

# Canon, Creeds, & Revivals

How the Church Preserved our Christian Beliefs

Class 4 - On the Bubble and Rejected Documents

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# “On The Bubble” or Disputed NT Documents

- Origen (185-254 AD) was an influential early Christian scholar, ascetic, and theologian. He was a prolific writer who wrote roughly 2,000 treatises
- Origen mentioned all 27 books of the NT; 21, he says are acknowledged and six are doubtful. Other disputed books that did not make it into the canon were *Didache*, *Letter of Barnabas*, and *Shepherd of Hermas*. After moving to Caesarea where they were not accepted, he had doubts about the Preaching of Peter (don't have full text) and the *Acts of Paul*.

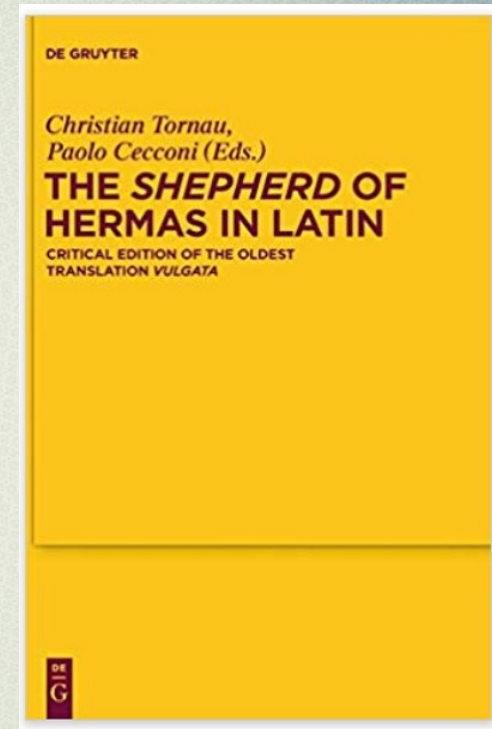


Dutch illustration by Jan Luyken (1700), showing Origen teaching his students



# Overview of Shepherd of Hermas (2nd Century)

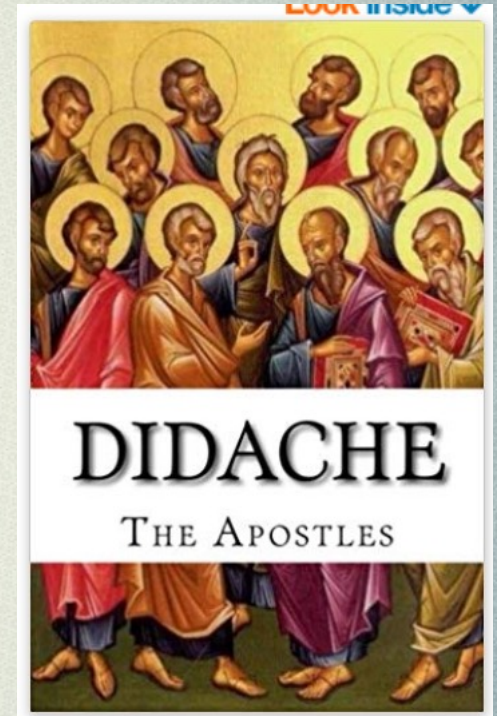
- **Background** - The Muratorian fragment is a list written c. 180 AD says “but Hermas wrote The Shepherd very recently, in our times, in the city of Rome, while bishop Pius, his brother, was occupying the chair of the church of the city of Rome. And therefore it ought indeed to be read; but it cannot be read publicly to the people in church either among the Prophets, whose number is complete, or among the Apostles, for it is after their time”
- **What is in it** - The work comprises five visions, twelve mandates, and ten parables. It relies on allegory and pays special attention to the Church, calling the faithful to repent of the sins that have harmed it.
- **Erroneous Christology** - In parable 5, the author mentions a Son of God, as a virtuous man filled with a holy "pre-existent spirit" and adopted as the Son. Adoptionism, the view that Jesus Christ was initially only a mortal man, was one of two competing doctrines about Jesus' true nature, the other being that he pre-existed as the Word (Logos)





