

THIRD PETER

A HYPOTHETICAL TEXT

Written by:
ROBERT C. FERRELL

www.Scriptural-Truth.com

Biblical scholars have long noted that there is a great deal of similarity between the letters of 2 Peter and Jude. In fact, there are only 7 verses in the entire letter of Jude that do not have a noticeable parallel in 2 Peter. (vss.3,4,14,15,16,22,&23) This means that fully 72% of the verses in the letter of Jude have been incorporated into the structure of 2 Peter.

The question then becomes: why? What could Peter be trying to communicate to us by incorporating so much of Jude's letter into his own? The answer may be surprisingly simple: what we are supposed to do is finish the job. We may easily combine the two letters in such a way that a third letter can be produced.

If, indeed, it can be demonstrated that the two letters "fit together" then what significance is there in doing so? Before I get into the deeper issues, I will attempt to establish that there are many passages in Peter's letter that make a great deal of sense if seen in this light. In 2 Peter 1:12, the Apostle tells us that he will "always remind [us] of these things..." as if to let us know that we (in the future) will need to be reminded about something that we were once firmly established in. Again, in verse 13 he uses the words: "I think it right that I refresh your memory". In verse 15, Peter even goes so far as to say: "And I will take the necessary steps to ensure that after I am gone you will forever be able to call these things to mind." This statement strongly implies that there will be a need to be reminded about something, and Peter will see to it that we are able to remember whatever it is he is talking about.

In verse 16, Peter says: "We were not devisers of cunningly

concocted stories when we related to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,". Unless he thought he might be attacked on the grounds that his stories were somehow "cunningly concocted", it would have been pointless to include such a statement. It seems likely that there is some clever design behind his letter, but he makes it clear in verses 20 & 21 that this cleverness would not have its origin with him, but rather with the Holy Spirit.

Another key point in Peter's letter is knowledge. What knowledge is he talking about? In 2 Pet 2:20 the author says: "If they have escaped the corruption of this world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are caught up again in it and overwhelmed, they are ultimately worse off than they were prior to knowing anything." Whatever this knowledge may be, not having it seems to allow us to be entangled in worldliness. The answer is implicit in verse 2:21: "It would have been better for them not to have had knowledge of the righteous path, than to have known it and turned away from the holy ordinance that was passed on to them." We seem to have lost the "way of righteousness" when we turned our backs on the "holy ordinance that was passed on to [us]." Was there any point in the history of the Church when we rejected any "holy ordinances? The answer will become obvious as this letter unfolds.

Peter tells us plainly in chapter 3 verses 1 & 2 that "...by this time, my beloved, this has become my second letter to you. I have written two of them in order to restore you to your earlier thinking and to stimulate you to wholesome thought." It is normally understood that his first letter to us was 1 Peter, which is true enough, but it is possible in light of the fact that another letter can be produced between this second letter and Jude, that this verse may have a double meaning - which would serve the purpose of "stimulating [us] to wholesome thinking." Verse 2 tells us what this "wholesome thinking" is: "I want you to call to mind the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets, as well as the command of our Lord and Savior given through your apostles." The

emphasis on the prior way of thinking seems to underscore the fact that this is an antidote for a people who will have abandoned the original understanding of the Scriptures as a result of entanglements in worldly affairs.

Let us now move on to Jude. Jude's stated purpose for writing to us is very much the same as Peter's. Verse 3 reads: "Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints." In other words, there is some kind of teaching that was handed down to us that we must fight for. This would tie in nicely with Peter's desire for us to "call to mind the words that were spoken in the past by the holy prophets as well as the injunction given us by our Lord and Savior through his apostles." What is this teaching, then, that was lost? What was entrusted to us? What commands did the Church reject? Why did Peter (or rather the Holy Spirit) choose to structure his whole letter around the book of Jude?

The reason is that Jude is unique. Jude has one feature which distinguishes it from all other books in the Bible. Jude deliberately and openly uses apocryphal books in his argument to illustrate why we need to "contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints." One of these books, called the Book of Enoch, was very popular and widely read among early Christians. It was, nevertheless, rejected by the early Church Fathers. The problem is: how can it be that Jude is authentic, and Enoch apocryphal? In verse 14, Jude says "Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men." Evidently, Jude not only believes that Enoch is a prophet, but also that that document is very ancient, because he calls him the seventh from Adam. In verse 9, Jude quotes another apocryphal source, which we do not currently have, but is believed by some to be a work called the Assumption of Moses. Peter alludes to this verse in 2 Peter 2:11, but falls short of quoting it explicitly. This has led biblical scholars to conclude that Peter did not approve of apocryphal sources. The fact that he omits Enoch's prophecy

probably was the one thing that allowed the book to be lost to the entire Western world until it was found in Ethiopia in the eighteenth century, where it had been in the canon of the Ethiopic Church all along.

What is stunning about the design of this third letter is that it allows us to bring these quotes back into Peter's line of reasoning. What is even more stunning is that it allows us to construct longer, and more intricate sentences that yield surprising results. Far from being redundant, the material that Peter adds to Jude changes the sense of the words, revealing a deeper meaning, and a deeper connection between the two works. For example, 2 Peter 2:11 reads: "yet even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not bring slanderous accusations against such beings in the presence of the Lord."; and Jude 9 reads: "But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" Putting these two verses together, we derive the following verse: "But even the archangel Michael, who is stronger and more powerful, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him in the presence of the Lord, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" It might have been natural to suppose that Michael was more powerful than the devil, but how would Peter have known that they were in the presence of the Lord unless he also was familiar with the book? Jude omits the location, so Peter's revelation that this was before the Lord, like Satan's accusations of Job, reveals a much deeper insight into the book than could have been surmised simply from Jude. What we have here is two independent attestations of the book and its contents. Rather than 'watering down' the references as is often said about Peter's usage of Jude, he is as a matter of fact, cleverly elaborating upon them. If Peter was willing to reveal this much about his own knowledge of the book, is it not a subtle way of giving his tacit approval to the work? If this is intentional, the entire basis for refusing these books might be undermined by Peter himself. And if by

Peter, we are forced to conclude that this is, by extension, the design of the Holy Spirit, since 2 Peter 1:20 & 21 reads: "Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

The particular wording of 2 Peter seems to provide us with a basis for reintroducing apocryphal books into the canon. This reintroduction would have the effect - literally - of turning the world upside-down. The ramifications would be many to say the least, but the most profound effects would be felt by the Church. What if our entire theological framework is based on an incorrect assumption: that the apocryphal books are inferior to the canonical ones?

2 Peter 3:15-16 lets us know that these kinds of hints are scattered throughout Paul's writings and the rest of the Scriptures by saying: "...even as our beloved brother Paul also wrote you with his God-given wisdom. He writes this same way in all his epistles, and in them discusses these very topics. In his letters he discusses some rather difficult subjects that are not at all easy to understand, which ignoramuses and inconstant people distort to their own destruction - the same way they do all the other Scriptures."

What kind of hints do we look for? There are thousands to be sure, but let's look at just a few. In Galatians 4:22-27, Paul relates an allegory about the spiritual significance of Hagar and Sarah. He explains that Hagar represents the covenant of bondage, whereas Sarah represents the covenant of freedom. These are the Old Testament and the New Testament. This is itself a riddle, because Genesis 25:1 tells us that Abraham took another wife whose name was Keturah. The fact that she is not mentioned in Galatians gives her a fascinating characteristic. If the women are testaments, then which testament does Keturah represent? She represents one that is not mentioned. What collection of books is almost never mentioned in church services? The Apocrypha. Her name even means incense, which would correspond to an offering

acceptable to God, and her six sons would stand for the six thousand years which would have elapsed before this testament would be enforced. So in fact there are to be three testaments according to Paul's theory, not merely two, for without taking Keturah into account the explanation is incomplete.

In Hebrews 9:4 & 5, we are told that the Ark of the Covenant contained three things: the golden jar of manna, Aaron's staff which budded, and the tables of the Law. This riddle is like the previous one because the tables of the Law correspond to the Old Testament, Aaron - who was a High-Priest - represents Christ, who is our High Priest; and his staff represents his authority as messiah. Just as Aaron's authority had been called into question, and his staff was tested overnight, so Christ would come into the world in weakness and return in strength and glory. Since you have probably already guessed, the Manna represents the Apocrypha. The manna that was to be eaten on the seventh day, that is to say, at the beginning of the seventh millennium, had to be gathered on the sixth day - in twice the amount. (Ex 16:5) Jesus, moreover, tells us that this manna is hidden. (Rev 2:17) The word "Apocrypha" is derived from a Greek word meaning "hidden" or "concealed". What's more, the word 'manna' literally means, "What's that?", and many if not most Christians, not even knowing that there is such a thing will often ask "what's that?" when you mention the apocrypha!

Virtually all of Jesus' parables translate this way as well. Consider the parable of the sower as a man walking from a road to a field in a straight line. He goes from the road, which is trampled hard, to the side of the road, where the stones in the road inevitably get kicked, through a ditch, where the thorny places are, to the field, which represents the kingdom. The words that were eaten by Satan would be the apocryphal books. This lack causes gaps in our understanding which have to be filled with Theology, which is represented by stoniness. Once the stoniness sets in, the church is able to make peace with the world, which

is effected by the deceitfulness of riches. When the good soil is finally reached, the harvest will be 30, 60, or 100-fold. (See my other tract The Hidden Treasure for more on this and other parables.) I pray that other people's eyes will be opened, and will be inspired to interpret even more parables that we might all be ready when the Bridegroom comes! The wise, no doubt, will seek now to fill their lamps with oil. May God bless all who take these words to heart. Amen.

NOTE: I have underlined the Jude material so that it is more easily distinguished from the Peter material, and have bracketed the few extraneous words that needed to be added to better harmonize the two documents. I have also provided parallels in apocryphal books where they might illumine either the origin of a quote, or provide insights into the text.

THE 'THIRD' EPISTLE OF PETER:

Jude, brother of James, [and] Simon Peter, the apostle; servant[s] of Jesus Christ.

To those who have been called through the love and righteousness of God the father, and (have been) kept by our Savior Jesus Christ: (those) who have received a faith as precious as we have.

Grace, mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance by means of God's knowledge and that of our Lord Jesus.

Dearest friends, Although [we] were very eager to write to you concerning our shared salvation, [we] felt [we] had to write (also) to urge you to fight for the faith as it was once for all handed over to the saints.

His divine power has furnished us with everything we need to attain to life and godliness, by means of our knowledge of him who called us through his own glory and excellence. Through these (things), He has presented to us His very great and precious promises, in order that you might escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires; and through these things partake of the divine nature.

For this very reason, make every effort to add goodness to your faith; and knowledge to goodness; and self-control to knowledge; and perseverance to self-control; and godliness to perseverance; and brotherly kindness to godliness; and love to brotherly kindness. For if you have these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if someone doesn't exhibit them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten his cleansing from the sins of the past.

My brothers, for this reason, be all the more eager to make certain your calling and election; for if you practice these things, you will never stumble, and you will receive a lavish acceptance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Therefore I (Peter) will forever remind you of these things, even though you know them and, concerning the truth you presently hold, you are firmly grounded. As long as I live in this bodily tent, I think it is appropriate to jog your memory, because, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me, I know that I will soon put it aside. And I will make every effort to ensure that you will be capable of calling these things to mind anytime after I'm gone.

When we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, we weren't just following stories with an ingenious design, but we were eyewitnesses of his greatness. For when the voice came to him

from the Majestic Glory, he received honor and glory from God the Father, who said, "This is my dearly loved Son: I am delighted with him." When we were with him on the sacred mountain, we heard that voice coming from heaven firsthand.

Moreover, we have made the word of the prophets more certain, and you will do well if you pay attention to it as you would to a light shining on a dark place; until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

You must understand, above all else, that no scriptural prophecy is a matter for personal speculation; because prophecy was never based on any human impulse. Rather, as men were being borne aloft by the Holy Spirit, they spoke straight from God.

But false prophets were also among the people, just as among you there shall likewise be counterfeit teachers. Their sentence had already been written down a long time ago, [and] they have (already) secretly infiltrated your ranks. These men are godless, and they will secretly introduce destructive heresies, perverting our God's grace into depravity; even to the point of denying the sovereign Lord who purchased them quickly bringing themselves to utter devastation. Many will emulate their shameful pattern, bringing disgrace upon the way of truth. These teachers will greedily exploit you with stories of their own making. Their doom has been looming over them for a long time now, and their destruction has not been dormant.

Though you already know all about this, [we] want to remind you that the Lord rescued his people out of Egypt, but afterward, those who did not believe, He destroyed. Because if God didn't absolve the angels who failed to maintain their positions of authority, (and) sinned; but rather, (for) abandoning their own home, sent them to hell, placing them into dismal dungeons; keeping them bound with everlasting chains in darkness, to be detained for judgment on the great day. And if he didn't

exempt the ancient world when he brought the deluge on its ungodly people, but instead protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, as well as seven others.

And just as he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, as well as their neighboring towns for giving themselves over to sexual depravity and perversion by burning them to cinders, thereby making them an example of what shall befall the ungodly who are to suffer the punishment of eternal fire. And if he delivered Lot, a righteous man, who was troubled by the obscene lives of unruly men (you see, every day that upright man was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard while living among them.) If this is true, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from ordeals, while holding the unrighteous for judgement day, as he prolongs their punishment. This is especially true of those dreamers who pollute their own bodies (by) pursuing the sinful nature's perverse desires .

These men despise and reject authority; boldly and arrogantly, slandering heavenly beings. But even the archangel, Michael, who is stronger and more powerful, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against the devil when he was contending with him in the Lord's presence about the body of Moses, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" But these men blaspheme, speaking abusively against things they don't even understand. They are like brute beasts. They understand what they do by instinct, like unreasoning animals that are born only to be caught and destroyed. These very things are their own undoing. And they're going to die, too, just like those beasts.

For the damage they have done, they will be paid back with destruction. They get their kicks through their daytime reveling. They are stains and flaws, hidden reefs at your love feasts, indulging in their delights without any compunction even as they are eating with you; shepherds

who only feed themselves. With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable; they are experts in greed--an accursed brood!

Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain: they have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the error of Balaam son of Beor, rushing for profit and loving the wages of wickedness.

But he was rebuked for his wrongdoing by a donkey, a beast without speech, who spoke with a man's voice and restrained the prophet's madness. They have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion

These men are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. They are clouds without rain blown along by the wind; autumn trees without fruit and uprooted--twice dead. They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame: wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever. For they mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of sinful human nature, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity; for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him. If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to have turned their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them. Of them the proverbs are true: "A dog returns to its own vomit," and, "A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud."

Enoch, the seventh from Adam prophesied about these men "See the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts

they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

These men are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; They boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage.

Dear friends, this is now [our] second letter to you. We have written them both as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. We want you to recall the words that were spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles. How they foretold saying: "In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires." These are the men who divide you. who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the spirit. They will say, "Where is this `coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." But they deliberately forget that by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: with the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise as some count slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the

heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless, and at peace with him. Build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the holy spirit. Keep yourselves in love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you eternal life. Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction. Be merciful to those who doubt: snatch others from the fire and save them: to others show mercy, mixed with fear--hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.

Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall away from your secure position. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy--to the only God our savior be glory, majesty, power, and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

WHAT ARE APOCRYPHAL BOOKS?

The Bible is often called the "Book of Books" because it is comprised of numerous books as diverse in character as they are in origins. We do not, therefore, generally speak of it as "a book", but rather a collection, or canon of books. There have always been more books that claim to be

the word of God than have been included in any canon. Many books that have been found in ancient manuscripts have once held the status of "Scripture", at least among some believers. In fact, to this very day, there is no universal consensus among churches about which books are worthy of inclusion in the 'canon'. The Roman Catholic Bible includes thirteen more books, or parts of books than a standard Protestant Bible. The Greek and Russian Orthodox Churches add four more than the Catholic Bible. The Slavonic Bible adds one more to this total, and the Greek Bible adds still one more in an appendix. Who is right? This fact alone ought to be enough to illustrate that there is no clear distinction between Canonical and Apocryphal books. Yet most teachers of the word of God dare not to venture beyond what is allowed by their particular sect. In other words, man has judged himself worthy of defining what God has or has not written. The obvious conclusion is that since everyone can't be right, then most of these canons are wrong. Maybe they are all wrong. Nobody will admit it, of course, so we have a divided Church which cannot possibly be united until this issue is resolved. Sweeping the issue under the rug only serves the interest of the enemy - but sweep we do, for nearly two thousand of years. Major finds such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Nag Hammadi Codices have totally revolutionized our understanding of the scriptures, but Tradition prevents us from even considering these documents as inspired. Perhaps it is time for the Body of Christ to exorcise these demons of ignorance once and for all, by refusing to allow the traditions of men to squelch the truth. Read the following passages along with the corresponding text, and judge for yourself.

ENOCH 58:4-6; (note sequence) "They shall seek light and find righteousness with the Lord of the Spirits. Peace be to the righteous ones in the peace of the Eternal Lord! After this, it shall be told to the holy ones in heaven that they should scrutinize the mysteries of

righteousness, the gift of faith. For the sun has shined upon the earth and **darkness is over.**

There shall be light that has no end, and they shall not have to count days. For already darkness has been destroyed, light shall be permanent before the Lord of the Spirits, and the **light of uprightness** shall stand firm forever and ever before the Lord of the Spirits.

