Eusebius' Ancient Church History, AD 325

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Book 1

1.1 The Reason for this Record

It is my purpose to record:

- The successions of the holy apostles
- The history from the time of our Lord down to the present, (including important events of church history)
- Those who pastored the most prominent churches
- Those in each generation that have spread the Word of God either orally or in writing
- The names and dates of the Gnostics who, by their great heresies, like wolves, have unmercifully devastated the flock of Christ
- The calamities that befell the Jewish nation because of their rejection of our Savior
- The ways and times the Gentiles attacked the Word of God
- The character of those who endured torturous persecution and the martyrdoms we have endured in our times
- Lastly, to show the gracious and kind deliverance of our Savior

This being my purpose I will start at the beginning of the dispensation of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Please bear with me; I confess it is beyond my power to produce a perfect and complete history on these subjects, and since I am the first to try this, I am attempting to travel down a new and untrodden path.

I pray that God guides my hand; since I am unable to find even a trace of those who travelled this way before me, except in brief fragments that in one way or another give glimpses of events in ancient times. These ancient voices are like beacons of light warning us from a high watchtower where to walk and how to proceed with certainty and safety. I will gather the information from these ancient writers and compile them into one compact historical narrative. I will be content if I can preserve the records of apostolic succession from the apostles down to the present time, at least from the most eminent churches.

This record is especially important because I know of no ecclesiastical writer who had devoted himself to this project. I hope this will be very

useful for historical research. I have already created a chronological table, but this present work will be as full an account as I can give. My record will begin with the dispensation of our Savior Christ and the doctrine of His deity, which far surpasses what man can conceive. Anyone who begins to write a history of the church must begin with the very origin of Christ's dispensation, from whom Christians receive our very name; a dispensation more divine than many realize.

1.2 Jesus Christ's Pre-existence and Deity

Christ's nature is two-fold. He is God, represented by the head of the body,[1] and He is human, represented by the feet;[2] in that He put on humanity with the same limitations as we have, for the sake of our salvation. This record will only be complete if we begin with the most important events in His history. This way, the antiquity and deity of Christ will be shown to those who assume the idea of a "Christ" is of recent and foreign origin that was just invented yesterday and not taught in the Old Testament. There is no language sufficient to fully express the origin, deity, substance, and nature of Christ. The Holy Spirit prophesied,

> Who shall declare his generation?(Isaiah 53:8)
>
> No one knows the Father except the Son, and no one knows the Son fully except the Father alone who begot Him. (Matthew 11:27)

Who, beside the Father, could completely understand the Light that existed before the world, the Wisdom which existed before time, the Living Word which was in the beginning with the Father, and which was God? The first and Only-begotten Son of God existed before every created visible and invisible being,[3] and is the leader of the rational and immortal host of heaven, the Messenger of the great counsel, the Executor of the Father's unspoken will, the Creator, with the Father, of all things, the Second Cause of the universe with the Father, the true and Only-begotten Son of God, the Lord, God, and King of all created things, who has received dominion, power, might, honor, and deity from the Father. All this is evident from the more typological passages of Scripture which speak of His deity:

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[1] Colossians 1:16-18; God is the head of the church.
[2] John 13:1-8; a lowly human servant washes feet.
[3] Colossians 1:15-17

> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... All things were made by Him; and without Him nothing was made. (John 1:1, 3)

Moses, the greatest and earliest of prophets, taught this as well. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he describes the creation and arrangement of all things. Moses declares that the Creator of the universe and Maker of the world yielded the formation of all created things to none other than Christ, His divine and First-begotten Word. The Father spoke with Him respecting the creation of man.

> Let us make man according to our image, after our likeness. (Genesis 1:26)

Another prophet, speaking of God in the Psalms, confirms this saying:

> For He spoke, and it was done... He commanded, and they were created. (Psalm 33:9; 148:5)

He introduces the Father as Maker and Ruler of all, commanding with a sovereign nod, and second to Him, the divine Word who carries out His Father's commands. Moses, Abraham and his children, the righteous men, and prophets – all those that walked in righteousness and faith since the creation of man – have recognized Him with their pure mind and gave Him the worship that was due Him as the Son of God. The Son was by no means disrespectful to the worship of the Father but was appointed to teach the knowledge of the Father to everyone. The Lord God appeared as a common man to Abraham, at the oak of Mamre. Abraham immediately fell down, although he saw a man with his eyes, nevertheless worshiped Him as God, and sacrificed to Him as Lord. Abraham knew exactly who the Man was and said:

> Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? (Genesis 18:25)

It seems unreasonable to believe the uncreated and unchangeable substance of the Almighty God, the Father, was changed into the form of a man and that He appeared as a man during Old Testament times. But it is unreasonable to believe that the Scripture has lied about these things. When the God and Lord who judges all the earth and executes judgment is seen in the form of a man, who else can He be, this Author of the universe, than the only pre-existent Word? [a Christophany] Concerning whom also it is said,

> He sent His Word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions. (Psalm 107:20)

Moses very clearly speaks of Him as the second Lord after the Father, when he says,

> Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven;
> (Genesis 19:24)

The sacred Scripture also calls Him God, when He appeared again to Jacob in the form of a man, and said to Jacob,

> Your name shall no longer be “Jacob,” but “Israel:” for as a prince you have power with God. (Genesis 32:28)

That is why Jacob called the name of that place the “vision of God,” saying,

> I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. (Genesis 32:30)

We cannot just assume these are appearances of angels because whenever the angels appear in the countless passages of Scripture, they are called angels, not God or Lord.
Joshua, Moses’ successor, also calls Him the Leader of the heavenly angels and archangels, heavenly powers, and the power and wisdom of God, entrusted with the second rank of sovereignty and rule over all, and the “Captain of the LORD’s host” although he saw Him only in the form and appearance of a man. For it is written,

> It came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, there stood a Man over against him with His sword drawn in His hand: and Joshua went unto Him, and said unto Him, Are You for us, or for our adversaries? And He said, Nay; but as Captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and worshiped, and said unto Him, what says my Lord unto his servant? And the Captain of the LORD's host said unto Joshua, loose your shoe from off your foot; for the place where you stand is holy. (Joshua 5:13-15)

The phrase “Loose your shoe from off your foot; for the place where you stand is holy” proves this is the Word of God who spoke to Moses from

the burning bush. For the Scripture uses the same words and in reference to the same person,

> When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, here I *am*. And He said, do not come here: remove your shoes from your feet, for the place where you are standing *is* holy ground. Moreover, He said, I *am* the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. (Exodus 3:4-6)

This is the self-existing Word of God and Wisdom, which existed before the world was created and ministered to the Father. Besides the proofs already given, we may also learn from the words of wisdom, herself, who reveals very clearly through Solomon mysteries about herself:

> I, Wisdom, have dwelt with prudence and knowledge, and I have invoked understanding. Through me kings reign, and princes ordain righteousness. Through me the great are magnified, and through me sovereigns rule the earth. The Lord created me in the beginning of His ways, for His works; before the world he established me, in the beginning, before He made the earth, before He made the depths, before the mountains were settled, before all hills He begat me. When He prepared the heavens I was present with Him, and when He established the fountains of the region under heaven I was with Him. I was the one in whom He delighted; daily I rejoiced before Him at all times when He was rejoicing at having completed the world. (Proverbs 8:12-30)

This brief description proves that the divine Word pre-existed and appeared to some, if not to all.

The reason why the Gospel was not preached in ancient times to all men and to all nations is this:

It was not possible for the ancients to fully understand the doctrine of Christ, in its wisdom and its virtue. In the very beginning, while still in a state of blessedness, Adam disobeyed the command of God and fell into the present mortal condition and exchanged his former paradise for this present cursed earth. His descendants filled our earth and proved to be much worse, except for one here and there, choosing to live a brutal and sinful life. They were without city, state, laws and justice. They were

ignorant of the sciences, arts, virtue, and of philosophy. They were wild nomads wandering through the desert destroying the seeds of reason, piety, and culture implanted in the human soul.

They were totally depraved in their profanity, fornication, murder, cannibalism, and they dared to wage war with God in the same way the giants did before them[4]. In their madness, they planned to fortify earth against heaven and prepare an attack upon God himself.
On account of these things, God sent down upon them floods, conflagrations,[5] famines, pestilence, constant wars, lightning strikes, in waves of increasing intensity to cause repentance.
Then, when the extreme wickedness enveloped the whole race, darkening the minds of men, the First-begotten Wisdom of God, existing before all creatures, the pre-existing Word Himself, driven by His love for man, began appearing to His servants, sometimes in the form of angelic dreams and visions, and at other times in person as the saving power of God. He always appeared to the ancient holy men in human form, and they always recognized Him as Lord.

From these holy men, the Hebrew nation sprung into existence and spread the seeds of true religion, devoted to the worship of the true God. While still corrupt by ancient practices, God, through Moses, gave them images, symbols, the Sabbath, circumcision, instructions, and other spiritual principles. But He did not grant them a complete knowledge of the mysteries themselves.

But their law spread throughout the entire earth like a sweet odor, causing the heathen to be softened by the lawgivers and philosophers who arose on every side. Their savage brutality was changed into mildness, so that most nations enjoyed peace and friendship with other nations.

Then, finally, at the time of the origin of the Roman Empire, when all nations had been prepared to receive the knowledge of the Father, that

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[4] Genesis, Jasher, and Josephus record that the people of the pre-flood world, the Nephilim, and Nimrod at the tower of Babel, all believed they could actually destroy God.

[5] Jasher records God sent several floods and famines before Noah’s Flood to bring about repentance.

same Teacher of virtue appeared again, the Minister of the Father in all good things, the divine and heavenly Word of God, as a man with a nature like ours.

He suffered and did the things which had been prophesied. For it had been foretold that One who was at the same time both man and God should come and dwell in the world, should perform wonderful works, and should show Himself a teacher of faith in the Father to all nations. The prophecies foretold His extraordinary birth, His new doctrine, and His wonderful works, the manner of His death, His resurrection from the dead, and finally His divine ascension into heaven.[6]
The prophet Daniel, under the Holy Spirit's inspiration, foresaw His kingdom at the end of time. Daniel wrote his vision in simple human terms, saying,

> I beheld, until thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow and the hair of His head like pure wool; His throne was a flame of fire. and His wheels burning fire. A river of fire flowed before Him. Thousands and thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. He appointed judgment, and the books were opened... I saw, and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and he hastened unto the Ancient of Days and was brought into His presence, and there was given Him the dominion and the glory and the kingdom; and all peoples, tribes, and tongues serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His kingdom shall not be destroyed. (Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14)

Daniel cannot be referring to anyone other than our Savior, the Word of God who was in the beginning with God, and who was called the Son of Man because of His final incarnation. But since I have collected the prophecies about our Savior Jesus Christ in another book[7] and arranged them in chronological order, what has been said will suffice for the present.

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[6] Some of these prophecies are in the Old Testament and some are in the Testaments of the Patriarchs (Dead Sea Scrolls).

[7] For a modern chronological list of prophecies see *Ancient Prophecies Reveled*.

1.3 Christ's Name Prophesied from the Beginning

I can even show that the names "Jesus" and "Christ" were honored by the ancient godly prophets. Moses was the first to mention the glorious name of Christ. When he delivered types and symbols of heavenly things, the oracle said,

> Look that you make all things according to the pattern which you were shown in the mount, (Exodus 25:40)

Moses called the high priest of God "Christ[8]." This way the name of Christ gave the high priesthood even more dignity. Moses evidently understood that Christ was deity. Under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he foresaw the name "Jesus" which He also dignified. Moses applied the name "Jesus," which had never been uttered before, by types and symbols to the one whom he knew would rule the Hebrew nation after his death.

Moses' successor had up to that point been called Oshea[9], but Moses bestowed on him the name of Jesus[10] (Joshua), which is greater in honor than the name of a prince or king. Joshua the son of Nun bore a resemblance to our Savior in that, after Moses instituted the symbolic worship, he was the only one that succeeded Moses and gave a government of pure and undefiled religion.

Thus, Moses bestowed the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ, a mark of the highest honor, upon the two men who in his time surpassed all the rest of the people in virtue and glory: namely, upon the high priest and upon his own successor in the government.

Afterward, the prophets foretold the Christ by name, and predicted the Jewish plots against Him and His call of the Gentile nations. Jeremiah wrote:

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[8] Anointed ("Messiah") or Christ; Leviticus 4:5,16; 6:22

[9] Numbers 13:16

[10] When the Hebrew name "Yeshua" is translated into English it comes out as "Joshua." When translated from Hebrew into Greek then into English it comes out as "Jesus."

> The Spirit before our face, Christ the Lord, was taken in their destructions; of whom we said, under His shadow we shall live among the nations. (Lamentations 4:20 LXX)

King David, perplexed, said,

> Why did the nations rage and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth set themselves in array, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ; (Psalm 2:1-2 LXX)

And David speaks of Christ's person saying,

> The Lord said unto me, You are My Son, this day have I begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Your possession. (Psalm 2:7-8)

The prophets under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit anointed not only the priests but also kings with oil and the name of Christ for the sake of the symbol, constituting typical "christs." The kings were shadows of the royal and princely sovereignty of the only one and true Christ, the Divine Word, who rules overall.

Certain prophets, by the act of anointing, were types of Christ. So, all these represent Christ, the Divine Word, who is the only true King, Priest, and Prophet. Jesus did not receive any types or symbols of the high priesthood, nor was He born from a family of priests. He was not elevated to the kingly throne, nor was He like the ancient prophets. He obtained no honor, nor pre-eminence, among the Jews; nevertheless, was adorned by the Father with all, not with the symbols, yet with the truth itself. Proof of this is evident, from the fact that none of those anciently anointed, whether priests, kings, or prophets, obtained such power and virtue as our Lord and Savior Jesus, the only true Christ.

These, although illustrious among their countrymen for many generations, never called their followers "Christians" from their own typical name of Christ. Neither was there ever any divine honor paid to them, nor were their followers ready to die for them after they were dead. Never did so great a commotion arise among all the nations of the earth in respect to anyone of that Age; for those mere symbols could not act with such power as our Savior has done. Although He did not receive the

same honors as those mentioned above, He is called Christ more than all of them. He is the only one and true Christ of God and has filled the whole earth with the sacred name of Christians. Not bestowing the types to His followers, but the real virtues and doctrines of truth, not anointing with oil but the Holy Spirit by participation in the unbegotten deity of the Father. Isaiah also teaches this,

> The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me; therefore, He has anointed Me. He has sent Me to preach the Gospel to the poor, to proclaim deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind. (Luke 4:18; Isaiah 61:1)

And King David addresses Him saying,

> Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. A scepter of equity is the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated iniquity. Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your fellows. (Hebrews 1:8; Psalm 45:6)

Here the Scripture calls Him God in the first verse, in the second it honors Him with a royal scepter. Then a little farther on, after the divine and royal power, it represents Him in the third place as Christ, being anointed not with oil made of material substances, but with the divine oil of gladness. This shows Christ's superiority over those who anciently, as types, were anointed with earthly oil. Elsewhere the same writer speaks of Him as follows:

> The Lord said unto my Lord, sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies Your footstool (Hebrews 1:13; Psalm 110:1*)*

And again,

> Out of the womb, before the morning star, have I begotten You. The Lord has sworn, and He will not repent. You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. (Hebrews 7:21; Psalm 110:4)

This Melchizedek is mentioned in the Holy Scriptures as a priest of the Most High God, not consecrated by any special anointing oil, or not even belonging by descent to the priesthood of the Jews. Christ our Savior was proclaimed priest by an oath, not after the order of others who received the types and symbols. Neither does history record Him anointed corporeally among the Jews, nor even as born from a tribe of the

priesthood, but as anointed a priest by God Himself, before the morning star; that is, before the creation of the world, obtaining an immortal priesthood, subject to no limitations of age, to endless Ages.
But the great and convincing evidence of that incorporeal and divine power in Jesus, is the fact that He alone, of all that have ever existed to the present day, even now is known by the title of Christ, among all men over the world; and with this title He is acknowledged and professed by all and commemorated both among Barbarians and Greeks. Even to this day He is honored as King by His followers throughout the world, and is admired as more than a prophet, and is glorified as the true and only high priest of God.

In addition to all this, as the pre-existing Word of God, existing before all Ages, has received the honor of worship, He is also adored as God; most remarkable is the fact that we who are consecrated to Him honor Him not only with our voices and mere words, but also with complete devotion of soul, so that we choose to give testimony unto Him rather than to preserve our own lives.

I have of necessity prefaced my history with these matters in order that no one, judging from the date of His incarnation, may think that our Savior and Lord Jesus, the Christ, has but recently come into being.

1.4 Christ's Religion

So that no one will assume that the doctrine of Christ is new or strange, as if it were recently fabricated and that He is no different from other men, let us briefly consider this point.

Shortly after news of Jesus Christ's incarnation spread over the earth, a new people suddenly came into existence; a people neither small nor weak, nor situated in some remote corner of the earth, but the most numerous and the most religious of all, indestructible and invincible, since they receive God's help. This people, appearing at that time, are appointed honored with the name of Christ.

One of the prophets, foreseeing with the eye of the Holy Spirit, that this people would arise, was so struck with amazement that he exclaimed:

> Who has heard of such things, and who has spoken thus? Has the earth brought forth in one day, and has a nation been born at once? (Isaiah 66:8)

The same prophet gave a hint also of the name by which the people would be called,

> Those that serve Me shall be called by a new name, which shall be blessed upon the earth. (Isaiah 65:15-16)

Even though we are a new people and the new name of "Christians" has recently become known to all nations, our life and our conduct, with our doctrines of religion, have not been recently invented, but established by God from creation through the ancient prophets. This we can prove in the following manner:

The nation of the Hebrews is not new, but well known and honored by all for its antiquity. The Hebrew records contain accounts of holy men, rare in number. Of these are Noah, who lived before the flood, and Abraham, the founder of the Hebrew people. Should anyone, beginning from Abraham and going back to the first man, pronounce those holy men Christians in fact, though not in name, he would not be far from the truth.

The name "Christian" indicates the very idea that a man, by the knowledge and doctrine of Christ, is distinguished by modesty, justice, patience, virtuous fortitude, and by a profession of piety towards the one and only true God. This was all zealously practiced by the ancient holy men, not just us. They did not, nor do we, observe circumcision, the Sabbath, abstinence from certain foods, nor any of the types and symbols Moses delivered because such things as these do not belong to Christians.[11] But they obviously knew the Christ of God as He appeared to Abraham, communed with Isaac, spoke to Jacob; and that He communed with Moses and the prophets after him, has already been shown.

You will also find these holy men honored the name of Christ, as the Scripture says,

[11] Catholic priestly rituals are based on these and should not be performed by Christians either.

> Touch not My christs, and do My prophets no harm.
> (Psalm 105:15)

We should plainly see that the first and most ancient religion, that of the holy men and Abraham, is the very religion lately announced to all in the doctrines of Christ. Long before Abraham received the command of circumcision, he received the testimony of righteousness through faith; as the Word says,

> Abraham believed in God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. (Genesis 15:6)

Christ, the Word of God, revealed Himself to Abraham, who was justified, yet not circumcised, and gave him a prophecy regarding those who in coming Ages should be justified in the same way as he was. The prophecy was in the following words:

> And in you shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed. (Genesis 12:3)

And again,

> He shall become a nation great and numerous; and in him shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. (Genesis 18:18)

It should be obvious that we are the fulfillment of that prophecy. For he renounced the superstition of his fathers, and the former error of his life, and confessed the one God over all, and worshiped Him with deeds of virtue, and not with the service of the Mosaic Law which came afterward. He was justified by faith in Christ, the Word of God, who appeared unto him.

