

Catholic Epistles, or Gen. Ep.

They were encyclical, intended for general circulation.

James
1 Pet
2 Pet

1 Jn
Jude

James

4/22/64

Author: Not James the Apostle, who was put to death in Acts 12:2, but James, the "brother of the Lord" (Gal. 1:19), sometimes called James the Just. (The names of the Lord's family are given in Mt. 13:55. Another brother, Jude, is believed to have written the Epistle of Jude.) See 1 Cor. 15:7.

This question is discussed by Mayor in his Epistle of St. James, and by Lightfoot in his commentary on Galatians.

* Place

Date: Early, probably in the middle 40's. The lack of any ref. to the Council in Jam. in Acts 15 is one strong argument for the early date. It was probably written from Jerusalem.

Destination: To the Jews of the dispersion (cf. 1:1), those believing Jews who were living outside of the land of Israel.

Occasion: To safeguard the practical aspects of the doctrine of justification by faith. It deals with the opposite aspect of Galatians.

Contents:

Ch. 1 - Behavior in trial explained with emphasis on doing the Word.

Ch. 2 - The tendency of some to show respect of persons rebuked and followed by the key section of the book on the rel. between faith and works (vv. 14-26).

Ch. 3 - The use of the tongue related to a true manifestation of wisdom.

Ch. 4 - The need for humility and submission instead of strife, recognizing the will of God and the shortness of life.

Ch. 5 - The rich particularly are warned (vv. 1-6), and then James returns to the question of suffering and gives final exhortations in view of the Lord's return.

1 Peter

4/22/64

The writer: the Apostle Peter. The facts of his life are well-known.

The place and time of writing: Babylon, c. 64 A.D. (Some take this ref. to Babylon to be Rome.)

Destination: Refs. in 2 Pet. to 1 Pet would indicate that both epistles were written to Jews of the dispersion. There are, however, some refs. to the Gentile members of these churches. Cf. 1 Pet. 1:1 for destination.

Purpose: Taking these two epistles together, 1 Pet. deals with the problem of suffering; 2 Pet. deals with the problem of heresy! (2 Pet. discussed following this.) Peter writes to encourage those who are suffering as Christians.

Contents:

Ch. 1 - The doctrine of salvation discussed as a foundation for all that follows.

Ch. 2 - Spiritual growth and good works encouraged (vv. 1-12) as an answer to their enemies, followed by specific instructions regarding behavior (continues through 3:12).

Ch. 3 (begin v. 17) - Their sufferings are related to the sufferings of Christ (through ch. 4). Special warnings are given re. suffering for evil which

they have done.

Ch 5 - Concluding words of exhortation to
those who are "elder" (vv. 1-4) and those
who are "younger" (vv. 5-11). Vv. 12-14
form the conclusion to the book

2 Peter

4/22/64.

Authorship - much controversy has centered in this epistle, but we are on safe ground in taking this as a genuine epistle of Peter the Apostle.

Date: The late 60's, i.e., 64-68 A.D. Both Peter & Paul were prob. martyred in the late 60's (cf. Jason, p. 447).

Destination: Cf. 3:1. This would make it the same as the first epistle.

Place of writing: Unknown, but prob. Rome where it is thought that he was martyred c. 67 A.D.

Contents:

Ch. 1 - There are two safeguards against heresy which Peter encourages here:

(1) Spiritual growth

(2) Absolute confidence in the Word

Ch. 2 - (Note its similarity to Jude's epistle.) This is the heart of the epistle with its warning against evil doers and false teachers.

Ch. 3 - The coming of the Lord. This is anticipated as a time when men will scorn such a prospect and persist in ungodliness.

1 John

4/23/64

Writer, date, and destination, all are a problem in connection with this book. But there are certain things we can assert with some degree of moderation.

(1) Writer: the Apostle John. Both tradition and internal evidence seem to support this. The first few verses of the book indicate that the writer had been an eye-witness of Christ. The book is similar to John's other writings.