ENOCH 14:4,5: "I (Enoch) wrote down your (the Watchers') prayers - so it appeared in vision - for your prayers will not be heard throughout all the days of eternity; and judgment **is passed upon you.**

ENOCH 15:3-.5: "**For** what reason have you abandoned the high, holy, and eternal heaven; and slept with women and defiled yourselves with the daughters of the people, taking wives, **acting like the children of the earth, and begetting giant sons?"** (GEN:6:1-4) surely you, you used to be holy, spiritual, the living ones, possessing eternal life; but now **you have defiled yourselves** with women, and with the blood of the flesh begotten children, you have **lusted with the blood of the people**, like them producing blood and flesh, which die and perish. On that account I have given you wives in order that seeds might be sown upon them and children born by them, so that the **deeds that are done upon the earth will not be withheld from you."** (MT:13:24-30)

ENOCH 48:10: "On the day of their weariness, there shall be an obstacle on the earth and they shall fall on their faces; and they shall not rise up again, nor will anyone be found who will take them with his hands and raise them up. For they **have denied the Lord of the Spirits and his Messiah.** Blessed be the name of the Lord of the Spirits!"

ENOCH 104:10-13: " And now I know this mystery: for the sinners shall **alter the just verdict** and many sinners will take it to heart; they will **speak evil words and lie: and they will invent fictitious stories**

and write out my scriptures on the basis of their own words. And would that they had written down all the words **truthfully** on the basis of their own speech, and neither **alter nor take away from my words**, all of which **I** testify to them from the beginning! Again know another mystery!; that to the righteous and the wise **shall be given the Scriptures of joy, for truth and great wisdom. So to them shall be given the Scriptures; and they shall believe them and be glad in them;** and all the righteous ones who learn from them the ways of truth will rejoice."

ENOCH 15:6,7: "Indeed you, you **used to be spiritual, having eternal life, and immortal in all the generations of the world.** That is why I formerly did not make wives for you, for **the dwelling of the spiritual beings of heaven is heaven.**"

ENOCH 10:4-6: ". . .the Lord said to Raphael, "Bind Azazel hand and foot and throw him into the desert which is in Dudael and cast him there; he threw on top of him rugged and sharp rocks. And he covered his face in order that he may not see light; and in order that he may be sent into the fire on the great day **of judgment.**"

ENOCH 10:13,14: "In those days, they will lead them into the bottom of the fire--and **in torment--in the prison** where they will be locked up forever. And at the time when they will burn and die, those who collaborated with them will be bound together with them from henceforth unto the end of all generations."

ENOCH 46:7,8: "And they have become the judges of the stars of heaven; they raise their hands to reach the Most High while walking upon the earth and dwelling in her. They manifest all their deeds in oppression; all their deeds are oppression. Their power depends upon their wealth. And their devotion is to the gods which they have

fashioned with their own hands. But they deny the name of the Lord of the Spirits. **Yet** they like to congregate **in** his houses and with the faithful ones who cling **to the Lord of the Spirits.**" ENOCH 22:6,7: "This spirit, the voice of which is reaching into heaven like this and is making suit, whose spirit is it? And he answered me, saying, "This is the spirit which had left Abel, whom Cain, his brother, had killed; it continues to sue him until all of Cain's seed is exterminated from the face of the earth, and his seed has disintegrated from among the seed of **the people.**"

PSEUDO-PHILO 18:12-14:And my prophecy will remain public, and my words will live on. And the wise and understanding will remember my words that, when I cursed, I perished, but though I blessed, I was not blessed. On saying these words he grew silent. And Balak said, "Your God has cheated you **of many** gifts from me." And then Balaam said to him, "Come and **let us** plan what **you** should do **to** them. Pick out the beautiful women who are among us and in Midian, and station them naked and adorned with gold and precious stones before them. And when they see them and lie with them, they will sin against their Lord and fall into your hands; for otherwise **you** cannot fight against them." And on saying this, Balaam turned away and returned to his place. And afterward the people were seduced after the daughters of Moab. For Balak did everything that Balaam had showed him."

ENOCH 18:10-16: (See also En 21 & 108; This is actually a BLACK HOLE.) "...And I saw what was inside those mountains--a place beyond the great earth, where the heavens come together. And I saw a deep **pit** with heavenly fire an its pillars; I saw inside them descending pillars **of** fire that were immeasurable in respect to both altitude and depth. And on top of that pit I saw a place without the heavenly firmament above it or earthly foundation under it or water. There was nothing on it--not

even birds--but it was a desolate and terrible place. And I saw there seven stars which were like great burning mountains Then the angel said to me, `This place **is the ultimate end of heaven** and earth; it is the prison house for the stars and the powers of heaven. And the stars which roll over upon the fire, they are the ones which have transgressed the commandments of God from the beginning of their rising because they did not arrive punctually. And he was wroth with them and bound them until the time of the completion of their sin in the year of mystery." THE STORY OF AHIQAR 7:27: "O my son! You have been to me like the **pig who went into the hot bath** with people of quality, and when it came out of the hot bath, **it saw a filthy hole and it went down and wallowed in it.**"

ENOCH 1:9: "Behold, he will surely come with ten thousand times a thousand of the holy ones in order to execute judgment upon all. He will destroy the wicked ones and censure all flesh on account of everything that they have done, that which the sinners and the wicked ones committed against him." ENOCH 27:2: "Then Uriel, one of the holy angels, who was with me, answered me and said to me, `This accursed valley is for those accursed forever; here will gather together all those accursed ones, those who speak with their mouths unbecoming words against the Lord and utter harsh words concerning his glory."

ENOCH 1:3-8: (note sequence) "The god of the universe, the Holy Great One, will come forth from his dwelling. And from there he will march upon Mount Sinai and appear in his camp emerging from heaven with a mighty power And everyone shall be afraid, and the Watchers (see Gen 6:1-4) shall quiver. And great fear and trembling shall seize them unto the ends of the earth. Mountains and high places will fall down and be frightened. And high hills shall be made low; and they shall melt like a honeycomb before the flame. And the earth shall be

rent asunder and all that is upon the earth shall perish. And there shall be a judgment upon all, including the righteous."

ENOCH 45:4&5: "On that day, I shall cause my Elect One to dwell among them, I shall transform the heaven and make it a blessing of light forever. I shall also transform the earth and make it a blessing, and cause my Elect One to dwell in her. Then those who have committed sin and crime shall not set foot in her." But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

BARNABAS 15:3-7: "He speaks of the Sabbath at the beginning of creation: `And God made in six days the works of his hands, and when He had completed them, He rested on the seventh day and sanctified it.' Notice, children, what He means by the words `He completed them in six days.' He means this: in six thousand years (after 1997, according to Ussher's chronology) the Lord will make an end of all things; for in His reckoning, the day means a thousand years. He is Himself my witness when He says: `Behold, a day of the Lord is as a thousand years. (Ps 90:4) Therefore, my children, in six days--in the course of six thousand years--all things will be brought to an end. `And He rested on the seventh day. This is the meaning: when His Son returns, He will put an end to the era of the Lawless One, judge the wicked, and change the sun, moon, and the stars. Then on the seventh day, He will properly rest. Furthermore He says: `You shall sanctify it clean of hand and heart.' Consequently, if anyone is able at present to sanctify, clean of heart, the day on which God has sanctified it, then we are the victims of deception. Consider: we shall, as it appears, properly rest and sanctify it then only when we are able to do so after being ourselves justified, and

having received the promised blessing; when there is no more iniquity, and all things have been made new by the Lord, then at last shall we be able to sanctify it, because we have first been sanctified ourselves."

But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: with the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise as some count slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

And Enoch, The Seventh From Adam Also Prophesied

Science & Mystery in the First Book of Enoch

Copyright 2002, by Robert C. Ferrell
All Rights Reserved

Shortly after I became a Christian, I decided to read The Bible from cover to cover. One day, I was reading in Deuteronomy, and I became curious about God's dietary laws; why were some foods considered "clean" and others considered "unclean"? Later that day I happened to be in a bookstore, and a certain book caught my eye. It was called the "Lost Books of the Bible." Curious, I picked it up and opened it, and I immediately saw the word, "Deuteronomy". As I scanned the verses surrounding it, I realized that I had opened it right to the answer to this very question. This sort of experience was not new to me, because God had answered many of my questions this way in the past, and I had come to believe that this was one of the ways God speaks to us. But this time it was different - this wasn't The Bible, but a book that was rejected by early Church theologians. I wasn't sure if this was a sign or just a coincidence, but felt I had to buy the book anyway. I grew to really like what these books had to say, but I still had to wrestle with my conscience, because I wasn't too sure if these books were inspired, or were just brilliant fictions. I finally grew to love them so much that I just didn't care anymore, I had come to learn so much from them that I simply began to accept their inspiration on their own merits.

The years passed, and then it happened. I was reading the First Book of Enoch, and all of a sudden I realized that what I was reading could not have been fiction. I was absolutely sure that what had been written in these pages could not have been the ramblings of an overzealous pseudoprophet. What I read I read over and over again, and the more I read it, the more certain I became about my conclusion. What

I was reading was a perfectly scientific description of a **BLACK HOLE!**

This account is taken from 1 ENOCH chapter 21: "And I came to an Empty place And I saw there neither a heaven above nor an earth below, but a chaotic and terrible place. And there I saw seven stars of heaven bound together in it, like great mountains, and burning with fire. At that moment I said, "For which sin are they bound, and for what reason were they cast in here?" Then one of the holy angels, Uriel, who was with me, guiding me, spoke to me and said to me, "Enoch, for what reason are you asking and for what reason do you question and exhibit eagerness? These are among the stars of heaven which have transgressed the commandments of the Lord and are bound in this place until the completion of ten million years, according to the number of their sins." I then proceeded from that area to another place which is even more terrible and saw a terrible thing: a great fire that was burning and flaming: the place had a cleavage that extended to the last sea, pouring out great pillars of fire; neither its extent nor its magnitude could I see nor was I able to estimate. At that moment (I said), 'what a terrible opening is this place and a pain to look at!' Then Ura'el, one of the holy angels who was with me responded and said to me, Enoch, why are you afraid like this?' (I answered and said), 'I am frightened because of this terrible place and the spectacle of this painful thing.' And he said unto me, 'This place is the prison house of the angels; they are detained here forever.'

A black hole is the final stage of a star's life; if the star had at least three solar masses. Some black holes are much larger, containing millions, or even billions of solar masses. There isn't any limit to how enormous they can become - especially if they are well fed by stars near the center of a galaxy. A super massive black hole, such as are believed to lurk at the centers of radio galaxies tend to spew out huge **PILLARS** of radiation - some as far as 6000 light-years, or even more! Our entire galaxy is only about 100,000 light-years across, so the two ascending

and descending pillars of radiation could add up to a total of 12,000 light-years across.

A super massive black hole would be surrounded by stellar and interstellar material, such as dust, and other stars. One example of a black hole having captured a star is Cygnus X-1, the star seems to be orbiting absolutely nothing at all, but is in fact losing much of its mass in its fatal attraction.

A black hole has at its center what is called a ‘singularity’, which has an incredible mass and an infinite gravitational force, but is infinitely small. So great is its pull, that the space around it is bent to infinity, and even light cannot escape. Everything that passes a certain point, called the event horizon, is doomed; it is the threshold beyond which there is absolutely no possibility that anything could escape.

The material that surrounds it forms a white-hot spiraling feature called an accretion disk. In some cases, this whirling mass can outshine its entire galaxy a hundred fold. It is paradoxical, but even though no light can escape from a black hole, its accretion disk can be extremely bright.

Now that we have the black hole basics down, we can interpret Enoch’s vision. The EMPTY PLACE, which is CHAOTIC and does not have a heaven ABOVE or an earth BELOW is OUTER SPACE. Space is almost completely empty, and it can be called CHAOTIC because there are constantly at work cycles of stellar and planetary birth and death. There is, moreover no ‘up’ or ‘down’ in space - all directions are relative to one another.

The GREAT FIRE that was burning and flaming corresponds to the ACCRETION DISK that surrounds and feeds it. The CLEAVAGE is the bending of the space-time to infinity. If one imagines space-time as a rubber sheet, this bending of time and space would resemble the kind of funnel that would be the result of a long stick pushing down the center of it. The bending is so extreme, and the forces so vast, that science does not even have physics adequate to describe it just yet. All

current laws of physics and quantum mechanics break down, and as yet unknown laws of quantum gravity take over. Time and space literally go out of existence within the singularity. It is an ending point - an infinitesimal boundary to the universe.

The LAST SEA is the SINGULARITY. Under the new physics of quantum gravity, this singularity is somehow a seething mass of something called 'QUANTUM FOAM'. It is chaotic and not well understood as of yet, but one can see that it would correspond nicely with the word 'sea', since the sea is both fluid and somewhat chaotic.

The GREAT PILLARS of FIRE would correspond to the immense radiation jets that spew out from it in both directions perpendicular to the accretion disk. The fact that Enoch goes on to state that he could neither estimate its extent nor its magnitude lets us know that the forces at work in it are infinite and impossible to describe or even imagine.

Another account of this black hole is given in chapter 18, verses 10-16. "...a place beyond the great earth, where the heavens come together. And I saw a deep pit with heavenly fire on its pillars; I saw inside them descending pillars of fire that were immeasurable in respect to both altitude and depth. And on top of that pit I saw a place without the heavenly firmament above it or earthly foundation under it or water. There was nothing on it - not even birds - but it was a desolate and terrible place. and I saw there the seven stars which were like great burning mountains. Then the angel said to me, 'This place is the ultimate end of heaven and earth: it is the prison house for the stars and the pillars of heaven. and the stars which roll over upon the fire, they are the ones which have transgressed the commandments of God from the beginning of their rising because they did not arrive punctually. And He was wroth with them and bound them until the time of the completion of their sin in the year of mystery.'"

The fact that this place is BEYOND THE GREAT EARTH firmly establishes its location in outer space. When it says that it is the place where the HEAVENS COME TOGETHER it indicates that it is a

boundary to the fabric of space and time. The DEEP PIT is the infinite bending of time and space that occurs beyond the event horizon. Again, the PILLARS are the radiation jets that ‘pour out’ of it. The fact that stars (a codeword for the fallen angels) are in orbit around it correctly indicates that stars can be, and often are captured by black holes. The image of the STARS ROLLING correctly reflects the fact that stars rotate as they orbit it.

A third account of this black hole is found in chapter 108, verses 3-6.

“...for there is not ground there as upon the earth. I also saw something like an invisible cloud; and though I could see that it was completely dark, yet I could see the flame of its fire because it was burning brightly; and there were some things like bright mountains which formed a ring around it and were sweeping to and fro. Then I asked one of the angels who was with me, saying to him, ‘What is this bright thing? For it is not a heaven but merely the flame of a fire which is burning - and a voice of weeping, crying and lamenting as well as strong pain.’ and he said unto me, ‘this place which you see, into it shall be taken the spirits of sinners, blasphemers, those who do evil, and those who alter all the things which the Lord has done through the mouth of the prophets, all of which have to be fulfilled.

Once again, we see that there is no ground there, The INVISIBLE CLOUD could be referring to interstellar dust and gas; these would obscure his ability to see it clearly. It is truly amazing that he says that it was COMPLETELY DARK, but that he could see the FLAME OF ITS FIRE BECAUSE IT WAS BURNING BRIGHTLY! The black hole itself would be COMPLETELY DARK, and its accretion disk would be BURNING BRIGHTLY! Scientists have long known that the only way we could ever see a black hole would be indirectly, such as seeing a star in orbit around it, or by an accretion disk. The things like bright mountains form a RING around it, and they (the stars) SWEEP TO AND FRO - they are clearly in orbit around it!

After coming to the conclusion that this was really big news, I

wrote up a few pages about it and mailed them out to local churches, as well as a few of the nationwide ministries, but only got one response, and that by a person who held that if it came from an apocryphal source it wouldn't be worth his time to look at it. Only now do I see that it was probably for the best, since I've come to find another wrinkle in this mystery. These chapters can be combined in such a way as to form a coherent **FOURTH CHAPTER**, which is comprised of all three without having to alter the sequence of any of the verses in any of the chapters.

The combined material reads as follows: "...and I came to an empty place, beyond the great earth, where the heavens come together. and I saw a deep pit with heavenly fire upon its pillars; I saw inside them descending pillars of fire that were immeasurable in respect to both altitude and depth. And on top of that pit I saw a place without the heavenly firmament above it or earthly foundation under it or water. There was nothing on it - not even birds - but it was a chaotic, desolate and terrible place. For there is not ground there as upon the earth.

I also saw something like an invisible cloud; and though I could see that it was completely dark yet I could see the flame of its fire because it was burning brightly; and there were some things like bright mountains which formed a ring around it and were sweeping to and fro. And there I saw the seven stars of heaven bound together in it, (which were like great mountains), and burning with fire.

At that moment I said, 'For which sin are they bound, and for what reason were they cast in here?' Then one of the holy angels, Uriel, who was with me, guiding me, spoke to me and said to me, 'Enoch, for what reason are you asking and for what reason do you question and exhibit eagerness? These are among the stars of heaven that have transgressed the commandments of the Lord and are bound in this place until the completion of ten million years, according to the number of their sins. I then proceeded from that place to another place which is even more terrible, and saw a terrible thing: a great fire that was burning and flaming; the place had a cleavage that extended to the last sea, pouring

out great pillars of fire; neither its extent nor its magnitude could I see, nor was I able to estimate. Then I said, ‘What a terrible opening is this place and a pain to look at!’

Then I asked one of the holy angels who was with me saying to him, ‘What is this bright thing? For it is not a heaven, but merely the flame of a fire which is burning - and a voice of weeping, crying, and lamenting as well as strong pain.’

Then Ura’el, one of the holy angels who was with me, responded and said to me, ‘Enoch, why are you afraid like this?’ I answered and said, ‘I am frightened because of this terrible place and the spectacle of this painful thing.’ Then the angel said to me, ‘This place which you see is the ultimate end of heaven and earth. It is the prison house of the angels; the stars and the powers of heaven; they are detained here forever. Into it shall be taken the spirits of sinners, blasphemers, those who do evil, and those who alter all the things which the Lord has done through the mouth of the prophets, all of which have to be fulfilled.

And the stars which roll over upon the fire, they are the ones which have transgressed the commandments of God from the beginning of their rising because they did not arrive punctually. and He was wroth with them and bound them until the time of the completion of their sin in the year of mystery.”