To Abraham, a man of this character, it was said that all the nations of the earth would be blessed in him. But the very religion of Abraham has reappeared at the present time, practiced in deeds more efficacious than words, by Christians alone throughout the world. Everyone should be able to acknowledge that we Christians practice one and the same lifestyle and have the same religion as those ancient holy men. It is obvious that the perfect religion committed to us by the teaching of Christ is not new and strange. It is truly the original religion. This should suffice on this point.

1.5 The Timing of Christ's Appearance

After this necessary introduction to church history, we can start our journey beginning with the birth of Christ. Let us pray that the Father, and Jesus, the Word, aid us in our search for the truth.

It was the forty-second year of the reign of Augustus, and the twenty-eighth from the subjugation of Egypt and the death of Anthony and Cleopatra, which ended the dynasty of the Ptolemies, when our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem of Judea just as the prophecies foretold. That same year, Quirinius[12] was governor of Syria. Hebrew historian Flavius Josephus mentions the census taken during Quirinius' term of office. Josephus also gives an account of the uprising of the Galileans, which took place at that time, of which also Luke, among our writers, has made mention in the Acts, in the following words:

> After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away a multitude after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. (Acts 5:37)

Josephus agrees with Luke. In the eighteenth book of his Antiquities, Josephus says,

> But Quirinius, who belonged to the senate, and having held other offices, advanced through all the grades of office to the consulship, a man also of great dignity in other respects, by the appointment of Caesar, came to Syria with a small force and with judicial power over the people, to take a valuation of their property… Judas the Gaulonite, sprung from the town called Gamala, together with Sadducus, a Pharisee, headed a revolt of the people, saying that the assessment had nothing else in view but manifest slavery; and they exhorted the people to assert their liberty.
> (Josephus' Antiquities 18.1, 4)

He also writes in the second book of his *Wars of the Jews*, concerning the same man:

[12] This Quirinius is the same Cyrenius mentioned by Luke. This would be 2 BC. This date fits perfectly with the biblical prophecies. See *Ancient prophecies revealed*.

> About this time a certain Judas of Galilee stimulated the inhabitants to revolt, urging it as a reproach, that they endured paying tribute, and that they who had God for their master, suffered mortals to usurp the sovereignty over them.[13] (Josephus' *Wars* 2.21)

These things are recorded by Josephus.

1.6 Jewish Rulers in Christ's Time

When Herod, the first foreign ruler, became King, Moses' prophecy was fulfilled,

> That a prince should not fail of Judah, nor a ruler from his loins, until He should come for whom it is reserved. (Genesis 49:10)

Moses also showed He was to be the "expectation of the nations." This prediction remained unfulfilled so long as they were permitted to have rulers from their own nation, which extended from Moses until the time of Augustus Caesar.

Under Augustus, Herod, the first foreigner, was given the Kingdom of the Jews by the Romans. Josephus relates, he was an Idumean on his father's side and an Arabian on his mother's.

But Africanus, who was also no common writer, says, Herod was a son of Antipater, and that the latter was the son of a certain Herod of Ascalon, one of the so-called servants of the temple of Apollo. This Antipater, having been taken a prisoner while a boy by Idumean robbers, lived with them, because his father, being a poor man, was unable to pay his ransom. Growing up in their practices he was afterward befriended by Hyrcanus, the high priest of the Jews. A son of his was that Herod who lived in the times of our Savior.

When the government of the Jews had been given to such a man, the expectation of the nations was now at hand, according to prophecy,

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[13] *Josephus' Wars* 2.17 says Judas the Galilean was the son of Manachem. He is called Manaen in Acts 13:1-3 and was one of the Essenes prophets who blessed the apostle Paul.

because with him terminated the regular succession of governors and princes from the time of Moses.

The Jews were ruled by Moses, Joshua, the judges, then Saul, David, and all the kings until the captivity in Babylon.

After the return from the captivity of Babylon, they continued to have an aristocratical form of government, together with an oligarchy. The high priests directed the nation's affairs until Pompey, Roman proconsular general, took Jerusalem by force, defiled the sacred places, and entered the sanctuary of the temple.[14]

Aristobulus, who had been both king and high priest by regular succession until then, was sent with his children in chains to Rome, and the priesthood was given to his brother Hyrcanus, whilst the whole nation of the Jews was made tributary to the Romans from that time. But Hyrcanus, who was the last of the high priests by succession, having been soon after taken prisoner by the Parthians, Herod, as I said before, had the government of the Jews conferred upon him by the senate of Rome and the emperor Augustus. About this time, the advent of Christ occurred, fulfilling the prophecies of the expected salvation of the nations and the calling of the Gentiles.

From this time the princes and rulers of Judah (I mean of the Jewish nation) came to an end, and as a natural consequence the priesthood, which had been handed down from father to son for generations, was immediately thrown into confusion.

Josephus records these things. Showing Herod was appointed king by the Romans, he no longer nominated the chief priests from the ancient lineage but conferred the honor upon certain obscure individuals. Herod's son Archelaus did similar things until finally the Romans took control of the Jewish government themselves.

Josephus also shows that Herod was the first that locked up the sacred vesture of the high priest, and secured it under his own private seal, refusing to permit the high priests to use it as ordained.

[14] 64 BC.

The same thing was done by Archelaus, his successor, and then by the Romans. These things have been recorded by us in order to show that another prophecy has been fulfilled in the appearance of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

The book of Daniel clearly teaches the number of weeks until the coming of Christ, of which we have treated in other books. Another prediction states after the completion of those weeks the government of the Jews should be totally abolished.[15]

It has been clearly shown that all this was fulfilled at the time of the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Let this be sufficient as to the date of the Messiah's birth.

1.7 Alleged Discrepancies of Jesus' Genealogy

Matthew and Luke give the genealogy of Christ differently, which appears to be a contradiction in Scripture. Many believers have offered guesses. I will give the explanation from Julius Africanus' *Epistle to Aristides*, in which he discussed the reported problem with the genealogies. After Julius refuted the false opinions of others, he gave this account that he received from tradition.

> In Israel, the names of the generations were calculated either naturally or legally. If it is a natural record, it reflects biological fathers. If it is a legal record, it reflects the adoptive fathers, as when another man fathered a son in the name of a brother who had died childless.[16] Since no clear hope of resurrection was yet given, they pictured the future promise by a kind of mortal resurrection, so that the name of the deceased needed to survive. These genealogies, then, include those who are biological sons and those who were adoptive sons. So, neither of the gospels is in error, for one records the biological and the other the legal.

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[15] Daniel 9 predicts 483 prophetical 360-day years (173,880 days) from Artaxerxes' decree to rebuild Jerusalem in 44 BC to the death of the Messiah. This calculates out to be AD 32. This also proves Jesus, who was thirty-three and a half when he died, was born in 2 BC. After the Messiah's death the government of Israel was dissolved and the nation dispersed.

[16] Deuteronomy 25:5-6

For the families descended from Solomon and those from Nathan were so intermingled, by raising up of children to the childless and by second marriages, that the same persons are justly considered to belong at one time to the legal fathers, at another time to the biological fathers. So that both these accounts are strictly true and come down to Joseph with considerable intricacy indeed, yet quite accurately. Allow me to clarify. If we list Matthew's genealogy[17] from David through Solomon, the third from the end is Matthan, who begat Jacob the father of Joseph. But if we list Luke's genealogy through Nathan the son of David, the third from the end is Melchi, whose son Heli was the father of Joseph.

Therefore, we must show how Joseph truly is the son of both Jacob through Solomon and Heli through Nathan. Jacob and Heli were brothers and their fathers, Matthan and Melchi, although of different families, are both truly the grandfathers of Joseph.

A woman tradition names Estha, married Matthan the descendant of Solomon. They had a son named Jacob. When Matthan died, Estha remarried, for the law did not prohibit a widow, whether such by divorce or by the death of her husband, from marrying another. Melchi, a descendant of Nathan, being of the same tribe but of another family married Estha and they had a son they named Heli. So Jacob and Heli had the same mother but different fathers. Heli married but died childless. Jacob took his brother's wife and fathered a son unto Heli's name. Jacob was Joseph's biological father, as it is written 'Jacob begat Joseph.' But legally Joseph was the son of Heli.

Matthew's genealogy is not rendered void saying 'Jacob begat Joseph' while Luke states Joseph was the 'legal son of Jacob son of Heli.' He could not have expressed it any clearer. The legal genealogy does not use the word 'begat' even though it traces the genealogy all the way back to Adam the son of God.

It can be proven that this is not idle conjecture. For the relatives of our Lord according to the flesh, whether with the desire of boasting or simply wishing to state the fact, in either case truly, have handed down the following account: Some Idumean robbers attacked Ashkelon, a city of Palestine, and carried away Antipater,

[17] Matthew 1:1-16; Luke 3:23-38

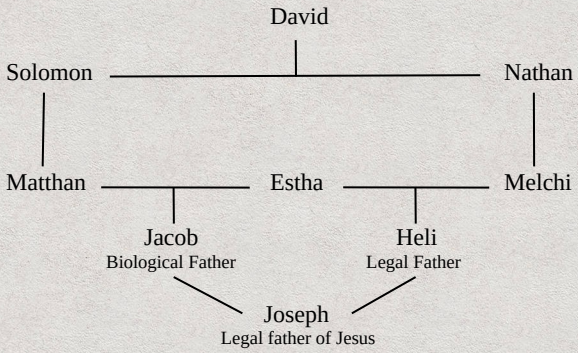
son of a certain temple servant named Herod, in addition to other booty from a temple of Apollo. And since the priest was not able to pay the ransom for his son, Antipater was brought up in the customs of the Idumeans, and afterward was befriended by Hyrcanus, the high priest of the Jews. He was subsequently sent by Hyrcanus on an embassy to Pompey, and having restored the kingdom to him, which had been invaded by his brother Aristobulus, Antipater himself had the good fortune to be nominated the procurator of Palestine. Antipater, however, having been treacherously slain by those who envied his good fortune, was succeeded by his son Herod. He was afterwards, by a decree of the senate, appointed King of the Jews, under Anthony and Augustus. His sons were Herod [Antipas] and the other tetrarchs. These accounts of the Jews also coincide with those of the Greeks. But as there had been kept in the archives up to that time the genealogies of the Hebrews as well as of those who traced their lineage back to proselytes, such as Achior the Ammonite and Ruth the Moabitess, and to those who were mingled with the Israelites and came out of Egypt with them. Since the lineage of the Israelites contributed nothing to Herod's advantage, and since he was goaded with the consciousness of his own ignoble extraction, he burned all the genealogical records, thinking that he might appear of noble origin if no one else were able to trace his pedigree by the public records back to patriarchs, proselytes, or to those mingled with them. A few of the careful, however, kept private records of their own, either by remembering the names or by getting them in some other way from the registers, pride themselves on preserving the memory of their noble extraction. Among these are those already mentioned, called Desposyni [belonging to the Lord], on account of their connection with the family of the Savior. Living in the villages of Judea, Nazareth and Cochaba, they went into the rest of the land, explained the aforesaid genealogy from the book of daily records, as faithfully as possible. Whether or not this is true, no one could find a clearer explanation, and the Gospel records in any case are absolutely true!

And at the end of the same epistle Africanus adds these words:

> Matthan, descendant of Solomon, begat Jacob. When Matthan was dead, Melchi, descendant of Nathan, begat Heli by the same woman. Heli and Jacob had the same mother. After Heli died childless, Jacob raised up seed for him by fathering Joseph. Joseph was Jacob's biological son, but Heli's legal son. Thus, Joseph was the son of both.

This ends Julius Africanus' account.

This genealogy of Joseph is also proof that Joseph and Mary both belonged to the same tribe since the Law of Moses makes it illegal for different tribes to intermarry. The command to marry someone from the same family and lineage was given so that the inheritance would not pass from tribe to tribe.



Church father Papias adds,

There are four Marys found in the Gospel:

1. Mary the mother of the Lord
2. Mary the wife of Cleophas or Alphaeus, who was the mother of James (bishop and apostle), Simon, Thaddeus, and of one Joseph

3. Mary Salome, wife of Zebedee, mother of John the evangelist and James
4. Mary Magdalene

- James, Judas, and Joseph were sons of an aunt of the Lord's, while James and John were sons of another aunt of the Lord's.
- Mary, wife of Alphaeus and mother of James the Less and Joseph, was the sister[18] of Mary the mother of the Lord, whom John names of Cleophas, either from her father or from the family of the clan, or for some other reason.
- Mary Salome is called Salome either from her husband or her village. Some affirm that she is the same as Mary of Cleophas, because she had two husbands.

Mother Mary Father Joseph | Jesus Christ	Aunt Mary Uncle Cleophas | James Simon Thaddeus Joseph	Aunt Mary Salome Uncle Zebedee | John James

1.8 Herod's Cruelty

When Christ was born, according to the prophecies, in Bethlehem of Judea, at the time previously noted, Magi came from the east, asking where they could find the newborn King of the Jews. Their reason for taking such a long journey was that they had seen His star and they earnestly desired to worship the babe as God. Herod was very disturbed by their enquiry thinking his kingdom was in danger; he inquired therefore of the Jewish doctors of the law, where they expected Christ to be born. When he learned that Micah's prophecy stated it would be in Bethlehem, he issued, in a single decree, all the male infants in

[18] In the Hebrew language sister can mean sister-in-law.

Bethlehem and its surrounding borders to be slain. Every baby boy who was two years old or less, which was the time frame given by the Magi. Herod assumed that Jesus would surely share the same fate as the others of his own age. But the child's parents learned of the danger from an angel that appeared unto them, so they went to Egypt for safety. These things are recorded by the Holy Gospel of Matthew.

In addition to this, it is worthwhile to note the result of Herod's crime against Christ and those of the same age. Immediately, God's justice overtook him while he was still alive, and gave him a foretaste of what he was to receive after death. It is not possible to relate here how he tarnished his reign by the murder of his wife, children, relatives, and dearest friends. No tragic drama could be any darker, which is detailed at length in the histories of Josephus. Immediately after his crime against our Savior and the other infants, the punishment sent by God drove him on to his death. Josephus, in the seventeenth book of his *Antiquities of the Jews*, writes as follows concerning Herod's end:

> Herod's disease grew more severe, God inflicting punishment on him for his crimes. A slow fire burned in him which was not so apparent to those who touched him but intensified his internal distress. He had an insatiable desire for food, ulceration of the intestines, very severe pains in the colon, and a watery edema in his feet and in his abdomen. His genitals were putrefied and produced worms. He found it also very difficult to breathe and had a very offensive stench. He had convulsions also in every limb, which gave him uncontrollable strength. It was said, indeed, by diviners and wise men that God had inflicted this punishment upon the King on account of his great impiety.
> (Josephus' Antiquities 17.6.5)

In book two of the *Wars of the Jews*, Josephus gives a similar account of Herod:

> The disease then tormented his whole body. He had a slow fever, unbearable itching over his whole body, and continuous pains in his colon. His feet were swollen like those of a person suffering from dropsy, his abdomen was inflamed, and his genitals were so putrefied they produced worms. Besides this he could only breathe setting upright, and then only with difficulty, and he had convulsions in all his limbs. The diviners said that his diseases

> were a punishment. But he still clung to life and hoped for a recovery and devised methods of cure. For instance, crossing over Jordan he used the warm baths at Callirhoë, which flow into the Dead Sea, but are themselves sweet enough to drink. His physicians here thought that they could warm his whole body again by means of heated oil. But when they had lowered him down into a tub filled with oil, his eyes turned up like the eyes of a dead person. But when his attendants raised an outcry, he recovered at the noise; but finally, he gave up trying to cure himself. He commanded about fifty drachms to be distributed among the soldiers, and great sums to be given to his generals and friends. Then returning to Jericho, seized with depression, he planned to commit a monstrous crime. He gathered from every town the most illustrious men of all Judea, he commanded that they be shut up in the hippodrome. And having summoned Salome, his sister, and her husband, Alexander, he said: 'I know that the Jews will rejoice at my death. But I may be lamented by others and have a splendid funeral if you are willing to perform my commands. When I shall expire, surround these men who are now under guard, as quickly as possible with soldiers, and slay them, in order that all Judea and every house may weep for me even against their will.' (Josephus' *Wars* 1.33.5-6)

And later Josephus says,

> Again he was so tortured by an insatiable hunger and a convulsive cough that he planned to anticipate his fate. Taking an apple he asked also for a knife, for he was accustomed to cut apples and eat them. Then looking round to see that there was no one to hinder, he raised his right hand as if to stab himself. (Josephus' *Wars* 1.33.7)

In addition to these things, Josephus records that he murdered another of his own sons before his death, the third, Antipater, slain by his command, and that immediately afterward he breathed his last, not without excessive pain. Such was the end of Herod, who suffered a just punishment for his slaughter of the children of Bethlehem, which was the result of his plots against our Savior. After this an angel appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and commanded him to go to Judea with the child and His mother, revealing to him that those who had sought the life of the child were dead. To this the evangelist adds,

> But when he heard that Archelaus reigned in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there; notwithstanding being warned of God in a dream he turned aside into the parts of Galilee. (Matthew 2:22)

1.9 The Times of Pilate

Josephus agrees with Matthew regarding the fact that Archelaus succeeded Herod. He records Archelaus received the kingdom of the Jews by the will of his father Herod and by the decree of Caesar Augustus, and how, after he had reigned ten years, he lost his kingdom, but his brothers Philip and Herod the younger, with Lysanias, still ruled their own tetrarchies.

In the eighteenth book of his *Antiquities*, Josephus says it was the twelfth year of the reign of Tiberius, who had succeeded to the empire after Augustus had ruled fifty-seven years, that Pontius Pilate was entrusted with the government of Judea, and that he remained there ten full years, almost until the death of Tiberius.

This shows that the *Acts of Pilate*[19] is a recent forgery since it was not known to the ancient church and it claims that the Savior's crucifixion was in the fourth consulship of Tiberius, which was the seventh year of his reign. At this time Pilate was not yet in charge of Judea. Josephus clearly shows in the above-mentioned work that Pilate was made procurator of Judea by Tiberius in the twelfth year of his reign.

1.10 Jewish High Priests During the Ministry of Christ.

The evangelist [Luke 3:1] records that in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius, and in the fourth year of the governorship of Pontius Pilate, while Herod and Lysanias and Philip were ruling the rest of Judea, that our Savior and Lord, Jesus the Christ of God, being about thirty years old, came to John for baptism, and began His ministry, preaching the Gospel.

Scripture says Jesus began his ministry under the high priest Annas and ended it under Caiaphas. The entire time does not comprise quite four

[19] See book 9 chapter 5 for more on the *Acts of Pilate*

years. With Jewish Law abolished, the High priests no longer held their position for life. Roman governors appointed one and then another person who continued in the office of the high priesthood for not more than one year. Josephus recorded that there were four high priests in succession from Annas to Caiaphas. In his *Antiquities* he writes as follows:

> Valerius Gratus put an end to the priesthood of Annus and appointed Ishmael, the son of Fabi, high priest. Soon he removed him and appointed Eleazer, the son of Annus the high priest, to the same office. Then he removed him also at the end of a year and gave the high priesthood to Simon, the son of Camithus. But he likewise held the honor no more than a year, when Joseph, also called Caiaphas, succeeded him.
> (Josephus' *Antiquities* 18.2.2)

The whole time of our Savior's ministry was not quite four full years, since each of the four high priests, from Annas to Caiaphas, held the office only for a year. The Gospel therefore has correctly indicated Caiaphas as the high priest under whom the Savior suffered. From this we can also see that the time of our Savior's ministry does not disagree with the record of history. Our Savior and Lord called the twelve Apostles when He began his ministry and gave them the special title of *Apostles*. He appointed seventy others whom He sent out two by two into every place and city where He himself planned to come.

