

## THE CHRISTIAN BIBLE IN AN APPROXIMATE CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

### **1 Thessalonians** Written: 49-50 CE. Author: Paul.

Paul's earliest letter. A joyful recollection of his time with the church, stressing the imminent arrival of Christ from heaven and the salvation he will then bring, even to believers who had already died. "... *Jews who ... killed the Lord Jesus ...*": 2:15

### **1 Corinthians** Written: mid 50s CE. Author: Paul.

Written to the church in Corinth, in response to numerous problems experienced after Paul's departure, including divisions in the church, sexual immorality, proper worship, and the reality of the future resurrection. *Lord Supper: 11:23*

### **2 Corinthians** Written: mid 50s CE. Author: Paul.

Follow-up letter to 1 Corinthians, which attacks "super-apostles" who claim precedence over Paul and explains that followers of Jesus in this age will experience hardship rather than glory.

### **Galatians** Written: late 50s CE. Author: Paul.

Written with urgency to gentile churches throughout region of Galatia to attack those arguing that gentile Christians must adopt the ways of Judaism, especially circumcision.

### **Philippians** Written: late 50s CE. Author: Paul.

Joyful letter thanking the church in Philippi for its moral and material support and urging church unity among members who should live for others in imitation of Christ.

### **Philemon** Written: late 50s CE. Author: Paul.

Letter written to a wealthy Christian, Philemon, urging him to receive back and forgive his slave Onesimus, who had absconded with his property and fled to Paul for help.

### **Romans** Written 60-64 CE. Author: Paul.

Written to the Christian church of Rome to explain the essentials of Paul's gospel message, that only the death of Jesus can bring salvation from sin, for both Jews and gentiles.

### **2 Thessalonians** Written: ca 70s CE? Author: unknown, in the name of Paul.

Written in imitation of 1 Thessalonians, an appeal to Christians not to think the return of Christ is immediate. The end is coming, but it will be preceded by clear signs.

### **Mark** Written in 70 CE. Author: anonymous; traditionally ascribed to Mark, the personal secretary of the apostle Peter.

The earliest record of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, which portrays him as the messiah no one expected or understood, who was sent to die for the sins of the world and be raised from the dead.

### **Matthew** Written in 80-85 CE. Author: anonymous; traditionally ascribed to Matthew, the tax collector disciple of Jesus.

An account of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection that stresses he is the Jewish messiah sent from the Jewish God to the Jewish people in fulfillment of the prophecies of the Jewish Scriptures.

### **Luke** Written in 80-85 CE. Author: anonymous; traditionally ascribed to Luke, a traveling companion of Paul.

An account of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection that stresses he was the final prophet sent from God, destined to be rejected by his own people so salvation would go to gentiles.

### **Acts** Written in 85-90 CE. Author: anonymous: same author as Gospel of Luke.

An account of the miraculous spread of the Christian church after Jesus' resurrection, through the preaching and miracles of the apostles, especially Paul, who took the message to gentiles.

### **John** Written in 90-95 CE (*KR: 100 CE, Syria?*). Author: anonymous; traditional ascribed to Jesus' disciple John the Son of Zebedee.

An account of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection focusing on his identity as a pre-existent divine being sent from above to bring eternal life to all who believe in him

### **Revelation** Written 90-95 CE. Author: as above

A description of mysterious visions of the heavenly realm and the cataclysmic disasters to strike the earth before all God's enemies are destroyed and a new utopian world arrives for the followers of Christ.

### **Colossians** Written: end of first century (*KR: 80 CE*). Author: unknown, in the name of Paul.

Letter urging Christians in Colossae not to worship spiritual powers other than Christ, who alone provides all that is needed for salvation and spiritual completion.

### **Ephesians** Written: end of first century. Author: unknown, in the name of Paul.

Letter to church of Ephesus, giving a plea for the unity provided by Christ and the free salvation he provides, to a church experiencing splits between Jewish and gentile factions. *Modelled on Col.*

### **1 Timothy** Written: end of first century (*KR: beg. II c. CE, Ephesus?, DM: 100-150 CE*). Author: unknown, in the name of Paul.

Allegedly written to Paul's young follower Timothy, pastor of church in Ephesus, giving instructions about how to organize and run his church.

### **2 Timothy** Written: as above

By the same author as 1 Timothy and Titus, also addressed to Timothy, giving Paul's final thoughts and instructions as he is preparing soon to die.

### **Titus** Written: as above

By the same author as 1 and 2 Timothy. Addressed to Paul's follower Titus, pastor of church on Cyprus, giving instructions about how to organize and run his church.

### **Hebrews** Written: end of first century. Author: Anonymous; traditionally ascribed to Paul.

A plea to readers not to leave the Christian faith for Judaism, since Christ is superior to everything in the Hebrew Bible, which foreshadowed the salvation he would bring.

### **James** Written: end of first century. Author unknown, in the name of Jesus' brother James.

A moral essay correcting Christians who believed that "faith alone" would save, by stressing the need to do "good works," since faith without works "is dead."

### **1 Peter** Written: end of first century. Author unknown: in the name of Jesus' disciple Peter.

A letter encouraging Christians experiencing suffering for their faith, emphasizing that Christ himself suffered, as would all those who strive to be his witnesses in the world.

### **1 John** Written: end of first century (*KR: beg. II c. CE*). Author: anonymous; traditionally ascribed to Jesus' disciple John the Son of Zebedee.

An essay written to urge followers of Jesus to be fulling loving to one another and not to be led astray by a separatist faction that suggested Jesus was a phantasmal being and not fully human.

### **2 John** Written: as above (same author as 1 John)

Brief letter addressing a church leader's community urging unity in love and the avoidance of false teaching.

### **3 John** Written: as above (same author as 1 John)

Very brief letter addressing similar issues of 2 John in light of a specific problem, the reception of a visiting church leader who was rejected by some in the congregation.

### **Jude** Written: end of first century (*KR: beg. II c. CE*). Author anonymous; in the name of Jude, the brother of Jesus.

Brief and vitriolic letter attacking false teachers who had infiltrated the Christian community, without indicating the nature of their teaching.

### **2 Peter** Written: ca. 120 CE (*KR: mid II c. CE*). Author unknown: in the name of Jesus' disciple Peter.

A letter explaining why the "imminent" return of Jesus had not yet happened, assuring its readers that a delay was necessary but all was going according to God's plan. *Calls Paul's letters "scripture"*.