The fact that a fourth account of this black hole can easily be produced suggests that it was written with this intent by someone very clever. The fact that the object described in it accurately reflects a black hole both in terms of structure and function suggests that God really did inspire Enoch to write it precisely in this manner, in order to keep it a mystery. The order in which Enoch describes this object also betrays a complete knowledge of a black hole. Notice that at first his description of it is from a distance - from a vantage point where he can take it all in at once. He sees the PIT, then the HEAVENLY FIRES on its PILLARS; and he could see that there was nothing but EMPTY SPACE both above and below it.

He then is able to describe the ACCRETION DISK in detail; beginning with the dimmer outer edge of GAS and INTERSTELLAR DEBRIS which he likens to "an INVISIBLE CLOUD". He then notes the contrast between the inner disk and the hole itself by saying that it was "COMPLETELY DARK" but that it was "BURNING BRIGHTLY". He is then able to make out individual stars that surround it, most notably the "SEVEN STARS OF HEAVEN", which the angel tells him are bound in it until judgment is passed upon them. Then he proceeds to the region of the EVENT HORIZON. There he describes the most horrific aspect of this place - the BOTTOMLESS PIT! The first thing he describes here is the GREAT FIRE, (which is even more terrible than what was previously mentioned), which was BURNING and FLAMING. As the material spirals ever closer to the center, it heats up to an unimaginably high temperature. The CLEAVAGE would be the region around the event horizon where the fabric of space-time gets bent to infinity. This also is precisely the place where the great pillars of fire are said to be "POURING OUT". The immense radiation jets seem to hover just above this region, emitting powerful x-rays from the white-hot disk material.

Here he also notes that its size and power are both infinite by saying, "Neither its extent (infinite bending of space-time) nor its magnitude (infinite power of its event horizon - where even light cannot escape) could I see, nor was I able to estimate." He then tells the angel who was taking him on this journey that the "spectacle of this painful thing" frightens him; whereupon the angel tells him that this place is "the ultimate end of heaven and earth." Again, space and time as we know it go out of existence inside it.

So we see that what appears to be three loosely related chapters within the Book of Enoch combine to form a picture of Enoch and several angels actually approaching this black hole and getting progressively nearer to it. In modern terminology we would call this a fly by; something you would expect to see in a documentary about

space rather than something from an apocryphal book. Now that I have gone about at some length explaining this, I would like to also point out that there are some being cast into the fire "who alter ALL the things which the Lord has done through the MOUTH of the PROPHETS, all of which have to be fulfilled." Notice that the word 'mouth' is singular, as if to tell us that all of the prophets spoke with one voice. 2 Peter 1:21-22 reads, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy man of GOD spake as they were moved by the HOLY SPIRIT," echoing the idea that all the prophets spoke together with one voice. What constitutes the word of God has been altered by evildoers, and they are to be judged for it!

The very next verse, Enoch 108:7, reads this way, "For some of these things were written and sealed above in heaven so that the angels may read them (the things that are written) and know that which is about to befall the sinners, the spirits of the ones who err, as well as those who defiled their bodies, revenged themselves on God, and worked together with evil people." Some of the Scriptures may have been destroyed or nullified by the earthly authorities, but the heavenly authorities know what they once said, and we are to again acquaint ourselves with them.

There are numerous places in the book of Enoch that let us know that we will understand the apocryphal books in the last days. Consider Enoch 104:10-105:2, "and now I know this mystery: for they (the sinners) shall alter the just verdict and many sinners will take it to heart; they will speak evil words and lie, and they will invent fictitious stories and write out my Scriptures on the basis of their own words. And would that they had written down ALL the WORDS TRUTHFULLY ON THE BASIS OF THEIR OWN SPEECH, and neither ALTER nor TAKE AWAY FROM MY WORDS, all of which I testify to them from the beginning! Again know another mystery!; that to the RIGHTEOUS and the WISE SHALL BE GIVEN THE SCRIPTURES OF JOY, FOR

TRUTH and GREAT WISDOM. SO TO THEM SHALL BE GIVEN THE SCRIPTURES; and they shall BELIEVE THEM and be GLAD in them; and all the RIGHTEOUS ones who learn from them the ways of truth shall rejoice."

In those days, he says, "The Lord will be patient AND CAUSE THE CHILDREN OF THE EARTH TO HEAR. Reveal it to them with your wisdom, for YOU ARE THEIR GUIDES; and a healing power upon the whole earth. Until I and MY SON are united with them forever in the upright paths in their lifetime and there shall be peace unto you. Rejoice you children of truth. AMEN."

This is pretty straightforward. The teaching is very simple, and one never needs to force an interpretation, for the Spirit of God will teach you all that you need to know, according to your desire to know. Notice how 1 John 2:24-29 lets you know that if you hold on to that which was preached from the beginning you will be taught by God. It reads, "Let that therefore abide in you which you have heard from the BEGINNING. If that which you have heard from the BEGINNING shall remain in you, you also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life. These things have I written unto you CONCERNING THEM THAT SEDUCE YOU. But the anointing which you have received of Him abideth in you, and you need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and IS TRUTH, and is NO LIE, and even as it hath taught you, you shall abide in Him. and NOW, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. If you know that He is righteous, you know that that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of Him." Now what was taught from the beginning? Any theologian who has studied the matter can tell you that many apocryphal books circulated during the early Christian era; that the Book of Enoch was not only widely read by early Christians, but also quoted as SCRIPTURE in JUDE 14-15; and that the book was

deemed 'HERETICAL' by the early Church Fathers and subsequently banned and burned until not a single copy of it was to be found in the entire Western world, until it was discovered in the CANON of the ETHIOPIAN CHURCH in 1773. What was from the beginning was the apocryphal books along with the canonical ones.

The word 'apocrypha' is derived from a Greek word meaning 'hidden' or 'secret', and was at first applied to books that contained a secret meaning; a concealed interpretation given only to trusted initiates. These were not the sort of people who strove for power and status, and hence had no say as to which books became canonized and which ones slid into oblivion. The sort of people that did manage to gain positions of power and authority are described in Jude 4, "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."

These people are the enemies of the truth, and are opposed to teaching out of the apocryphal books. Jude advises in verse 3, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was NEEDFUL for me to write unto you and EXHORT you that you should EARNESTLY CONTEND FOR the FAITH that was ONCE DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS." How do I **know that the faith** that we are supposed to earnestly fight for are the apocryphal books? In verse 9, Jude quotes a now lost apocryphal book saying, "Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil, disputed about the body of Moses, but did not dare bring against him a railing accusation, instead he said, The LORD rebuke thee. In Jude 14 & 15, Jude writes the following verses, "And ENOCH also, the seventh from Adam, PROPHESED of these, saying, 'Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches

which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.

What 'hard speeches' is Jude talking about? In verse 10, right after his quote from the apocryphal ASSUMPTION OF MOSES, he writes, "But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves." Why does Jude choose this particular location to point this out? Because the NATURAL UNDERSTANDING, finds it hard to believe in the apocryphal books and therefore seeks to dismiss them on any and all grounds possible. But what were the grounds upon which they were dismissed? Was the testing of God's word really according to spiritual criteria, or was it more carnal than spiritual?

There are usually given at least five basic criteria for the acceptance or rejection of the New Testament books: the authority of Jesus, apostolicity, Church usage, orthodoxy, and evidence of inspiration. As for the authority of Jesus, first we have to make an assumption: that somehow all of the people that passed on other traditions such as the Gospel of Thomas, or the Preaching of Peter, or the various patristic citations, or the Agrapha did not know what Jesus said, and therefore could not be trusted. Moreover, we kind of have to accept that on the testimony of people who never heard Jesus speak. And we kind of have to ignore the fact that John 21:25 says "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I SUPPOSE THAT EVEN THE WHOLE WORLD ITSELF COULD NOT CONTAIN THE BOOKS THAT SHOULD BE WRITTEN. AMEN." If there were so many things that should have been written, why weren't they? If Matthew, Mark, and Luke were able to write so much about Him, and modern scholars even admit that they used other sources, why are other works so suspect? Is it not possible that other stories and sayings were valid? There is every reason to believe that they were, or else why would John leave us with such an impression?

Luke begins his gospel this way: "Forasmuch as MANY have

taken in hand to set forth in order A declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as THEY DELIVERED THEM UNTO US, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed." Clearly, then, Luke uses other sources besides Mark. This has been known and recognized from the beginning, so why don't we take it more seriously. If you read his prologue carefully there is no indication that he is writing to correct any mistakes or falsehoods in these or other writings, only to set them in order so that Theophilus can make better sense of them, to reassure him that they indeed do fit together.

As for apostolicity, this criterion was and is too nebulous and contradictory to have any validity whatsoever, since many works that claimed to have apostolic authorship were rejected anyway, and others were accepted into the canon whose apostolic claims were seriously in dispute. Among the more 'dubious' works were Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John, Jude, and Revelation. Any or all of these might never have made it into the canon because each had its detractors. Some have even felt the need to ascribe 'apostolic lineage' to the letter to the Hebrews - asserting that Paul wrote it. Maybe he did, and maybe he didn't, but there is no indication that he did - and he did claim authorship for all of his other letters, so why disown Hebrews? This is all speculation.

As for Church usage, there is little doubt that some churches frequently read books such as The Shepherd of Hermas, The Didache, Barnabas, and 1 Clement. While churches in the West were slow to accept Hebrews, churches in the East didn't even use Revelation. It would seem that some of these so-called 'spurious' books died hard, while others that did make the cut only barely got in. As for orthodoxy, this has a rather subjective dimension, but might have been the criterion

with the most going for it. Clearly we cannot accept works that are diametrically opposed to the accepted works. To say that Jesus was not the one who died on the cross, or that he was not the Son of God, for instance, would not only conflict with the other Scriptures, but undermine their credibility if accepted. Even so, there were many rejected books that could not really be categorized in this way. We also must make certain allowances for style, since many apocryphal Acts, Letters, or Stories might have once been understood as allegories or parables. In other words, they might have been ‘religious fictions’ which like parables do not have to be taken literally. Many Catholic scholars accept books such as Judith and Tobit on this basis, whereas many Protestants do not. So it is evident that if we cannot make this issue any clearer today, can we really assume that they could have then. Were there not power struggles then as there are today? Were there not divisions on theological issues then just as are there are today? Did not people stake their public reputations on issues of doctrine then as they do today? Did not many people run the risk of loss or excommunication back then? The Church could be ‘heavy handed’ at times, to say the least. ‘Heresy’ came to mean simply anything that the Church did not approve of for any reason or no reason.

All of which brings us to inspiration. As far as I can tell, this means that people could ‘just tell’ if they were or were not inspired; that there was a general agreement between people who ‘just felt that way.’ I personally do not deny the witness of the Holy Spirit. Every day I feel the presence of the Spirit - guiding me, teaching me, correcting me. All people who know that Jesus loves them and paid the price for them have the witness of the Holy Spirit. But I am also quite sure that those who believed the Shepherd of Hermas, or Barnabas, or the Didache were inspired felt that same way, or else they would not have been so hard to get rid of. The point is that none of these criteria conclusively PROVE anything either apart or taken together. So the usual recourse is to simply accept things the way they are, or at least not rock the boat by

asserting otherwise.

I believe that we are all in for a big surprise. When it can be plainly seen that a black hole is described in Enoch, we should realize that we would have been wise to have taken Jude at his word that Enoch was a prophet. If the powers that rejected that book were really of such high moral character, why would they call God a liar by saying that Enoch was not a prophet even though Jude unequivocally says that he was? If we cannot take God at His word, then what business do we have calling ourselves 'believers'? Whose word should we take; God's or men's. We have given precedence to the teachings of men over the word of God. If I were to come to you saying something like "...God did not love the world, and did not send His only begotten Son into the world..." surely I would be branded an 'evildoer' and nobody would listen to me. But if I were to come to you saying that Jude was a bit misguided in quoting at least two apocryphal sources, and I don't think we ought to point this out to the congregation, or even back him up, then I could probably take my seat next to the other great theological pundits who have and still do say such things.

I do not believe that God is going to fault me for taking Him at His word. He might, however have something to say to those who do not. Matthew 5:18 & 19 reads: "For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Now let us read what doing the commandments consists of; John 6:28 & 29 reads: "Then said they unto Him, What shall we do that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." So if we fail to place our trust in Him, we cannot be doing the works of God. One can plainly see that if Enoch and other apocryphal works are inspired, and we know

this by 'believing on Him whom He has sent,' then the work of God would be to make this known.

Can I prove it? Yes, I believe that it can be adequately demonstrated through the Scriptures. Perhaps the greatest single piece of evidence I can offer is the curious relationship between the letters of 2 Peter and Jude. In another work, I demonstrated how God revealed to me that these two letters can be combined to form a third letter. One day, when I was pondering their curious similarity, it dawned on me that some of the similar material within them could be combined to make more sense. As I worked on these passages I realized that not just these sections, but the entire text of both letters could be arranged logically into a larger, clearer work. It then became apparent to me that this phenomenon could not have been some kind of accident because everything about it pointed to a deliberate design. First of all, Jude has at least two clear references to apocryphal books, and many more that are very close - especially to the book of Enoch. 2 Peter 1:21,22 on the other hand, contains the following quote: "...knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

Naturally, if Peter went so far as to point out that this principle was crucial for understanding exactly what he was trying to tell us, the fact that he leaves out the explicit quote from Enoch cannot be considered evidence that he disapproved of the work, for he would be contradicting himself in a most overt and egregious manner to have utilized a book that itself drew upon apocryphal books in an attempt to discredit them. How could it possibly be rationalized that he was trying to water down Jude in light of the fact that this very letter contains perhaps the strongest statement anywhere in the entire Bible that all prophets were inspired and none of them ever made anything up themselves? So the implications are that if they were meant to be recombined at some future time, these quotes would then exist in the same letter, forming an

argument for their inspiration, not against it, as is often supposed. Combining the two epistles into one reveals the answer to us once and for all, and setting it up in such a way ensures that only a generation who actually heeds his advice will be able to understand this as his true message - and hence the revelation of the Holy Spirit.

If you are at all skeptical about any of this, you can easily prove it to your own satisfaction. First of all, make a photocopy of both books. Next cut them into columns and line up like with like. For example, 2 Peter 2:11 reads: "Yet even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not bring slanderous accusations against such beings in the presence of the Lord," and Jude 9 reads: "But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you!'" If you simply combine the two statements in a straightforward manner, you will derive something like the following verse: "But even the archangel Michael, though [he is] stronger and more powerful, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him in the presence of the Lord, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you!'"

What I did not elaborate on before, I can more clearly explain now. The fact that the author of 2 Peter uses this method of combining texts in such a way as to produce another one either implies that he knew that it had been done in Enoch, or else he did not know about it, but was moved to do so by the Holy Spirit, and if so, why would we blaspheme the Holy Spirit by suggesting that something it moved someone to write was not actually inspired? In other words in using this technique in defense of Jude's position not only does he endorse the book, but reveals that he almost certainly realized that the pattern was there. This would explain why he says so many peculiar things - such as "We did not follow **CLEVERLY INVENTED** stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," (2 Pet 1:16), and "...we

have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you would do well to pay attention to it," (1:19) and ‘...this has now become my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders TO STIMULATE YOU TO WHOLESOME THINKING. I want you to RECALL THE WORDS SPOKEN IN THE PAST by the HOLY PROPHETS and the command given by our LORD and SAVIOR through your APOSTLES." (2 Pet 3:1 &2)

All of these statements point to the inspiration of 1 Enoch based on the structure of the letter itself. It is a mystery which was not only known, but was given to the apostles to preach by the command of none other than the Lord Jesus! This is it then - the MYSTERY of the KINGDOM! Peter is making the WORDS OF THE PROPHETS MORE CERTAIN! He is the one Jesus promised to give the ‘KEYS OF THE KINGDOM’ to in Matthew 16:19. And it has remained hidden from us in plain sight. Hidden that is to say from our understanding.

All of this was to be revealed to us on the third day - or after 2000 years had passed and the third millennium had begun. Therefore because Jesus was born sometime around 4-6 B.C., we are already in the millennium. He is willing to reveal these things to us now. Now is the time to lift up our heads, for our redemption is drawing near.

I would like to conclude with a few thoughts from 2 Kings 22 & 23. In these chapters lies a story of Scriptures lost and then found. Chapter 22 tells of Josiah, a young king who ‘walked in all the way of David his father and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.’ Young Josiah sent to the temple for silver to give to the workers who were repairing the breaches in it - workers who, incidentally, who were of such a character that they didn’t even have to account for any of the money they received. In the process of searching for the silver to give the faithful workers, Hilkiah the high priest came across ‘the book of the law’. When Shaphan the scribe read it aloud to Josiah, he tore his clothes and immediately sent Hilkiah and some others to ‘inquire of the LORD’ concerning the prophecies contained therein; he knew God was

angry at their fathers for not having listened to the words it contained. God responded that because Josiah had a tender heart and had humbled himself before the Lord and wept, that Josiah would not see the desolation of Judah. The king, deeply moved, destroyed all the idols and images, and put away all the wizards and consulters of familiar spirits.

So we see what God's attitude will be toward those who have tender hearts, humility, and a deep sense of the enormity of ignoring God's words. We see this same sentiment expressed by Jesus in Luke 8:15; "But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience." So it is a good thing to believe God's word - even if it has been hidden away 'inside His temple'. He did not criticize him at all for listening to the words of a book that had been hidden for a long time, but BLESSED him instead for giving heed to it. God had mercy on him because he read it and took it seriously. There, we have a precedent - and it is no accident that we have been given this account in all of its details. God was about to bring His wrath down on the people of Judah and Jerusalem, but arranged for a man of tender heart to be king - to demonstrate how He would save us from His wrath. incidentally, the book that Hilkiyah found is believed by some to be the book of Deuteronomy, which means 'the second telling of the law.' Are our hearts as pure as Josiah's? Will we humble ourselves before our master? Will we listen to the hidden Scriptures? Josiah did and we have this testimony of him: "and he did what was right in the sight of the Lord."