1.11 Testimonies Regarding Jesus and John the Baptist

Not long after this John the Baptist was beheaded by the younger Herod [Antipas], as is stated in the Gospels [Mark 6:14-29]. Josephus confirmed the same fact, mentioning Herodias by name, and stating that, although she was the wife of his brother, Herod made her his own wife after divorcing his former lawful wife, who was the daughter of Aretas [IV], king of Petra, and separating Herodias from her husband while he was still alive. It was on her account also that he murdered John, and waged war with Aretas, whose daughter he had disgraced. Josephus relates that Herod's entire army was destroyed in this war, on account of his crime against John. Josephus also records that John the Baptist was an exceedingly righteous man, which agrees with his description found in the Gospels. He records also that Herod lost his kingdom on account

of the same Herodias, and that he was banished with her, and condemned to live at Vienne, Gaul. These things are written in the eighteenth book of his *Antiquities*, where he describes John as follows:

> The Jews believed that the army of Herod was destroyed by God, who justly avenged John the Baptist. For Herod murdered him, a good man and one who exhorted the Jews to come and receive baptism, practicing virtue and righteousness toward each other and toward God; for baptism is only acceptable when it is performed, not for the remission of certain sins, but for the purification of the body, after the soul has already been purified in righteousness through repentance. John's preaching stirred people's hearts and when many began gathering around him Herod feared that his great influence might lead to some sedition, for they appeared ready to do whatever he asked. Herod decided it would be better to seize and behead John before an insurrection could start than to regret not stopping beforehand. Because of Herod's suspicion, John was taken prisoner and sent to the above-mentioned citadel of Macherus and put to death. (Josephus' *Antiquities* 18.5.2)

After relating John's history, Josephus mentioned our Savior in the same work:

> And there lived at that time Jesus, a wise man, if indeed it be proper to call Him a man. For He did wonderful works and was a teacher of those who receive the truth in gladness. He won over many Jews and Gentiles. He was the Christ. When our Jewish leaders convinced Pilate to crucify Him, those who had loved Him in the beginning did not cease loving Him. For He appeared unto them alive again on the third day, as the prophets of God predicted along with countless other wonderful things about Him. Moreover, the race of Christians, named after Him, continues down to the present day. (Josephus' *Antiquities* 18.3.3)

When a Hebrew historian, such as Josephus, testified concerning John the Baptist and our Savior, what option is there but to reject those who forged those *Acts* [*of Pilate*]? But let this suffice here.

1.12 The Disciples of Jesus

Everyone knows the names of the twelve Apostles of our Savior from the Gospels, but there is no list of the seventy disciples.[20] The Barnabas who Paul wrote about in Galatians [2:1, 9, 13] and who is mentioned in Acts was said to be one of the seventy. In Clement's fifth book of his *Hypotyposes*, he states that Sosthenes, who wrote to the Corinthians [1 Corinthians 1:1] with Paul, was one of the seventy as was Cephas, a man who had the same name as the apostle Peter, and the one whom Paul says, "When Cephas came to Antioch I withstood him to his face.[21]" [Galatians 2:11] Matthias, also, who took the place of Judas, and the other one [Justus] who was honored by being made a candidate with him [Acts 1:23], were like-wise of the seventy. They say that Thaddeus also was one of them, of whom I shall presently relate an account which has come down to us.

Putting together all the records you will see there were more than the twelve and the seventy. Paul said [1 Corinthians 15:4-7] after the resurrection, Jesus appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve, and after them to above five hundred brethren at once, of whom some had died but the majority were still alive at the time he wrote. Afterwards, he appeared unto James, disciple and brother of the Savior and to all who were called apostles, which included Paul, hence more than just the twelve.

> Afterward he appeared to all the apostles.
> (1 Corinthians 15:7)

But enough in regard to these individuals, the story concerning Thaddeus is as follows:

1.13 Prince of Edessa

The divinity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ became well-known among all nations on account of His wonder-working power. He attracted countless numbers from foreign countries lying far away from Judea, who had the hope of being cured of their diseases and of all kinds of sufferings. For instance, the King Abgarus, who ruled with great glory

[20] Hippolytus left a list of the seventy disciples. See *Ancient Church Fathers p. 11*

[21] It is unclear if Eusebius means Paul withstood Cephas or Paul withstood Peter who had the same name as this Cephas.

the nations beyond the Euphrates, being afflicted with a terrible disease which it was beyond the power of human skill to cure, when he heard of the name of Jesus, and of His miracles, which were attested by all with one accord, sent a message to Him by a courier and begged Him to heal his disease.[22] But He did not at that time comply with his request; yet Jesus deemed Abgarus worthy of a personal letter in which He said that He would send one of His disciples to cure his disease, and at the same time promised salvation to himself and all his house. Not long afterward, His promise was fulfilled. For after His resurrection from the dead and His ascent into heaven, Thomas, one of the twelve apostles, under divine impulse sent Thaddeus, who was also numbered among the seventy disciples of Christ, to Edessa, as a preacher and evangelist of the teaching of Christ. All that our Savior had promised, was fulfilled through him. We have written evidence of these things taken from the archives of Edessa, which was at that time a royal city. For in the public registers there, which contain accounts of ancient times and the acts of Abgarus, these things have been found preserved down to the present time. But there is no better way than to hear the epistles themselves which we have taken from the archives and have literally translated from the Syriac language in the following manner.

The Epistle of Abgarus, to Jesus

Abgarus, ruler of Edessa, to Jesus the excellent Savior who has appeared in the country of Jerusalem, greeting. I have heard the reports of You and how You cured illnesses without medicines or herbs. For it is said that You can make the blind to see and the lame to walk, that You cleanse lepers and cast out impure spirits and demons, and that You heal those afflicted with lingering disease, and even raise the dead. Having heard all these things concerning You, I have concluded that one of two things must be true: either You are God, and having come down from heaven You do these things, or else You are the Son of God. I have therefore written to ask if You would take the trouble to come to me and heal the disease which I have. For I have heard that the Jews are plotting against You. I have a very small, yet noble city, which is great enough for us both.

[22] John 12:20 records when Abgarus' courier came to Jesus.

The Answer of Jesus to Abgarus

Blessed are you who have believed in Me without seeing Me. For it is written concerning Me, that they who have seen Me will not believe in Me, and that they who have not seen Me will believe and be saved. But in regard to your request that I should come to you, it is necessary for Me to fulfill all the things which I have been sent here for, and after I have fulfilled them thus to be taken up again to Him that sent Me. But after I have been taken up, I will send to you one of My disciples, so he will heal your disease and give life to you and yours.

To these epistles there was added the following account in the Syriac language.

After the ascension of Jesus, Judas, who was also called Thomas, sent Thaddeus, an apostle, one of the Seventy to him. When he arrived, he lodged with Tobias. When report of Thaddeus became well-known, Abgarus was told that an apostle of Jesus had come, as He had written him. Thaddeus began then in the power of God to heal every disease and infirmity, insomuch that all wondered. When Abgarus heard of the great and wonderful things which he did and of the cures which he performed, he suspected that he was the one of whom Jesus had written him, saying, “After I have been taken up I will send one of My disciples to heal you.”

Therefore, summoning Tobias, with whom Thaddeus lodged, he said, I have heard that a certain man of power has come and is lodging in your house. Bring him to me. And Tobias, coming to Thaddeus said to him, the ruler Abgarus summoned me and told me to bring you to him so you can heal him. Thaddeus said, I will go, for I have been sent to him with power. Tobias therefore arose early on the following day, and taking Thaddeus, came to Abgarus. When he arrived, the nobles that were present stood around Abgarus. And immediately upon his entrance a great vision appeared to Abgarus in the countenance of the apostle Thaddeus. When Abgarus saw it he prostrated himself before Thaddeus, while all those who stood about were astonished; for they did not see the vision, which appeared to Abgarus alone.

He then asked Thaddeus if he were in truth a disciple of Jesus, the Son of God, who had said to him, “I will send you one of My

disciples, who shall heal you and give you life." Thaddeus said, because you have mightily believed in Him who sent me, therefore have I been sent unto you. And still further, if you believe in Him, the petitions of your heart shall be granted you as you believe. And Abgarus said to him, I believed in Him so much that I wished to take an army and destroy those Jews who crucified Him, but I feared reprisal by the Romans. And Thaddeus said, Our Lord has fulfilled the will of His Father, and having fulfilled it, has been taken up to His Father. And Abgarus said to him, I too have believed in Him and in His Father. And Thaddeus said to him, therefore I place my hand upon you in His name. And when he had done it, immediately Abgarus was cured of the disease and of the suffering which he had. Abgarus marveled, that he had received through His disciple Thaddeus exactly what he heard concerning Jesus, so, who healed him without medicines and herbs, and not only him, but also Abdus, who was afflicted with the gout; for he too came to him and fell at his feet and having received a benediction by the laying on of his hands, he was healed. The same Thaddeus cured also many other inhabitants of the city, and did wonders and marvelous works, and preached the word of God.

Afterward Abgarus said, Thaddeus, you do these things with the power of God, and we marvel. But, in addition to these things, I ask you to inform me in regard to the coming of Jesus, how He was born; and in regard to His power, by what power He performed those deeds of which I have heard. And Thaddeus said, I will keep silent now, since I have been sent to proclaim the Word publicly. But tomorrow assemble for me all thy citizens, and I will preach in their presence and sow among them the Word of God, concerning the coming of Jesus, how He was born; and concerning His mission, for what purpose He was sent by the Father; and concerning the power of His works, and the mysteries which He proclaimed in the world, and by what power He did these things; and concerning His new preaching, and His abasement and humiliation, and how He humbled himself, and died and debased His divinity and was crucified, and descended into Hades, and burst the bars which from eternity had not been broken, and raised the dead; for He descended alone, but rose with many, and thus ascended to His Father. Abgarus therefore commanded the citizens

> to assemble early in the morning to hear the preaching of Thaddeus, and afterward he ordered gold and silver to be given him. But he refused to take it, saying, if we have forsaken that which was our own, how shall we take that which is another's? These things were done in the three hundred and fortieth year [of the kingdom of Edessa].

I have inserted them here in their proper place, translated from the Syriac literally, and I hope to good purpose.

Book 2

2.1 Apostles After Christ's Ascension

Matthias, whom we have shown was one of the Seventy, was chosen to replace Judas, the betrayer.

Stephen was one of the seven deacons who was appointed for the service of the congregation, by prayer and the laying on of hands of the Apostles, and was the first, after the Lord, to be martyred, stoned to death, at the time of his ordination by the slayers of the Lord, as if he had been promoted for this very purpose. And thus, he was the first to receive the crown, corresponding to his name, which belongs to the martyrs of Christ.

James, called the Just on account of the excellence of his virtue, is recorded to have been the first to be made bishop of the Church of Jerusalem. This James was called the brother of the Lord because he was known as a son of Joseph, and Joseph was the legal father of Christ because the Virgin, being betrothed to him, "was found with child by the Holy Spirit before they came together," as the account of the holy Gospels shows. Clement writes:

> Peter, James, and John after the ascension of our Savior, as if also preferred by our Lord, did not strive after honor, but chose James the Just to be bishop of Jerusalem.
> (Clement, *Hypotyposes 6*)

And Clement also says concerning James:

> The Lord after his resurrection imparted knowledge to James the Just, John, and Peter, and they imparted it to the rest of the Apostles, and the rest of the Apostles to the Seventy, of whom Barnabas was one. But there were two disciples called James: One called the Just, who was thrown from the pinnacle of the temple and was beaten to death with a club by a fuller, and another who was beheaded.
> (Clement, *Hypotyposes 7*)

Paul also makes mention of the same James the Just, where he writes, “Other of the Apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.” At that time also the promise of our Savior to the queen of the Osrhoenians[23] was fulfilled.

Thaddeus was sent by Thomas under a divine impulse to Edessa as a preacher and evangelist of the religion of Christ, as we have shown a little above from the document found there. When he came to that place, he healed Abgarus by the word of Christ; and after bringing all the people there into the right attitude of mind by means of his works, and leading them to adore the power of Christ, he made them disciples of the Savior's teaching. And from that time down to the present, the whole city of Edessa has been devoted to Christ, offering extraordinary proof of the beneficence of our Savior toward them also. These things have been drawn from ancient accounts; but let us now turn again to the divine Scripture.

Paul was still persecuting the Church during this time. He entered the houses of believers and dragged men and women away to prison. When the first and greatest persecution was instigated by the Jews against the Church of Jerusalem in connection with the martyrdom of Stephen, and when all the disciples, except the Twelve, were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria, some, as the divine Scripture says, went as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, but could not yet venture to impart the word of faith to the nations, and therefore preached it to the Jews alone.

Philip also, one of those who with Stephen had been appointed as a deacon, being among those who were scattered abroad, went down to Samaria, and being filled with divine power, he first preached the word to the inhabitants of that country. Divine grace worked so mightily with him that even Simon Magus, with many others, was attracted by his words.

[23] See 2.12

Simon Magus was at that time so well-known by his jugglery, deceived many into believing he was the great "power of God." But at this time, being amazed at the wonderful deeds wrought by Philip through the divine power, he counterfeited faith in Christ, even going so far as to receive baptism. And what is surprising, the same thing is done even to this day by those who follow his most impure heresy [Gnosticism]. For they, after the manner of their forefather, slipping into the Church like a pestilential and leprous disease, greatly afflict those into whom they are able to infuse the deadly and terrible poison concealed in themselves. The most of these have been expelled as soon as they have been caught in their wickedness, as Simon himself, when detected by Peter, received due punishment.

As the preaching of the Savior's Gospel was daily advancing, an officer of the Ethiopian queen [Candace] (For Ethiopia even to the present day is ruled, according to ancestral custom, by a woman), was one of the first Gentiles to receive the mysteries of the divine word from Philip in consequence of a revelation, and having become the first-fruits of believers throughout the world, he is said to have been the first on returning to his country to proclaim the knowledge of the God of the universe and the life-giving sojourn of our Savior among men; so that through him the prophecy was truly fulfilled, which declares that

> Ethiopia stretches out her hand unto God. (Psalm 68:31)

In addition to these, Paul, that "chosen vessel,"

> not of men neither through men, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ himself and of God the Father who raised him from the dead, (Galatians 1:1)

was appointed an apostle, being made worthy of the call by a vision and by a voice which was uttered in a revelation from heaven.

2.2 Tiberius' Reaction to News of Christ's Death

When the Resurrection and Ascension of our Savior were known abroad, in accordance with an ancient custom which prevailed among the rulers of the provinces of reporting to the emperor the events which took place in them, so he would not miss anything, Pontius Pilate informed Tiberius of the reports which were heard abroad through all Palestine concerning the Resurrection of our Savior Jesus from the dead. He gave an account also of other wonders which he had learned of him, and how, after his death, having risen from the dead, he was now believed by many to be a god.

They say that Tiberius referred the matter to the Senate, but that they rejected it, ostensibly because they had not first examined into the matter (for an ancient law prevailed that no one should be made a god by the Romans except by a vote and decree of the Senate), but in reality because the saving teaching of the divine Gospel did not need the confirmation and recommendation of men. But although the Senate of the Romans rejected the proposition made in regard to our Savior, Tiberius still retained the opinion which he had held at first and contrived no hostile measures against Christ.

Tertullian recorded these things, a man well versed in the laws of the Romans, and in other respects of high repute, and one of those especially distinguished in Rome. In his apology for the Christians, which was written by him in the Latin language and has been translated into Greek, he writes as follows:

> But in order that we may give an account of these laws from their origin, it was an ancient decree that no one should be consecrated a god by the emperor until the Senate had expressed its approval. Marcus Aurelius did this concerning a certain idol, Alburnus. And this is a point in favor of our doctrine, that among you, divine dignity is conferred by human decree. If a god does not please a man, he is not made a god. So, according to this custom, it is necessary for

> man to be gracious to God. Tiberius, therefore, under whom the name of Christ made its entry into the world, when this doctrine was reported to him from Palestine where it first began, communicated with the Senate, making it clear to them that he was pleased with the doctrine. But the Senate, since it had not itself proved the matter, rejected it. But Tiberius continued to hold his own opinion and threatened death to the accusers of the Christians.

Heavenly providence had wisely instilled this into his mind in order that the doctrine of the Gospel, unhindered at its beginning, would spread throughout the world.

2.3 Christ's Doctrine Spread Throughout the World

In accordance with the divine Scriptures, the doctrine of the Savior, like the rays of the sun, quickly illumined the whole world; the voice of the inspired evangelists and Apostles went forth through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In every city and village Churches were quickly established, filled with multitudes of people. And those whose minds were in error, darkened by the superstition and idolatry of their forefathers, were, by the power of Christ, operating through the Apostles' teaching and the wonderful works, set free from the cruelest bondage. They renounced with abhorrence every aspect of demonic polytheism, and confessed that there was only one God, the Creator of all things, and Him they honored with the rites of true piety, through the inspired and rational worship which has been ordained by our Savior among men. But the divine grace being now poured out upon the rest of the nations, Cornelius of Caesarea in Palestine, with his whole house, through a divine revelation and the agency of Peter, first received faith in Christ. After him, a multitude of other Greeks in Antioch, to whom those who were scattered by the persecution of Stephen had preached the Gospel, came to faith. When the Church of Antioch was increasing and abounding, a multitude of prophets came to Jerusalem, and Barnabas and Paul

were among them, in addition, many other brethren. The name of Christians first sprang up at Antioch. Agabus, one of the prophets who was with them, uttered a prophecy concerning the famine which was about to take place, and Paul and Barnabas were sent to relieve the necessities of the brethren.

2.4 After Tiberius' Death

Tiberius died after having reigned about twenty-two years, and Caius [Caligula] succeeded him in the empire [AD 37]. He immediately gave the government of the Jews to Agrippa, making him king over the tetrarchies of Philip and of Lysanias; in addition to which he bestowed upon him, not long afterward, the tetrarchy of Herod, having punished Herod (the one under whom the Savior suffered) and his wife Herodias with perpetual exile on account of numerous crimes. Josephus testifies to these facts. Under this emperor Philo became known; a man most celebrated not only among many of our own, but also among many scholars outside the Church. He was a Hebrew by birth but was not inferior to those who held high dignities in Alexandria. How exceedingly he labored in the Scriptures and in the studies of his nation is plain to all from the work which he has done. How familiar he was with philosophy and with the liberal studies of foreign nations, it is not necessary to say, since he is reported to have surpassed all his contemporaries in the study of Platonic and Pythagorean philosophy, to which he particularly devoted his attention.

2.5 Philo's Trip to Rome

Philo has recorded in five books what happened to the Jews under the madness of Caius; how Caius called himself a god, performed as emperor innumerable acts of tyranny, the miseries of the Jews under him, and describes his trip to Rome on behalf of those at Alexandria. He received nothing but laughter and ridicule when testifying about Jewish laws before Caius and almost lost his life

by being there. Josephus also mentions these things in the eighteenth book of his *Antiquities*, in the following words:

> A sedition arose in Alexandria between the Jews that dwell there and the Greeks. Three representatives were chosen from each faction and sent to Caius. One of the Alexandrian representatives was Apion, who badly slandered the Jews stating they neglected the honors due to Caesar. For while all other subjects of Rome erected altars and temples to Caius, and in all other respects treated him just as they did the gods, they alone considered it disgraceful to honor him with statues and to swear by his name. After Apion finished with the charges, by which he hoped that Caius would be aroused, Philo, the chief of the Jewish representatives, a skilled philosopher, a brother of Alexander the Alabarch, defended the Jews from his accusations. But Caius cut him off and ordered him to leave and being enraged to the point of taking some severe measure against them. And Philo departed insulted and told the Jews that were with him to be of good courage; for while Caius was enraged against them, he was in fact already contending with God. (Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.8.1)

And Philo himself, in his work *On the Embassy*, accurately describes the details of what he did at that time. But I shall omit most of them and record only those things which will make clearly evident to the reader that the misfortunes of the Jews happened to them not long after, and because of their crime against Christ.

