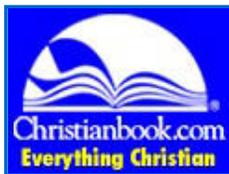


John's Work

Up

- [Search Site](#)
- [Books'n Mor](#)
- [Overview](#)
- [Concepts & Theory](#)
- [Marking Time](#)
- [Levantine Fieldwork](#)
- [The First Christians](#)
- [Perspectives](#)
- [Biblical Chronology](#)
- [The Levant](#)
- [Music &The Bible](#)
- [Helps & Aids](#)
- [Travel & Touring](#)
- [Words & Phrases](#)
- [Photo Gallery](#)
- [Useful Links](#)
- [Who We Are](#)
- [Our History & Purpose](#)
- [Works Cited](#)
- [What We Believe](#)
- [Article Submissions](#)
- [How to Cite BibArch](#)
- [How to Contact Us](#)

[Click here to send us Questions or Comments](#)



[BibArch Home](#)

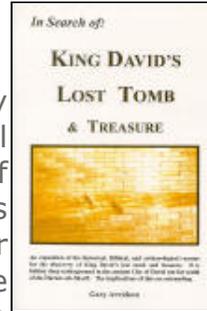
[Up](#)

After ca. CE 77 the apostle John alone may have remained of the twelve original apostles for there is no evidence that any of the others were still alive. As Peter's successor John became responsible for oversight of the church-at-large and for the task of completing the Scriptures. In fulfilling his charge, he completed his gospel account, three epistles, and finally Revelation.

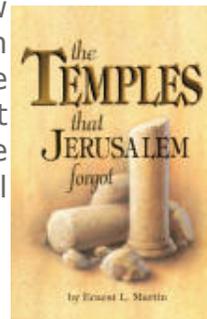
Ultimately it was up to John to seal permanently the compendium we know as the New Testament. The existence of the John Rylands Papyrus, dating to ca. 115, infers that John saw to it that the New Testament was set out in the codex form in the late 90s. This task would overcome the sheer bulk involved in using scrolls and it would safeguard the "inspired" order of the New Testament and define the canon for all ages of the [Church of God](#).

The Emergence of Apostasy

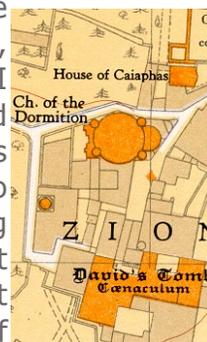
Even from a cursory reading of II Peter, I, II, and III John, Jude, and Revelation it is evident that at the time of their writing serious discord, heresy, and internal conflict troubled the Church of God. The apostle Jude, in his epistle written ca. CE 80-90, reported that the apostasy described in II Peter had worsened significantly. Jude told of the state of the Church in the seventies or eighties. He found it necessary to write to the Church concerning incorrect teaching since false teachers, who had secretly crept into it, abused God's grace and taught sexual perversion. This was reminiscent of Paul's comment, ca. CE 56, at [Romans 3:8](#) where he protested his being slandered by false teachers.



Does the national archive and treasury of the kings of Judah lie hidden deep underground in the ancient City of David?



What was Jerusalem in the days of Herod and Jesus really like?



The Old City of Jerusalem

NE

The tomb of King David has been lost since the days of Herod the Great. Have archaeologists and historians now isolated its location? New research suggests the tomb, and a national archive and treasury containing unbelievable wealth, lies not far south of the Haram esh-Sharif. You will find the implications astounding.

Tradition places Herod's Temple on the Haram esh-Sharif. Is this really the site of the Temple in Jesus' day? A new carefully detailed compilation and analysis of the historical evidence says -- *absolutely not!*

[View Temple Video](#)

This small sample section of a beautiful map from the Survey of Israel, suitable for framing, is a must for serious students of the Bible. The map sets forth the topography of the city and provides labels for all major



Copyright © 1997-2006
High Top Media
All Rights Reserved.

[Legal Notices](#)

What was the nature of the Church at this time? Significant change in the Church occurred during the postwar period CE 70-135. In CE 70 the ancient church was decidedly Judeo-Christian but by CE 135 Gentiles had become the majority in Christendom (see [The Struggle for Supremacy](#) for more information). Keep in mind that John's writings (his gospel, I, II, II John, and Revelation), Jude, and II Peter are Judeo-Christian documents written from a Semitic, Judeo-Christian ([Nazarenes](#)) perspective.