(2) Place of writing: Assumed to be Ephesus. It is thought that John went to Ephesus about the time Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D.

(3) Date: Very late — between 90 + 100 A.D.

(4) Destination: The assumption is that it was written for the same churches as the book of the Revelation.

(5) Occasion: Three purposes seem to be prominent:

(a) To speak of the nature of God as ^{being} the basis for Christian fellowship.

(b) To show the evidences of the new birth (1 Jn. 5:13). The word "know" appears some 40 times.

(c) To expose error, esp. Gnosticism.

(b) Outline:

I. Intro, a Prologue (1:1-4).

II. The Conditions of Fellowship With God (1:5-2:29).

III. The Evidence of the Believer's Fellowship (3:1-5:12).

IV. Concl. (5:13-21).

2 John

4/23/64

Writer and date: An open question points out that 8 of the 13 verses in this epistle are similar to verses in 1 John which would indicate that the writer was the same as 1 John and the date approx. the same (90-100 AD).

Destination: Either a Christian lady, or a church. There are differences among expositors, but there seems to be no great reason for accepting it ~~as~~ it was in its the most obvious way: a letter to a lady, possibly a widow, and her children.

Purpose: To establish the limit of Christian fellowship. It can only be in the truth.

3 John

4/23/64

Writer and date: The same as 1 + 2 John,
i.e., John the Apostle, c. 90-100 A.D.

Destination: Gaius (v. 1), probably the Gaius
of Rom. 16:23 and 1 ~~Cor.~~ 1:14.

Purpose: To show the extent of Christian
fellowship, in contrast with 2 John where
the limits are established.

Jude

4/23/64

Writer: He is generally considered to have been the brother of our Lord, and of the writer of the epistle of James.

Destination: From an assumed acquaintance among the readers ~~of~~ with OT scripture and Jewish traditions we seem to be safe in assuming that this was written to believing Jews, probably those who had been dispersed through the empire.

Date: Late 60's, before the destruction of Jerusalem.

Purpose: To warn against and to expose false teachers.

Outline:

- I. Intro with Statement of Purpose for Writing, or Theme (vv. 1-4).
- II. Warning against false teachers, showing their character and judgment (vv. 5-19).
- III. Final exhortations and prayer (vv. 20-25)

Note: The similarity between Jude & 2 Peter is obvious, but it is generally conceded that Jude wrote first. It may have been original with Jude, or both may have gotten the information from a third source.

Revelation

4/23/64

Writer: Strong evidence for the Apostle John, both internally and from early Christian writers.

Background:

from Jev.

- (1) John had gone to Ephesus, in 70 A.D. Nero had died in 68.
- (2) For about 25 years John labored in that area, possibly as a "circuit preacher".
- (3) During Domitian's reign (81-96 A.D.) persecution against Christians was resumed, and it became an offense worthy of death to refuse to worship Domitian who claimed to be a god. John ignored this edict and consequently was banished to Patmos "for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 1:9). Here John received the visions recorded in the book of the Revelation.
- (4) John was supposedly released by Domitian's successor, Nerva, c. 96-98 A.D.

Date: c. 98 A.D.

Purposes:

- (1) A revelation of Jesus Christ.
- (2) To encourage believers in the seven churches mentioned in chs. 2 + 3. These churches were the primary recipients of the book.
- (3) To give a detailed description of the end times, particularly of the R.T. Tribulation. Thus, the prophetic word is completed.

Revelation

Outline:

- I. Intro & prologue, with a description of John's vision of Christ (1).
- II. Letters to the Seven Churches (2,3).
- III. Vision of heaven God and the Lamb in heaven (4,5).
- IV. The Lit. Diet (6-18).
- V. The Second Coming of Jesus Christ (19) ↗
- VI. The Millennium and the Judgment at the Great White Throne (20).
- VII. The New Heaven and New Earth (21:1-22:7).
- VIII. Conclusion (22:8-21).