Philo relates that at Rome in the reign of Tiberius, Sejanus, the most influential member of the imperial court, made a move to completely destroy the Jewish nation; and in Judea, Pilate, under whom the crimes against the Savior were committed, attempted something contrary to the Jewish law in respect to the temple, which was at that time still standing in Jerusalem, and caused the Jews to revolt.

2.6 Caius Caligula's Jewish Persecution

After the death of Tiberius, Caius received the empire [AD 37] and, besides innumerable other acts of tyranny against many people, he greatly afflicted the Jews. These things we may learn briefly from Philo, who writes as follows:

> Caius was very capricious toward all nations but especially toward the nation of the Jews. He so bitterly hated them that, beginning with Alexandria, he closed the synagogues in city after city and he filled them with idols of himself (for in permitting others to erect them he really erected them himself). Then the temple in the holy city, which was still untouched, and regarded as an inviolable asylum, he tried to transform into a temple of his own, to be called "the temple of the visible Jupiter, the younger Caius."
> (Philo, *On the Embassy* 43)

Philo also records numerous other atrocities by Caius in his book *On the Virtues*. Josephus also records that these misfortunes of the whole nation began with the time of Pilate, because of their crime against the Savior. He writes as follows:

> When Tiberius sent Pilate to Judea as procurator, he secretly carried veiled images of the emperor, called ensigns, to Jerusalem by night. The following day this caused huge commotion among the Jews who were shocked that their laws were so trampled underfoot for they allow no image to be set up in their city. (Josephus, *Wars* 2.9.2)

Comparing these things with the Gospel accounts, you will see that it was not long before their own words came back to haunt them. They cried out before Pilate that they had "no other king than Caesar" [John 19:15]. Josephus wrote about the next calamity they experienced.

> After this, Pilate stirred up another riot by spending temple funds, which is called Corban, to build an aqueduct three hundred stadia in length. This made the Jews furious, and when Pilate was in Jerusalem, they surrounded his tribunal, threatening retribution. But he anticipated the riot and had distributed armed soldiers disguised in citizen's clothing through the crowd, forbidding them to use the sword, but commanding them to club those who shouted. When he gave them the signal from the tribunal, the Jews were beaten. Many Jews died from the blows and many others were trampled to death by their own countrymen in their flight. Then the mob, horrified at this calamity, held their peace. (Josephus, *Wars* 2.9.4)

In addition to these, Josephus records many other tumults which were stirred up in Jerusalem itself, and show that from that time seditions, wars, and mischievous plots followed each other in quick succession, and never ceased in the city and in all Judea until finally the siege of Vespasian overwhelmed them. Thus, the divine vengeance overtook the Jews for the crimes which they dared to commit against Christ.

2.7 Pilate's Suicide

It is recorded that Pilate, who was governor in the time of our Savior, fell into such misfortune under Caius, whose times we are recording, that he was forced to execute himself. Divine vengeance, as it seems, did not delay his punishment for long. This is also related by those Greek historians who have recorded the Olympiads, and the events which have taken place in each period.

2.8 Famine during Claudius’s Reign

Caius had not quite ruled four years when Claudius succeeded him as emperor [AD 35]. In Claudius’ time a great famine came over the whole world, which many secular historians have written about

in their histories. This fulfilled Agabus's prediction of a worldwide famine recorded in the Acts of the Apostles [Acts 11:27-30]. Luke describes the famine in the time of Claudius and records how the brethren of Antioch, each according to his ability, sent aid to the brethren of Judea by the hands of Paul and Barnabas. He then adds the following:

2.9 Apostle James' Martyrdom

"Now about that time" (it is clear that he means the time of Claudius) "King Herod stretched forth his hands to persecute members of the church and murdered James the brother of John with the sword" [Acts 12:1-2]. And concerning this James, Clement relates that the one who led James to the judgment-seat was so moved when he heard his testimony that he confessed that he was himself also a Christian.

> Then they were both led away together; and on the way he begged James to forgive him. James looked at him for a moment and said, "Peace be with you," and kissed him. So, they were both beheaded at the same time.
> (Clement, *Hypotyposes* 7)

Scripture says Herod, upon the death of James, seeing that the deed pleased the Jews imprisoned Peter, and would have murdered him if an angel had not come in the night and liberated him from prison for the service of the Gospel. Such was the providence of God in respect to Peter.

2.10 Herod Agrippa's Death

Acts records the divine justice the king immediately received for his actions against the Apostles. For when he went to Caesarea, on a notable feast-day, clothed in a royal garment, he delivered an address to the people from a lofty throne in front of the tribunal. When all the multitude applauded the speech, as if it were the

voice of a god and not of a man, the Scripture relates that an angel of the Lord struck him, and he was eaten by worms and died [Acts 12:20-23].

We must admire the account of Josephus for its agreement with the divine Scriptures in regard to this amazing event. In the nineteenth book of his *Antiquities,* he states:

> He had completed the third year of his reign over all Judea when he came to Caesarea, which was formerly called Strato's Tower. There he held games in honor of Caesar, learning that this was a festival observed in behalf of Caesar's safety. A great multitude of the highest and most honorable men in the province attended this festival. On the second day of the games he proceeded to the theater at break of day, wearing a garment entirely of silver and of wonderful texture. When the silver reflected the sun's earliest rays, it shined so bright that it produced a sort of fear and terror in those who gazed upon him. And immediately his flatterers raised up their voices, not for his benefit, calling him a god, and saying, "Be merciful; up to this time we have revered you as a man, henceforth we confess that you are superior to the nature of mortals." The king did not rebuke them, nor reject their impious flattery. A moment later he looked up and saw an angel sitting above his head. And this he quickly perceived as a bad omen, and he was instantly smitten with a heart-piercing pain that soon spread to his stomach. Looking at his friends he said, "I have lived a life most people envy but I, your god, am now commanded to die; fate had just proved your words of me to be lies. You called me an immortal, yet I will be led away to die. We must accept our destiny as God has decreed it." While he was still speaking his pain grew overwhelming and he was immediately carried away to his palace. Everyone knew he would soon die, so the multitude, with their wives and children, put on sackcloth after the custom of their fathers, implored God on behalf of the king, and lamentation and tears were everywhere. As the king lay in a

> lofty chamber, he saw them below lying prostrate on the ground and could not stop himself from weeping. After suffering continually for five days with severe stomach pain, he departed this life, at the age of fifty-four, which was the seventh year of his reign. He ruled four years under Emperor Caius, three of those were over the tetrarchy of Philip, and the fourth he also ruled over that of Herod. He then ruled for three more years under the reign of Emperor Claudius. (Josephus, *Antiquities* 19)

Josephus marvelously confirms this and other things so perfectly with the Scriptures. If someone disputes the name of the king at that time, the date and events recorded in any document will show it to be the same king. There is either a copyist error or the king had two names, as often happens.

2.11 Theudas and His Followers

Luke, in the Acts, introduces Gamaliel as saying:

> Theudas rose up boasting himself to be somebody, who was killed, and his followers scattered. (Acts 5:34-36)

Let us compare this with Josephus' account of this man.

> While Fadus was procurator of Judea, a certain impostor called Theudas persuaded a very great multitude to take their possessions and follow him to the Jordan River. For he said that he was a prophet, and that he could command the river to part giving them an easy passage, which deceived many. But Fadus did not permit them to enjoy their folly, but sent a troop of horsemen against them, who attacked them unexpectedly and killed many, captured many, and took Theudas himself captive and cut off his head and carried it to Jerusalem. (Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.5.1)

After this, Josephus makes mention of the famine, which took place in the reign of Claudius, in the following words.

2.12 Helen, the Queen of the Osrhoenians

> At this time the great famine took place in Judea, in which the queen Helena, having purchased grain from Egypt with large sums, distributed it to the needy.
> (Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.5.2)

You will find this statement also agrees with the Acts of the Apostles, where it states that the disciples at Antioch:

> Each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren that dwelt in Judea, which they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Paul. (Acts 11:27-30)

But splendid monuments of this Helen, of whom the historian has made mention, are still shown in the suburbs of the city which is now called Aelia,[24] but she is said to have been queen of Adiabene.

2.13 Simon Magus

When faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ had reached all men, the enemy of man's salvation devised a plan to control the imperial city for himself. He sent the previously mentioned Simon there and used Simon's deceitful arts to lead many Romans astray, placing them in his power. This is stated by Justin Martyr, a distinguished Christian writer who lived shortly after the time of the Apostles. I will speak more about Justin later. Justin wrote in his *First Apology* (a defense of the Christian faith) to Antoninus Pius, as follows.

> After the Ascension of the Lord, the demons empowered certain men who claimed they were gods, and who not only went unpersecuted by you, but you even deemed worthy of

[24] Roman Emperor Hadrian renamed Jerusalem as Aelia.

> honors. One of these was Simon, a Samaritan of the village of Gitto, who in the reign of Claudius Caesar performed mighty acts of magic in Rome by the art of demons that possessed him. Rome considered him a god and even honored him with a statue, which was erected in the Tiber River, between the two bridges. The statue bore this Latin inscription "Simoni Deo Sancto" which means "To Simon the Holy God." Nearly all the Samaritans and even a few other nations confess and worship him as their primary God. There was also a woman named Helen who travelled around with him who was a former prostitute in Tyre of Phoenicia. They claimed she was the first emanation that proceeded from him.

Justin's account agrees with Irenaeus' account that he writes in his *Against Heresies*, Book 1, where he gives a full account of this man and his profane and impure teaching. It would be superfluous to recount here. Anyone wishing to know the history and the false doctrines of Simon and each of the cults that have sprung from him, as well as their practices, can find them detailed in Irenaeus' books. Simon was the author of all [Gnostic] heresy. From his time down to the present, those who have followed his heresy have pretended to be Christians, seeming to be modest and pure. But they embraced again idolatrous superstition, which they say they have renounced; and they bow down before pictures and images of Simon and Helen, who was with him; and they venture to worship them with incense, sacrifices, and libations. Anyone hearing about their more secret rites would be disgusted, calling it madness and folly. It is improper for modest men to write or talk about their excessive obscenity and lewdness. Their practices are more vile than one can imagine. This abominable sect makes a sport of those wretched women that are literally overwhelmed with all kinds of vices.

2.14 Apostle Peter’s Preaching in Rome

At this time the evil power who hates all that is good, that enemy of salvation, made Simon the father of such wickedness to be the great antagonist of the inspired Apostles of our Savior. For that divine grace which manifests through His ministers, by their appearance and presence, quickly extinguished that evil flame, and humbled and cast down

> every high thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God. (2 Corinthians 10:5)

Therefore, no conspiracy of Simon nor of his disciples could accomplish anything in those apostolic times. The Divine Word, now dwelling in the Apostles themselves, conquered every opposition and flourished on the earth. When the Apostle Peter in Judea exposed Simon’s evil deeds, he fled from the east to the west so he would live the way he wanted without feeling convicted. When Simon came to the city of Rome, that evil spirit lying in wait there vaulted him to such a success that the citizens of Rome honored him as a god by erecting a statue to him. But this did not last very long. For immediately, during the reign of Claudius [AD 41-54], the gracious providence of God led Peter to Rome. That strong and great Apostle, who on account of his courage, came against this great corruptor of mankind. He like a noble commander of God clothed in divine armor, carried the light of understanding from the East to those who dwelt in the West, revealing the light itself, and the word which brings salvation to souls, and preaching the kingdom of heaven.

2.15 Mark’s Gospel

When the Divine Word was established in Rome, Simon and his power over the Romans was exposed and destroyed. The splendor of piety enlightened the minds of Peter's hearers so greatly that they were not satisfied with only hearing the unwritten teachings of the Gospel that they entreated Mark, Peter’s companion, to

create a written account. They would not stop until he agreed to do so. This became known as the Gospel of Mark. Peter was pleased with the zeal of the people and through the revelation of the Spirit learned that Mark's Gospel was to be sanctioned to be read in all the Churches. Clement gives this account in the eighth book of his *Hypotyposes*. Papias, bishop of Hierapolis also recounts the same history. Peter mentions Mark in his first epistle which is said that he wrote in Rome, as is stated by him, when he calls the city, by a figure, Babylon this way,

> The church that is in Babylon, elected together with you, salutes you; and so does Marcus my son. (1 Peter 5:13)

2.16 Mark Founds the Alexandrian Church

They say that this Mark was the first to be sent to Egypt, and that he proclaimed the Gospel, which he had written, and established the first Churches in Alexandria. So great was the multitude of believers, both men and women, that were converted at the very beginning, and so extraordinary was their philosophy and asceticism, that Philo thought it important to describe their pursuits, their gatherings, their practices, basically their whole manner of life.

2.17 Philo's Account of the Therapeutae[25]

It is said that Philo became acquainted with the Apostle Peter when he was preaching the Gospel in Rome during the reign of Claudius [AD 41-54]. This is not at all improbable since the writing I am referring to, which he composed, contains church rules we still observe today.[26] Since he accurately describes the lifestyle of our ascetics proves that he not only knew them, but

[25] The author believes that Therapeutae was the name of the Essenes in Egypt.
[26] Cults always try to discredit Christian authors.

also approved of them, while he also highly respected the apostolic men of his time. These ascetics seem Hebrew since they observed the lifestyle of the Jews (I mean of the customs of the Ancients). In his work, entitled *On a Contemplative Life* also called *On the Life of Prayer*, after first affirming that he will not write anything untrue or anything speculative about them, he says that these men were called Therapeutae and the women that were with them Therapeutrides. He then states the reason for that name is because, like physicians, they healed everyone who came to them using herbal remedies and their pure and sincere worship of the Deity. Whether Philo names them Therapeutae because it suited them as healers or whether they had that name already, does not need to be discussed here because the name "Christian" was not yet known everywhere. However, Philo bears witness that they renounce their property, saying,

> When they begin their philosophical way of life, they turn over their property to their relatives, renounce all the cares of [their old] life, and leave the city to dwell in the country and secluded gardens, knowing very well that associating with people of a different faith is unprofitable and harmful.

It is logical to assume that they did this under the guidance of the Spirit to live out the same zealous faith of the ancient prophets. The universally accepted work, the *Acts of the Apostles*, records that all the companions of the Apostles sold their property and distributed to all according to the necessity of each one, so that there was no want among them. Scripture says,

> For as many as were possessors of lands or houses, sold them and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet, so that distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. (Acts 4:34b-35)

Philo testifies to facts just like those described in Acts, and then adds the following,

> They are found everywhere in the world for it is fitting that both Greeks and Barbarians could become Therapeutae. They have many houses of worship, but they are mainly around Alexandria, Egypt. Quarterly their leaders come to a place situated on a small hill, just north of Lake Mariout. This place was picked for its security, air, and temperature, which resembles their ancient homeland.

Then after describing the kind of houses which they had, he describes their houses of worship.

> In every house[27] there is a sacred apartment which is what they call a sanctuary or library, where are stored away the mysteries of their religious life. They do not take food, drink, or anything else for the necessities of life in there, but only the books of laws, prophecies, hymns, and other subjects to perfect their knowledge and piety.

After other matters he says,

> The whole time, morning to evening, is constant study. For they read the holy Scriptures and explain the prophecies[28] of their fathers in an allegorical manner, regarding the written words as signs of hidden truth communicated in types and shadows. They also have the commentaries of the Ancients,[29] who were the founders of their sect, and who left many examples of the allegorical method. They use these to judge modern doctrine by.

These facts seem to have been stated by a man who had heard them expounding their sacred writings.

These "commentaries of the Ancients," which he says they had, were most likely not only on the Gospels and the writings of the Apostles, but probably some commentaries on the ancient prophets, such as are quoted in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and in

[27] House or house-church.
[28] Philosophy or prophecies
[29] Or Testaments of the Ancients

many other Epistles of Paul. Later he wrote about the new psalms which they composed:

> They not only spend their time in meditation, but they also compose songs and hymns to God. They are uncommonly serious about their different meters and melody.

He wrote many other things in this same book, but I selected these facts to show the characteristics of their ecclesiastical way of life. If anyone doubts what has been said is not unique to the Gospel, but that it could be applied to cults, let the author's subsequent words convince him. If he is not prejudiced, he will see undisputed proof. Philo says,

> In their mind, temperance is the foundation on which other virtues are built. None of them eat or drink[30] during the day, since they regard philosophical[31] study so important to use every hour of direct daylight for it and the wants of the body are at dusk and dawn. Some have so great a desire for this wisdom that they fast for three days at a time. There are even a few who love wisdom so much as to study the doctrines twice as long; eating very little up to six days.

It is obvious that Philo considered them to be a Christian community. If anyone still denies this, there is even more proof. There are even more striking examples of their practice that only occur among Christians, according to the Gospel.

He says that there were women among them most of whom were aged virgins[32] who lived a celibate lifestyle. They were not forced to do so like the Greek priestesses, but rather in their zeal they chose that lifestyle because of their desire for wisdom instead of husbands, and spiritual children instead of physical children,

[30] Either not eating from dusk and dawn (intermittent fasting) or not participating in ritual food and drink (like communion).

[31] Philosophical study or prophetical study

[32] Ignatius uses "virgins" and "widows" for deaconesses. See Ignatius' *Philippians 1*5 and *Smyrnaeans 12*. Also, Paul mentions these "widows" in 1 Timothy 5:3-16.

which only a pious soul is able to bear. After this, Philo adds more fully,

> They expound the sacred Scriptures by types, figures, and allegories. To them the whole law is a living organism, of which the literal meaning is for the body, while the hidden meaning within the words is for the spiritual. This sect puts more weight on the hidden meaning, which revealed His thoughts through a "mirror of names."[33]

It is not necessary to describe their meetings, how the men and women live separately in the same place, or their practices. They are identical to ours, practiced to this very day! Especially the festival of our Savior's passion, which we too observe with fasting, spending the whole night in prayer and the study of the Divine Word.

Philo has described all these in his own work, their identical mode of life and the vigils of the great festival with their practices and hymns. He describes how they, like us, sing one at a time with the others silently until they join in singing the chorus and how on the festival they sleep on the ground on beds of straw. To use his own words,

> they drink no wine at all, nor eat any meat, but only drink water, and eat their bread with salt and hyssop.

In addition to this Philo describes the offices of those who carry on the services of the Church, mentioning the deacons and the bishops, which is the highest office. But whosoever desires a more complete knowledge of these things may get it from the history already cited. But it should be clear to everyone that when Philo wrote these things, he saw them as the first heralds of the Gospel and the customs handed down from the beginning by the Apostles.

[33] A "mirror of names" might mean inscription prophecies.

2.18 Works of Philo

Philo was a prolific author and very thorough and profound in his explanations. He wrote many commentaries on the sacred Scriptures and works on various subjects.

He expounds on the history of Genesis in his book entitled *Allegories of the Divine Laws*. In another book entitled *Questions and Answers on Genesis and Exodus*, he teaches chapter by chapter and addresses each subject with its questions and objections, together with their respective solutions, and he includes tables.