# Overview of Didache (56-80 AD)

- The Didache (Dee-da-kay) is also called the "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles." and was possibly written around 65-80 AD.
- Church Handbook - It is supposed to be what the twelve apostles taught to the Gentiles concerning life and death, church order, fasting, baptism, prayer, etc. There is debate as to its authenticity.
- It is relatively short containing 2300 words.
  - Chapter 1-6 - Way of Life and the Way of Death
  - Chapters 7–10 - Ritual dealing with baptism, fasting, & Communion
  - Chapters 11–15 - How to treat apostles, prophets, bishops, and deacons
  - Chapter 16 - Prophecy of the Antichrist and the Second Coming





# Text of Didade

**Chapter 1. The Two Ways and the First Commandment.** There are two ways, one of life and one of death, but a great difference between the two ways. The way of life, then, is this: First, you shall love God who made you; second, love your neighbor as yourself, and do not do to others what you would not want done to you. And of these sayings the teaching is this: Bless those who curse you, and pray for your enemies, and fast for those who persecute you. For what reward is there for loving those who love you? Do not the Gentiles do the same? But love those who hate you, and you shall not have an enemy. Abstain from fleshly and worldly lusts. If someone strikes your right cheek, turn to him the other also, and you shall be perfect. If someone impresses you for one mile, go with him two. If someone takes your cloak, give him also your coat. If someone takes from you what is yours, ask it not back, for indeed you are not able. Give to every one who asks you, and ask it not back; for the Father wills that to all should be given of our own blessings (free gifts). Happy is he who gives according to the commandment, for he is guiltless. Woe to him who receives; for if one receives who has need, he is guiltless; but he who receives not having need shall pay the penalty, why he received and for what...





# Text of Didade (cont.)

**Chapter 2. The Second Commandment: Grave Sin Forbidden.** And the second commandment of the Teaching; You shall not commit murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not commit pederasty (sexual relationship between an adult man and a boy), you shall not commit fornication (sex outside of marriage), you shall not steal, you shall not practice magic, you shall not practice witchcraft, you shall not murder a child by abortion nor kill that which is born. You shall not covet the things of your neighbor, you shall not swear, you shall not bear false witness, you shall not speak evil, you shall bear no grudge. You shall not be double-minded nor double-tongued, for to be double-tongued is a snare of death. Your speech shall not be false, nor empty, but fulfilled by deed. You shall not be covetous, nor rapacious (greedy), nor a hypocrite, nor evil disposed, nor haughty. You shall not take evil counsel against your neighbor. You shall not hate any man; but some you shall reprove, and concerning some you shall pray, and some you shall love more than your own life.



## Text of Didade (cont.)

**Chapter 7. Concerning Baptism.** And concerning baptism, baptize this way: Having first said all these things, baptize into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in living water. But if you have no living water, baptize into other water; and if you cannot do so in cold water, do so in warm. But if you have neither, pour out water three times upon the head into the name of Father and Son and Holy Spirit. But before the baptism let the baptizer fast, and the baptized, and whoever else can; but you shall order the baptized to fast one or two days before.

**Chapter 8. Fasting and Prayer (the Lord's Prayer).** But let not your fasts be with the hypocrites, for they fast on the second and fifth day of the week. Rather, fast on the fourth day and the Preparation (Friday). Do not pray like the hypocrites, but rather as the Lord commanded in His Gospel, like this: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily (needful) bread, and forgive us our debt as we also forgive our debtors. And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one (or, evil); for Thine is the power and the glory for ever. Pray this three times each day.





## Text of Didade (cont.)

**Chapter 9. The Eucharist.** Now concerning the Eucharist, give thanks this way. First, concerning the cup:

We thank thee, our Father, for the holy vine of David Thy servant, which You madest known to us through Jesus Thy Servant; to Thee be the glory for ever..

And concerning the broken bread:

We thank Thee, our Father, for the life and knowledge which You madest known to us through Jesus Thy Servant; to Thee be the glory for ever. Even as this broken bread was scattered over the hills, and was gathered together and became one, so let Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy kingdom; for Thine is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ for ever..

But let no one eat or drink of your Eucharist, unless they have been baptized into the name of the Lord; for concerning this also the Lord has said, "Give not that which is holy to the dogs."