Moreover, that Orthodox Christianity, as it sought to become the exclusive religion of the empire, distanced itself from the Judeo-Christian Churches of God and all Jewish Christian sects and adopted a severe anti-Semitic stance. This is the primary reason why the later Orthodox bishops, in the East (the Greeks) and West (the Latins), so strongly resisted their inclusion in their lists of recognized books (for more information see [The Rise of the Orthodox](#)). Their Judeo-Christian essence is why some denominational scholars continue to resist acknowledging their apostolic authorship today. Their symbolism is from a Jewish perspective, in this case from the *gehal'el*, and the heresies they report, condemn, and combat relative to the gentilization of Christianity. This conflict largely resulted from the leadership vacuum left upon the deaths of the apostles.

The [apostles](#) simply did not hand down any centralized form of governance for the Church. They simply left the governance of the Church to Jesus Christ as its head. The Church of God at Jerusalem under the leadership of Simeon the son of Cleophas was no longer a force in the governance of the greater Church. When the apostles abandoned Jerusalem after James' murder the congregation retained the honor of being the mother of all churches absent the authority it once had (see [The Cenacle](#)). The leadership of the greater Church of God was wherever the apostles were at any given

time. In essence, nearly all congregations were on their own. This was true in Judeo-Christianity as well as in emerging Gentile Christianity. The changes in doctrine and praxis were evolutionary not revolutionary. There may have been local leaders who developed followings after themselves but accounts of these movements are not extant.

As a result of the growing divergence in doctrinal perspective Christianity became quite fragmented. By the end of the Apostolic Period, if indeed it ended in CE 135 and not earlier, there were many Christianities--[Jewish Christians](#), [Judeo-Christians](#), and [Gentile Christians](#). In the context of the transitional period CE 70-135 an aged apostle John sought to keep his Judeo-Christians, the Nazarenes in the homeland and their Hellenistic counterpart in Asia Minor, within the fold. Keep in mind that he wrote to the *qahal'el*, the Church of God, not to Jewish Christian ([Ebionites](#)), Judeo-Christian, or Gentile derivative movements. To explicate his writings one must keep in perspective John's fundamental Nazarene, *qahal'el*, Judeo-Christian standpoint. When placed in this perspective it should become apparent that the primary problem John addresses is the gentilization of the apostles' doctrines.

At the writing of John's gospel, probably completed in the late eighties, the Church understood Scripture to include both the Hebrew Scriptures and the apostolic complement although the latter was not yet complete. John may have incorporated Jude's epistle in the Scriptures prior to finishing his own gospel account. The apostle John, apparently, decided that the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke did not sufficiently address the account of Jesus' ministry.^{F1} According to Eusebius:

Matthew, also having first proclaimed the gospel in Hebrew, when on the point of going also to other nations, committed it to writing in his native tongue, and thus supplied the want of his presence to

them, by his writings. But after Mark and Luke had already published their gospels, they say, that John, who during all this time was proclaiming the gospel without writing, at length proceeded to write it on the following occasion. The three gospels previously written, having had been distributed among all, and also handed to him, they say that he admitted them, giving his testimony to their truth, but that there was only wanting in the narrative the account of the things done by Christ at the first of his deeds and at the commencement of the gospel. ([Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.24, Boyle 1955:108.](#))

Eusebius believed this omission led to John's gospel. He wrote:

For these reasons the apostle John, it is said, being entreated to undertake it, wrote the account of the time not recorded by the former evangelists [and apostles] and the deeds done by our Saviour, which they have passed by (for these were the events that occurred before the imprisonment of John,). This very fact is intimated by him when he says, "this beginning of miracles Jesus made," and then proceeds to make mention of the Baptist, in the midst of our Lord's deeds, as John was at that time "baptizing at Ænon near Salim. ([Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.24, Boyle 1955:109.](#))

Important aspects of Jesus' ministry remained to be written and preserved. Other matters pertaining to Jesus' ministry lacked clarification. John recognized his responsibility to address those matters he saw as insufficiently reported in the other three gospel accounts. In his gospel, John preserved for the Church the knowledge of the foot-washing aspect of the [Christian Passover](#) and many details of Jesus' life prior to his public ministry. The gospel of John reflects the life, issues, and condition of the Church in the eighties and more likely the end of the decade, and responds to the false teaching, misunderstanding, and heresies prevalent at that time, i.e. the Gnostic and the variant Christianities which later emerged as Orthodox and Byzantine.