He also wrote treatises on certain subjects such as

On Agriculture (2 volumes)
On Drunkenness (2 volumes)
On What the Sober Mind Desires and Detests
On the Confusion of Tongues
On Flight and Discovery
On Assembly for the Sake of Instruction
Who is Heir to Things Divine?
On the Division of Things into Equal and Unequal
On the Three Mosaic Virtues (written by Moses and others)
On Changed Names and Why They Were Changed
On the First Covenant
On the Second Covenant
On Emigration
On the Life of a Wise Man Perfect in Righteousness
On Unwritten Laws
On Giants
On the Immutability of God
On Dreams (Moses' proposition that they are sent by God, 5 volumes)

These are the books on Genesis that have come down to us.

But on Exodus we know of

Questions and Answers (5 volumes)
On the Tabernacle
On the Ten Commandments
On the Laws from Each of the Ten Commandments (4 volumes)
On Sacrificial Animals
On the Kinds of Sacrifice
On Rewards for the Good
On Punishments and Curses for the Wicked.

Some of his smaller books include

On Providence
On the Jews
The Statesman
Alexander
On Irrational Animals Possessing Reason
On the Proposition that Wicked Men are Slaves
On the proposition that Good Men are Free.

He has two books, *On the Contemplative Life* and *On Suppliants*, from which we have drawn the facts concerning the life of the Apostolic men.

Also there is

On the Interpretation of the Hebrew Names in the Law and in the Prophets

It is said that Philo came to Rome during the reign of Gaius and wrote a book entitled *On Virtues*, which was ironically about the impiety of the emperor. Later, during the reign of Claudius he read it to the entire Roman senate. His books were so much admired that they were deemed worthy of a place in the Roman libraries. At this time, while Paul was completing his journey

> from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum,
> (Romans 15:19)

Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome. This is when Aquila and Priscilla left Rome with the other Jews and came to Asia. They lived where the Apostle Paul was strengthening the Churches whose foundations, he had newly laid. The sacred book of Acts also records these things [Acts 18-19].

2.19 Calamity of the Jerusalem Passover

When Claudius was still emperor, there was a great sedition that took place in Jerusalem at the Feast of the Passover. Thirty thousand Jews were trampled to death by each other trying to evacuate the temple. That festival became a time of mourning for the whole nation, every house wept. These things are related literally by Josephus. Claudius appointed Agrippa II, son of Agrippa I, king of the Jews and sent Felix to be procurator of the whole country, including Samaria, Galilee, and the land called Perea. Claudius died after reigning only thirteen years and eight months. Then Nero succeeded him as emperor [AD 54].

2.20 Jerusalem During Nero's Reign

Josephus' *Antiquities* Book 20 relates the sedition among the priests during the reign of Nero, while Felix was procurator of Judea. Josephus says,

> There arose a sedition between the high priests and the priests and leaders of the people of Jerusalem. And each side formed a militia of bold and restless men and put himself at their head, and whenever they met, they hurled insults and stones at each other. No one could stop them; it was as if there were no ruler of the city. The high priests became so bold as to send their servants to the threshing-

> floors of the poor to seize tithes. This left many starving for food. This is how the violent factions prevailed over all justice.
> (Josephus' *Antiquities* 20.8.8)

Josephus says that about the same time there sprang up in Jerusalem a certain kind of

> robbers who, by day and in the middle of the city, murdered those whom they met.
> (Josephus' *Antiquities* 20.8.5)

Especially at the feasts, they mingled with the multitude and with daggers concealed under their garments, they stabbed the most distinguished men. The murderers themselves were among the first to express indignation at the murder. This allowed the people to remain confident in them and they remained undiscovered. They murdered Jonathan the high priest first, but afterwards many were murdered daily, and the fear became worse than the evil itself, each one expected death hourly.

2.21 Egyptian Mentioned in Acts

Later Josephus proceeds as follows:

> A greater evil afflicted the Jews. An Egyptian false prophet appeared in the land of Israel. This impostor deceived about thirty thousand men and led them from the desert to the Mount of Olives where he planned to enter Jerusalem by force and to overpower the Roman garrison and seize control of the government, using his followers as bodyguards. But Felix anticipated his attack and went out to meet him with the Roman soldiers, and all the people joined in the fight, so that when the attack failed, the Egyptian fled with a few men, but the most of them were killed or taken captive.
> (Josephus' *Wars* 2.13.5)

Josephus relates these events in his *Wars of the Jews*, Book 2. It is worthwhile to note that the account of this Egyptian is also mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. In the time of Felix, when a multitude of Jews in Jerusalem accused the apostle Paul of heresy, the Roman centurion asked him,

> Are you not the Egyptian, who before these days made an uproar, and led out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers? (Acts 21:38)

These are the events which took place in the time of Felix.

2.22 Paul Acquitted of All Charges in Rome

Nero appointed Festus as Felix's successor. Under Festus Paul made his defense and was sent bound to Rome. Aristarchus accompanied him, whom Paul somewhere in his epistles[34] calls his fellow-prisoner. At this point, Luke closes his history, the *Acts of the Apostles*, by stating that Paul spent two whole years at Rome as a prisoner at large and preached the Word of God without restraint.

After his acquittal, the Apostle Paul embarked on his last missionary journey.[35] When he came back to Rome for the second time, he was martyred. Shortly before his death he wrote 2 Timothy from prison in which he mentions his first trial and acquittal and his current trial and impending execution. Listen to his testimony on this,

> At my first trial, no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and

[34] Colossians 4:10
[35] Fourth missionary journey, approximately AD 63-66.

> that all the Gentiles might hear, and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. (2 Timothy 4:16-17)

Paul plainly indicates by these words that at his first trial, in order that his call to preach might be fulfilled, he was "rescued from the mouth of the lion," referring to Nero, probably on account of his ferocity.

Now, in his second trial Paul does not use the phrase "rescued from the mouth of the lion" because he knew his death was near. Instead, he says,

> the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom (2 Timothy 4:18a)

indicating his impending martyrdom, which he also more clearly expresses in the same epistle, saying,

> For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. (2 Timothy 4:6)

Paul says Luke was with him when he wrote 2 Timothy,[36] but he was not present at his first trial.

Luke had probably finished the *Acts of the Apostles* by that time, recording the events down to the time he was with Paul. I mention this to show that Paul's martyrdom did not occur at Paul's stay in Rome, recorded by Luke.

It is also probable that Nero was milder at Paul's first trial and Christian doctrine was more easily received; but when he became brazen in his crimes, he began attacking the Apostles and other Christians as well.

2.23 Martyrdom of James, the Lord's Brother

After Paul had "appealed to Caesar" and Festus sent him to Rome, the Jews, realizing they could not ensnare Paul, turned against

[36] 2 Timothy 4:11

James the Lord's brother, whom the Apostles made bishop of Jerusalem. They made the following evil plans against him. They took him to a public place and demanded that he renounce his faith in Christ before all the people. But, contrary to the opinion of all, with a clear voice, and with greater boldness than they had anticipated, he spoke out before the whole multitude and confessed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God and our Savior and Lord.

When they could no longer bear his testimony, who, on account of his virtue and piety was deemed the most "just" of all men, they seized an opportunity in the current anarchy and murdered him. The state of anarchy was caused by the death of Festus, making Judea without a head in government.

I previously mentioned how James died by quoting Clement, who says he was thrown from the pinnacle of the temple and was beaten to death with a club. Hegesippus, who lived immediately after the Apostles, gives us this most accurate account in his *Memoirs, Book 5*.

> James, the brother of the Lord, received the government of the Church along with the Apostles. He was surnamed the Just[37] by all from the time of our Savior to the present day; for there were many that bore the name of James. He was set apart from birth to not drink wine or strong drink, eat flesh, cut his hair, or use the anointing oil or the baptismal. He alone was permitted to enter the Holy Place because he wore only linen, never wool. He habitually entered the temple and was often found on his knees begging forgiveness for the sins of the people. His knees became hard like a camel's knees because of his constant kneeling before God. Because of his great piety he was called "the Just" and "Oblias," which is the Greek form of the Hebrew "Zadik" and "Ozleam," meaning "righteousness" and

[37] James the Just or James the Zadok.

"protector of the people;" as the prophets declare concerning him. [38]

Some of the seven sects of the people which I have mentioned in the Memoirs, asked him what the "door of Jesus"[39] meant. He replied, "that Jesus was the Savior." From his reply, some believed that Jesus is the Christ. The sects mentioned before did not believe in a resurrection or in His coming to judge every man according to his works. Those who did believe, did so on account of James. When many of the rulers believed, there was an uproar among the Jews (Scribes and Pharisees) who said that there was a real danger that most of the people might start believing that Jesus is the Messiah.

They called James to an assembly and said to him,

> We call on you to restrain the people; many have gone astray in regard to Jesus, believing he is the Christ. We and all the people trust you and know that you are Just and have no respect of persons. We are confident that you can persuade all that have come to the Feast of the Passover not to be led astray concerning Jesus. Therefore, address the people from the pinnacle of the temple, that from that high position you may be clearly seen, and that your words may be easily heard. For all the tribes, with the Gentiles [Noahides] also, are come together on account of the Passover.

Then those Scribes and Pharisees placed James upon the pinnacle of the temple, and cried out,

> Just one, in whom we have confidence, since the people are led astray after Jesus, the crucified one, please explain to us, what is the "Door of Jesus."

[38] James the Zadok. He was a godly judge of the people from the Zadok priestly line. An "ozleam" was a kind of defense attorney, protecting the rights of the people against tyranny.

[39] I am the door: by me if any man enters in, he shall be saved. (John 10:9 KJV)

James answered with a loud voice,

> Why do you ask me concerning Jesus, the Son of Man? He himself sits in heaven at the right hand of the great Power and is about to come upon the clouds of heaven.

Then many were fully convinced and rejoiced in the testimony of James, and said, “Hosanna to the Son of David.”

Then these same Scribes and Pharisees said to each other, “We made a horrible mistake by allowing such testimony to Jesus. Let us go up and throw him down, so that they will fear and not believe him.” And they cried out, saying, “Oh! oh! The Just man is also a heretic.” And they fulfilled the Scripture written in Isaiah,

> Let us take away the just man, because he is troublesome to us: therefore, they shall eat the fruit of their doings.
> (Isaiah 3:10 LXX)

So, they went up and threw down the Just man, and said to each other, “Let us stone James the Just,” because he did not die from the fall. As they began to stone him, he turned and knelt down and prayed,

> I ask You Lord God our Father, forgive them, for they do not realize what they do.

And as they started to stone him, one of the priests of the sons of the Rechabites, who are mentioned by Jeremiah the prophet, cried out, saying, 'Stop, what are you doing? The Just one is praying for you. And one of them, who was a fuller, took the club with which he beat out clothes and beat the Just man on the head. This is how he suffered martyrdom. They buried him on that spot, by the temple, and his Ossuary still remains by the temple.[40] He became a true witness, both to Jews and Greeks, that Jesus is the

[40] The James Ossuary was found in October, 2022.

> Christ. Immediately after this, Vespasian invaded and took control over Judea.
> (Hegesippus' *Memoirs Book 5*)

This is Hegesippus' full account, which completely agrees with Clement's account about him. James was so admired and honored by everyone for his justice that most of the Jews believed that this caused the siege of Jerusalem, which occurred immediately after his martyrdom. Josephus said the same,

> These things happened to the Jews to avenge James the Just, who was a brother of Jesus, that is called the Christ. For the Jews murdered him in spite of his great righteousness. (Josephus' *Antiquities* 20.9.1[41])

Josephus also described his death in his *Antiquities Book 20*, this way.

> When Caesar [Nero] learned of the death of Festus, he sent Albinus to be procurator of Judea [AD 62]. But the younger Ananus, who previously was made the high priest, was rash and had a very reckless disposition. He belonged to the sect of the Sadducees who are the cruelest of all the Jews in the execution of judgment, as we have already shown. This being his character, he seized the opportunity, with Festus dead and Albinus absent, to convene the Sanhedrin. He charged James the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, with a few others of violating the law, and condemned them to be stoned. The most fair-minded citizens that strictly observed the law were so greatly angered at this that they secretly sent to the King [Agrippa II] requesting him to order Ananus to cease those proceedings because it was not legal for him to do so. Some of them went so far as to meet up with Albinus to remind him that it is illegal for Ananus to convene the Sanhedrin without his permission. Albinus, convinced by them, wrote in anger to Ananus, threatening to call him into account. For this same reason King Agrippa

[41] This is not found in modern translations of Josephus, but it is also quoted as such by Origin (*Against Celsus*, 1.47)

> removed him from the office of the high priesthood, which he had held for only three months, and appointed Jesus, the son of Damnaeus as his successor.
> (Josephus' *Antiquities* 20.9.1)

These things are recorded regarding James, who is said to be the author of the first of the General Epistles. Some doubt the authenticity of the Epistle of James. It is true that not *many* of the ancients quote it; however, the Epistle of Jude, another one of the General Epistles, is not quoted much by them either. Nevertheless, we know that all seven of the General Epistles are read in almost all the churches.

2.24 Annianus Succeeds Mark at Alexandria

Annianus succeeded Mark the evangelist in the administration of the Church of Alexandria in the eighth year of Nero's reign [AD 62].

2.25 Nero's Execution of Paul and Peter

When Nero's government was firmly established, he began to plunge into unholy pursuits, and attack the religion of the Supreme God. I will not go into the depths of his depravity in this work. Several historians give a detailed account of his extreme madness if you wish to read of it. Without reason, he murdered countless people including his dearest friends, his mother, brothers, his own wife, and other family members in the same way he would execute his enemies, with various forms of death. Worse than all of these crimes, Nero was the first emperor to be called the "enemy of God." The Roman Tertullian describes it this way,

> Examine your records. There you will find that Nero was the first to persecute Christianity. After he rose to power, Nero exercised great cruelty against all at Rome. We glory in having such a man leading our persecution. Anyone who knew him understood that Nero never condemned anything unless it was of great virtue. (Tertullian, *Defense 5*)

Nero not only publicly announced himself to be the enemy of the Christian God, but he went on to slaughter the Apostles. History records that Nero had Paul beheaded in Rome and Peter crucified. The account of the execution of Peter and Paul is substantiated by the fact that their names are preserved in the cemeteries of Rome, even to this present day.

Caius, a church member who arose under Roman Bishop Zephyrinus, also confirmed this. When he was writing against the Phrygian heretic Proclus, he mentioned where the sacred corpses of the Apostles where laid,

> But I can show the trophies of the Apostles. For if you will go to the Vatican or to the Ostian way, you will find the trophies of those who laid the foundations of this Church. (Caius, *Against Proclus*)

Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, in his epistle to the Romans, says that they were both martyred at the same time. He says,

> Your great council has bound together the seed that was planted by both Peter and Paul in Rome and in Corinth.[42] They both planted and taught us here at Corinth. And in the same way, they taught in Italy, and suffered martyrdom about the same time.[43] (Dionysius, *To the Romans*)

I have quoted these things in order to further confirm the truth of this history.

2.26 The Last Jewish War Against Rome

Josephus records the catastrophic events of the last Jewish war against the Romans, which started in the twelfth year of Nero [AD 68]. In his detailed account, he states that a great many of the most honorable among the Jews were scourged and crucified in Jerusalem by Florus when he was procurator of Judea. Josephus

[42] 1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:6, 22

[43] Some church records date their execution in June, AD 67.

then says that this revolt of the Jews started a terrible persecution throughout all of Syria, and other places, in which the Jews were slaughtered without mercy as enemies by the citizens of those cities. The cities were filled with unburied corpses, the dead of the elderly and infants. And the women had nothing to cover their nakedness.[44] The whole province was full of indescribable horror yet the dread of what was to come was far worse than those crimes already committed.

Such is the account of Josephus, and such was the condition of the Jews at that time.

[44] Compare to Nazi Germany; the old and young murdered, the men in slave labor camps, and the women in brothels.

Book 3 -

3.1 Where the Apostles Taught

Such was the condition of the Jews. The holy apostles and disciples of our Savior were dispersed throughout the entire world. According to tradition:

- Thomas labored in Parthia,
- Andrew was in Scythia,
- John was in Asia (he is buried in Ephesus),
- Peter preached in Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and Asia to the Jews of the dispersion. Peter was crucified head-downwards in Rome; for he had requested that he might suffer in this way.
- Paul preached the Gospel of Christ from Jerusalem to Illyricum, and afterwards suffered martyrdom in Rome under Nero.

Origen records these facts in the third volume of his *Commentary on Genesis*.

3.2 Linus, the First Roman Bishop

Linus was the first to receive the Episcopate at Rome, after the martyrdom of Paul and of Peter. Paul mentions him, when writing to Timothy from Rome, at the end of the epistle, “Eubulas, Prudens, Linus, and Claudia greet you.”

3.3 The Epistles of the Apostles

The *First Epistle of Peter* is acknowledged as genuine. It is undisputed that all the ancient writers quoted it freely. We have learned that some canons do not have the *Second Epistle of Peter*, yet, it is profitable to many and is quoted with the other Scriptures. However, the so-called *Acts of Peter*, *Gospel of Peter*, the *Preaching of Peter*, and the *Apocalypse of Peter* were never

universally accepted as genuine. No ancient or modern ecclesiastical writer ever quotes them in their writings.

As I write my "History," I will note who succeeded the apostles and what they said about which works were heretical, which were disputed, which were accepted, and which were canonical.

Of Peter, one is universally accepted as genuine by all the ancient fathers.

Of Paul, fourteen epistles are well known and undisputed. Some canons do not have the *Epistle to the Hebrews*. Some in Rome say Paul did not write it, but I will explain what the ancients say about it later. The so-called *Acts of Paul* is not found with the undisputed books. Paul mentions Hermas, among others, at the end of the Epistle to the Romans. This Hermas is ascribed to be the author of *The Shepherd*. *The Shepherd of Hermas* is disputed by some because it is not found among the undisputed books, but some consider it invaluable, especially to those who are new to the faith. It has been read in the public church services and some of the most ancient writers have quoted it. This will suffice on which books are disputed and which are accepted as Scripture.

3.4 The First Successors of the Apostles

Paul preached to the Gentiles and established churches

> from Jerusalem round about even unto Illyricum. (Romans 15:19)

We learn this from both his own words, and from the account which Luke gives in Acts.

Where Peter preached Christ and taught the doctrine of the New Covenant to those of the circumcision is clear from his own words in his undisputed epistle, in which he writes,

> to the Hebrews of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. (1 Peter 1:1)

It is not easy to tell the number and the names of those who were true zealous followers of the apostles that were appointed as pastors of the churches they founded, except for those mentioned in the writings of Paul. Paul had many fellow-laborers, or "fellow-soldiers," as he called them, and many of them are permanently memorialized by him in his own epistles. Luke, in Acts, also mentions his friends by name.

Timothy is recorded to have been the first to receive the Episcopate of the church in Ephesus.

Titus was appointed over the churches in Crete.

Luke was born in Antioch and was a physician by profession. He was close friends with Paul and very well acquainted with the rest of the apostles. He left us two inspired books which teach spiritual healing which he learned from them. The first is the Gospel of Luke. He testifies that he wrote it

> just as they were passed down by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word (Luke 1:2)

The second, the Acts of the Apostles, he composed not by the eye-witness testimonies of others but by what he witnessed himself. It is said that whenever Paul used the phrase "according to my gospel" he was referring the Gospel of Luke.

Paul records this about the rest of his followers:

Crescens was sent to Gaul. [2 Timothy 4:10]

Linus, mentioned in Second Timothy [4:21] as Paul's companion at Rome, as I have already shown, became the first pastor of the church of Rome after the martyrdom of Peter and Paul[45].