THE PETER PRINCIPLE
&
THE KEYS TO THE KINGDOM.

Copyright 2002 by Robert C. Ferrell,

All Rights Reserved.

What is the *Peter Principle*? The *Peter Principle* is a key that unlocks many a parable. It is, in fact, the key to understanding the *Church* and its history. *Jesus* himself establishes this principle in Matthew 16:18&19 when He says "And I say also to you (Simon) that you are *Peter*, and upon this 'rock' (Greek - Petros) I will build my *Church*; and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. And I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven to you, and whatever you bind on the earth shall be, having been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on the earth shall be, having been loosed in the heavens." These words have often been misunderstood as meaning that the Church must be able to trace its *apostolic* lineage through Peter. Apostolic succession is not what is meant by these verses. It is easy to gloss over the fact that 'Simon' and not 'Peter' was this apostle's original name, so had the emphasis been upon the individual, certainly this would have been mentioned in some other way, or at least some other context. This is not, in fact, where Jesus first attributes this title to Simon. In John 1:42, It reads, "And he (Andrew) brought him (Simon) to Jesus. And when he beheld him, he said, 'Thou art Simon, son of Jona: and thou shalt be called Cephas,' which is by interpretation, a *stone*." Clearly then, Jesus foresees this moment long before it happens, so the emphasis is upon the circumstances under which 'Peter' would be named. Jesus relates Simon to the word Peter, which means 'rock', and then He relates the word 'rock' to the Church. Naturally this is not Jesus naming Peter per se, but is rather underscoring the fulfillment of his name, which was

only effected by his recognition of Jesus as the Christ. When we go back to the original reason why Jesus calls Simon a 'rock', it is because he listened to his Father in heaven (v.17). So it is this "listening to the father" that is the 'rock', and consequently it is this "listening to the Father" that is the foundation of the Church.

So the Church is not founded on the basis of Apostolic lineage, nor Peter, but upon listening to the Father. And just as Peter is given the keys of the kingdom by listening, so the church after him. The *Church* and *Peter* are synonyms in the language of the parables. When we see the name '*Peter*' in a parable, we are to substitute the word '*Church*'. As you might imagine, once you get started, you will be able to discern other keys as well, until you come to understand the mystery of the kingdom.

I KNOW NOT, NEITHER UNDERSTAND I WHAT THOU SAYEST

A good parable to start with is Peter's three denials of Jesus. In John 1:1-5, we read: "In the beginning was the word, and the word was toward God, and the word was God. This One was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and without Him came into being not even one thing that came into being. In Him was life, and this life was the light of men, and the light is shining in the darkness, and darkness did not overtake it." And in verse 14, we read: "And the word became flesh and tabernacled among us...." So we know in parabolic language, Jesus is the WORD.

When we apply these rules to Peter's denials of Jesus, the parabolic meaning becomes: the *Church* (Peter) will have denied the *Word* (Jesus) three times before the return of Christ. Mark 14:53-72 gives an interesting account of these denials. "And they led Jesus (the word) away to the high priest: and with him were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the canon-lawyers. And Peter (the church) followed him at a distance even into the palace of the high priest: and he sat with the servants and warmed himself at the fire. And the chief priests and all the council (children of the Devil - John 8:44) sought for

witnesses against Jesus (the word) to put him (it) to death; and found none. For many bare false witness against him (it) but their witness agreed not together. (i.e. the basis for rejecting certain books was unfounded, and deliberately trumped-up.) And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him (it) saying, we heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands (the 'natural' church) and within three days (i.e. in the third millennium) I will build another made without hands. (i.e. the undefiled church.) But neither so did their witness agree together. And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus (the word) saying, Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee? But he (the word) held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest (Satan) asked him and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am: and you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of Power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. (His saints are the clouds - see Jude 14,15.)

Then the high priest rent his clothes and saith, what need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? (i.e. Let's put the word to the test, and see if it really comes to pass.) And they all condemned him (the word) to be guilty of death. And some began to spit on him and to cover his face and to buffet him and to say unto him, Prophecy: and the servants (the demons) did strike him with the palms of their hands. (the word was abused, hidden, destroyed, etc.)

And as Peter (the church) was beneath in the palace, there cameth one of the maids of the high priest (to accuse the Church of adhering to the word): and when she saw Peter warming himself, (i.e. seeking to be comfortable during a very trying time in church history) she looked upon him and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth (i.e. the word of the kingdom. See Mk 14:28, and realize that Galilee here represents the kingdom - where we will be reunited with Jesus - the millennium - a time, not a location.) But he denied, saying I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest (the church claimed neither to

know, nor understand the word of the kingdom). And he went out onto the porch; and the cock crew. (meaning this event took place before the first millennium.) And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, this is one of them (i.e. those who adhere to the entirety of God's word). And he denied it again. (This was in the 17th century when the Protestants by consensus removed the Apocrypha from the canon. Note Matthew 26:72 uses the word 'oath' to describe this particular denial of the word.) And a little after they that stood by said again to Peter (the Church), Surely thou art one of them for thou art a Galilean (among the Elect of the kingdom) and thy speech agreeth thereto. (The Scriptures that you use tell the very story of your past and future.) And he (the church)began to curse and to swear saying I know not this man (word) of whom ye speak (the Apocrypha). And the second time the cock crew (the year 2000). And Peter (the Church) called to mind the word that Jesus (the word) said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept. (The Church will regret having made such a horrible mistake.)

This is what actually happened. The Church took centuries to finally fix the canon at 66 books that were considered 'authentic' plus an additional 15 books that were still more or less 'in dispute'. Specific dates as to when this decision was actually made are a bit hard to determine, but it is agreed that the issue was settled sometime during the late fourth century. This is why the cock crowed between the first and second denials - because the first denial was destined to occur before AD 1000, and two were destined to follow afterward. The second denial was, as previously stated, when the Protestants dropped the disputed books by mutual consensus. The third will come when the Church will be confronted with this issue around the year 2000 (the second cock crow...the *dawn* of the third day). The detail about Peter's accent is intriguing because it has to do with the way words are spoken. In other words, the Bible is written in *parables* and *codes* which are

already beginning to be understood. The Church, as will be established later in this treatise, will not admit to this mistake even though it will be thoroughly demonstrated through the interpretation of parables.

GET THEE BEHIND ME, SATAN!

Using the same keys as before, the hidden meaning of one of Jesus' strongest rebukes against anyone in the New Testament becomes clear. In Matthew 16:21-23, only a few verses after Jesus identifies Peter as representing the Church in parabolic language, He rebukes him sharply. It reads: "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples how that He (the word) must go unto Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes (children of the Devil), and be killed (i.e. be torn and publicly humiliated by canon-lawyers who would destroy the Word of God), and be raised up on the third day (i.e. the word would be revived in the third millennium.)

Then Peter (the Church) took Him (the Word) and began to rebuke Him (it), saying: Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee. (In other words, this will not be recognized or taught by the Church.)

But He (the Word) turned and said unto Peter (the Church): Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offense unto me, for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men' (the things of God would be the Scriptures, and the things of men would be traditions, theology, buildings, social standing, money, etc....)

So we see that the formula works again, and it tells the same story. These are the very keys that Jesus told Peter (the Church) in verse 19 that he would give. Peter is going to facilitate God's plan by being a hindrance to the truth. Since the Church's blindness prevents it from recognizing the mystery, God will be able to reveal it in its season, and thus cast Satan out of the Church once and for all at the close of this age of wickedness.

SATAN HATH DESIRED TO HAVE YOU

In Luke 22:31-35, Jesus reveals that Satan will exert a powerful influence over the Church. It reads: "And the Lord said: Simon, Simon,

(the Catholic/Orthodox, and Protestant Churches,) Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat: but I (the Word) have prayed for you, that thy faith fail not: (i.e. that his words will be understood at their proper time.) and when thou (the Churches) art converted, (i.e. when you accept the Apocryphal books, along with the keys) strengthen thy brethren. (use your resources and power to restore the body of Christ to its glorious state.)

And he (Peter) said unto Him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee both into prison and to death. (Without realizing it, Peter is acknowledging that he will fall under the influence of Satan: prison and death.) And He (the Word) said: I tell thee, Peter (I prophesy to you, Church): the cock shall not crow this day before thou deny that thou knowest me. (You will deny the word once before the year 1000.)

Again, we find the same pattern at work here. What you are picking up on is the story behind the story; the parabolic meaning. Jesus is asking the Church to convert to the faith that will not fail. This will not happen right away, since we know a third denial will take place right at the second cock crow. (around AD 2000) But we shall see that the Church will indeed be converted and repent of its errors.

WHEREFORE DIDST THOU DOUBT?

Other examples of the Peter Principle involve end-time events. Before we can understand the parable of Peter walking on water, we must find some more keys. First of all, *water* is a synonym for *word*. We read in Ephesians 5:26 "...That He (Jesus) might sanctify and cleanse it (the Church) with the washing of the *water* of the *word*." We may also translate the word '*wind*' as '*doctrine*' because Ephesians 4:14 says: "...that we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro and carried about with every *wind* of *doctrine*, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive." The *waves* are *false teachers who have infiltrated the Church*, since Jude 4 says: "For there are certain men crept in unawares...denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." And Jude 13, referring to these men, says that they

are "...*raging waves of the sea*, foaming out their own shame".

In Matthew 14:22-33 we read: "And straightway Jesus constrained His disciples to get into a ship, and to go before Him unto the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. (That is to say that the body of believers would have to venture on into the future without the tangible experience of Jesus' presence along the way, while those who had partaken of the bread, knowing the mystery of the Kingdom would have to remain in the past.)

And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up into a mountain to pray: and when the evening was come, (the Church Age) He was there alone. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with the waves (the infiltrators): for the wind (doctrine) was contrary. (The disciples were being held back by false teachings.)

And in the fourth watch of the night (late evening, or early morning - the end of the Church age, and the beginning of the Millennium) Jesus (the Word) went unto them, walking on the sea. (The sea represents the nations of the world; the great age. Psalm 65:7 illustrates this by saying: "which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the *people*." The fact that he is walking on the sea illustrates His *transcendence* of human understanding and teaching.) And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea (when they perceived the transcendence of the Word over the teachings of men) they were troubled, saying: 'It is a spirit'; and they cried out for fear (of judgment).

But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying: 'Be of good cheer, it is I (the word that will manifest itself at the close of this age - the Dead Sea Scrolls, The Nag Hammadi Codices, the Apocryphal writings, the proper understanding of the Scriptures, etc...); be not afraid.' And Peter (the Church) answered Him and said: 'Lord if it be you (the Word of God), bid me to come unto thee on the water.' (Allow me to transcend natural understanding, too.)

"And He said 'come' and when Peter came down out of the ship, he

walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous (the backlash of tradition) he was afraid and beginning to sink (into a natural understanding) he cried saying Lord, save me' And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him, and said unto him: 'O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?' (Remember, Jesus not only commanded Peter to come to Him, but He also commanded the disciples not to fear) And when they (the Church and the Word) were come into the ship, the wind (false doctrine) ceased. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped Him, saying: 'Of a truth thou art the Son of God!'"

Interestingly, John 6:21 reads: "Then they willingly received him into the ship (the canon): and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went (the Kingdom)." Jesus, who is the Word of God, and the ship, which is the canon of scripture, were the only two things capable of transcendence. The church could not by itself have escaped the perils of this age: false doctrine and worldliness. As for the mountain that Jesus was on, this is symbolic of power and authority. He is where His disciples could not follow Him - the right hand of the Father. As for His being alone, God is One. This is difficult to understand, but Galatians 3:19 & 20 gives us this insight: "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was *added* because of *transgressions*, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but *God is One*." God is not a *trinity*, but a *unity*, but His threefold aspect has to do with how He reveals Himself in the *Scriptures*. The *Old Testament* is the testament of the *Father*, the *New Testament* is the testament of the *Son*, and the *Apocryphal books* are the testament of the *Holy Spirit*. (I will attempt to better illustrate this principle later in this treatise.)

PEACE, BE STILL!

The previous parable had to do with the Word of God entering into the *Canon*, and this parable will illustrate that the same message is

contained in the Scriptures we already have. In Mark 4:35-41, we read: "And the same day, when the even was come, He saith unto them: 'Let us pass over unto the other side.' (Let us go on to the kingdom) And when they had sent away the multitude, (after all those who had understood His parables had died,) they took Him even as He was into the ship. (The word was put into the canon without altering it.) And there were also with Him other little ships. (There were other books that would come along.) And there arose a great storm of wind, (subversive doctrine) and the waves (infiltrators, false teachers) beat into the ship, so that it was now full. (Full of water, or words from without that the infiltrators put into the canon, such as mistranslations based on false doctrine.)

And He was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: (The word was hidden beneath the surface level of the Scriptures, in a dormant state.) and they awake Him, and say unto Him: 'Master, carest thou not that we perish?' And He arose and rebuked the wind, (the sleeping Word awoke, and when it did, it had the power to stop all the false doctrines) and said unto the sea (nations): 'Peace, be still!' And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm (the Millennial Kingdom). And He said unto them: 'Why are you so fearful? How is it ye have no faith?' And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another: 'What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?'" By translating this parable with the same keys as before, we understand that the Scriptures we already go by contain a meaning that is both hidden and dormant, but contains a powerful capacity to silence enemies of the truth. This is not only for the benefit of the Church, but also the rest of the world (the seas). All of our sciences are based on atheistic logic and the method of doubt and the idea of evolution, and when the Word of God makes all of these assumptions appear as ridiculous to us as they do to him, we will all be ready to move forward into the Sabbath Rest, and receive the truth from God - free from traditions. Incidentally, the very thing you are reading now is part of the deeper meaning of the

Word. Jesus is awakening, the Kingdom is at hand.

SIMON, SLEEPEST THOU?

The number that is most often associated with Peter is three. We have already considered his three denials of Christ; let us now explore another example of this phenomenon. In Mark 14:32-42, we see that the Church will be asleep each of the three times it is approached by the Word of God.

"And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane (oil press): and He saith to His disciples: 'Sit ye here while I shall pray.' And He taketh with Him Peter (the Church) and James and John (which will be revealed in a later section), and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy (because He could foresee that they would all sleep until the end of the age): and He saith unto them: 'My soul is exceedingly sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.' And He went forward a little and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him (the Word). And He said: 'Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: (See Isaiah 51:17-23, this is the cup of God's fury which Jesus had to drink on our behalf, and He is about to give it to our oppressors.) nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.' And He cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter (the Church): 'Simon, (the Catholic/Orthodox churches - there were no 'Protestant churches at the time of the first rejection of the Word,) sleepest thou? Coudest not thou watch one hour? Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit is truly ready, but the flesh is weak."

I will have to clarify a few issues here before moving on. There is more here than meets the eye - even if you understand the parallel between this section and the three denials. As I have previously stated, what we understand as the 'trinity' is really three stages of God's revelation. The Father corresponds to the Old Testament, the Son to the New Testament, and the Holy Spirit to the Apocryphal books - in that order. We read in John 1:14 that: "...the Word became flesh," and in 1

John 5:7 it says: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." So if Jesus is the Word, and the word became flesh, then the flesh that Jesus was talking about during the last supper was His word. His word will be divided, and the blood (His life - see Lv 17;14) would go out of His flesh, which is His word, which is the New Testament. But if it was by the shedding of his blood that His life was poured out, it would be by the Spirit that God would raise Him from the dead, because 2 Corinthians 3:6 says: "...for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." What is going to restore the life to His flesh (the Word) is the Holy Spirit. His words will therefore be reunited, and His life restored. What words would represent the part of His flesh that was broken off? The words that were removed from the canon are the Apocryphal books. So they would be restored through the Holy Spirit, and that is why they can be understood as the Testament of the Holy Spirit (see 1 John 5:6-9).

Continuing our narrative, verse 39 reads: "And again He went away and prayed, and spake the same words. (Earnestly praying that the Church would be vigilant against the wiles of the devil the next time it had to make a decision about the Word.) And when He returned, He found them asleep again, for their eyes were very heavy, (They were spiritually unable to discern the truth,) neither [knew] they what to answer Him. (This is the Protestants not having good reason for rejecting the books that the Catholics had managed to hold on to.) And He cometh the third time and saith unto them: 'Sleep on now and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. (The church will have the issue of the Word of God come up a third time, when the church is full of sinful people, and will still be unable to see.) Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me (the Word) is at hand (the Antichrist)."

So we understand these events as corresponding to Peter's three denials, and just as Peter rejected Jesus a third time, so he will still be unable to see clearly right up to the time that the antichrist comes.

Indeed many will be taken in by his teachings, and the signs that God will allow him to perform because His people are not discerning. This situation will create a need for God to call on a different people - the Elect. Let us now apply what we know already and see if He hasn't taken pains to reveal more about these people to us.

THIS IS MY BELOVED SON: HEAR HIM

In Mark 9:2-13, Jesus reveals His greatness to Peter, James and John in a most incredible way. It reads: "And after six days (6000 years - 2 Pet 3:8) Jesus taketh with Him Peter (the Church) and James and John, and leadeth them up into a high mountain apart by themselves: and He was transfigured before them. And His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so no fuller on earth can white them. (His absolute purity and innocence are indicated here.) And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus (about His departure from Jerusalem - see Luke 9:31)."

It will become clear as we move along that Moses represents the Old Testament here, while Jesus represents the New Testament, and Elijah, the Apocryphal books. Correspondingly, Since Peter represents the Church, he is the natural counterpart to Jesus, or the New Testament. Moses, therefore, would correspond to the Jews, and Elijah, to the Elect. We should Keep in mind that Jesus referred to John the Baptist as Elijah in Matt 17:11-13; but He also says that he will come, and restore all things. There will be, therefore, another person who will function as Elijah; making the way straight for His second coming. These are also the two witnesses referred to in Rev 11:6. These will no doubt be real people, but their 'witness' also means that the Old Testament and the Apocryphal Testament will witness together with the New Testament, since witnesses have to witness *to* something.