# Overview of Letter of Barnabas

- The Letter of Barnabas (early 2nd century) was essentially a treatise on the use of the Old Testament by Christians. Very anti-Jewish, the author believed that the Old Testament could not be understood by Jews and that its significance could be understood only by searching for types or prefigurations of Jesus. At the end, the author discusses the ways of good and of evil.
- Dispute authorship - Barnabas the Apostle or Barnabas of Alexandra
- Error - It has many misquotations of scripture (see graph)
- Reputation
  - Regarded as scriptural in Egypt.
  - Included in the Codex Sinaiticus, a 4th-century Greek manuscript of the Bible.
  - Quoted by the presbyter Clement of Alexandria (215 AD).
  - Few Christians continued to read it outside of Egypt





# Overview of Acts of Paul

- Acts of Paul, one of the earliest of a series of pseudepigraphal (falsely attributed) writings known collectively as the Apocryphal Acts. Probably written about 160–180 AD, it is an account of the Apostle Paul’s travels and teachings.
- The Acts of Paul was first mentioned by Tertullian (AD 160–230), who found the book heretical. Tertullian related that the book had been written by a presbyter of a church in Asia who claimed to have written “out of love of Paul,” and who was expelled from his church office.



On the walls of a grotto in Ephesus, Turkey, is a mural depicting Paul with his companion Thecla. The way in which the two figures are portrayed indicates that, rather than being a mere disciple of Paul, Thecla shared equal status as a wise teacher



# Overview of Acts of Paul

- Little was known of the actual contents of the Acts of Paul until the publication in 1904 of a 6th-century Coptic manuscript indicating that the complete apocryphon comprised three different texts
  - Acts of Paul and Thecla
  - Letter from the Corinthians to Paul and his reply, commonly styled III Corinthians;
  - The Martyrdom of Paul.
- Each of these had previously been discovered as a separate writing in a number of manuscripts and in a variety of publications.
- The subsequent publication in 1936 of a substantial Greek fragment corroborated the theory that these texts share a common authorship and originally constituted a single work.



The second discovery was announced by "L'Osservatore Romano" in its June 28 edition. It is the discovery of the oldest known depiction of the apostle Paul, dating back to the fourth's century

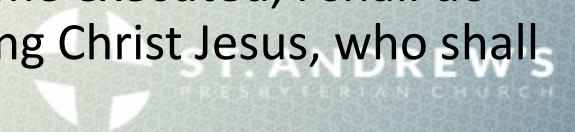


# Text of Acts of Paul

3. And in the multitude Paul also was brought in fetters. Those that were imprisoned with him looked at him, so that the emperor knew that he was the leader of the soldiers. And he said to him. "Man of the great King, now my prisoner, what induced you to come secretly into the Roman empire and to enlist soldiers in my territory?" But Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, said in the presence of all, "Caesar, we enlist soldiers not only in your territory, but in all lands of the earth. For thus we are commanded to exclude none who wishes to fight for my King. If it seems good to you to serve him, you will not regret it. Moreover, think not that riches or that which glitters in this life will save you; but if you become his subject and ask him, you shall be saved. For someday he will destroy the world."

Having heard this, Nero commanded to burn all prisoners with fire, but to behead Paul in accordance with the law of the Romans. And Paul was not silent but communicated the word to Longus the prefect and Cestus the centurion. And Nero being instigated by the evil one (raged) at Rome, and had many Christians executed without being judged, so that the Romans stood before the palace and cried, "It is enough, Caesar; these men are ours; you destroyed the strength of the Romans." Being thus convinced, he desisted <having issued an edict> not to touch any Christian till his case had been investigated.

4. After the issuing of the edict, Paul was brought before him, and he insisted that he should be executed. And Paul said, "Caesar, I live not merely for a short time to my King; and if you have me executed, I shall do the following: I will rise again and appear to you, for I am not dead, but live to my King Christ Jesus, who shall come to judge the earth."





# Text of Acts of Paul (cont.)

And Longus and Cestus said to Paul, "When have you this King that you believe on him, without changing your mind to death?" And Paul answered and said, " You men, being ignorant and in error, change your mind and be saved from the fire which comes over the whole earth. For we fight not, as you suppose, for a King who is from the earth, but who is from heaven for the living God, who comes as judge because of the righteousness, which takes place in this world. And blessed is he who will believe on him and live in eternity when he shall come with fire to purge the earth." And they besought him and said, "We pray you, help us and we will release you." But he answered with a smiling face, "I am not a deserter of Christ, but a faithful soldier of the living God. If I knew that I should die, I would do it, Longus and Cestus; but since I live to God and love myself, I go to the Lord that I may come (again) with him in the glory of his Father." And they said to him, "How can we live after you have been beheaded?"