Clement was appointed third bishop of the church at Rome. Paul testifies that Clement was his co-laborer and fellow soldier. [Philippians 4:3]

Dionysius the Areopagite was the first convert of Paul's sermon to the Athenians in the Areopagus as recorded by Luke in the Acts

[45] See 3.2

[17:34]. Dionysius of Corinth, an ancient author and pastor, writes that Dionysius the Areopagite became the first pastor of the church at Athens.

The dates and events surrounding the apostolic succession will be given later; now we will continue our history.

3.5 Flight to Pella and the Siege of Jerusalem

After Nero had been in power about thirteen years, Galba and Otho ruled a year and six months.[46] Vespasian, who had become famous for his campaigns against the Jews, was proclaimed sovereign in Judea and received the title of Emperor from the armies there. He turned over the war against the Jews to his son, Titus, and immediately left for Rome.

After the Ascension, the Jews, in addition to their evil against our Savior, kept plotting ways to destroy His apostles. First, they stoned Stephen to death, then they beheaded James, the son of Zebedee and the brother of John, and finally they murdered James, the first pastor of Jerusalem after the Ascension of our Savior, in the manner already described. They harassed the rest of the apostles in innumerable ways, trying to destroy them, and drove them out of the land of Judea. So, they went to preach the Gospel to all nations, relying upon the power of Christ, who had said to them,

> Go and make disciples of all the nations in My name. (Matthew 28:19)

But the whole body of the church in Jerusalem had been commanded by a revelation given to holy men there before the war, to leave the city and to dwell in a certain town called Pella, beyond the Jordan River. When all the believers in Christ left Jerusalem, it was as if Jerusalem and all of Judea became entirely destitute of holy men. Then the judgment of God overtook those who had committed such outrageous crimes against Christ and the

[46] Nero died June 9, AD 68; Galba ruled June AD 68 to January AD 69, Otho ruled January to April AD 69. Vespasian ruled the empire from July 1, AD 69 to June AD 79.

apostles, and totally destroyed that generation of evil men. There were a great number of calamities that overwhelmed the entire nation, especially in Judea, where thousands of men, women, and children died by the sword, famine, and countless other ways of death. Most of the larger cities of Judea were besieged and when the suffering became so bad those who were left fled to Jerusalem for protection. The war progressed worse and worse until finally the abomination of desolation[47] stood in the temple of God as the prophets foretold. The temple, which was once the glory of God, was now about to fall and be destroyed by fire. One can read about all the details in Josephus's history.

It might be necessary to quote Josephus about the three hundred thousand[48] that came from all over Judea to Jerusalem for Passover that were imprisoned in Jerusalem. This was indeed just, because they inflicted suffering on the Savior and Benefactor of all men, the Christ of God, and now they were "shut up" in Jerusalem like a prisoner on a Passover. Their coming destruction was divine justice. I will skip over the calamities they suffered by the sword and other means, but it is necessary that I focus on the ones caused by famines so that those who read this work will understand it was not long before God executed vengeance on them because of their iniquity against the Christ of God.

3.6 The Famine during the Siege

Josephus, in his *Wars of the Jews* Book 5, records the tragedy of what happened.

> It was equally dangerous for the wealthy to remain. For under pretense of desertion men were slain for their wealth. The madness of the rioters increased with the famine and

[47]The prophecy of the Abomination of Desolation is recorded in Daniel 11:31 and 12:11. Eusebius, being an amillennialist, may have believed this was completely fulfilled in AD 70, but the Romans besieged Jerusalem and could not get in, so there was no idol in the temple at that time. The complete fulfillment of Daniel's prediction will be with a future Antichrist.

[48] Some copies have three million.

both kinds of misery were inflamed more and more every day. When food could not be found anywhere, they broke into homes. If they found food, they would torment the homeowners on the grounds that they denied having any. But if they didn't find any food, they would torture the owner and accuse them of hiding it too well. The bodies of these poor wretches proved whether they had food or not. They attacked those who seemed to be in good health assuming they had plenty of food but those who looked emaciated they left alone for it seemed absurd to slay those who were on the point of starving. Many secretly sold their property for a single measure of wheat, if they belonged to the wealthy, or barley, if they were poor. Then locking themselves up in the innermost interior of their houses, some ate the grain raw on account of their terrible hunger, while others baked it as necessity and fear dictated. No tables were set up anywhere; they took the still half raw food and tore it into pieces. The horrible display of the powerful plundering and the poor crying out would bring tears to your eyes. Famine is the worst form of evil because it destroys all traces of shame. Those who are worthy of respect under all other circumstances are shamed during a famine. Wives tore away food from the very mouths of their husbands, children from their parents, and even worse than this, mothers from their own babies. Even as their dearest children were dying in their arms, mothers were not ashamed to withhold the last drops that supported life.

Even while doing this, they did not remain undiscovered. Rioters were everywhere forcefully taking food from everyone. Whenever they saw a locked house, they regarded it as a sign that food was inside. They would break open the doors and seize any food, almost forcing it out of their very throats. Old men who clung to their food were beaten, and if the women hid it in their hands, their hair was torn for so doing. There was no pity for gray hairs nor infants, but, pulling the children away from their morsels of food, they smashed them on the ground. But to those who ate quickly as they were breaking down the doors, they were even more

> cruel, like they wronged them somehow. They created terrible types of torture to find food: stopping up genitalia with bitter herbs and piercing their rears with sharp rods. Other things too horrible to repeat, just to get them to tell where the last loaf of bread was concealed. What makes all this worse is that the tormentors were not even hungry. They did these things not out of necessity but as a show of strength and to store up food for themselves for the coming days. When anyone crept out of the city by night as far as the outposts of the Romans to collect wild herbs and grass, the tormentors went to meet them; and when he thought he had already escaped the enemy, they robbed them of what they had brought. Oftentimes the man would beg them, calling upon the holy name of God, to give back at least a portion of what he had stolen, risking his life. The robbers would give him nothing back. Indeed, it was fortunate if the one that was plundered was not also slain. (Josephus' *Wars 5.12.3*)

After relating several other things, Josephus adds the following:

> When it was no longer possible to go out of the city, all hope of safety for the Jews was gone. The famine increased so much that entire houses and families were destroyed. Rooms were filled with bodies of women and children, and corpses of old men lined the streets. Boys and young men, swollen by the famine, wandered the streets staggering like shadows until they collapsed wherever disease overtook them. The sick did not have the strength to bury their relatives and those who were well hesitated to do so for fear of disease. Many died while they were burying others, and many went to the sepulchers while they could still walk. No one wept or mourned at this because the famine took away all emotion. Those dying a lingering death looked with dry eyes upon those that had gone to their rest before them. A deep silence and a deadly gloom encircled the city.
>
> But the robbers were more terrible than these miseries; for they broke open the houses, which were now mere sepulchers, robbed the dead and stripped the covering from

> their bodies, and went away with a laugh. They tried the points of their swords in the dead bodies, and some that were lying on the ground still alive they thrust through to test their weapons. But those that begged them to use their sword to end their life, they contemptuously left to linger a while longer. These died with eyes fixed upon the temple, leaving the factions to survive them. At first the factions gave orders that the dead should be buried out of the public treasury, for they could not endure the stench. But afterward, when they were not able to do this, they threw the bodies from the walls into the trenches. When Titus went around and saw the trenches filled with the dead, and the thick blood oozing out of the putrid bodies, he groaned aloud, and, raising his hands, called God to witness that this was not his doing.
> (Josephus' *Wars 5.12.3*)

After speaking of these things, Josephus further adds:

> I cannot hesitate to declare what my feelings compel me to. I suppose, if the Romans had lingered in coming against these guilty wretches, the city would have been swallowed up by a chasm, overwhelmed with a flood, or struck with such thunderbolts as destroyed Sodom. For they created a generation of men much more godless than were those that suffered such punishment. By their madness indeed was the whole people brought to destruction.
> (Josephus' *Wars 5.13.6*)

In the sixth book, Josephus writes as follows:

> Countless people died by famine in the city and the misery there was unspeakable. For if there were even a morsel of food in any house, there was war, and the closest friends engaged in hand-to-hand conflict with one another and snatched from each other the most wretched supports of life. Nor would they believe that even the dying were without food; but the robbers would search them while they were yet breathing, lest anyone should feign death while concealing food in his bosom. With mouths gaping for want

of food, they stumbled and staggered along like mad dogs, and beat the doors as if they were drunk, and in their stupidity, they would rush into the same houses two or three times an hour. Necessity compelled them to eat anything they could find, and they gathered and devoured things that were not fit even for the filthiest animals. Finally, they did not abstain even from their girdles and shoes, and they stripped the hides off their shields and devoured them. Some even used what was left of old hay for food, and others gathered stubble and sold the smallest weight of it for four Attic drachm.[49]

Why should I speak of the shamelessness which was displayed during the famine toward inanimate objects? Because I am going to relate a fact of wickedness such as is recorded neither by Greeks nor Barbarians; horrible to relate, and incredible to hear. I would gladly have omitted this calamity, so I might not seem to posterity to be a teller of fabulous tales, if there were not innumerable witnesses to it that are still alive. And besides, I should render my country poor service if I suppressed the account of the sufferings which she endured.

There was a certain woman named Mary who lived beyond Jordan, whose father was Eleazar, of the village of Bathezor (which signifies the house of hyssop). She was distinguished for her family and her wealth and had fled with the rest of the multitude to Jerusalem and was shut up there with them during the siege. The tyrants had robbed her of the rest of the property which she had brought with her from beyond the river into the city. The rioters would daily rush in and seize the food she had found and whatever else they might steal. This made her very angry and she constantly lashed out at them, cursing them. Some became angry with her while others pitied her, but none dared attack her. She grew tired of finding food for them. When it became impossible to find anymore, in addition to her

[49] About 4 shekels of silver.

extreme hunger, her resentment raged more and more violent.

Her hunger and violence drove her to do a most natural thing. She took her nursing baby boy and said “why should you live to see the war, famine, or the factions? Roman enslavement is bad enough, but the cruelty of the Sicarii is much worse. Come, be food for me, a vengeance for these rioters, and a by-word to the world, for this is all that is wanting to complete the calamities of the Jews.” When she had said this, she slew her son. Having roasted him, she ate one half herself, and covering up the remainder, she kept it. Soon the rioters appeared on the scene, and, smelling the nefarious odor, they threatened to slay her unless she gave them the food. She replied that she had saved an excellent portion for them, and with that she uncovered the remains of the child. Horror immediately seized them as they stood transfixed at the sight. Then she said, “This is my own son, and the deed is mine. Eat, for I too have eaten. Do not be more delicate than a woman, nor more compassionate than a mother. But if you are too ‘holy’ and reject my sacrifice, I will eat the rest. Hearing this, the men left trembling, cowards for the first time in their lives and yet barely even giving up this food. Soon the whole city heard about this horrible crime. Everyone was horrified but could see themselves doing it, too. After this all those who were suffering in the famine now longed for death. Those who died before hearing about or experiencing these miseries were blessed.
(Josephus’ *Wars 6.3.4)*

Such was the vengeance for the wickedness and impiety of the Jews against the Christ of God.

3.7 The Predictions of Christ

It is fitting to add to these accounts the sure prediction of our Savior in which He foretold these very events as follows:

> Woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day; For there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. (Matthew 24:19-21)

The historian, Josephus, estimates the total number of dead was 1.1 million by famine and sword, and that the factions and terrorists that betrayed each other after the taking of the city, were executed. The tallest and most distinguished youths were saved for the triumph. Of the rest, those over seventeen were sent as prisoners to labor in the mines of Egypt or distributed through the provinces to meet their death in the theaters by the sword or by beasts. Those under seventeen were taken to be sold as slaves, and of these alone the number reached ninety thousand. These things took place in this manner in the second year of the reign of Vespasian, [AD 70-71] in accordance with the prophecies of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who by divine power saw them beforehand as if they were already present and wept and mourned as the holy evangelists show. They give the very words Jesus said about Jerusalem,

> If thou hadst known, even thou, in this day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a rampart about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee and thy children even with the ground. (Luke 19:42-44a)

And then, speaking to the people, he said,

> For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword and shall be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. (Luke 21:23b-24)

And again,

> When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. (Luke 21:20)

If anyone compares the words of our Savior with the parts of the historian, Josephus, where he describes the whole war, they cannot fail to admit that the foreknowledge and the prophecy of our Savior were truly divine and extraordinary. Concerning the calamities, then, that happened to the Jews after our Savior's death and the cries of the multitude, when they begged for the release of the robber and murderer but shouted that the Prince of Life should be killed, it is not necessary to add to the account of the historian. Yet it may be proper to mention, also, those events which show the kindness of that all-gracious Providence who held back their destruction a full *forty* years after their crime against Christ.

During this time [40 years] many of the apostles and disciples still lived in Jerusalem, including James who was the first bishop there, the one who is called the brother of the Lord. They remained the surest protection of the place. Divine Providence was long-suffering toward them in order to see if they might repent for what they had done and obtain pardon and salvation. Beside this long-suffering, it also furnished glimpses of the things which would happen to them if they did not repent. These events have already been recorded by Josephus and we cannot do better than to recount his work about them for the benefit of the readers.

3.8 Signs Preceding the War

Taking, then, the work of Josephus, read what he records in his sixth book of *War of the Jews*. His words are as follows:

> These miserable people were deluded by liars and false prophets to the point where they did not believe or watch for the signs that foretold coming desolation. On the contrary, as if moonstruck, blind, and senseless, they slighted the prophecies of God.
>
> One sign was a star, in the form of a sword, standing over the city, and a comet, which lasted for a whole year.
>
> Another sign happened before the revolt and the disturbances that led to the war, when the people were gathered for the Feast of Unleavened Bread, on the eighth

of the month Xanthicus [April 8, AD 65 or 66]. At the ninth hour of the night [3 A.M.], a great light shone about the altar and the temple that was as bright as day. It continued for half an hour. Some thought this was a good omen, but the scribes knew it indicated the soon-coming events.

Another sign happened at that same feast. A cow, led by the high priest to be sacrificed, brought forth a lamb in the midst of the temple.

Another sign was that the eastern gate of the inner temple was seen at the sixth hour of the night to open of itself. This gate was made of bronze and very massive, resting on iron-bound beams, and had bars sunk deep in the ground. it was difficult for twenty men to close it each evening.

Another sign, unbelievable yet true, was a marvelous vision of chariots and armed troops seen throughout the whole region in mid-air, wheeling through the clouds and encircling the cities. This was just after that feast, on the twenty-first of the month Artemisium [May 21] just before the setting of the sun. This might seem like a fable if it were not related by the eyewitnesses and followed by the calamities that corresponded to those signs.

Another was at the Feast of Pentecost, when the priests entered the temple at night to perform the services, as was their custom, they said that at first, they perceived a movement and a noise, and afterward a voice as of a great multitude, saying, “Let us leave this place!”

Something even more terrifying happened four years before the war [AD 66] during the time of peace. A commoner, Yeshua, son of Ananias, came to the Festival of Tabernacles and suddenly cried out: “A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the temple, a voice against bridegrooms and brides, a voice against all the people.” Day and night he went through all the streets shouting this. But certain powerful people, angered at his actions, seized the man and had him beat with many stripes. But without uttering a word

> in his own behalf or saying anything to those present, he continued to cry out the same words as before. The rulers concluded that this man was moved by God but brought him before the Roman governor. Then, though he was scourged to the bone, he neither made a plea for mercy nor shed tears but changed his voice to the most mournful tone possible, he answered each stroke with the words, "Woe, woe unto Jerusalem." (Josephus' *War 6.5.3*)

Josephus records another fact still more remarkable. He says that a certain prophecy was found in their sacred writings which declared that about this time a certain person from their country would go forth to rule the world. He thought that this was fulfilled by Vespasian. But Vespasian did not rule the whole world, but only that which was subject to the Romans. Truly, therefore, it should be applied to Christ; to whom it was said by the Father,

> Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Thy possession. (Psalm 2:8)

At that very time, indeed, the voice of His holy apostles

> went throughout all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. (Psalm 19:4 LXX)

3.9 Josephus and His Works

Since I have used so much of Josephus' material for our history, it is fitting that we know about his origin and family. He says this about himself,

> Josephus, the son of Mattathias, a priest of Jerusalem, who fought against the Romans in the beginning and compelled to record what happened afterward.

He was the most famous Jew of his day, among both the Jews and Romans. They honored him by a statue erected in Rome, and his writings were deemed worthy of a place in the Roman library. He wrote the whole *Antiquities of the Jews*, in twenty books, and *War of the Jews*, a history of the war with the Romans, in seven books.

He testifies that *War of the Jews* was not only written in Greek, but that he translated it into his native tongue. He is worthy of credit because of this and many other matters. Two other writings of his still exist, which deserve to be read. They are also about Jewish antiquity. These two volumes are entitled *Against Apion*. These are a replay to Apion the Grammarian who wrote a treatise against the Jews. They also refute others who had attempted to vilify the ancient traditions of the Jewish people. In the first of these books, he gives the number of the canonical books of the Old Testament, which are undisputed by the Hebrews. He gives this ancient tradition in the following words.

3.10 Josephus on the Divine Books

> We do not have a multitude of books that disagree and contradict one another. We have only twenty-two[50] that record all human history and are justly considered to be of divine origin. The first five are written by Moses and contain the laws and the tradition respecting the origin of man and continue the history up to his death. This period is nearly three thousand years long.[51] From the death of Moses to the death of Artaxerxes, who succeeded Xerxes as king of Persia, the prophets that followed Moses wrote the history of their own times in thirteen books. The other four books[52] contain hymns to God, and precepts for the regulation of human life. From the time of Artaxerxes to our own day all the events have been recorded, but those accounts do not have the same authority as the previous ones because they were not handed down by a succession of prophets. It is evident how we feel about our writings by how we treat them. In the lapse of so many ages no one has dared either to add to, take away from, or change them. Jews have been taught since the beginning of our nation to

[50] They count the twelve minor prophets as one, and combine others, bringing the total from 39 books down to just 22. It is the same Old Testament that we have today.

[51] 2488 years by Dead Sea Scroll count.

[52] Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon

> revere them as the teachings of God, abide by them, and, if necessary, to cheerfully die for them.
> (Josephus' *Against Apion 1.8*)

These are the remarks of the historian I thought it proper to share. Another work by the same author entitled *On the Supremacy of Reason* is also of great value. Some call it *Maccabaicum* because in it he records those Hebrews who fought for the true religion as detailed in the books of *Maccabees*. At the end of *Antiquities* Book 20, Josephus mentions that he wanted to write four books on God, and His existence, according to the traditional Jewish opinion, and also concerning the laws, why it is that they permit some things while prohibiting others. He also mentions other books that he wrote.

In addition to these things, it is proper to quote what Josephus says, at the close of his *Antiquities*, to confirm the truthfulness of his accounts. Josephus attacks Justus of Tiberias saying that his written historical account was not completely truthful. Then after accusing him of several other things, he says,

> I am not afraid in respect to my writings as you were, but, on the contrary, I presented my books to the emperors themselves, who already knew the events were true. For I was careful to preserve the truth in my account and was not disappointed when I saw they approved of my account. I also presented my history to many others, some of whom were present at the war, like King Agrippa and some of his relatives. Emperor Titus so strongly desired that the knowledge of these events should be communicated to the world that he indorsed my books and authorized their publication by his own hand. And King Agrippa wrote sixty-two epistles testifying to the truthfulness of my account.
> (*Life of Flavius Josephus 65*)

Josephus quotes two of these epistles. But this will suffice regarding him. Let us now proceed with our history.