While Gnosticism became a troubling problem for the Church of God it was its ultimate gentilization that eventually overwhelmed it. Eusebius attests to the acceptance of the gospel of John in the ancient Church. He states:

And of these his gospel, so well known in the churches throughout the world, must first of all be acknowledged as genuine. That it is, however, with good reason, placed the fourth in order by the ancients, may be made evident in the following manner. ([Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.24, Boyle 1955:107.](#))

John's Confirmation of the New Scriptures

The apostle John astutely confirmed the veracity of the Christian Scriptures. He established this point by his selection of material, wherein appears a quotation of Christ which includes a comment concerning the nature of Scripture. Breaking into Christ's answer to Jews who were threatening to stone him, John wrote a fascinating statement. He recorded, "and the Scripture cannot be broken" ([John 10:35](#)). He wrote it at a time when the Judeo-Christian reader understood "Scripture" to be the Hebrew Scriptures and the existing, yet still open, set of apostolic writings.

Generally translators take the phrase "and the Scripture cannot be broken" to be part of the argument stated by Jesus. Nevertheless, while early translators

John's Gospel

John, written ca. CE 85-89 so "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name" ([John 20:31](#)).

The specific purposes of the gospel are:

- To show that Jesus was fully divine (God) and fully human (man),
- To provide details of Jesus' life and teachings not included in the synoptic gospels; and
- To reinforce the faith of the

incorporated people of God.
 the phrase
 into the text in the King James Version, it is now correctly set out as a parenthetical thought in the NASB and RSV. The phrase was not necessary to complete Jesus' statement, nor did it necessarily strengthen his argument, for the Jews in question already knew the authority of the [Hebrew Scriptures](#), particularly the Written Torah, was not in issue. The phrase was an insertion by John which some translators fittingly sense as a parenthetical comment. The phrase as a parenthetical statement by the apostle John corroborates his confirmation of the veracity of the set of apostolic writings as having the authority of the Hebrew Scriptures for the Church of God.

The Book of Revelation

The Romans banished John to the Isle of Patmos ca. CE 95 ([Revelation 1:9](#)). Tradition placed this during the persecution of [Domitian](#). According to Eusebius during Domitian's reign an aged John lived in exile on the island of Patmos because of his testimony to the word of God ([Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.18, 23, Boyle 1955:101-102, 104-107](#)).

The Revelation to John

Revelation, written ca. CE 96, states it is a message that God the Father gave to Jesus Christ to show his servants the things which must shortly, as God reckons time, take place.

The specific purposes of the book are:

- To tell of things past (history),
- To disclose things then existing (the then current state of affairs of the Church of God); and
- To reveal things future (a prophecy from apostolic times to the end of physical human

Upon his release, ca. CE 96, the Romans permitted John to return to Ephesus. "After fifteen years of Domitian's rule," says Eusebius, "Nerva

existence when God makes all things new - a new heavens and a new earth). succeeded to the throne. By vote of the Roman senate, Domitian's honors were removed and those unjustly banished returned to their homes and had their property restored to them. This is noted by the chronicles of the period. At that time too, [ca. CE 96] the apostle John, after his exile on the island of Patmos, resumed residence at Ephesus, as early Christian tradition records" ([Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.20, Schaff and H. Wace 1986:xxx](#), see also [Boyle 1955:103](#)).

The use of the past tense "was" in Patmos at [Revelation 1:9](#) suggests that John saw the vision in Patmos, but that it was after his release and return to Ephesus ca. CE 96 that he finished writing the book of Revelation. John lived to a great age and wrote his gospel account, three epistles, and the book of Revelation.^{F2} John remained at Ephesus until his death, ca. CE 98, at the time of [Trajan](#) ([Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.23, Boyle 1955:103-105, 116](#)).