5. And while they were speaking Nero sent a certain Parthenius and Pheretas to see whether Paul had already been beheaded. And they found him still alive. He summoned them beside him and said: "Believe in the living God, who will raise me, as well as all those that believe on him, from the dead." But they said, "We will now go to Nero, but when you have died and have been raised up, we will believe in thy God."

But when Longus and Cestus continued to ask about their salvation, he said to them, "In the early dawn come quickly to my grave, and you will find two men at prayer, Titus and Luke; they will give you the seal in the Lord."



## Text of Acts of Paul (cont.)

And turning toward the east, Paul lifted up his hands to heaven and prayed much; and after having conversed in Hebrew with the fathers during prayer, he bent his neck, without speaking any more. When the lictor cut off his head, milk splashed on the dress of the soldier. And the soldier, and all who stood near by, were astonished at this sight and glorified God, who had thus honored Paul. And they went away and reported everything to Caesar.

6. When he heard (of it), he was much amazed, not knowing what to say. While many philosophers and the centurion were assembled with the emperor, Paul came about the ninth hour, and in the presence of all he said, "Caesar behold, here is Paul, the soldier of God; I am not dead, but I live in my God. But upon you, you miserable one, many evils and great punishments will come, because you have unjustly shed the blood of the righteous, not many days ago." And after having spoken thus, Paul departed from him. When Nero had heard (this), he commanded that the prisoners be released, Patroclus as well as Barsabas with his friends.

7. And as Paul had told them, Longus and Cestus the centurion, came very early to the grave of Paul, trembling. And when they came near, they found two men in prayer and Paul with them, so that they became frightened when beholding the incredible miracle, while Titus & Luke, being afraid at the sight of Longus and Cestus, turned to run away. But the persecutors said to them, "We persecute you not in order to kill you, you blessed men of God, as you suppose, but in order to live, that you may do to us as Paul promised to us, whom we have just seen in prayer beside you." Upon hearing this, Titus and Luke gave them joyfully the seal in the Lord, glorifying God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be honor for ever and ever. Amen.



# Summary (On the Bubble)

- Documents that were inconsistent or had errors did not make it into the NT canon (e.g. Shepherd of Hermas, Letters of Barnabas)
- Although useful to the church, documents that did not meet the requirement of “apostolic” and “catholic” did not make it into the NT canon (Acts of Paul, Shepherd of Hermas)
- Didache focused on church order and lacked timelessness (very culturally dependent). However, it is very good teaching and fascinating history but did not rise to the level of “inspired” Scripture



# Gnostic Gospels

- **All of these works were rejected outright by church fathers due to their Gnostic teachings.**
- ***Gospel of Thomas** – first to mid-2nd century; collection of 114 sayings attributed to Jesus, 31 of them with no parallel in the canonical gospels*
- **Gospel of Marcion** – second century, potentially an edited version of the Gospel of Luke
- **Gospel of Basilides** – composed in Egypt around 120 to 140 AD, thought to be a gnostic gospel harmony of the canonical gospels
- **Gospel of Truth (Valentinian)** – mid-second century, departed from earlier gnostic works by admitting and defending the physicality of Christ and his resurrection
- **Gospel of the Four Heavenly Realms** – mid-second century, thought to be a gnostic cosmology, most likely in the form of a dialogue between Jesus and his disciples
- **Gospel of Mary** – second century
- **Gospel of Judas** – second century
- **Greek Gospel of the Egyptians** – second quarter of the second century
- **Gospel of Philip**
- **Pseudo-Gospel of the Twelve** – a Syriac language gospel titled the Gospel of the Twelve, this work is shorter than the regular gospels and seems to be different from the lost Gospel of the Twelve.
- **Coptic Gospel of the Egyptians** – also called Holy Book of the Great Invisible Spirit



# Gospel of Thomas

- The Gospel of Thomas (also known as the Coptic Gospel of Thomas) is a non-canonical sayings gospel. It was discovered near Nag Hammadi, Egypt, in December 1945 among a group of books known as the Nag Hammadi library.
- The Coptic-language text is composed of 114 sayings attributed to Jesus.
- Bishop Eusebius included it among a group of books that he believed to be not only spurious, but "the fictions of heretics".
- Most interpreters place its writing in the second century, understanding that many of its oral traditions are much older.