3.11 Simeon, Second Bishop of Jerusalem

It is said that after the martyrdom of James and the conquest of Jerusalem which immediately followed it, the apostles and disciples of the Lord who were still living, came together from all over with those who were earthly relatives of the Lord. For most of them also were still living. They consulted together to determine who was proper to pronounce as the successor to James. They unanimously declared Simeon the son of Cleopas,[53] of whom the Gospel also makes mention, to be worthy of the episcopal seat there. They say he was a cousin of the Savior. For Hegesippus records that Cleopas was a brother of Joseph.[54]

3.12 Vespasian's Search for David's Family

Hegesippus also said that after the conquest of Jerusalem, Vespasian gave orders that every one of the family of David, the royal line, should be hunted down and killed. In consequence of this, another very violent persecution began against the Jews.

3.13 Anencletus, Second Bishop of Rome

After Vespasian had reigned ten years [AD 69-79] Titus, his son, succeeded him. In the second year of his reign, Linus, who had been bishop of the church of Rome for twelve years [AD 69-81], transferred his office to Anencletus. But Titus was succeeded by his brother Domitian after he had reigned for two years and two months [AD 81].

3.14 Abilius, Second Bishop of Alexandria

In the fourth year of Domitian [AD 85], Annianus, the first bishop of Alexandria, died after holding the office for twenty-two years [AD 63-85]. He was succeeded by Abilius, the second bishop.

[53] The Cleophas of John 19:25; see 1.7
[54] This could be by marriage or blood.

3.15 Clement, Third Bishop of Rome

In the twelfth year of the reign of Domitian [AD 93] Clement succeeded Anencletus who had been bishop of the church of Rome for twelve years. The apostle [Paul] in his epistle to the Philippians informs us that this Clement was his fellow-worker. Paul said,

> With Clement and the rest of my fellow laborers whose names are in the book of life. (Philippians 4:3)

3.16 The Epistle of Clement

In the name of the church at Rome, Clement wrote one epistle to Corinth which is acknowledged as genuine. It is of considerable length and great merit. This letter was read publicly in many churches both in the days of old and in our time. It was written to counter another dissention in Corinth. Hegesippus clearly recorded the sedition that occurred in Corinth in Clement's day.

3.17 Domitian's Persecution

Domitian [AD 81-96] showed great cruelty toward many, and unjustly put to death a large number of noble men at Rome, and, without cause, exiled and confiscated the property of many other honorable men. He became a successor of Nero in his hatred and hostility toward God. He was the second that stirred up persecution against us, although his father Vespasian did nothing prejudicial against us.

3.18 The Apostle John and Revelation

It is said that during this persecution the apostle and evangelist John, who was still alive, was condemned to dwell on the island of Patmos because of his testimony to the Divine Word. Irenaeus, in his *Against Heresies* book 5, discusses the number of the name of Antichrist, given in the Revelation of John [666 in 13:18], this way,

> If it were necessary for the name of the Antichrist to be revealed openly at this present time, it would have been declared by John who saw the Revelation. It was written not

> very long ago, but almost in our generation, at the end of the reign of Domitian [AD 95-96].
> (Irenaeus' *Against Heresies 5.30.3*)

Christian doctrine flourished to such a degree by that time, that even the historians that were hostile to our religion did not hesitate to mention the persecution and the martyrdoms which took place. They even recorded the precise date. The persecution started in the fifteenth year of the reign of Domitian [AD 96] when Flavia Domitilla, niece of Flavius Clement, who at that time was one of the consuls of Rome, was exiled with many others to the island of Pontia for professing Christ.

3.19 Domitian Orders David's Descendants Slain

When Domitian had commanded that all the descendants of David to be slain, an ancient tradition says that some of the heretics accused the descendants of Jude (brother of the Saviour according to the flesh), of being traitors on the grounds that they were of the lineage of David and related to Christ Himself. Hegesippus declares,

3.20 The Relatives of our Savior

> The family of the Lord that were still alive were the grandchildren of Jude, who was the Lord's brother according to the flesh. When it was reported that they belonged to the family of David, Evocatus brought them to Emperor Domitian. Domitian feared the coming of Christ just as Herod had. He asked them if they were descendants of David, and they confessed that they were. Then he asked them how much property and money they owned. They answered that, together, they only had thirty-nine acres of land worth about 9,000 denarii from which they paid taxes and supported themselves by their own labor. (Hegesippus' *Memoirs*)
>
> Then they showed that their hands were hard and calloused by the continuous work which proved their testimony.

> When he asked them about Christ and His kingdom, what it was and when it should appear, they said "it was not of this world or earthly, but heavenly and angelic, which would appear at the end of the Age, when he should come in glory to judge the quick and the dead and judge everyone according to his works." At this point, Domitian despised them as ignorant fools and let them go. He then ordered the Christian persecution to cease. After their release, they continued as leaders in the churches because of their witness and because they were relatives of the Lord. They lived in peace from that time until the reign of Trajan. (Hegesippus' *Memoirs*)

This is the testimony of Hegesippus. Tertullian also mentioned Domitian.

> Domitian also, who shared Nero's cruelty, at first continued the persecution that Nero started. But apparently, he had some ability to reason because he very soon stopped the persecution and even recalled those who were banished. (Tertullian, *Apology 5*)

After Domitian reigned fifteen years, Nerva succeeded him as emperor of the empire [AD 96]. All present-day historians record that at that time the Roman Senate decreed that Domitian's honors should be revoked, and that those who had been unjustly banished by him should return to their homes and have their property fully restored to them.

It was at this time that the Apostle John returned from his banishment on the island of Patmos and resumed residence at Ephesus, according to ancient Christian tradition.

3.21 Cerdon, Third Bishop of Alexandria

After Nerva had reigned a little more than a year he was succeeded by Trajan. It was during the first year of his reign that Cerdon succeeded Abilius, who had governed the church of Alexandria for thirteen years. Cerdon was the third that held the Episcopate at church after Annianus, who was the first.

At that time Clement was still the bishop of Rome, being also the third that held the Episcopate there after Paul and Peter were martyred. Linus was the first, and Anencletus second.

3.22 Ignatius, Second Bishop of Antioch

At this time Ignatius was the second bishop of Antioch, Evodius was the first. Also, at that time Simeon was the second bishop of Jerusalem, the brother of our Savior [James] was the first.

3.23 Narrative about John the Apostle

At that time the Apostle and evangelist John, the one whom Jesus loved, was still alive. He continued to govern the churches in Asia Minor after his return from exile on Patmos and the death of Domitian. Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria are two ancient witnesses who are trustworthy and have maintained sound doctrine in the church. Both testify that John was still alive at this time. Irenaeus in his *Against Heresies* says,

> And all the elders that associated with John the disciple of the Lord in Asia bear witness that John delivered his gospel to them. For he remained among them until the time of Trajan. (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies 2.22.5*)

In his third book of *Against Heresies*, Irenaeus shows the same thing in the following words:

> The church in Ephesus also, which was founded by Paul, and where John remained until the time of Trajan, is a faithful witness of the apostolic tradition.
> (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies 3.3.4*)

Clement likewise in his book entitled *The Rich Man Who Was Saved*, indicates the same time of John's death. Take and read the whole account about John where is says,

Listen to a story, a true history about John the Apostle, a memory handed down and carefully preserved. After the tyrant's death, when John returned from the isle of Patmos to Ephesus, from there he went to neighboring gentile territories when asked to appoint bishops, plant churches, or start other ministries ordained by the Holy Spirit. When he went to one of the cities close by (some remember the name[55]), and finished his business there, he then turned to the newly appointed bishop, and seeing a strong handsome youth with an ardent spirit, he said, "This one I commit to you in all earnestness in the presence of the church and with Christ as witness." The bishop accepted the youth and repeated the charge in the presence of all. Then John returned to Ephesus.

But the presbyter took the youth home and was committed to him. He reared, kept, cherished, and finally baptized him. After a time, he relaxed his guard and instruction, with the idea that he was sealed in the Lord and perfectly protected. But some youths of his own age, idle, dissolute, and accustomed to evil practices, corrupted him since he was prematurely freed from restraint.

At first, they enticed him by expensive entertainment. Then they took him with them when they went out at night to commit robberies. Eventually they forced him to plunder with them and commit even greater crimes. He gradually became accustomed to their ways, and on account of his zealous character, leaving the right path, and taking the bit in his teeth like a stallion, he rushed more violently down into the depths.

Finally, renouncing his salvation in God, he went from petty crimes to serious offences. He felt he had permanently lost his salvation and fully expected to suffer damnation with the rest of them. He formed the group into a band of robbers and became their gang-leader. He became more violent, bloody, and cruel than any of the rest.

[55] Some said it was Smyrna.

After a while some necessity arose, so they sent for John. When he had set in order the other matters on account of which he had come, John asked, “Come, O bishop, restore the deposit which both I and Christ committed to you, in the presence of your church.” But the bishop was at first confused, thinking that he was being asked for money which he had not received. He could not believe John would accuse him of taking money, but he could not disbelieve John either. But when John said, “I am asking for the young man, the soul of the brother.” The old man groaned deeply, burst into tears, and said, “He is dead.” John replied, “How and what kind of death?” he told him “He is dead to God. He turned wicked, abandoned the faith, and became a robber. Now, instead of the church, he lives on the mountain with his gang.”

But the apostle tore his clothes, grabbed his head, and with great lamentation said, “A fine guard I left for a brother’s soul! Bring me a horse and take me to him.”

He rode away from the church just as he was. When he came to that place, he was seized by the robber’s lookout. John, however, did not try to flee but told them, “I need to speak to your leader, take me to him.” The leader was waiting, armed as always. But when he recognized it was John approaching, he turned in shame to flee.

But John, forgetting his age, ran after him with all his might, crying out, “My son, why do you flee from me, your own father, unarmed, aged? Pity me, my son; don’t fear; you still have hope for life. I will give account to Christ for you. If need be, I will willingly endure your death as the Lord suffered death for us.[56] I would give up my life for you. Stop and believe! Christ has sent me.” Upon hearing this he stopped, and with a downcast look, dropped his weapon, and then trembled and wept bitterly. When the old man approached, he embraced him and begged for

[56] Either risking death from the robbers or from running in his old age or both.

> forgiveness as much as he was able, baptizing himself a second time with tears, and concealing only his right hand.[57]
>
> John assured him, by an oath, that he could find forgiveness from the Savior. After falling on his knees and praying, he kissed his right hand as if now purified by repentance and led him back to the church. John did not cease to intercede for him with many prayers, fastings, and lengthy counseling sessions. John did not leave that church until he had completely restored him, furnishing a great example of true repentance and great proof of regeneration, a trophy of a visible resurrection.

I have inserted this extract from Clement here for the historical benefit of my readers.

3.24 The Order of the Gospels

Now let me point out the undisputed writings of the Apostle John. First, we must acknowledge his gospel as genuine since it is read in all the churches under heaven. It is easy to understand why the ancients placed it in the fourth place after the other three gospels. Those inspired and truly pious apostles lived pure lives and exhibited every virtue, but their speech was not eloquent. They relied on the Savior's power working through them, but they did not know how, nor did they attempt to write down, the doctrines of their Teacher in a detailed way using artistic language. They did because they were assisted in their ministry by one greater than man.

Paul, for instance, who surpassed them all in style and in richness of thought, wrote a few, very brief epistles. Although he had innumerable mysterious matters to communicate, he had attained unto the third heaven, had been taken to the very paradise of God, and was deemed worthy to hear unspeakable utterances there.

The rest of the followers of our Savior, the twelve apostles, the seventy disciples, and countless others besides, were not ignorant

[57] An idiom, he was embarrassed over all the bloodshed.

of these things. Out of all the disciples of the Lord, only Matthew and John have left us written records, which tradition says, were led to write only under the pressure of necessity.

Matthew, who had at first preached to the Hebrews, when he was about to go to other nations, wrote down his gospel in his native tongue, to fill the gap of his departure.

After Mark and Luke had already published their gospels, they say that John, who had employed all his time in proclaiming the gospel orally, finally proceeded to write for the following reason. When the three gospels were published and spread abroad, John read them and bore witness to their truthfulness but noticed they lacked the account of what Christ did at the beginning of His ministry. And this indeed is true. For it is evident that the three evangelists only recorded the things our Savior did during the one year after the imprisonment of John the Baptist. They indicated this in the beginning of their account.

For Matthew, after the forty days' fast and the temptation which followed it, indicates the time when he says:

> Now when Jesus heard that John was arrested, he withdrew from Judea into Galilee. (Matthew 4:12)

Mark likewise says:

> Now after John was imprisoned Jesus came into Galilee. (Mark 1:14)

And Luke, before beginning his account of the deeds of Jesus, records the same time, when he says that Herod,

> adding to all the evil deeds which he had done, shut up John in prison. (Luke 3:19b-20a)

The apostle John was asked to write it for this very reason, to start his gospel with the period which had been omitted by the earlier evangelists. He recorded the deeds done by the Savior before the imprisonment of the Baptist. He indicates this, they say, in the following words:

> This was the beginning of the miracles Jesus did
> (John 2:11)

Then he refers to the Baptist, in the midst of the deeds of Jesus, as still baptizing at Aenon, near Salim; where he states the matter clearly in the words:

> For John was not yet cast into prison.
> (John 3:24)

In his gospel, the Apostle John records the deeds of Jesus which were performed before the Baptist was cast into prison, but the other three evangelists mention only the events that occurred after that time. One who understands this can no longer think that the Gospels contradict one another, since John's gospel contains the first acts of Christ, while the others give an account of the latter part of his life. John naturally omitted the genealogy of our Savior because it had already been given by Matthew and Luke. Instead, he began with the doctrine of His divinity, which was reserved for him by the Holy Spirit, as one superior to them. Let these things suffice regarding the gospel of John. The cause which led to the composition of the gospel of Mark has already been stated.

Luke, in the beginning of his gospel, states that many others had more rashly undertaken to write a narrative of the events. He had a much better understanding of them, so he felt the necessity to free us from their uncertain opinions. He wrote in his own gospel an accurate account of those events regarding the full truth that he had learned from Paul and his acquaintance with the rest of the apostles. So much for our own account of these things. In a more fitting place, we will attempt to quote the ancients, what others have said about these sacred books.

John's gospel and 1 John are the only writings of his that are accepted as genuine, without any dispute both now and in ancient times. Second and Third John are disputed by some. Some churches are still divided about his book of Revelation. In the proper place we shall answer this question based on the testimony of the ancients.

3.25 The Real and Fake Apostolic Writings

This is the proper place to give a summary of books of the New Testament previously mentioned. First are the four holy gospels followed by the *Acts of the Apostles*. After these are the epistles of Paul, 1 John, and 1 Peter. The last book is the Revelation of John, concerning which we shall give the different opinions in due time. These then are acknowledged by all as genuine.

The disputed books are accepted by the majority. These are James, Jude, 2 Peter, 2 John, and 3 John. Some question whether they are by the apostles or other people with the same names.

The rejected books are the *Acts of Paul*, *Shepherd [of Hermas*], and the *Apocalypse of Peter*.

Additional disputed books are the *Epistle of Barnabas* and the so-called *Teaching of the Apostles* [*Didache*]. These are grouped with the *Revelation of John*, which, as I have said, some reject and others accept as genuine. Some also place the *Gospel of the Hebrews* in this category. Hebrews who have accepted Christ are thoroughly delighted with it.[58] These are the only disputed books.

We wanted to give a catalogue of both the accepted and the disputed books to distinguish between what ecclesiastical tradition says are genuine and commonly accepted from those disputed, yet known to the most ancient writers. We also want to give a catalogue in order to identify the forged books written by heretics in the name of the apostles. We must know how and why they exist.

[58] Cults took the real *Didache* and added to it to create the *Teachings of the Apostles* and later this became the basis for the *Apostolic Constitutions*. Similarly, they took *3 Corinthians* and added to it to create the *Acts of Paul*. The original *Gospel of the Hebrews* was a Hebrew version of the gospel of Matthew. Later the Gnostics Ebion and Cerinthus created a gnostic version by the same name. This is what caused all the confusion. We want to read the genuine originals, but not the added-to forgeries.

The heretical books include: the *Gospel of Peter*, *Gospel of Thomas*, *Gospel of Matthias*, many other gospels besides them, and *The Acts of Andrew*, *John*, and the other apostles, which no one in the succession of ecclesiastical writers has ever mentioned them in their writings. Furthermore, the character and style are at odds with apostolic usage, both in thought and purpose. The things written in them so completely deviate from true orthodoxy that they clearly prove they are heretical fiction. Therefore, they are not even placed among the rejected writings, but are cast aside as absurd and impious. Let us now proceed with our history.

3.26 Menander the Sorcerer

Menander, who succeeded Simon Magus, showed by his conduct to be another instrument of diabolical power, worse than Simon. He also was a Samaritan and carried his sorceries to no less an extent than his teacher had done, and at the same time invented still more ridiculous tales than he did.

He said that *he* was the Savior who had been sent down from invisible aeons for the salvation of men. He also taught that no one could overcome the world-creating angels unless he is first initiated into his magic system and receive baptism in his name. He would grant those whom he deemed worthy to be given perpetual immortality. They would never die, but would remain in this world forever, without growing old, truly immortal.

These facts can be easily confirmed from the works of Irenaeus. Justin Martyr, in the passage where he mentions Simon, also gives an account of Menander, in the following words.

> We know that Menander, Simon's disciple, was also a Samaritan, from the village of Capparattea. He too, was driven by demons, and came to Antioch deceiving many by his magical art. And he persuaded his followers that they would never die. Some of his followers still believe this.
> (Justin Martyr, *First Apology 1.26)*

The devil used these sorcerers, who claimed to be Christians, to pervert the mystery of godliness by the use of magical arts and to destroy the church doctrine of the immortality of the soul and resurrection of the dead. All who choose any of these men as their savior have fallen away from hope.

3.27 The Ebionite Heresy

The evil demon, who was unable to tear some away from their love of Christ by this means used another approach. The ancients properly called these men Ebionites because they held poor and low opinions about Christ.

Ebionites believed Jesus was a plain and common man, who was justified only through His great virtue, and that He was born of Mary by natural intercourse. Observing the ceremonial law was completely necessary, on the grounds that they could not be saved by faith in Christ alone with a corresponding life.

There were others who went by the same name but denied some of their more strange and absurd beliefs. They believed the Lord was born of a virgin and the Holy Spirit, but they still refused to believe that he preexisted, as God, Word, and Wisdom. They were just as impious as the first group by strictly observing the bodily worship of the Law. They also rejected all the epistles of the apostle Paul, whom they called an apostate from the Law. They only used the so-called Gospel of the Hebrews and not much else. They observed the Sabbath and other rites just like the Jews, but at the same time, they celebrated the Lord's Day as a memorial of the resurrection of the Savior, just like we do. They are called Ebionites because of their beliefs. The name signifies their poor intellect. "Ebion" is a Hebrew word for "poor."

3.28 Cerinthus the Heresiarch

It is understood that at this time Cerinthus, the founder of another heresy, appeared. Caius,[59] who we previously quoted, in his *Dialogue,* writes as follows about this man.

> Cerinthus falsely claims angels gave him special revelation and that he has a secret prophecy book written by some great apostle. He teaches that after the resurrection when the kingdom of Christ will be set up on earth everyone living in Jerusalem will again be enslaved to lusts and desires. Cerinthus is an enemy of the Scriptures of God and when trying to deceive men, he says, "the thousand-year period will be for celebrating marriage festivals."
> (Caius, *Dialogue with Proclus*)

Dionysius, who was the bishop of Alexandria in our day, in the second book of his work, *On the Promises*, when speaking about the Revelation of John, drawn from tradition, he mentions Cerinthus in the following words.