Picking up in verse 5 we read: "And Peter (the Church) answered and said to Jesus: 'Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias (That is - let's have separate assemblies; one for the Christians, one for

the Jews, and one for the Elect).' For he [knew] not what to say; for they were sore afraid. (After the Elect finally show up, and begin to reveal these mysteries, the Church will become defensive and seek for some plausible way to preserve itself and a modicum of dignity.) And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying: 'This is my beloved Son: hear Him.' And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves.

The fact that Moses and Elijah disappear, and only Jesus remains indicates that there are no divisions between these books, but that Jesus, who is the Word, is indeed all three, and therefore transcendent of time and space, since we can plainly see that He would have to be in order to have testified this of Himself so far in advance.

"And as they came down from the mountain, He charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of Man were risen from the dead. (No man will be able to give this interpretation until the Word of Life rises above the carnal understanding of the Scriptures.) And they kept saying with themselves, questioning one with another what this rising from the dead should mean. (See James 2:26: 'For as the *body* without the *spirit* is dead, so Faith without Works is dead also' Until the Testament of the Holy Spirit comes to reveal its works over the past 6000 years, and also to give us further instructions regarding our future, we too are dead - the body of Christ.)

And they asked Him, saying: 'Why say the scribes that Elias must first come?' And He answered and told them: 'Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things (the one that will restore all things will be Elijah, but what will he restore? John 16:12,13 says: 'I (Jesus) have yet many thing to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth...and He will show you things to come.' He will restore the things that Jesus had to say to us that we were not then ready for. He will restore what we

rejected, in other words, the Apocrypha.); and how it is written of the Son of Man, that He must suffer many things, and be set at naught. But I say to you that Elias is indeed come and they have done unto him whatsoever they [wanted], as it is written of him. (In other words if Elijah represents the restoration of the word today, he also represented it then, so by cutting off his head for reproofing wickedness in high places, we understand that the Scriptures that were cut off then were cut off because they had the power to restore all things to God.)

SIMON, SON OF JONAS, LOVEST THOU ME?

Another place where the number three is associated with Peter is John 21:15-18. This encounter takes place at the sea of Tiberias, Jesus' third appearance to His disciples after His resurrection. "...Jesus (the Word) saith to Simon Peter: 'Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?' He saith unto Him: 'Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee.' He saith unto him; 'Feed my lambs.' (By 'lambs', Jesus is talking about young sheep, and hence the early Christians, so this command naturally corresponds to an early period in the Church age. This would make a lot of sense if "feeding lambs" had anything to do with the Church not 'feeding' the early Christians the 'word', or, in other words, it corresponds nicely with Peter's first denial.)

"He saith to him (Peter, or the Church) again the second time: 'Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto Him: 'Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee.' He saith unto him: 'Feed my sheep.' (Obviously, if by sheep Jesus was referring to a later period in Church history, this would fit in nicely with Peter's second denial by the Protestant Churches more than a thousand years later.)

"He saith unto him the third time: 'Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?' Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time: 'lovest thou me?' And he said unto Him: 'Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.' Jesus saith unto him: "Feed my sheep."

We should be aware that Peter never volunteered to feed the sheep. The Church will not do it, so another entity must arise to do the job.

These are the Elect Ones. Having understood these truths, we can then understand verse 18, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee; 'When thou (the Church) wast young, thou girded thyself, and walkest whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. (i.e. - the Elect will have to show you the meaning of the Scriptures, and lead you into the Kingdom, since to understand any of these mysteries correctly, it is necessary to know that the apocryphal books are inspired, or else none of this will be understood.)

"This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God. (The Church will be in a 'dead state' in order for the Scriptures to be fulfilled, since the Scriptures turn out to have precisely this meaning, and must therefore be fulfilled.) And when He had spoken this, He saith unto him: 'Follow me.'

Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on His breast at supper, and said; 'Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?' (i.e. John, John 13:25) Peter seeing him saith to Jesus: 'Lord, and what shall this man do?' And Jesus saith unto him: 'If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.'"

If tradition can be trusted, and the "disciple whom Jesus loved" is John, then John represents the body of the Elect. Now it can be understood that the real message here is that the Elect will "tarry till [Jesus] come[s]." In other words, they will not be revealed until the time of His second coming, and will therefore be His heralds - functioning as Elijah, or John the Baptist.

PART II - IMPLICATIONS:

When we interpret 'Peter' as 'the Church', and 'John' as 'the Elect', then we can use these keys to unlock other keys. For example, we know that Peter, John, and James were present at Jesus' transfiguration, as well as Moses and Elijah. Since it is evident that Peter corresponds with Jesus, and John, with Elijah, then James must correspond with Moses,

or the Old Testament, which is to say, the Jews. Since James and John are brothers, (the sons of Zebedee) it makes sense that in spiritual terms they are brothers as well. It also makes sense that they are called the sons of thunder (Boanerges Mk 3:17) since both the Old Testament and the Apocrypha are full of 'fire and brimstone' theology.

The relationship between Peter and John is particularly intriguing. One can use these insights to unlock the near future. The various interactions between the Church and the Elect, that is, Peter and John, provide a detailed set of instructions for the end time. Specifically, they reveal how the Elect are to approach the Church with the truth, and how the Church is to use its resources to help the Elect. For example, in Luke 22:8-16. Jesus sends Peter and John to prepare the *Passover*. Jesus foretells that they will encounter a man carrying a pitcher of water (the word), and also there will be a large upper room, already furnished (there will be a higher level of meaning to the Scriptures, prepared in advance), which verse 16 says will be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.

In John chapter 20 verses 3 through 9 we read that when Peter and John ran to the empty tomb together, John beat him there and saw inside, but did not enter; whereas when Peter arrived, he entered, and John followed. Therefore we may conclude that the function of the Elect is to be the first (besides Mary Magdalene) to see the empty tomb, and then to show deference to the Church, allowing them to enter before we do. We must not see ourselves as apart from them, but rather to humbly yield ourselves as servants to the Church, that they may enter in before us, and we not show ourselves to be arrogant and unworthy.

The Book of Acts contains many parables to interpret using this understanding, such as the way they interact with each other in chapters three and four, which I need not detail here except to point out that they work and heal *together*, in complete humility, giving all credit to God. We are to do likewise, performing the same works. This is an amazing revelation, God has given us detailed instructions to follow in these final days. Simon, son of Jonah, or John(!) is a title given to Peter (the

Church) to let us know that in this sense, the Church is actually to be a spiritual son of John (the Elect).

Another interesting implication of John meaning 'the Elect' would be the curious relationship between him and Jesus' mother, Mary. No doubt what I am about to write will be offensive to some, and outrageous to others, but it follows naturally from all of the assumptions previously worked out. Jesus was born of Mary, as everyone knows; and Mary was a virgin, as everyone also knows. How then can we explain Jesus' own statement from the cross in John 20:26 & 27? Here Jesus is saying that Mary is John's mother, and John is, conversely, Mary's son. It is easy just to chalk this up to the fact that Jesus loved John and could therefore entrust His own mother to his care. But what if we interpret this attribution in a way that is consistent with the foregoing keys? What if John (the Elect ones) will also be the result of a virgin birth? In other words, the *Scriptures*, undefiled by any man, are nonetheless 'pregnant' with meaning; pregnant, that is to say, with a new people: the Elect. Another way of saying this is we are John, and just as the Christians became a new people in light of the fact that Christ fulfilled the Old Testament, and allowed those Scriptures to be seen in a new and better light - as pointing to Christ - so the Bible will give rise to a new people in these final days. We also shall be born of Mary - that is to say the *Holy Spirit*.

This idea is known from patristic sources quoting the now lost gospel of the Hebrews, and is an idea that is defended by figures no less illustrious than Origen and Jerome. Of course this does not prove that I am right about this, but it does illustrate the fact that it is indeed a very old concept. Here is the quote: "Just now my *mother*, the *Holy Spirit* took me..." Jerome then goes on to explain that one should have no trouble accepting such a statement, for in Hebrew the word for 'spirit' is feminine.

In other words, then, Jesus' mother is Mary, and Jesus' mother is also the Holy Spirit, so using simple, syllogistic reasoning we may

arrive at the same conclusion that those who used to read that lost gospel must have known: that when the word 'Mary' is used, then it should be understood that in the language of parables 'The Holy Spirit' is meant. You simply substitute the words 'Holy Spirit' wherever you see 'Mary' (mother of Jesus). Small wonder, then, that an alternate theory of Mary had to be developed. I shall not say more about this, since the discerning will understand, but those who cannot discern will simply twist my words against me. Let it suffice to say that I am not advocating any worship or undue devotion to Mary, but rather only attempting to establish her function as a key to unlocking parables.

CONCLUSION:

The key to unlocking the Bible is *keys*. If you want to become proficient at unlocking the Scriptures, you must understand Jesus taught us this very principle in Luke 11:52: "Woe unto you, Lawyers! For ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered." Keys were handed down by the apostles and disciples of the early Church. The keys were then understood, but only by the initiates they chose. Obviously the mystery was eventually squelched by the 'lawyers', or those who "hindered...them that were entering." The 'death' of the mystery, and by extension the '*word*', is a paradigm for Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. We thus end, as it were, at the beginning. Consider the glorious preamble to John. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not...and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

The secret to decoding this Mystery is to be found in the apocryphal Acts of John, which, though known by the early Church Fathers, was nonetheless rejected by most of them. In chapter 105, Jesus expounds to John the paradoxical nature of His suffering: "You (John, the Elect) hear that I (Jesus, the Word) suffered, yet I suffered

not; that I suffered not, yet I did suffer; that I was pierced, yet I was not wounded; hanged, and I was not hanged; blood flowed from me, yet it did not flow; and in a word, those things that they say of me I did not endure, and the things that they do not say those I suffered. Now what they are I will reveal to you (John - the Elect ones) for I know you will understand. Perceive in me the slaying of the *word* (Logos), the piercing of the *word*, the blood of the *word*, the wounding of the *word*, the hanging of the *word*, the passion of the *word*, the nailing of the *word*, the death of the *word*. And thus I speak, discarding manhood. Therefore in the first place think of the *word*, then you shall perceive the *Lord*, and thirdly the *man*, and what he has suffered."

Notice that this does not deny the suffering of Jesus the *man*, but only relegates it to the lowest of three levels of interpretation. Heretofore, two levels of meaning - those of Jesus the man, and Jesus the *Lord* have been preached in the churches, and both are correct, but the revelation of another layer of meaning that explains the other two more fully deserves a hearing.

If we are bold we can finish the story; the *word* was put on trial by those in authority - on trumped-up charges - just to get rid of it, even though the word had no defect and the witnesses against it, no integrity; their witness against the word was contradictory. The authorities managed to incite such hostility against the word that the people chose a 'murderer' instead of the one who could give them life. The word was discredited and put to death by means of injustice and violence. The word was then hidden away until, through the power of God, it was raised up again on the third day (which means the third millennium.)

These keys will also translate the apocryphal books. If you are honest enough to put them to the test, you will find that they also decode to these same keys. Consequently this discovery ought to be looked into diligently by those who have the authority to do so. Today we have been given an objective means for testing the 'inspiration' of a work. If it can be done, then what excuse shall we offer God for rejecting them a third

time? Does not Scripture say that Peter's *accent* gave him away the third time? The very words *spoken by the Church* today are that 'accent'. Let us not tempt God. Even so, we know Peter did, so we know in advance that the church will also - Scripture must be fulfilled.

FURTHER ALONG THE PETER PRINCIPLE...
The Secret Book of James - Declassified!

Copyright 2002, by Robert C. Ferrell
All Rights Reserved.

In a previous work, "The Peter Principle & The Keys to The Kingdom", I both demonstrated that certain New Testament figures have parabolic significance, and detailed how I was able to arrive at their proper interpretation. Peter, for example, can almost invariably be read as "*the Church*" because in Matthew 16:17-19 Jesus names Simon "son of John", "Peter", which means "*rock*" as a function of his listening to Jesus' Father in heaven. The name "*rock*" is attributed to Simon not because of who he was, but because listening to the Father makes a person securely founded and strong like a rock, so that when Jesus says in verse 18: "And I say to you: you are Peter, the rock; and on this rock I will build my Church..." we understand that the Church is not founded on the basis of apostolic succession, because that would be mixing up cause and effect. Simon is called a "*rock*" as an effect of his spiritual intuition, so if the Church is to be founded upon this "*rock*", then the cause is still the spiritual intuition that is a function of listening to the father. Hence both Peter and the Church share the same cause and effect relationship, which opens the door to the possibility that they have the same meaning as one another and can, therefore, be seen as interchangeable. The only reason that the "Church" seems to be subordinate to Peter is because Peter is an individual, but the Church is a corporate body of believers, and hence when we speak of the Church as being founded upon the "*rock*" that is because the many persons within that body are each, like Peter, a "*rock*", and hence the Church is built upon the multitude of believers who, like Peter, together form a "*rock*".

Other figures have related functions as well. Jesus, for example,

can be interpreted as "*the word*" since we read in John 1:1, "In the beginning the word already was. The word was in God's presence, and what God was, the word was." And in verse 14 we read; "So the word became flesh..." which lets us know that Jesus is actually God; Jesus also means the word; the word is in fact Jesus' flesh. The word refers to Jesus, and Jesus signifies the word: the word also refers to the flesh, and the flesh also signifies the word. When we see the word "*Jesus*", we can translate it as the "*word*", and when we see Jesus referring to His flesh, we know that He is referring to His "*word*" as well. From these few simple facts we can derive an unlimited number of other insights. When, for example, Jesus breaks the bread and tells His disciples that it is His "*flesh*" that is broken for them, He is actually telling them that His word is going to be torn apart for their sakes. Also, since we see that "*Jesus*" is synonymous with "*the word*" in parabolic language, the interplay between Peter and Jesus becomes the interplay between the "*Church*" and "*the word*" throughout Church history - making his denials of Jesus really mean his rejection of the word of God through the ages as well.

The figures of James and John can be derived from the Scriptures as well, but in a more complicated way. In Matthew 17:1-13 we read that Jesus takes Peter (*the Church*) and James and John up "into a high mountain apart, and He was transfigured before them." Now we already understand Jesus represents the *word of God*, and Peter represents the *Church*, so when Jesus transfigures before them, why do Moses and Elijah appear? John 1:17 says: "for the law was given through *Moses*, but *grace* and *truth* came through Jesus Christ." Through this observation we can say that Moses represents the *Old Testament* here, and naturally enough, Jesus in this context would represent the *New Testament*, and Elijah would represent some other Testament. Furthermore, since Peter represents the *Church*, we know that James and John, likewise, each represent some other kind of congregation. One of the two ought to correspond to the Old Testament, and therefore

represent the Jewish people. This idea is further reinforced by Peter himself when he says in Matthew 17:4: "...Lord, it is good that we are here. Would you like me to make three tabernacles here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah?" In other words the Church would like to preserve itself through recognizing themselves, the Jews and the other congregation as separate entities, each with its own ideas about worshipping God.

But Mark 9:6 lets us know that it is only through the Church's own ignorance and fear that it suggests this by saying: "for he (Peter) knew not what to answer; for they became sore afraid."

A little bit later, the disciples ask Jesus why Elijah must precede Jesus' (*the word's*) rising from the dead, and Jesus replies in verses 11-13: "...Elijah is to come and set everything right. But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they failed to recognize him, and did to him as they wanted; in the same way, the son of man is to suffer at their hands. Then the disciples understood that He meant John the Baptist." So we can see that Elijah here represents John the Baptist; but what about James and John? Well, Jesus tells us about two Elijahs, one that is coming, and one that has come. The one that has come was John the Baptist - who was murdered. The one who is to come will be the one who is to "set everything right." (Certainly this must mean that in the divine scheme of things, the Church must definitely go wrong somehow) Now since Moses in this rendering represents the Old Testament; and Jesus, the New, Elijah must represent a testament that will set everything right - functioning, as it were, as a corrective testament. But if this is so, then why the parallel between the one to come and John the Baptist? It is fitting that Elijah should serve a double function here, because he represents a testament that was both destroyed and is to come. There is only one answer to the question of what Scriptures were once cut off: the apocryphal books. So these are to be restored at the end of the age, when Jesus, who represents the word of God will be "raised from the dead." No one, not the Jews, nor the

Christians, nor even the Elect who are to come and restore the apocryphal books at the end of the age will understand these things until this mystery is revealed.

So we see the pattern that is to come: there will be three testaments which will become one; the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphal books of the Old and New Testaments. Since Peter represents the Christians, and James and John represent the Jews and the Elect who are to come, the only thing that remains to be seen is which apostle represents which testament. John lets us know in chapter 20, verses 20-22 that it is none other than himself that is to be the “Elijah that is to come and set everything right” by saying: “Peter looked around, and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved, John, following them - who at supper leaned back close to Him to ask the question, ‘Lord, who is it that will betray you?’ When he saw him, Peter (the Church) asked, ‘Lord, what about him?’ Jesus said, ‘If it be my will that he stay until I come, what is that to you? Follow me.’” So if John represents the Elect, then James, his brother, represents the Jews.

In “The Peter Principle”, I detailed virtually all of these things, and I demonstrated these principles primarily through the four gospels, but I also mentioned that these keys would work in the apocryphal gospels. It is indeed one thing to come to these conclusions through logic, but it is quite another to put them to the test. If the things that I am saying were untrue, I can’t see why they would work at all, but if the things that I am saying work all of the time, then it is indeed a wonder. But I know that they do work, and I am not the least bit afraid to put them to the test. I will devote the remainder of this work to the decoding of a complete apocryphal gospel. When I am done, I hope you will have a profound sense of what it is like to truly understand the Scriptures; that the same principles are operating in both the canonical and the apocryphal writings, and that both are equally inspired.