# Some Texts in Gospel of Thomas

- (7) Jesus said, "Blessed is the lion that the human being will devour so that the lion becomes human. And cursed is the human being that the lion devours; and the lion will become human."
- (15) Jesus said, "When you see one who was not born of woman, fall on your faces and worship. That one is your Father."
- (70) Jesus said, "If you (plur.) produce what is in you, what you have will save you. If you do not have what is in you, what you do not have [will] kill you."
- (98) Jesus said, "The Father's imperial rule is like a person who wanted to kill someone powerful. While still at home he drew his sword and thrust it into the wall to find out whether his hand would go in. Then he killed the powerful one."
- (105) Jesus said, "Whoever knows the father and the mother will be called the child of a whore."
- (108) Jesus said, "Whoever drinks from my mouth will become like me; I, too, will become that person, and to that person the obscure things will be shown forth."
- (110) Jesus said, "The one who had found the world and become rich should renounce the world."
- (112) Jesus said, "Woe to the flesh that depends upon a soul. Woe to the soul that depends upon flesh."
- (114) Simon Peter said to them, "Mary should leave us, for females are not worthy of life." Jesus said, "See, I am going to attract her to make her male so that she too might become a living spirit that resembles you males. For every female (element) that makes itself male will enter the kingdom of heaven."



# Jewish-Christian Gospels

The Jewish–Christian gospels are known through quotations in the works of the early Church Fathers Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius, Epiphanius, Jerome and probably Didymus the Blind.

- ***Gospel of the Hebrews*** - Presented traditions of Christ's pre-existence, coming into the world, baptism and temptation, with some of his sayings. Holy Spirit is Jesus' Divine Mother and a first resurrection appearance to James
- **Gospel of the Nazarenes** - The Gospel of the Nazarenes has been lost. Fragments survive in the form of quotations. Much in common with the canonical Gospel of Matthew, and would have been written in Palestinian Aramaic in the first half of the 2nd century
- **Gospel of the Ebionites** - Harmony of Gospels, early 2nd century. Jesus is chosen to be God's Son at the time of his Baptism; the abolition of the Jewish sacrifices by Jesus; and an advocacy of vegetarianism.



# Gospel of the Hebrews

**First Fragment** - And it came to pass, when the Lord had come up from the water, the entire fountain of the Holy Spirit descended and rested upon him and said to him, "My son, in all the prophets did I await you, that you might come and I might rest in you; for you are my rest; you are my firstborn Son that reigns for ever." [2]

**Second Fragment** - Just now my mother the Holy Spirit took me by one of my hairs and bore me up on to the great mountain Tabor. [3]

**Third Fragment** - He who seeks will not stop till he find; and having found, he will wonder; and wondering, he will reign; and reigning, he will rest. [4]

**Fourth Fragment** - And be ye never joyful save when ye have looked upon your brother in charity. [5]

**Fifth Fragment** - ... he is set down among the greatest criminals who has grieved the spirit of his brother. [6]

**Sixth Fragment** - And when the Lord had given his linen cloth to the servant of the priest he went to James and appeared unto him. For James had sworn that he would not eat bread from that hour wherein he had drunk the cup of the Lord until he saw him rising again from the dead.... "Bring a table and bread." And he took up the bread and blessed and broke and afterward gave to James the Just and said to him, "My brother, eat thy bread, for the Son of Man is risen from them that sleep." [7]



# Infancy Gospels (2nd Century or later)

- ***Protoevangelium of James*** - Probably written about AD 145, which expands backward in time infancy stories and presents a narrative concerning the birth and upbringing of Mary herself. It is the oldest source outside the New Testament to assert the virginity of Mary not only prior to, but during (and after) the birth of Jesus.
- **Gospel of the Nativity of Mary** - events surrounding the birth of Mary, mother of Jesus
- **Infancy Gospel of Thomas** - is a biographical gospel about the childhood of Jesus, believed to date at the latest to the second century. Hippolytus, Origen, and Eusebius identified it as a fake.



# Protoevangelium of James

## **CHAP. VIII.-- HOW JESUS HEALED A BOY'S FOOT.**

And a few days thereafter, a boy in that town was splitting wood, and struck his foot. And a great crowd went to him, and Jesus too went with them. And He touched the foot which had been hurt, and immediately it was made whole. And Jesus said to him: Rise, and split the wood, and remember me. And when the crowd saw the miracles that were done by Him, they adored Jesus, and said: Indeed we most surely believe that Thou art God.