> Cerinthus founded the Cerinthian heresy, named after him. He originally wrote his work of fiction in John's name to make it more believable. One of the things he taught was that Christ's kingdom would be on earth but since he was so sensual and carnal, he thought it would consist of those things which he desired: gluttony, drunkenness, and sexual immorality. These things would be more acceptable if they were done then in the form of festivals where one would sacrifice and slay their enemies. (Dionysius, *On Promises 2*)

These are the words of Dionysius. Irenaeus, in his *Against Heresies* Book 1, gives some more sickening false doctrines of Cerinthus and in his third book he records a history, received by Polycarp, which deserves to be read. Irenaeus says that the apostle John once entered a bathhouse to wash; but, learning that Cerinthus was there, he jumped up and rushed out of the door, for he could not bear to be under the same roof with him. He advised those with him to do the same, saying,

[59] Caius or sometimes translated as Gaius. We know little of his works.

> Let us get out of here, lest the bathhouse fall on us for Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is inside.
> (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies 3.3.4*)

3.29 Nicolaitans

About this time, the heresy of the Nicolaitans arose that John mentions in Revelation [2:15], but they only existed a very short time. They bragged that the founder of their sect was Nicolas, one of the deacons who, with Stephen, was appointed by the apostles for the purpose of ministering to the poor. Clement of Alexandria, in Book three of his *Stromata*, says this about him.

> Nicolaitans say that he had a beautiful wife, and after the ascension of the Savior, the apostles reproached him out of jealousy. He brought her to them and said anyone who wanted her could have her. They perverted a saying of his, that "one ought to abuse the flesh." These heretics quote it freely and use it as a license to commit fornication shamelessly. But it is well known that Nicolaus was faithful to his wife. He never lived with another woman. As to his children, his daughters were virgins into their old age and his son remained chaste.[60] If the story of him bringing his dearly beloved wife before the apostles were true, it would only have been to show he refused a life of fornication and to show the expression "abuse the flesh" meant self-control in the face of those pleasures others eagerly pursued. I do not think he wished to serve two masters, as the Savior taught, pleasure and the Lord. They say that Matthias also used the same phrase "abuse the flesh" to teach we must fight against the flesh and not give in to it for the sake of pleasure. Instead, we should strengthen the soul by faith and knowledge.
> (Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata 3.4*)

So much concerning those who then attempted to pervert the truth, who became extinct very quickly.

[60] A "chaste" son could not be a part of this cult, and neither could virgin daughters.

3.30 The Apostles Who were Married

After the above quote, Clement continued stating which apostles were married to rebuttal those who rejected marriage. He said,

> Or will they reject even the apostles? For Peter and Philip had children, and Philip also gave his daughters in marriage. And Paul does not hesitate, in one of his epistles, to greet his wife,[61] whom he did not take with him, for the sake of his ministry. (Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata 3.6*)

Since we are on this subject, it would be proper to mention another account given by Clement, which is worth reading. In the Seventh book of his *Stromata*, he writes as follows:

> They say that when the blessed Peter saw his own wife led out to execution, he rejoiced because of her calling and her return home, and called to her very encouragingly and comfortingly, addressing her by name, and saying, "Oh thou, remember the Lord."
> (Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata 7.11*)

Such was the marriage of the blessed ones, and their perfect affection toward those dearest to them. This account being in keeping with the subject in hand, I have related here in its proper place.

3.31 The Death of John and Philip

We have already mentioned the time and manner of the death of Peter and Paul,[62] and where they are buried. We have also mentioned when John died,[63] but Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus,

[61] Philippians 4:3 "Yokefellow" can be translated as "wife" or "companion." In classical and modern Greek it is "spouse." A "true yokefellow" is a soulmate. Origen in his commentary on Romans says "Paul, then, if certain traditions are true, was called while in possession of a wife, concerning whom he writes in Philippians 'I ask you also, my loyal mate, help these women.'"

[62] See 2.25

[63] See 3.23

records his burial place in his letter to Victor, bishop of Rome. In this epistle he mentions him together with the apostle Philip and his daughters in the following words:

> In Asia also, great lights have fallen asleep, which shall rise again on the last day, at the coming of the Lord, when He comes with glory from heaven and brings back all the saints. Among these are Philip, one of the twelve apostles, who rests in Hierapolis, and his two aged virgin daughters, and a third daughter who lived in the Holy Spirit and now rests at Ephesus. Also, John [the apostle], who leaned on the bosom of the Lord, and [John the Presbyter] the priest who wore the miter, who was a martyr and a teacher also rest at Ephesus. (Polycrates, *Letter to Victor*)

So much concerning their death. In Caius' *Dialogue with Proclus*, which we mentioned before, he agrees with what has been quoted, mentioning the death of Philip and his daughters.

> After him there were four prophetesses, the daughters of Philip, at Hierapolis in Asia. Their tomb is there and the tomb of their father. (Caius, *Dialogue with Proclus*)

Such is his statement. In the *Acts of the Apostles*, Luke mentions the daughters of Philip, who were in Caesarea of Judea with their father, were endowed with the gift of prophecy. Luke says,

> We came unto Caesarea; and entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and abode with him. Now this man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy. (Acts 21:8-9)

We have now given the facts about the apostles, the apostolic age, and their sacred writings. We have also listed which writings are genuine, which ones are disputed but still used in most churches, and which ones are rejected because they teach heresy. Now let us proceed with our history.

3.32 Simeon, Jerusalem Bishop, Martyred

It is reported that after the major persecutions of Nero and Domitian, under Emperor Trajan, whose times we are now

describing, Christians were blamed for a popular insurrection which resulted in sporadic persecutions against us. It is also reported that during this persecution, Simeon, son of Cleopas, second bishop of the church of Jerusalem, was martyred. Hegesippus, whom we have quoted previously, is a witness to this fact, too. He says Simeon, a known Christian, was falsely accused by certain heretics and was tortured in different ways for several days. The judge and his attendants were amazed at him. He finally suffered a death similar to our Lord. But it is best to hear from Hegesippus himself.

> Certain heretics accused Simeon, the son of Cleopas, on the ground that he was a descendant of David and a Christian. Thus, he suffered martyrdom, at the age of one hundred and twenty years, while Trajan was emperor and Atticus governor. (Hegesippus' *Memoirs*)

Hegesippus also says that his accusers ordered searches to be made for the descendants of David and everyone belonging to that family was to be arrested. It is reasonable to assume that Simeon was an eyewitness of the Lord, judging from his long life, and from the fact that the Gospel mentions Mary, the wife of Cleopas, who were his parents.

We previously mentioned that Hegesippus also said there were other descendants of one of the so-called brothers of the Savior, Judas, who testified before Domitian on behalf of faith in Christ. They lived until the same reign. He wrote as follows.

> They came and took leadership of the churches as witnesses and relatives of the Lord. Their leadership kept the churches at peace with Rome until the reign of Emperor Trajan when the above-mentioned Simeon, son of Cleopas, an uncle of the Lord, was falsely accused by heretics. They were all accused and brought before Governor Atticus. Simeon was tortured for many days then suffered martyrdom. Everyone, including the proconsul, marveled that, at the age of 120 years, he could endure so much. But orders were given that he should be crucified. (Hegesippus' *Memoirs*)

In addition to these things Hegesippus said that the church up to that period remained a pure and uncorrupted virgin. Those who wanted to corrupt the sound doctrine of the preaching of salvation were lurking in the shadows, but when the sacred brotherhood of apostles and the generation of eyewitnesses who knew the truth had passed away, various schools of Gnosticism arose. Because none of the apostles were left to refute them, they boldly proclaimed their "knowledge falsely so called."

3.33 Trajan forbids the Search for Christians

Our persecution was so great, in so many places at once, it alarmed Pliny the Elder, a very distinguished governor, and he reported the great number of those martyred for their faith to the emperor. In his report, he also stated that he had not heard of any Christians breaking any laws. They were known for rising early in the morning and singing hymns to Christ as a god. They abhorred adultery, murder, and similar crimes. They obeyed all the laws of the land.

In reply, Emperor Trajan made this decree: Christians should not be hunted down but should be punished if found. This stopped some of the heaviest persecution, but there were always some pretexts for those who wanted to harm us. There was always a person or ruler who would plot against us. So that even without open persecution there were always small pockets of local persecution that caused the faithful to be martyred in various ways. The summary above is taken from Tertullian's *Apology*, written in Latin. Here is the translation.

> The Christian inquisition was prohibited this way. Pliny the Elder, the governor of a province, had condemned certain Christians and deprived them of their dignity. But when he learned how many there really were, he was not sure how to proceed. He then sent a report to Trajan the emperor informing him that, aside from their unwillingness to sacrifice, he had found nothing criminal in them. He also reported that the Christians arose early in the morning and sang hymns unto Christ as a god, and for the purpose of

> preserving their discipline forbade murder, adultery, covetousness, robbery, and the like. In reply to this Trajan wrote that the Christians should not be sought after but should be punished if found. (Tertullian, *Apology 2*)

Such were the events which took place at that time.

3.34 Evarestus, the Fourth Bishop of Rome

In the third year of the reign of Trajan, Clement handed over the church of Rome to Evarestus, shortly before his death. Clement governed and taught Rome for nine years [AD 92-101].

3.35 Justus, the Third Bishop of` Jerusalem

When Simeon died in the manner described before, a Jew named Justus succeeded him as the pastor of Jerusalem. He was one of a great number of the circumcision who at that time believed in Christ.

3.36 Ignatius and his Epistles

By this time Polycarp, a disciple of the apostles and well known in all of Asia [Minor], was ordained by eyewitnesses of our Lord, as bishop of Smyrna. And at that same time Papias, who was well known, was ordained bishop of Hierapolis and Ignatius was ordained the second bishop of Antioch, after Peter.[64] Tradition says that Ignatius was taken from Syria to Rome and became food for wild beasts because of his testimony to Christ. Even though his journey was under strict military guard, he was able to encourage all the churches along the way with many sermons, but he especially warned them to keep the tradition of the apostles and avoid the heresies just springing up. He decided it was necessary to put that tradition in writing for safety's sake.

So, when he came to Smyrna, where Polycarp was, he wrote an epistle to the church at Ephesus, in which he mentions Onesimus, their pastor; and another to the church at Magnesia, situated upon

[64] Not necessarily the apostle Peter.

the Maeander, in which he mentions their bishop, Damas; and finally, one to the church at Tralles, whose bishop then was Polybius.

He also wrote to the church in Rome, asking them not to secure his release from martyrdom, and thus rob him of his earnest hope. It is proper there to quote briefly from this epistle.

> From Syria even unto Rome I fight with wild beasts, by land and sea, day and night, bound by ten leopards. That is, a band of soldiers who treat me worse when I show them kindness. I am more fully learning discipleship by their mistreatment of me, but this does not justify me. May I be blessed to have swift wild beasts prepared for me. I will compel them to devour me quickly, not like some that they were afraid to touch. If they are unwilling, I will force them. Forgive me. I know what is best for me. Now I truly begin to be a disciple. May nothing visible or invisible distract me from attaining to Jesus Christ. Let fire, cross, attacks of wild beasts, breaking of bones, cutting of limbs, crushing of the whole body, or any of the tortures of the devil come upon me if only I may attain unto Jesus Christ. (Ignatius' *Romans 5*)

These things he wrote from Smyrna. He left Smyrna and came to Troas where he wrote to the church at Philadelphia and to the church at Smyrna; and a personal letter to Polycarp, their pastor. Since Ignatius knew Polycarp well as an apostolic man, he asked him to oversee the care for his church, placing in it a pastor who had a true shepherd's heart.

Ignatius, writing to the Smyrnaeans, used the following words concerning Christ, (I am not sure where this is recorded).

> I know and believe that he was in the flesh after the resurrection. When he came to Peter and his companions he said to them, "Take, handle me, and see that I am not an

incorporeal spirit." They immediately touched him and believed.[65] (Ignatius' *Smyrneans 3*)

Irenaeus also knew of his martyrdom and mentions his epistles in the following words:

> As one of our faith said, who was condemned to the beasts on account of his testimony unto God, "I am God's wheat, and by the teeth of wild beasts am I ground, that I may be found pure bread."
> (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies 5:28* quoting Ignatius' *Romans 4*)

Polycarp also mentions these letters in his epistle to the *Philippians*.

> Therefore, I exhort you all to obey the word of righteousness, and to be patient, as you have seen us do. Not only us, but the blessed Ignatius, Zosimus, and Rufus, others among yourselves, Paul himself, and the rest of the apostles. Be assured that all these have not run the race in vain, but in faith and righteousness, are now in their due place in the presence of the Lord, with whom also they suffered. For they did not love this present world but loved Him who died for us, whom, for our sakes, God raised from the dead.
> (Polycarp, *Philippians 9*)

> Both you and Ignatius wrote to me, asking that if anyone travelled into Syria, he should bring your letters with him. I will attend to this request if I find a fitting opportunity, either personally, or through someone else acting on my behalf, that your desire may be fulfilled. The epistles that Ignatius wrote to us, and the rest of his epistles that we have, we will send to you, as you requested. They are attached to this epistle, and by them you will profit greatly; for they teach about faith, patience, and all the things that lead to edification in our Lord. (Polycarp, *Philippians 13*)

[65] Eusebius is not sure where Ignatius got the phrase "They immediately touched him and believed" because it is not in the gospels. It comes from Papias, see 3.39.

Hero succeeded Ignatius as the bishop of Antioch.

3.37 The Evangelists of That Time

Among those that flourished at that time was Quadratus, who, it is said, was renowned, along with the daughters of Philip, for his prophetical gifts. There were many others besides these who were well known in those days, who were the first to succeed the apostles. Those dedicated disciples of such great men built up the foundations of the churches which had been laid by the apostles everywhere. They preached the Gospel more widely and scattered the saving seeds of the kingdom of heaven throughout the whole world. Most of the disciples of that time were filled with a more ardent love for the divine word, and had already fulfilled the command of the Savior, and had distributed their property to the needy. Then starting out upon long journeys they performed the office of evangelists, being filled with the desire to preach Christ to those who had not yet heard the word of faith, and to deliver to them the divine Gospels. After laying the foundations of the faith in foreign places, they appointed others as pastors, and entrusted them with the care of the recent converts, while they themselves went on again to other countries and nations, with the grace as God led. The Holy Spirit did many mighty works through them. Multitudes of men whole heartedly converted to the true faith as soon as they heard the Gospel. Since it is impossible for us to list the names of everyone who became shepherds or evangelists in the churches throughout the world in the Age immediately succeeding the apostles, we have only recorded the names of those who wrote about apostolic doctrine in writings that still exist.

3.38 The Real and Fake Epistles of Clement

We have written about Ignatius' life and his epistles. Clement, whose epistle is accepted by everyone, was written in the name of Rome to the church at Corinth. First Clement shows many of the same ideas as the book of Hebrews. In fact, it quotes Hebrews often. This proves Hebrews is not a recent production and should be reckoned as a genuine epistle of Paul. It is said that Paul wrote Hebrews in his native tongue, and it was translated into Greek by

either Luke or Clement. Clement is most likely the translator because both his epistle and Hebrews bear the same style of writing, and the thoughts mentioned in both are very similar.

There is also a second epistle bearing the name of Clement [2 Clement]. It is not recognized as genuine because it is not mentioned by any of the ancients. There are other works credited to Clement, his *Dialogue with Peter* and *Apion*. None of the ancients have quoted these either. These do not preserve the purity of apostolic orthodoxy. The acknowledged writing of Clement [1 Clement] is well known. This should be sufficient on the writings of Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp.

3.39 The Writings of Papias

Five books of Papias still exist, entitled *Expositions of Oracles of the Lord*. Irenaeus mentions that these are the only works that he wrote,

> Papias, who was an ancient writer, student of John, and associate of Polycarp, records these things in the fourth book of the five-volume set. (Irenaeus' *Against Heresies* 5.33)

This is Irenaeus' account. But Papias himself in the preface to his discourses does not say that he was a student and eyewitness of the holy apostles directly. Instead, he says he received the doctrine of faith from their disciples.[66] Papias says,

> In addition to what I witnessed, I will also write down everything I have learned from the elders and treasured in my memory to confirm the truth. Unlike many people, I want to hear from those who tell the truth, not fanciful stories. I do not want to hear about foreign philosophy, only from those who teach what the Lord taught, the truth itself. If I met with anyone who had been a disciple of the Apostles anywhere, I made it a point to inquire about what

[66] Papias says he was a student of Ariston and John the presbyter (this John was a disciple of John the apostle). This might be the source of the confusion.

> they learned from the Apostles. What was taught by Andrew, Peter, Philip, Thomas, James, John, Matthew, or any other of the disciples of our Lord? What was taught by the elders, Aristion, John the presbyter, and other disciples of the Apostles? I learned more from listening to those eyewitnesses than from all the books about those times. (Papias)

Notice that he mentions the name of John twice. Once in the list of apostles with Peter, James, Matthew, and the others. This would be John the apostle. He also lists John the presbyter as a disciple of the apostles, along with Aristion. This proves, as others record, that there were two people named John, and they are both buried in Ephesus. Most believe it was John the apostle who saw the Revelation. If not, it would have been John the presbyter. Papias says he learned the teachings of the apostles from their disciples, specifically he was a student of Aristion and John the presbyter. He often mentions them by name and quotes them in his writings.

Papias also records miracles and other events that occurred that he received through tradition. The daughters of Philip continued to live in Hierapolis and when Papias visited them, they told of someone who was raised from the dead. Another miracle occurred respecting Justus, surnamed Barsabas, who drank a deadly poison but was not harmed by it, through the grace of the Lord. This is the same Justus who is mentioned in the book of Acts. After the resurrection, the holy apostles prayed over both Justus and Matthias and cast lots to see which one of them was to replace Judas the traitor to fill up their number. The passage is as follows:

> They appointed two, Joseph, called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. (Acts 1:23)

Papias was the first to write down these, and other accounts, from oral tradition. He also records specific unwritten parables of our Lord with His interpretation and other incredible things. Among these is that there would be a literal one-thousand-year reign where Christ would physically reign on this earth after the resurrection of the dead. I assume he got his ideas from taking the apostolic account too literally. He did not understand that they are

symbols that represent the mystical, not the physical. It is evident from his discourses that he was very limited in his intelligence. His ideas are the reasons why other ecclesiastical writers held the same opinions – his writings were so close to the time of the apostles. Many early church fathers, like Irenaeus, adopted these ideas.

Papias also recorded other accounts about our Lord given by Aristion and John the presbyter, mentioned above. For those curious, we will add a few details here. There is a tradition which he gives about Mark when he wrote his gospel.

> John the presbyter also said this, "Mark was the interpreter of Peter. He accurately recorded everything that Peter remembered our Lord spoke and did, just not in order. Mark neither heard nor followed our Lord. He followed Peter. Peter did not dictate the discourses of our Lord, so Mark did not make any mistakes. He just recorded what Peter remembered. He was careful to do one thing, not to leave out anything or add anything falsely to Peter's account." (Papias)

Such is the account of Papias, respecting Mark. About Matthew, he stated this.

> Matthew composed his gospel in a Hebrew dialect, and everyone interpreted it the best that he was able. (Papias)

Papias quotes from 1 John, 1 Peter, and gives another history of the woman who had been accused of many sins before the Lord. This account about her is from the Gospel of the Hebrews, which is a necessary addition to her history.[67]

[67] Papias' quote of 1 John, 1 Peter, and John 8 prove their genuineness.