The gospel that I will be interpreting is called The Secret Book of

James. It is a rebuke of Jesus directed at Peter and James (the Church and the Jews), and it talks about "...those who will be saved through faith in this discourse," and it also says that Jesus has promised them (the Jews and Christians) life and "...has disclosed to them children who are to come." This book itself claims to be obscure to both the Christians and the Jews because it ends by saying: "...for apart from what I have recounted, the Savior did not disclose revelation to us. For their sake we proclaim, indeed, a portion with those for whom it was proclaimed, those whom the Lord has made his children." Those who are to come after are the Elect Ones.

THE SECRET BOOK OF JAMES:

James writes to you. Peace be with you from peace, love from love, grace from grace, faith from faith, life from holy life!

Since you asked me to send you a secret book which was revealed to me and Peter (that is, the Jews and the Christians across time to the Elect) by the Lord, I could neither refuse you nor speak directly to you, (He could not refuse because it was meant for those to come, and he could not speak directly because he had been commanded to encode it with these keys) but I have written it to you in Hebrew letters and have sent it to you - and to you alone. (Meaning by Hebrew that James signifies the Jews, and to you alone means that only one whose heart has been prepared by God could understand it) But inasmuch as you are a minister of the salvation of the saints, endeavor earnestly and take care not to recount this book to many - this which the Savior did not desire to recount to all of us, his twelve disciples. But blessed are those who will be saved through faith in this discourse. (The Elect, who will interpret it.)

Now I sent to you ten months ago another secret book which the Savior revealed to me. But that one you are to regard in this

manner, as revealed to me, James. (The Jews alone, in all likelihood, rather than to James and Peter - meaning that what was then revealed pertained only to the Jews, but this is directed toward both Jews and Christians.)

Now the twelve disciples were sitting all together at the same time, and, remembering what the Savior had said to each one of them, whether secretly or openly, they were setting it down in books. (there are secret books, and secrets in the open books as well) And I was writing what was in my book - lo, the Savior appeared, after he had departed from, and while we were watching for him. And so, five hundred and fifty days after he arose from the dead, we said to him: 'Have you gone and departed from us?' (In standard Biblical numerology five means grace, ten represents completion, and eleven, destruction, so 550 (5x10x11) probably indicates the time of destruction, and the time of complete grace - symbolically speaking. In other words, at the end of the age.)

And Jesus said: 'No, but I shall go to the place from which I have come. If you desire to come with me, come.'" (That is - if they desire to follow the *word*.)

They all answered and said: 'If you bid us, we'll come.'

He said: 'Truly I say to you, no one will ever enter the Kingdom of Heaven if I bid him, but rather because you yourselves are full (Of the spirit). Let me have James and Peter (The Jews and the Church), in order that I may fill them.' And when he called these two, he took them aside, and commanded the rest to busy themselves with that with which they had been busy.

The Savior said: 'You (the Jews and Christians) have received mercy. Do you not desire, then to be filled? (with the spirit) And is your heart drunk? Do you not desire, then, to be sober? Therefore, be ashamed! And now, waking or sleeping, remember that you have seen the Son of Man, and with him you have spoken and to him you have listened. Woe to those who have seen the Son of Man!

Blessed are those who have not seen the Son of Man, and who have not consorted with him, and who have not spoken with him, and who have not listened to anything from him. Yours is life!’ (In other words it is the Jews and the Christians who will bear the brunt of his anger at his return, and those who were not given the knowledge will then understand him as he should have been understood all along.) Know, therefore, that he healed you when you were ill, in order that you might reign. Woe to those who have rested from their illness, because they will relapse again into illness. (The illness is religion.) Blessed are those who have not been ill, and have known rest (The truth about the Kingdom - the mystery) before they became ill. Yours is the Kingdom of God! Therefore I say to you, become full (of the spirit) and leave no place within you empty, since the Coming One is able to mock you!’ (With the Scriptures.)

Then Peter (The Church) answered and said: ‘Lord, three times you have said to us, “Become full,” but we are full.’ (The three times correspond to the three times the Church was approached by ‘the word’ and denied that the Apocryphal books were God’s word; the 4th, 17th, and 21st centuries.)

The Lord answered and said: ‘Therefore I say to you, become full (of the spirit) in order that you may not become diminished (in the spirit). Those who are (spiritually) diminished will not be saved, For fullness (of spirit) is good, and diminution (in spirit) is bad. Therefore just as it is good for you to be diminished (in reason), and on the other hand, bad for you to be filled (with reason), so also the one who is full (of reason) is diminished (in spirit); and the one who is diminished (in spirit) is not filled (spiritually), as the one who is diminished (of reason) is filled (spiritually). And the one who is full (of the spirit), for his part, brings his sufficiency to completion. Therefore it is fitting to be diminished (of reason) while you can still be filled (with the spirit);

and to be filled (with the spirit) while it is still possible to be diminished (of reason), in order that you can fill yourselves the more (spiritually). Therefore become full of the spirit but be diminished of reason. For reason is of the soul; and it is soul.'

And I answered and said to him: 'Lord, we can obey you if you wish. For we have forsaken our forefathers and our mothers and our villages and have followed you. Grant us, therefore, not to be tempted by the wicked Devil.'

The Lord answered and said: 'What is your merit when you do the will of the Father if it is not given to you by him as a gift, while you are tempted by Satan? (The Church and to a lesser extent the Jews of the early Church would have liked to have been delivered from Satan's clutches. The Jews fell prey to the Devil because they could not accept a messiah who did not rescue them from the Romans, and the Church fell prey because she could not accept the word of God in its entirety. Both seem convinced of their own righteousness, but Jesus lets them know that God will rectify both dilemmas, but as a gift - while they are caught in their errors, being tempted by Satan, thereby setting up the final test of their virtue: whether caught in their errors they will convert, or remain lost, as he makes clear by saying:) But if you are oppressed by Satan and are persecuted and you do the Father's will (i.e.--repent and convert), I say that he will love you and will make you equal with me and will consider that you have become beloved through his providence according to your free choice. Will you not cease, then, being lovers of the flesh and being afraid of sufferings? (In other words, the Devil has them right where he wants them - in relative comfort and enjoying worldliness.) Or do you not know that you have not yet been mistreated and have not yet been accused unjustly, nor have you yet been shut up in prison, nor have you yet been condemned lawlessly, nor have you yet been crucified without reason, nor have you been tried shamefully, as was I myself

(the Word of God), by the evil one? (But anyone who takes this position *will* go through all of these things, since the word ‘yet’ lets us know this is the price of conversion, as he goes on to explain.) Do you dare to spare the flesh for whom the spirit is an encircling wall? If you contemplate the world, how long it is before you, and also How long it is after you, you will find that your life is but a single day and your sufferings one single hour. For the good will not enter the world. (That is--the Spirit is incompatible with worldliness.) Scorn death (worldliness), therefore, and take concern for life. Remember my cross and my death and you will live.’

And I answered and said to him: ‘Lord, do not mention to us the cross and the death, for they are far from you.’ (They didn’t understand about the *word*) The Lord answered and said: ‘Truly I say to you, none will be saved unless they believe on my cross. But those who have believed on my cross, theirs is the Kingdom of God. Therefore become seekers for death (Unless they are willing to die to their beliefs, they will not live, but those who are willing will live,) just as the dead who seek for life, for that which they seek is revealed to them. (The Elect, who believe in the hidden Scriptures that were ‘killed’.) And what is there to concern them? (For they, who have no stake in any prior religious affiliation, there will be little or no problem accepting this.) When you turn yourselves towards death, it will make known to you election. In truth I say to you, none of those who are afraid of death will be saved. For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who have put themselves to death. (When their ‘reason’ diminishes, and they become full.) Become better than I; make yourselves like the Son of the Holy Spirit.

Then I questioned him: ‘Lord, how may we prophesy to those who ask us to prophesy to them? For there are many who look to us and seek to hear an oracle from us.’ (They are unable to

understand, or to interpret the Scriptures.) The Lord answered and said: 'Do you not know that the head of prophecy was cut off with John?' (The Baptist, who represents the hidden books of scripture, which were cut off; the ones that will herald his second coming.) And I said: 'Lord, it is not possible to cut off the head of prophecy, is it? (We know what we are talking about, don't we?)

The Lord said: 'When you come to know what 'head' is, and that prophecy issues from the head, then understand what the meaning of 'its head was removed' is. (These are the faculties of seeing, hearing, and speaking, which along with understanding, are all requisites for revealing the mysteries in the Scriptures. John's head was cut off because his condemnation of adultery in high places engendered hatred and a wicked scheme on the part of Herodias' wife, who through lust, social pressure, and a rash oath, brought about his demise.) I first spoke with you in parables, and you did not understand. Now in turn I speak with you openly, and you do not perceive. But it is you who were to me a parable within parables, and as that which is open in the words that are open. (By a parable within parables he means that though they searched for the meaning of the parables, they were, in fact, themselves the subject of the parables, although they wouldn't ever catch on until he disclosed it to them - such as this very letter is a parable about them without their having realized it yet. The interpretation is open, and the words are open - and always have been.)

Be zealous to be saved without being urged. Rather, be ready on your own and if possible, go before me. For thus the Father will love you. (Be quick to repent and convert, and like John the Baptist, go before him to proclaim the good news of his Second Coming. Do not wait until judgment comes at last.)

Become haters of hypocrisy and evil thought. For it is thought which gives birth to hypocrisy, but hypocrisy is far from the truth.

Let not the Kingdom of Heaven wither away. (By evil thought

and hypocrisy.) For it is like a date palm shoot whose fruits poured down around it. It put forth leaves and, when they budded, they caused the productivity of the date palm to dry up. Thus it is also with the fruit which came from this single root: when the fruit was picked, fruits were collected by many harvesters. It would indeed be good if it were possible to produce these new plants now; for then you would find the Kingdom. (The date is a fruit, so it has a seed inside. The seed, when planted will bring forth another palm. Therefore there would have to be a passage of a considerable amount of time before another harvest. The leaves, the unfruitful growth of theology and organization within early Christianity, took all of the energy that was intended for fruitage, and diverted it, thereby withering the tree. This is also a paradigm for Jesus 'death' and his going away. This is all a part of his plan of salvation.)

Since I have been glorified in this manner before this time, why do you all restrain me when I am eager to go? You have constrained me to remain with you eighteen more days for the sake of the parables. (During and after the second century, the tide of opinion began to turn against so-called apocryphal books, and 'heresies', which if they are essential in understanding the mysteries could explain the eighteen days - that is the eighteen hundred years that have since elapsed, and for the sake of parables - this would represent the time of harvest; when they realize that they are themselves the subject of the parables.) It sufficed for some persons to pay attention to the teaching, and to understand 'The Shepherds' and 'The Seed' and 'The Building' and 'The lamps of the Virgins' and the 'Wage of the Workers' and the 'Double Drachma' and 'The Woman.'" (I won't attempt to interpret any of these here, but it is clear that while some people both paid attention to these parables and understood them, the Jews and the Church did not. In another of my works, The Hidden Treasure, I expounded some parables, and demonstrated that the

mystery of the Kingdom would be lost and eventually rediscovered, and that bound up in it would be the re-establishment of the truth as contained in both the canonical and apocryphal books. So if some understood, then the Church would itself be responsible for its loss. This is why Jesus exhorts them to become eager about the word.)

Become zealous about the word. For the word's first condition is faith; the second is love; the third is works. Now from these comes life. For the word is like a grain of wheat. when someone sowed it, he believed in it; and when it sprouted, he loved it, because he looked forward to many grains in the place of one; and when he worked it, he was saved, because he prepared it for food. Again he left some grains to sow. Thus it is also possible for you all to receive the Kingdom of Heaven: unless you receive it through knowledge, you will not be able to find it. (I, for one, can vouch for this principle, since the only way I was able to arrive at these conclusions was to believe in these books, love them, and work with them. And now I am able to bear fruit and eat.)

Therefore I say to you, be sober. Do not go astray. And many times I have said to you all together - and also to you alone, James. (He came to the Jews first.) I have said - be saved. And I have commanded you to follow me, and I have taught you the response in the presence of the rulers. (The Archons, the fallen angels, who are also known as the Watchers.) Observe that I have descended, and I have spoken, and I have troubled myself, and I have received my crown, when I saved you. For I have descended to dwell with you in order that you also may dwell with me. And when I found that your houses had no ceilings over them, I dwelt in houses which would be able to receive me when I descended. (The Elect Ones who are to come will both believe and receive the *word*.)

Therefore, obey me, my brothers. Understand what the great light is. The Father does not need me. For a father does not

need a son, but it is the son who needs the father. 'To him I am going, for the Father of the Son is Not in need of you. (Meaning religious institutions.)

Pay attention to the word. (Don't ignore those who will be sent to you) Understand knowledge. (Believe the interpretations they give.) Love life. (Faith, love, and works.) And no one will persecute you, nor will anyone oppress you, other than you yourselves. (Meaning the churches and the synagogues will, but that is why he says that we are to lose our lives if we are to find them.) Oh, you wretched! Oh, you unfortunates! Oh, you dissemblers of the truth! Oh, you falsifiers of knowledge! Oh, you sinners against the spirit! Do you even now dare to listen (To the Elect), when it behooved you to speak from the beginning? Do you even now dare to sleep when it behooved you to be awake from the beginning, in order that the Kingdom of Heaven might receive you? In truth I say to you that it is easier for a holy one to sink into defilement, and for a man of light to sink into darkness, than for you to reign - or even not to reign!

I have remembered your tears and your grief and your sorrow. They are far from us. Now then, you who are outside the inheritance of the Father, weep where it behooves you and grieve and proclaim that which is good, since the Son is ascending appropriately. In truth I say to you, had it been to those who would listen to me that I was sent, and had it been with them that I was to speak, I would never have descended upon the earth. And now, then, be ashamed on account of them.

Behold, I shall depart from you. I am going and I do not desire to remain with you any longer - just as you yourselves have not desired. Now then, follow me quickly. (Here he is talking to those who will convert - that they should do so without hesitation.) Therefore I say to you, for your sake I have descended. You are the beloved; you are those who will become a cause of life for many.

Beseech the Father. Implore God often, and He will give to you.

Blessed is the One who has seen you with him when he is proclaimed among the angels and glorified among the saints. (The Father, who has used them despite their faults as a means of salvation to all who will repent, and accept the truth.) Yours is life! Rejoice and be glad as children of God. Keep His will in order that you might be saved. Take reproof from me and save yourselves. I intercede on your behalf with the Father, and He will forgive you much.'

And when we (Christians and Jews) heard these things, we became elated, for we had been depressed on account of what we had said earlier. (They were no longer depressed because when they perceived that God had used their errors as a means of salvation, they lost sight of the gravity of their sin.) Now when he saw our rejoicing, he said: 'Woe to you who are in want of an advocate! Woe to you who are in need of grace! (Many among them will imagine that since good will come as a result of their rejection of Christ, that their stubbornness will automatically be overlooked, but Jesus is letting them know that a sincere repentance is still necessary, and that they should bring forth fruit worthy of repentance by saying:) Blessed are those who have spoken freely and have produced grace for themselves. Liken yourselves to foreigners (to the Kingdom!): of what sort are they in the estimation of your city? (As strangers.) Why are you troubled when you oust yourselves of your own accord and depart from your own city? (They abandoned their place in the Kingdom in order to establish their own.) Why do you abandon your dwelling place of your own accord, readying it for those who desire to dwell in it? (By "readying it for those who desire to dwell in it," he means that because all of this is spelled out in parabolic language - in no uncertain terms - once the mystery is realized, that is, revealed to the *world* by the Father, everything they have done, or failed to do

will mean the end of them and the beginning of a new people, who through faith in God's total power will be able to usher in the Kingdom at last.) **Oh, you exiles and fugitives! Woe to you, because you will be caught! Or perhaps you imagine that the Father is a lover of humanity? (That is, He somehow intends for the world to remain as it is now.) Or that He is persuaded by prayers? (That is, prayers that reflect such a view.) Or that He is gracious to one on behalf of another? Or that He bears with one who asks? (For fleshly things, as he goes on to explain.) For he knows the desire and also that which the flesh needs. Is it not the flesh that desires the soul? Yet the body does not sin without the soul, just as the soul is not saved without the spirit. But if the soul is saved when it is without evil, and if the spirit is also saved, then the body becomes sinless, for it is the spirit which animates the soul, but it is the body that kills it - that is, it is the soul which kills itself. Truly I say to you, the Father will not forgive the sin of the soul at all, nor the guilt of the flesh. For none of those who have worn the flesh will be saved. For do you imagine that many have found the Kingdom of Heaven? (If the Kingdom of God is within us, as it says in Luke, and this corruptibility must put on incorruptibility as Paul says, then we shouldn't be too surprised at these statements. He is still addressing Peter and James here, and he also called reason 'soul' earlier, so he might also be referring to 'fleshly' reason as opposed to spiritual intuition.) Blessed is the one who has seen himself as a fourth one in Heaven.'** (Jesus has already indicated that we should become 'greater' than him, and he also tells us in the canonical tradition that we shall do greater things than he did because he went to the Father, so if he is counted as one in Heaven, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit, then apparently it is His desire that we should become like Him, If we recognize the authority He has given us as a new people, then we know His will, become, as it were, His friends, who know what the Master is doing, thereby seeing

him as he is, and thus becoming like him.)

When we heard these things, we became distressed. Now when he saw that we were distressed, he said: 'This is why I say this to you, that you may know yourselves. (And not, as it were, to frighten them with condemnation.) For the Kingdom of heaven is like an ear of grain (life) which sprouted in a field (The Scriptures, which were in the world). And when it ripened (during the early Church age), it scattered its fruit (life) and, in turn, filled the field (the Scriptures) with ears of grain (life) for another year (the end of the age - the harvest of the world). You also: be zealous to reap for yourselves an ear of life, in order that you may be filled with the Kingdom. (Which is within).