## **CHAP. IX.-- HOW JESUS CARRIED WATER IN A CLOAK.**

And when Jesus was six years old, His mother sent Him to draw water. And when Jesus had come to the fountain, or to the well, there were great crowds there, and they broke His pitcher. And He took the cloak which He had on, and filled it with water, and carried it to His mother Mary. And His mother, seeing the miracles which Jesus had done, kissed Him, and said: O Lord, hear me, and save my son.

## **CHAP. X.-- HOW JESUS SOWED WHEAT.**

In the time of sowing, Joseph went out to sow wheat, and Jesus followed him. And when Joseph began to sow, Jesus stretched out His hand, and took as much wheat as He could hold in His fist and scattered it. Joseph therefore came at reaping-time to reap his harvest. Jesus came also, and collected the ears which He had scattered, and they made a hundred pecks of the best grain; and he called the poor, and the widows, and the orphans, and distributed to them the wheat which He had made. Joseph also took a little of the same wheat, for the blessing of Jesus to his house.



# Acts of Apostles

- Several texts concern themselves with the subsequent lives of the apostles, usually with highly supernatural events.
- Almost half of these, anciently called The Circuits of the Apostles and now known by the name of their purported author, "Leucius Charinus" (supposedly a companion of John the apostle), contained the Acts of Peter, John, Andrew, Thomas, and Paul. These were judged by the Patriarch Photios I of Constantinople in the ninth century to be full of folly, self-contradiction, falsehood, and impiety.
- The Acts of Thomas and the Acts of Peter and the Twelve are often considered Gnostic texts.
- Other Act of Apostle are authored much later and not consider to be included in NT

Acts of Andrew - Leucius Charinus, 2nd century

Acts of Paul - Leucius Charinus, 2nd century

Acts of Peter - Leucius Charinus, 2nd century

Acts of John - Leucius Charinus, 2nd century

Acts of Thomas - Leucius Charinus, Gnostic

Acts of Peter and the Twelve - Gnostic

*Acts of Pilate - 2nd century*

Acts of the Martyrs - 3rd century

Acts of Paul and Thecla - 2nd century

Acts of Peter and Andrew - 3rd century

Acts of Philip - 4th century

Acts of Xanthippe, Polyxena, & Rebecca, 4th

Acts of Timothy - 5th century

Acts of Barnabas - 5th century

Acts of Peter and Paul - 5th century

Acts of Mar Mari - Sixth century



# Act of Pilate (150-255 A.D)

Pontius Pilate unto Claudius, greeting. There befell of late a matter which I myself brought to light (or, made trial of): for the Jews through envy have punished themselves and their posterity with fearful judgements of their own fault; for whereas their fathers had promises (al. had announced unto them) that their God would send them out of heaven his holy one who should of right be called their king, and did promise that he would send him upon earth by a virgin; he then (or this God of the Hebrews, then) came when I was governor of Judea, and they beheld him enlightening the blind, cleansing lepers, healing the palsied, driving devils out of men, raising the dead, rebuking the winds, walking upon the waves of the sea dry-shod, and doing many other wonders, and all the people of the Jews calling him the Son of God: the chief priests therefore, moved with envy against him, took him and delivered him unto me and brought against him one false accusation after another, saying that he was a sorcerer and did things contrary to law.

But I, believing that these things were so, having scourged him, delivered him unto their will: and they crucified him, and when he was buried they set guards upon him. But while my soldiers watched him he rose again on the third day: yet so much was the malice of the Jews kindled that they gave money to the soldiers, saying: Say ye that his disciples stole away his body. But they, though they took the money, were not able to keep silence concerning that which had come to pass, for they also have testified that they saw him arisen and that they received money from the Jews. And these things have I reported (unto thy mightiness) for this cause, lest some other should lie unto thee (Lat. lest any lie otherwise) and though shouldest deem right to believe the false tales of the Jews.



# Epistles

There are also non-canonical epistles (or "letters") between individuals or to Christians in general. Some of them were regarded very highly by the early church.