	Year Probably Written	Authorship	Probable Origin
<p>After John's death many of those who were part of the Hellenistic branch of Judeo-Christianity listened to false teachers and began</p>			
<p>The Apostolic Writings as Scriptures in CE 97</p> <p>Anciently circulated in four sections each a separate codex the apostles defined the canon for all ages of the Church of God. With the three sections of the Hebrew Scriptures the Bible then consisted of seven sections.</p>			
<p>I. The Gospels (the memoirs of the apostles)</p>			
Matthew	41	Matthew	Judea
Mark	69	John Mark	Babylon
Luke	58	Luke	Caesarea
John	85-89	John	Ephesus
<p>II. The Acts of the Apostles & The General Epistles (the historical writings)</p>			
The Acts of the Apostles	62	Luke	Rome
The General Epistles			
James	60	James	Jerusalem
1 Peter	68	Peter	Babylon
2 Peter	75	Peter	Babylon
John	80s	John	Ephesus

to	II John	80s	John	Ephesus
look	III John	80s	John	Ephesus
for	Jude	70s or 80s	Jude	unknown
new	III. The Pauline Epistles (the apostles' leaders)			
and	Letters Addressed to Specific Churches			
new	Romans	57 Winter	Paul	Corinth
ideas	Corinthians	56 Spring	Paul & Sosthenes	Ephesus
Data	II Corinthians	56 Summer	Paul & Timothy	Philippi
illustrating	Galatians	49 Fall	Paul	Antioch of Syria
this	Ephesians	58 Summer	Paul	Caesarea
phenomenon	Philippians	58 Spring	Paul & Timothy	Caesarea
is	Colossians	58 Summer	Paul & Timothy	Caesarea
set	I Thessalonians	50 Summer	Paul, Silvanus, & Timothy	Corinth
forth	II Thessalonians	51	Paul, Silvanus, & Timothy	Corinth
in	An-addressed Letter for the Church-at-Large			
the	Revelation	67 Summer	Paul	Corinth
2	Letters Addressed to the Ministry			
and	Timothy	62 Summer	Paul	Philippi
3	II Timothy	67 Fall	Paul	Rome
account	Philemon	62 Summer	Paul	Philippi
of	IV. Revelation (the state of the Church of God)			
the	past, present, and future)			
several	congregations	ca. 96	John	Ephesus

in Asia Minor. The Church entered a period where local overseers, or "**bishops**," became increasingly autonomous as did doctrinal understanding. From a Judeo-Christian perspective apostasy continued to develop, particularly in the West.

With the book of Revelation John closed the canon of the New Testament and circulated the book of Revelation throughout the Judeo-Christian congregations of Asia Minor. Presumably the apostle John died of old age and natural causes. His successor is unknown.

The traditions of Greco-Roman Christianity suggest Byzantine bishop Polycarp of Smyrna, the acknowledged leader of the Gentile Greco-Roman bishops in the east but not of the Judeo-Christian bishops, as John's successor. There is no verifiable

reliable evidence in support of this idea although some data certainly suggests Polycarp's theology was more in common with Greco-Roman Gentile theology than with the Judeo-Christianity of the apostle John. The point is that it was self-serving for Orthodox Byzantines like the ardent Nicene Eusebius to link Polycarp with the apostle John in order to certify themselves. Some Protestant groups have latched onto the John-Polycarp connection in order to establish an apostolic succession link within their own denominational history in order to avoid any linkage between their groups and the Roman Catholic Church (see [McGoldrick 1994](#)).^{F3}

^{F1}"Indeed, "according to Harry Y. Gamble," it was apparently the aim of each Gospel writer to offer an adequately comprehensive document which would stand on its own" ([Gamble 1985:24](#)).

^{F2}The Book of Revelation is ascribed to the apostle John by all early writers. See [Justin Martyr, *Dialog with Trypho* 81](#), [Roberts and Donaldson 1987:240](#)).

^{F3}McGoldrick, an anti-successionist providing a fairly detailed review of the literature, deals with the issue of the true Church existing in every period of history in the Christian era independently from the Roman Catholic Church. A. N. Dugger and C. O. Dodd illustrate a denominational account of successionism as generally understood in the seventh day Churches of God ([Dugger and Dodd 1972](#)) as does Herman L. Hoeh for the Radio Church of God and its Church of God predecessors ([Hoeh 1959](#)).

Taken from *The First Christians* by Michael P. Germano and edited for the worldwide web.
Copyright ©1992, 1993, 1995, 1996, 2000 by Michael P. Germano. All Rights Reserved.

Page last edited: 01/28/06
05:24 AM

Thank you for visiting BiBARCH™
Please Visit Our Site Often



Rated in the
**Top 10% of
Websites**
by WebsMostLinked

Rated Outstanding and **best** starting



Chosen by librarians at O'Keefe Library, St. Ambrose University, for inclusion in **The Best Information on the Net.**

web/internet resource by the