As long as I am with you, give heed to me and obey me. But when I am to depart from you, remember me. (That is, after he has gone, remember that he is the *word*.) And remember me because I was with you without your knowing me. (They did not know the word of God, even though it was in their presence, as the hidden books.) Blessed are they who have known me. (Because they could reveal it to the world.) Woe to those who have heard and have not believed! Blessed are those who have not seen but have had faith. (Because when they do see, they will believe all the more, whereas the others did not.)

And once again I persuade you. (At the end of the age.) For I am revealed to you - building a house which is very valuable to you (Those who believe and convert), since you take shelter under it; in the same way it will be able to support your neighbor's house when theirs is in danger of falling. (Again, meaning the Churches and the Synagogues.) In truth I say to you, woe to those on whose behalf I was sent down to this place! Blessed are those who are to ascend to the Father. Again I reprove you. Those who are (in positions of power and authority), make yourselves like those who are not, in order that you may come to be with those who are not.

Do not let the Kingdom of Heaven become desolate among you. Do not become arrogant on account of the light which illumines. (Realize that God is the one who has brought this about, so no one should become too proud because of his or her revelations.) Rather, become to yourselves in this manner, as I am to you. For I have placed myself under the curse, in order that you may be saved.

Peter answered and said: ‘Sometimes you urge us on to the Kingdom of Heaven, and other times you turn us away, Lord. Sometimes you persuade us and impel us to faith and promise us life, and other times you expel us from the Kingdom of Heaven.’ (The Church doesn’t realize that the blessing is founded upon a curse.) And the Lord answered and said to us: ‘I have given you faith many times. Moreover, I have revealed myself to you, James (the Jews), and you have not known me. (The Jews never accepted Christ.) Again, I see you rejoicing many times. And when you are elated over the promise of life, are you nonetheless glum? And are you distressed when you are taught about the Kingdom? But you have received life through faith and knowledge. (They are looking at it the wrong way, as a threat rather than as a blessing, and therefore become defensive, and are tempted to reject these things, as he goes on to explain.) Therefore, scorn rejection when you hear it, but, when you hear the promise, (as in this very moment, when you are hearing it) be the more glad. In truth I say to you, the one who will receive life and believe in the Kingdom will never leave it - not even if the Father desires to banish him! (This promise is so binding, that God himself will not break it for any reason whatsoever. He says this so that our hearts may take comfort and approach without fear.)

These things shall I say to you for the present. But now I shall ascend to the place from which I have come. But you, when I was eager to go, have driven me (the word) out, and, instead of your

accompanying me, you have pursued me. (Instead of preserving the mystery, they rejected it; and instead of preserving the hidden books, they destroyed and discredited them; and even though they were written in such a way that they ought to be misunderstood until the proper time, Jesus seems to be saying that they should have at least tried to understand and preserve them.) **But give heed to the glory which awaits me, and, having opened your hearts, listen to the hymns which await me up in Heaven. For today I am obliged to take my place at the right hand of my Father. Now I have said my last word to you. I shall depart from you. (The word, as well as the understanding of it will leave the Church and the Jews.) For a chariot of wind has taken me up, and from now on I shall strip myself (of the old understanding) in order that I may clothe myself (with the new). But give heed: blessed are those who have preached the *Son* before he descended, so that, when I have come, I may ascend. (The Elect, along with the converts, who will preach of his glory, and thus prepare the way for his coming.) ‘Thrice blessed are those who were proclaimed by the Son before they came into being, in order that you (James and Peter) may have a portion with them.’ (The Elect Ones had been proclaimed by the Scriptures thousands of years before their being called. The three blessings are the three testaments, and the third dispensation of the Scriptures. They are called ‘John’, and decode like ‘James’ and ‘Peter’). When he said these things, he went away. And we knelt down (in repentance), I and Peter (The Jews and the Christians), and gave thanks, and sent our hearts up to Heaven. We heard with our ears and saw with our eyes the sound of wars and a trumpet call and a great commotion. (The Great Tribulation.) And when we passed beyond that place, we sent our minds up further. (Meaning that after the tribulation, our hearts will rejoice, and be transformed.) And we saw with our eyes and heard with our ears hymns and angelic praises and angelic jubilation. And heavenly**

majesties were hymning, and we ourselves were jubilant. (The Millennium will be a time of joy and angelic benediction.) After this, we also desired to send our spirits up to the Majesty above. And when we ascended, we were permitted neither to see nor to hear anything. (What will be after the Millennium will remain undisclosed until all people are made ready.) For the rest of the disciples called to us and questioned us: ‘What is it that you have heard from the Master?’ And, ‘Where has he gone?’

And we answered them: ‘He has ascended.’ And, ‘He has given us a pledge and has promised us all life and has disclosed to us children who are to come after us, since he has bidden us to love them, inasmuch as we will be saved for their sake.’ (The Jews and the Christians should love the Elect.) And when they heard, they believed the revelation, but were angry about those who would be born. (Since it wasn’t them, and it was far in the future.)

Then I, not desiring to entice them to scandal, sent each one to another place. But I myself went up to Jerusalem, praying that I might obtain a portion with the beloved who are to be revealed. (Because the Jews will finally accept Christ as the Messiah, knowing that he indeed does have the power to deliver them now.) And I pray that the beginning may come from you, (Meaning the one who is to interpret this letter) for thus I can be saved. Because they will be enlightened through me (i.e. - this letter), through my faith and through another’s which is better than mine (one who has the benefit of hindsight), for I desire that mine become the lesser. (So that it can become ‘greater’ through the power of God at the end of the age.) Endeavor earnestly, therefore, to make yourself like them, and pray that you may obtain a portion with them. For apart from what I have recounted, the Savior did not disclose revelation to us. For their sake we proclaim, indeed, a portion with those for whom it was proclaimed, those whom the Lord has made his children.”

CONCLUSION:

There is a profound awe of God that knowledge of His greatness imparts. We can hardly be in profound awe of a God whose revelations are systematically misunderstood. Peter argues with Jesus about 'being full' in this discourse. The Church is convinced that it is in the right and is therefore blind to its mistake. As long as they hold that the apocryphal books, which they have themselves hidden from us, are inferior, then there is no way for them to realize that they are inspired unless and until we take it upon ourselves to show them the keys to realizing their inspiration and bringing prophecy to its fruition. Early in the Church age, none of these things would have made sense because they were written before the prophecies in them had come to fulfillment. If anyone at that time would have been able to explain it to them as what would come to pass, they would have been dismissed on the grounds that they were merely written to harm the Church - and would hence be branded as 'heresies'. But, if, after the passage of time, all trace of what they were supposed to mean became 'anathematized', or held in detestation, then eventually no one would know the mystery anymore, which would allow for the prophecies to come to pass right under everyone's noses without anyone suspecting in the least what their true purpose was.

No one can truly oppose God, because His understanding and power are limitless. If God is the source of all things, then all things should reflect that source. If these keys unlock the canonical Scriptures, and also the apocryphal books, then their source ought to be the same. This is the return to Him. Whatever does not return to God is not from God, but returns to its source, having exhausted its usefulness, it returns to oblivion, and is gone like a day that is passed, and cannot be called back into existence. God desires to overcome emptiness with fullness, and fullness with emptiness. His words reflect His eternity, and they can finally be appreciated as the Image of His Glory. Not as words that can be spoken, but as words that speak to the eternity that He planted within us - who, finally able to receive the breath of life, once again, become

living beings.

The Hidden Treasure

Over the centuries there has been so much written about the parables of Jesus that it is fair to ask why yet another attempt at their interpretation is necessary. The answer is that despite all that has been said about them, there is a dimension which, at least as far as I have been able to determine, has been completely overlooked.

This fresh approach, I believe, will be worth your while to learn since it can lead to the recovery of much of what has been lost over the centuries; much that pertains to our preparation for the Second Coming of Christ.

The first thing that I will do is give you the answer up front, so that as you read you can follow along better. The key is simply that the Church condemned much of God's word early on in its history, and as a consequence created a situation whereby the only means of interpreting the Scriptures more fully became hidden from our understanding. Amazingly, that's just about all there is to say about it--but how vast and far-reaching are the implications of such a simple idea! Think about it a moment, this event would render all other attempts to explain the Scriptures as futile, and therefore doom them to fail.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER (Mt 13:1-23; Mk 4:1-20; Lk 8:4-15)

I will begin with this parable because it is one of the few explained in detail, and also because in Mark 4:13 Jesus makes it clear that the proper understanding of it will be crucial in understanding other parables. Also it must be understood that for the sake of clarity, I have used a 'Combined Gospel' New Testament so that significant information won't be excluded.

In Matthew 13:3, Jesus tells this parable: **“Behold, the sower went forth to sow: and as he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside (and it was trodden under foot), and the birds came and devoured them: and others fell upon the rocky places, where they had not much earth: and**

straightway they sprang up, because they had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And others fell upon thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked them (and they yielded no fruit): and others fell upon the good ground, and yielded fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He that hath ears, let him hear.”

Jesus then goes on to explain the parable beginning at verse 18: “Hear then ye the parable of the sower. (The seed is the word of God.) When anyone heareth the word of the Kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the evil one (Satan), and snatcheth away that which hath been sown in his heart (that he may not believe and be saved). This is he that was sown by the way side. And he that was sown upon the rocky places, this is he that heareth the word, and straightway with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but endureth for a while; and when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, straightway he stumbleth (who for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.) And he that was sown among the thorns, this is he that heareth the word; and the care of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches (and the pleasures of this life), (and the lusts of other things entering in) choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. And he that was sown upon the good ground, this is he that (in an honest and good heart) heareth the word, and understandeth it (and accept it); who verily beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”

At first it seems pretty straightforward: some people don't bear fruit because Satan takes the word out of their hearts; some people don't bear fruit because they are too superficial, and therefore do not allow the word to grow in their hearts; still others are too interested in pleasures and materialism to allow the word to change them; while the ones with good hearts will grow in the word. All of this is true, but there's more here than meets the eye.

In all three accounts, the order is the same; first the road, then the

rocky places, then the thorny places, and then the field with the good soil. This can be further expounded. When people wear sandals, and their animals walk with them along a road, rocks pose a danger, not to mention a great deal of pain and discomfort, so naturally all of the larger and sharper rocks get kicked off to the side of the road. Between the road and the field, one would expect to find a drainage ditch, which is a natural place for weeds to grow. Finally, beyond the ditch would lie the field. So it is evident that we have a vivid and logical picture of a man walking in a straight line from a road to a field.

It is also worth mentioning that throughout His exposition, Jesus refers to the various patches of ground as “**he that...**” or in other words, the different types of ground represent different kinds of people. So since we have seen that the order of the soils is important, then it is evident that these soils represent various people in a particular order. In other words the ‘way side’ people precede the ‘rocky place’ people, who in turn precede the ‘thorny place’ people, who also precede the ‘good soil’ people. This is a parable that involves time and sequence.

It is obviously the Christians who receive the word, but the first ones mentioned have the word taken from them by Satan. This is a picture of the early Church, and the process of selection and canonization of the Scriptures. The words that Satan took away from them must represent the books they themselves rejected, since the words were taken out of their hearts so that they might not believe. Notice that the heart is the crucial thing here. In other words, there were certain Scriptures which they did not accept as precious, and were therefore vulnerable to attack by the enemy. The apocryphal books were not considered authentic by many Church leaders, and were therefore condemned except for the few that represent the difference between the Catholic canon and the Protestant canon. This first example refers cryptically to the period of time leading up to the first official proclamation of the canon in the late fourth century.

As a result of so many books having been removed, there arose the

need for men to try and explain things through philosophy and theology. But the assumption we as believers tend to make is that the books that were rejected could not have been inspired, or else they wouldn't have been rejected in the first place. This clearly circular reasoning assumes that God could not possibly have arranged for these books to be removed and restored at a later date. The beauty of this belief is that it is the very mechanism by which God is able to pull this amazing feat off before our very eyes. These people, relying upon their own wisdom, represent the 'rocky place' people. Since they chose to rely on their own ideas as opposed to God's, they can therefore be seen as having no root in themselves. This period of time reached its fulfillment sometime during the 17th century, when the Protestant Churches dropped the apocryphal books that were left in the Bible because their 'authenticity' was called into question. Thus they were 'scorched'.

Of course by this time world trade and world exploration were well underway, and had been for some time, and as a result the exchange of goods brought with it an exchange of ideas, and the one thing that practically everybody understood was money. With the whole world now within reach, religious ideals gradually began to give way to more secular concerns. This has more or less been the trend up to this time. We see the world now in an unparalleled state of materialism and hedonism and the lust for power. When this present generation will be presented with these mysteries, many will reject them, of course, since so many are so worldly. They will be deceived, or 'choked', by their riches.

Those who will accept the apocryphal books, along with the mysteries that are being revealed by God in these last days will be the 'good soil' people. These are the Elect ones that are spoken of in places like Mark 13:20, and much more in the apocryphal books. They will be able to expound parables and reveal mysteries when they arrive at last, since they will both 'understand' and 'accept' the word. This shall be the generation that bears the fruit.

THE LAMP AND THE BUSHEL (Mt 5:14-16; Mk 4:21-23; Lk 8:16-18)

“And He said unto them, ‘Is the lamp brought out to be put under the bushel, or under the bed, and not to be put on the stand? For there is nothing hid, save that it should be manifested; neither was anything made secret, but that it should come to light. If any man hath ears to hear, let him hear.’ And He said unto them, ‘Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete it shall be measured unto you; and more shall be given unto you. For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which (he thinketh) he hath.’”

In Psalm 119:105 we read: “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path,” and in Proverbs 6:23 it says: “For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light...”, so it should be apparent that the word ‘lamp’ refers to the Scriptures in the language of parables. Consequently this parable centers around the word: ‘word’.

If we restate the first sentence: “**Is the word brought out to be put under the bed?**” then it becomes apparent what the rest of the parable is about. If the lamp is the word, and the lamp is meant to be put on a lampstand, then the word is meant to be held up for all to see as well. Jesus then goes on to say that: “**...there is nothing hid, save that it should be manifested; neither was anything made secret, but that it should come to light.**” So if He is referring to the ‘word’, then what ‘word’ is hidden? What ‘word’ has been made secret? The very word ‘apocrypha’ comes from a Greek word meaning ‘hidden’, or ‘secret’. In other words, the apocryphal books should be brought to light. In fact, the literal meaning lets us know that they were intended to be hidden and made secret in order that in due course, they should be revealed.

Perhaps even more intriguing is the next verse: “**Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete it shall be measured unto you; and more (of the word!) shall be given unto you.**” In other words, with whatever measure you make when you hear the word, there will be a

corresponding amount measured back to you. The more you are willing to hear of God's word, the greater will be your reward from Him. One should not be afraid to read more of God's Scriptures, but rather, one should realize that those who cling to their limited understanding of the word will end up being wrong, as the next verse makes clear.

Jesus goes on to say: **“For he that hath, (eyes to see, and ears to hear the mystery of this parable) to him shall be given (more answers to the mysteries of God); and he that Hath not (this understanding), from him shall be taken away even that which he thinketh he hath.”** What he thinks he has is a correct estimation of what constitutes Scripture, and what that Scripture means. Any coherent system that is both accurate and consistent will certainly pose a threat to those in authority over the Churches. Once you grasp this concept, you will find that God will reveal more to you about it, but only if you are sincere, after all, what God is really testing about you is your sincerity. The knowledge of men is foolishness to God, therefore it will be discarded. The traditions of men have heretofore limited your knowledge about these mysteries, but He is even now restoring them, and you can be a part of it.

THE PARABLE OF THE TARES

(Mt 13:24-30; 36-43)

Another parable that Jesus expounds is the parable of the tares. Unless one is familiar with the apocryphal Book of Enoch, the meaning of this similitude will be obscure, but to one that is familiar with this ancient text, the meaning is unmistakable. In this one Jesus says: **“The Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto a man that sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away. But when the blade sprang up and brought forth fruit, then the tares appeared also. And the servants of the householder came and said unto him, ‘Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? whence hath it tares?’ And he said unto them, ‘An enemy hath done this.’ And the servants say unto him, ‘Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?’ But he saith, ‘Nay; lest haply while ye gather up the**

tares, ye root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather up first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn...”

Jesus then goes on to explain this parable to his disciples: “He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man; and the field is the world; and the good seed are the sons of the Kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; and the enemy that sowed them is the devil: and the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are angels. As therefore the tares are gathered up and burned with fire; so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his Kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. He that hath ears, let him hear.”

The important thing to bear in mind here is the fact that the devil is identified as the father of certain people who will coexist with God’s people until the time of the end. There is only one place in the canonical Scriptures where this story is told in detail.

In Genesis 6:1-4 we read the following account: “And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them. That the sons of God (the fallen angels, see Jude 6,) saw the daughters of men that they were fair: and they took them wives of all which they chose....” “There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.”

We thus have at least two data here about the offspring of the fallen angels: they were ‘giants’, and they were “mighty...men of renown”. We may thus infer from this that the word: ‘giant’ is a code word for ‘the powerful’, or ‘men of renown’. In other words, those men who strive

for power and renown in this world are spiritual offspring of the devil. After all, if they were physically gigantic, how could they be mistaken for the “sons of the Kingdom?” Moreover, the entire principle behind the analogy of tares being indistinguishable from wheat would not make any sense if these were really giants.

The Book of Enoch, which was widely read by early Christians, widely attested to in other apocryphal books, and even quoted as Scripture in Jude 14&15, contains this story in all of its details. In fact, in addition to fathering their children, these angels also taught these women numerous wicked things. Chapter 7 tells us that these angels were the first to teach about magical medicine and incantations, and in chapter 8 we are told that they also taught them how to make knives, swords, and breastplates. These angels also taught them about jewelry, and ornamentation, and cosmetics. Other evil practices include astrology, the smashing of the embryo in the womb, and even the mystery of writing, since chapter 69:10&11 read: **“For human beings are not created for such purposes to take up their beliefs with pen and ink. For indeed human beings were not created but to be like angels, permanently to maintain pure and righteous lives. Death, which destroys everything, would have not touched them, had it not been through Their knowledge by which they shall perish; death is now eating us by means of this power.”**

In other words, all of the strife, and warfare, and wickedness and idolatry on this earth is being carried out by people who have an inclination to follow the voices of devils. These angels have conspired among themselves to carry out great wickedness on the earth. Their children live in luxury and power, not to mention eminence and respect. These are our mighty men of today, those who ‘cause stumbling’ and ‘do iniquity’. They are without conscience, and are busily at work destroying mankind and the earth.