- Epistle of Barnabas - 70–132 CE (discussed earlier, rejected due to misquotes, very anti-Jew)
- *Epistles of Clement - 95 or 96 AD - Bishop in Rome*
- Epistle of the Corinthians to Paul - 160 CE (clearly recognized as not written by Paul)
- Epistle of Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans - a second-century
- Epistle of Ignatius to the Trallians - second-century
- Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians - first half of the second century
- Epistle to Diognetus - AD 130 to the late 2nd century
- Epistle to the Laodiceans (an epistle in the name of Paul) - lost letter mentioned in Col. 4
- Epistle to Seneca the Younger (an epistle in the name of Paul) - forged 4th century?
- Third Epistle to the Corinthians - 2nd century



# I Epistles of Clement (to the Corinthians) 95-96 AD

## **Chap. V. No less evils have arisen from the same source in the most recent times. The martyrdom of Peter and Paul.**

But not to dwell upon ancient examples, let us come to the most recent spiritual heroes. Let us take the noble examples furnished in our own generation. Through envy and jealousy, the greatest and most righteous pillars[of the Church] have been persecuted and put to death. Let us set before our eyes the illustrious apostles. Peter, through unrighteous envy, endured not one or two, but numerous labours and when he had at length suffered martyrdom, departed to the place of glory due to him. Owing to envy, Paul also obtained the reward of patient endurance, after being seven times thrown into captivity, compelled to flee, and stoned. After preaching both in the east and west, he gained the illustrious reputation due to his faith, having taught righteousness to the whole world, and come to the extreme limit of the west, and suffered martyrdom under the prefects. Thus was he removed from the world, and went into the holy place, having proved himself a striking example of patience.



# Apocalypse

Several works frame themselves as visions, often discussing the future, afterlife, or both:

- Apocalypse of Paul (distinct from the Coptic Apocalypse of Paul) - 3rd century
- *Apocalypse of Peter (distinct from the Gnostic Apocalypse of Peter) - 2nd century (Muratorian fragment forbids reading in church)*
- Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius - seventh century
- Apocalypse of Thomas (also called the Revelation of Thomas) - 2nd-4th century
- Apocalypse of Stephen (also called the Revelation of Stephen) - alternate stoning of Stephen
- First Apocalypse of James (also called the First Revelation of James) - Gnostic
- Second Apocalypse of James (also called the Second Revelation of James) Gnostic
- The Shepherd of Hermas (also included in the collection known as the Apostolic Fathers)



# Apocalypse of Peter

11 We, then, seeing the beauty of them were astonished at them, for they appeared suddenly. 12 And I drew near to the Lord and said: Who are these? 13 He saith to me: These are your (our) righteous brethren whose appearance ye did desire to see. 14 And I said unto him: And where are all the righteous? or of what sort is the world wherein they are, and possess this glory? 15 And the Lord showed me a very great region outside this world exceeding bright with light, and the air of that place illuminated with the beams of the sun, and the earth of itself flowering with blossoms that fade not, and full of spices and plants, fair-flowering and incorruptible, and bearing blessed fruit. 16 And so great was the blossom that the odor thereof was borne thence even unto us. 17 And the dwellers in that place were clad with the raiment of shining angels, and their raiment was like unto their land. 18 And angels ran round about them there. 19 And the glory of them that dwelt there was all equal, and with one voice they praised the Lord God, rejoicing in that place. 20 The Lord saith unto us: This is the place of your leaders (or, high priests), the righteous men.

21 And I saw also another place over against that one, very squalid; and it was a place of punishment, and they that were punished and the angels that punished them had their raiment dark, according to the air of the place. 22 And some there were there hanging by their tongues; and these were they that blasphemed the way of righteousness, and under them was laid fire flaming and tormenting them. 23 And there was a great lake full of flaming mire, wherein were certain men that turned away from righteousness; and angels, tormentors, were set over them. 24 And there were also others, women, hanged by their hair above that mire which boiled up; and these were they that adorned themselves for adultery. And the men that were joined with them in the defilement of adultery were hanging by their feet, and had their heads hidden in the mire, and said: We believed not that we should come unto this place. 25 And I saw the murderers and them that were consenting to them cast into a strait place full of evil, creeping things, and smitten by those beasts, and so turning themselves about in that torment. And upon them were set worms like clouds of darkness. And the souls of them that were murdered stood and looked upon the torment of those murderers and said: O God, righteous is thy judgement.



# Some Conclusions

- The Church Fathers used the criterion apostolic (given to us by the Apostles) and catholic (widely accepted) to determine NT cannon
- Factual consistency and theology were used to determine authenticity
- Some of these writings are pure fiction while others are interesting history

*Next week – Creeds: How the Church understood our core beliefs....*