

the Jewish Temple but then slaughtered the children of Bethlehem when Jesus was born. Pontius Pilate was the Roman Governor of Judea approx. 26-36 A.D.

Synoptic* Gospels:

*meaning 'to view together'. These 3 books introduce the man Jesus, his life, and hardships

MATTHEW: Tradition says Matthew wrote this in Hebrew; then translated it A.D.60 into Greek although exact date and author can't be substantiated.

Gospel writes of Jesus as the fulfillment of the prophesy as foretold in the Old Testament (Matt 21:2-9, Zach 9:9-10) per Peter's teachings. Matthew was Jesus' companion through most of Christ's public ministry.

MARK: written C60-70 A.D.

Gospel is of Jesus 'suffering as the son of God'. Mark, who never knew Jesus, was a later convert of Peter's and became a companion of Paul's on Paul's sojourns. Mark writes from what has been told to him.

LUKE: written C60 A.D.

Gospel tells of Jesus as 'Savior of the world' for everyone. Written by Luke from first-hand accounts by those who knew Jesus. Luke was another companion of Paul's on sojourns.



JOHN (son of Zebedee) : written C90 A.D.

This book tells of Jesus as the Divine One, the Son of God, with emphasis on the spirituality of Jesus' acts and deeds. John, son of Zebedee, was a disciple of John the Baptist, and was the most intimate earthly friend of Jesus'. After the death of Jesus' brother James, it was John to care for Mary until her death.

This Gospel is the one Friends hold as the guiding force in our religion above the others.

Acts: written C63 A.D. Author unknown Relates the acts of Peter and Paul though mainly about Paul. Covers the spread of the gospels north to Antioch and west to Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome.

Romans (the Epistle to): written 57-58 A.D. by Paul while in Corinth on 3rd mission. Covers the fundamental nature of Jesus' work and to let Roman Christians know Paul was en route to see them.

I Corinthians: written 52-53 A.D. by Paul to Corinthian Church while Paul was in Ephesus on 2nd mission. City of Corinth was one of the largest and richest in Roman Empire on the Isthmus of Greece.

II Corinthians: written C54-57 A.D. by Paul to same church while Paul was in Macedonia.

Galatians: written 57 A.D. by Paul to his churches in Galatia.

Ephesians: 'Prison Epistle' written 61-63 A.D. by Paul while imprisoned in Rome. During time of strife, Paul writes about unity and grandeur of the church, seeking to bind all into One Church.

Philippians: "2nd Prison Epistle" written 61-63 A.D. while still imprisoned. Also called the 'Missionary Letter', the Church in Phillipi which Paul founded in 51 A.D. offers to help Paul in his travels. Among the converts was Luke who became Pastor there for 6 years. City of Philippi was a strategic city on the East-West Great Northern Highway.

Colossians: "3rd Prison Epistle" written by Paul while imprisoned to the churches in Colossae. This church consisted of Greek, Jewish, and Oriental religions which created a philosophy of thinking and the recognition of Angels as intermediaries between God and Man.

I Thessalonians: written C52-53 A.D. by Paul to church in Thessalonica about the coming of Christ.

II Thessalonians: written C52 A.D. by Paul to same church to again assure of Christ's coming and the Day of Terror for disobedience.

I Timothy: written C64-67 A.D. By Paul to Timothy who was Paul's convert. This deals with church order and instructions to Timothy about church work in Ephesus.

II Timothy: written 64 A.D. By Paul after his re-arrest in prison. Nero, wanting a grander city for himself, burned down Rome that year and when cries of outrage were heard, proceeded to blame Christians for it. This letter to Timothy encourages to keep hope, not despair, and to keep the faith. Paul was executed about A.D. 66 or 67.

Titus: written 65 A.D. By Paul while in Crete to Titus, Paul's convert. Deals with church order.

Philemon: written unknown, by Paul to Philemon regarding Philemon's slave, Onesimus. Letter is to intercede with Philemon to forgive his run away slave and instead greet him as a Christian brother.

Hebrews: written unknown by unknown though possibly Paul. This is to forewarn Jewish Christians about tough times ahead and the fall of Jerusalem. It also warns that animal sacrifices would not remove sin.

James: written C60 A.D. by Jesus' brother about practical phases of Christian life for Christian Jews.

I Peter: written C66 A.D. by Peter to the churches in Asia Minor. It reminds followers that Jesus did his work while suffering.

II Peter: written C67 A.D. by Peter to assure, for the last time, that all God's people will be delivered. Peter was executed during Nero's persecution of Christians (A.D. 64-67) but asked to be nailed on the cross up-side-down. At the time of Jesus' arrest, Peter denied knowing him three times and felt unworthy to die as his Savior.

I John: written unknown by John to counter Gnosticism which taught the Body and Spirit were two separate entities. Gnostic thinking was that sin resided in the flesh only allowing the Body to sin as it pleased while the Spirit enjoyed a separate mystical piety. It also taught that Jesus was a phantom, a man in appearances only.

II John: written unknown by John to churches in Ephesus to caution again false teachers.

III John: written unknown by John to churches in Ephesus, cautioning about loving possessions, material things in this world.

Jude: written C67 A.D. By Jesus' brother. Thought to be addressed to the church in Asia Minor with stern warning to mind Church teachings.

Revelation: written C96 A.D. as 'directed by God through Christ by an Angel to John' in Ephesus. Written in two parts:

Chapters 1 – 3: Things which are.

Chapters 4 – 22: Things which shall be

First Council of Nicaea (in a nut shell...)

Emperor Constantine I (b. c. 208 A.D., d. 337 A.D.) was the first Christian ruler of the Roman Empire – from 306 to 337 A.D. The different churches which came into being since Christ had begun arguing amongst themselves. Constantine sought to put an end to it by calling together the many Bishops / Elders to a Council in the centrally located city of Nicaea, now modern-day Iznik, Turkey.

Approximately 300 attended from parts all over the Empire.

The Council met its challenges. The Bishops argued, talked, and compromised over several months before agreeing that : the Father and the Son are of the same substance, both are co-eternal, and that this belief was / is the traditional Christian belief as handed down from the Apostles. The Feast of Easter was separated from the Jewish Passover, the first twenty Canon Laws were written (rule #1, a prohibition of self-castration...) , and the Nicene Creed* professing devotion was written.

Among those attending this great meeting was Bishop Alexander of Alexandria and his Chief Deacon assistant, Athanasius (b. 296 A.D., d. 373 A.D.). Athanasius was a great thinker, writer and was paramount in helping the Council reach its ends. But for this, he was later falsely accused by his enemies of murder, treason, and even sorcery. He was exiled to Trier, a city near present-day Luxembourg, Germany, at least four times during his life. Yet he kept in touch with his diocese by letters till his return(s) to Alexandria. In one of his letters, he suggested 27 pieces he felt should be in the New Testament. Other lists had been suggested yet these alone, he reasoned, were 'the teaching of godliness proclaimed.' They are the Gospels we have today.

*Written in Latin by Athanasius, the Creed declares, in part: ... One altogether; not by confusion of Essence; but by unity of Person. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man; so God and Man is one Christ; who suffered for our salvation; descended into hell; rose again the third day from the dead. He ascended into heaven, he sitteth on the right hand of the God the Father Almighty, from whence he will come to judge the quick and the dead. At whose coming all men will rise again with their bodies; And shall give account for their own works. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire... This later became the Apostles Creed used in church liturgy today.