In Enoch chapter 7, we have an account of how these giants afflict men and destroy the earth. **“These (giants) consumed the produce of all**

the people until the people detested feeding them. So the giants turned against the people in order to eat them. And they began to sin against birds, wild beasts, reptiles, and fish. And their flesh was devoured the one by the other, and they drank blood. And then the earth brought an accusation against the oppressors.” The modern counterpart to these giants, the bad seed, operate in the very same ways. For example, the rich possess land, money and resources so vast that there always exists a permanent underclass who are impoverished and put in a position to serve the rich. Then, when these people are no longer needed, or other people in other places will work for less, these people will be replaced. The part about sinning against birds and reptiles and beasts has to do with environmental consequences of industrial and technological advances. Even today, many are concerned that the earth is laying accusation against us by becoming a less hospitable place to live.

Another striking parallel to the modern situation is the account of Noah in chapter 65: “In those days, Noah saw the earth, that she was deformed, and her destruction was at hand.” The earth had become deformed as the result of the secrets that the angels revealed. The earth is deformed today. Is it possible that our destruction is also near? The point is that we are busy destroying the earth at the instigation of these evil angels--and their children do their bidding, furthering the Kingdom of sin and death.

Since we are almost all tied into this world system, whether we like it or not, we are forced to participate in the destruction of mankind and the earth. Only God can rescue us from certain death. I have gone into this level of detail so that you can see that there is a great deal of enlightenment to gain from reading the apocryphal books. They don't just tell us the kinds of things we already know, but they supply supplementary and complementary information. It does very little good just to tell you that there are 'good' and 'bad' people that are difficult to tell apart. By encoding the mysteries of these books in parables, they can be held back until the time of the end, and then given back to us

after most of the prophecies encoded in them are already fulfilled. The remainder of the prophecies will be fulfilled as the inevitable consequence of this interpretation of them. Conflicts between those who understand these things and those that are in positions of authority and eminence will certainly come to pass since their authority will be threatened by them.

THE HIDDEN TREASURE

(Mt 13:44)

The next parable that Jesus tells is of a hidden treasure. He says: **“Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto treasure hid in the field: the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field.”**

Before I can really get into this one, I must make it clear that it is part of a series of parables which Jesus concludes thus: **“Have ye understood all these things?...Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven is like a man that is an householder, which bringeth out forth out of his treasure things new and old.”**

It is evident that this conclusion is meant to reveal something more about the preceding parables, since he uses the word ‘therefore’. So the treasure that is hidden in the parable above has the quality of containing both a ‘new’ aspect to it and an ‘old’ aspect to it. Moreover this ability to bring the treasure out is predicated on one’s “being instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven.” In other words, there is a secret that one must know before one can decode it.

Since one needs to have this ‘instruction’ before one can understand, it is evident that the reader cannot simply deduce a conclusion merely from the facts given, but rather would have to bring this understanding to bear on the parable. The theory that I proposed at the beginning of this treatise can be applied in a way that is both consistent throughout the Scriptures and with Church history.

If the mystery is that apocryphal books were to be popular for a time, then lost, and then recovered at the end of the age, then this is the

kind of sense we can make of it: The treasure is itself this mystery. What is brought forth from this 'treasure' is both 'new' and 'old'. What is new is the fact that the secret is only now being revealed to us, and is hence new to us. What is old is the fact that it was revealed to some during the early Church age. By extension, these Scriptures are also to be understood as being both new and old.

If this is so, we can deduce that the field is the Scriptures, since that is where the mystery of the Kingdom is embedded. So the man who found this treasure hidden in the field can be understood as having found this mystery in the Scriptures.

The next thing this man does is hide this treasure again. Now if this treasure is the mystery, and this mystery gets hidden again, then it is clear that this 'man' could not be referring to any particular person, since this process of hiding the mystery and then recovering it would take close to two thousand years to complete. It makes more sense, therefore, to see this man as representing the faithful man in general, or faithful Christians spread out over the age. When, in the previous parable, Jesus refers to the wheat and the tares growing together, he represents the development of both as a single growth cycle, rather than many, so it is probably within acceptable limits to apply this to the 'man' in this parable.

The last element that needs to be worked out is the part about the man selling all that he has, and buying the field. Now it is almost a given that anything that one is willing to sell all that he has for must be more precious than anything else the man had, so if the man represents the believing Christian, then this is an exhortation to not only abandon his (or her) worldly possessions, but also his or her theology, since the buying of the field (the Scriptures) entails transcending any belief system that acts as a hindrance to that end.

We are fortunate to have a related parable in the recently discovered Gospel of Thomas. This is a little like checking one's math, because we can see that the theory also seems to work in it. Saying 109

reads: “The father's imperial rule is like a person who had a treasure hidden in his field (the Scriptures) but did not know it. And when he died (i.e. when the canon was fixed and the apocryphal books were rejected, etc.,) he left it to his son. ‘The son (the Protestants) did not know about it (the mystery) either. He took over the field and sold it. (i.e.- the Protestants ‘sold’ the Scriptures by getting rid of the remaining apocryphal books.) The buyer (the Elect Ones) went plowing, discovered the treasure, and began to lend money at interest to whomever he wished.” (Meaning he had an unlimited source of knowledge to draw upon, for “to whomever he wished” also includes the ‘richest of the rich’, so presumably even the most knowledgeable people can benefit from this man.)

Thus we may conclude that the Elect Ones, by abandoning the lesser understanding, and scrupulously searching the Scriptures (the field) for the truth (the treasure) came to possess great riches (of wisdom), and the whole world would come to be indebted to them.

THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

(Mt 13:45 &46)

The next jewel in this string of parables is the Pearl of Great Price. It reads: “Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had , and bought it.”

Since verse 51 says: “Have ye understood all these things?” It is apparent that all of these parables are somehow related. If this is so, we can understand this one as following the previous one. A pearl is a valuable treasure when it is large and flawless. A large pearl takes more time to form than a small one; and the fewer flaws it contains, the more it is worth. From these observations we may conclude that whatever this pearl represents, it must be large, flawless, and must have taken a long time to form. Other ideas come to mind with this particular gemstone. First of all, a pearl forms from an irritant such as a piece of sand. Secondly, this process takes place inside of an oyster, which means that

its formation must have been unseen, or in secret. They are, moreover, with few exceptions, white--a color which usually signifies purity.

If we assume that this merchant is like the man that bought the field in the previous parable, and the pearl likewise represents the treasure, then the pearl is the mystery of the lost Scriptures. This mystery would only be revealed at the conclusion of the age, and would hence fit the requirement of being formed over a long period of time. And since the number of apocryphal books (as well as the canonical ones) is rather large, the analogy holds, since a large pearl is worth more than a small one. It must also be noted that the merchant, though looking for pearls, only bought the one. Instead of seeing all of these Scriptures as separate both from the canon and from each other, he sees only one thing, and thus we may conclude that they are a unity; that God inspired them all to work together. The great price that Jesus paid for our salvation is apparent when we consider that the entire heavens and the earth, and the totality of all things contained therein have all had to work together for all ages to achieve this end; to save us from our depravity and unbelief.

This parable also has a 'twin' in the Gospel of Thomas. Saying 76 reads: **“The (Father's) imperial rule is like a merchant who had a supply of merchandise and then found a pearl. That merchant was prudent; he sold the merchandise and bought the single pearl for himself. So also with you, seek His treasure that is unfailing, that is enduring, where no moth comes to eat, and no worm destroys.”**

The supplementary information added to the end in this particular version solidifies the idea that 'pearl' and 'treasure' are interchangeable in these examples. This treasure is 'unfailing', which reinforces the idea of perfection previously stated; and the word 'enduring' calls to mind the idea that such a pearl would take a long time to form.

It is significant that it reads: **“...he sold the merchandise and bought the single pearl for himself,”** as opposed to the several or many pearls he could have otherwise purchased. Matthew 13:45 states that he

was “seeking goodly pearls”, so it is likely that his specialty was gemstones, so the merchandise that he sold was probably other gems--maybe even other pearls. If these other, lesser gems represent his theological assumption that apocryphal books are separate, and distinct both from the Scriptures and each other, then they would be seen as many and of comparably little worth. But upon a sudden flash of insight, he comes to see their value to him as more than the sum total of their parts, all of them apart from each other do not compare with the singular pearl he could exchange them for.

PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN

(Mt 13:33)

In Matthew 13:33 Jesus relates this parable to His disciples: “...The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.” When we break this one down, we realize that this woman is in the process of making some kind of meal or bread. She has to reach into a jar three times to get the proper amount of meal--a three step process. There is also leaven added to it, which we can interpret as ‘doctrine’, since in Matthew 16:12 Jesus' disciples realize that “Jesus bade them (the disciples) not to beware of the leaven of bread, but the doctrine of the Pharisees and Saducees.”

Now the doctrine that they taught would have been their interpretation of the Scriptures. So if their doctrine is to their Scriptures is what leaven is to bread, then the meal is here symbolic of the Scriptures. If we then rephrase the parable with these changes it becomes: “The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto doctrine which a woman took, and hid in three measures of Scripture, till the whole Scripture was full of (good) doctrine.” The next thing to realize is that since the leaven was hidden by her in the meal, then the doctrine of the kingdom is hidden in the Scriptures. Clearly there is a hidden doctrine, which will come in three dispensations, the element of time in this parable.

If the first dispensation of the Scriptures was what we now refer to as the Old Testament, and the second dispensation of the Scriptures was the New Testament, then what would the third dispensation be? It doesn't make sense for this third dispensation to be in the future, as if to say there will be fresh Scripture for a new era. The woman had to wait for the whole lump to leaven. In other words we in the future would receive a fresh dispensation of old Scripture. What makes the most sense in this context is the apocrypha, since it was written long ago, and all that would be really novel about it would be the change in status it would receive as a result of a shift in doctrine. What is needed is merely for the leaven to work its way through the whole lump.

The final question is: what does the woman represent. She was the one who put the leaven into the lump. So the real question is : who puts the inspiration into the Scriptures? The answer to this question is found in 2 Peter 1:21: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." This makes sense when it is understood that Jesus was a Jew who spoke Aramaic. In Hebrew, the word 'spirit' is feminine.

HOUSES ON ROCK AND SAND

(Mt 7:24-27; Lk 6:46-49)

This is the final parable spoken in Jesus' famous Sermon on the Mount. It reads: "Everyone therefore that cometh unto me and heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man who digged and went deep, and laid a foundation, and built his house upon the rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house and the stream broke against it, and could not shake it: and it fell not because it had been well builded: for it was founded upon the rock. And every one that heareth these words of mine and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand, upon the earth without a foundation: the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall (and) ruin thereof."

The contrast is between two philosophies of construction; one sound, and the other unsound. The idea of a house being built upon a rock is reminiscent of Peter's great confession. In Matthew 16:13-18 this exchange takes place between Jesus and Peter: "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am? ...And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell will not prevail against it."

It is clear that Jesus calls Simon 'Peter', which means 'rock', because the Father in heaven revealed Jesus' true identity to him. He then goes on to say that he will build the Church on this 'rock'. This 'rock' then, means spiritual perception, or listening to the Father. If the foolish builder failed to dig deep enough to reach the rock, then he failed to hear the Father as well. In other words, There is a building that looks well built, at least as far as appearances go. But what specifically does this unsound building represent? Jesus says that: "...upon this rock I will build my Church."; so the building built upon the bedrock is the Church. The corresponding building must then represent an unsound Church.

If one contemplates that sand is granulated rock, then one has a great contrast between God's word--the solid rock; and men's words--the sand. And if this is so, then it becomes evident that in order to get to this rock of spiritual understanding, one must go beyond the sand--that is the unsure foundation that is our present theological framework. The only support that sand receives is from the sand that surrounds it. Likewise, the various teachings that have come down to us have only the support of other, loosely held teachings. If the Church only has its foundation in these often contradictory and unsound teachings, then we can expect many of our assumptions about what constitutes truth to be incorrect.

Let us now consider the testing that will soon come upon this Church. ‘To do this, we need to be able to decode a few words. First of all, in Ephesians 5:26, we read: “That he (Jesus) might sanctify and cleanse it (the Church) with the washing of water by the word.”, so the rain and floods and the stream have to do with God’s word. Next we read in Ephesians 4:14: “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of hand, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive:”. So it is evident that winds have to do with teachings, or doctrine.

Rain is water in a form that comes from above. If we think, rather, of words coming from above, we can perceive in this some kind of revelation from God at the end of time having to do with ‘new’ Scriptures. This might seem to rule out the apocrypha, since they aren’t really new, but consider the water cycle. Just as water gets ‘recycled’ through evaporation and condensation, so these ‘profitable’ books might “**have been lost to [us] for a season, that [we] should receive [them] forever.**” (Philemon 15.) After all of these Scriptures begin to rain down upon the present Church, the cumulative effect (**the flood**) will spell disaster for any theological framework unprepared for such a judgment. Not so if any Church now chooses to hear these words of Jesus and build on this solid foundation--by doing as Jesus' words here indicate.

As for the winds that smote upon these houses, these are doctrines that accompany the rains, or the Scriptures to be given at the end of time. There is a wonderful passage in Enoch 60:21&22 which makes this much clearer: “**When the rain wind becomes activated in its reservoir, the angels come and open the reservoir and let it out: (i.e. there is a dispensation of words and doctrine that is being held back, as it were by a reservoir, until the proper time.) and when it is sprayed over the whole earth, it becomes united with the water which is upon the earth;** (The apocryphal books will be combined with the canonical

books that we already have, since the water that is upon the earth would correspond with the Scriptures we already have.) and whensoever it unites with other waters, it unites with the water upon the earth which is for the use of those who dwell upon the earth, for it is nourishment for the earth sent from the Most High in heaven.”

CONCLUSION:

There are many more parables that can be understood using this insight. But the parables themselves aren't the only parts of the Scriptures that reveal this mystery. The Bible is absolutely brimming with this teaching, but it has hitherto been concealed. Consider I Corinthians 1:25: “...the foolishness of God is wiser than man; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” By the foolishness of God, Paul is letting us know that some Scriptures are going to be regarded by men as foolish, but they will, nonetheless, be of God, who by His superior wisdom can make them wiser than the men who judged them foolish. As for the weakness of God, Paul is referring to the fact that some of God's Scriptures will be considered of no value by those in positions of authority over the Church. Being considered apocryphal, or foolish, they will seldom be used or even referred to by pundits and preachers--except in scorn. When they prove to have authority given them by God Himself, then they will undermine the credibility of anyone who argues against this truth.

Conclusions are drawn from premises. If our premise is that all apocryphal and pseudepigraphal books are false and unreliable, then the mind will seek to discredit them at every opportunity. Unless we are inclined to believe them to be true first, then we will fall into traps of error that are deliberately set. After all, why does Jesus say that he uses parables in the first place? In Mark 4:11&12 we read: “Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God: but to them that are without, all these things are done in parables: that seeing they may see and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand.” He does it to keep the carnally minded from understanding him.

How can we understand the spiritual through the flesh? How then can we judge spiritual books by fleshly criteria? When Jesus tells a parable such as the Good Samaritan or the Wise Steward, do we not understand that the message is what is important, and not the personalities described? What if the Good Samaritan never really existed and the story, merely used as a vehicle to express a certain truth. The teaching is sound whether or not the characters ever existed. Similarly, what if God inspired two kinds of Scripture: one type would be historically accurate, and well pedigreed, and another would be less historically accurate, and of uncertain origin. Naturally, God would have known which of the two the fleshly mind would choose. Even an atheist can judge on the basis of historicity and textual criticism. If a person is able to read a parable properly, and sees that both types of Scriptures decode in the same way, then he sees that the fleshly method of selection leads to a false conclusion, and the spiritual way of seeing leads to an inheritance--a gift from God to be given to us in these final days.

What is the "gospel" of Jesus Christ? There was once a time when the sayings and works and miracles of Jesus were passed down orally. It is thought that people would write these sayings down from time to time so they could both remember them and pass them on to others. It was a living faith. Many people who were witnesses to the very events that we read about today could tell their stories. For a few precious decades these people were alive and scattered all over the Holy Land. There were witnesses in Tyre, Sidon, The Decapolis, Capernaum, Galilee, Jerusalem, and just about everywhere else one can imagine in that region. These people were of all ages; old and young: all nationalities; Jews, Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, Arabs, and many others. Each one of these groups saw different aspects of Jesus and his Gospel as significant - and as a result, different cultures opted to preserve these records differently. Today we know of Coptic Gospels, Arabic Gospels, and Jewish Gospels. We also know that early sects preserved traditions differently. The Gnostics preserved the Gospel of Thomas, which is probably much older than even the Gospel of Mark, from which Matthew and Luke borrowed much of their material. There are even two gospels that can be produced from the canonical gospels; one from the common material shared by Matthew and Luke, and another as possibly the central core around which the Gospel of John is composed.

One of these, a sayings source called "Q", for "quelle", or "source", can be reconstructed from the material that only Luke and Matthew share. It is quite sobering to think that both authors considered this document inspired enough to use, and still not a trace of it exists alone. Perhaps it is because most of it was preserved in Matthew and Luke that it was no longer considered necessary, but still it goes to show how arbitrary we can be in accepting some things and rejecting others. It was inspired, and still it was lost. We are that much poorer for the knowledge it might have given us had it been preserved.

The other 'gospel within a gospel' is sometimes called the "Signs Gospel", and exists more or less in its entirety in the Gospel of John,

and is believed to be the nucleus around which the rest of the gospel is structured. If this were indeed a separate gospel, then three of the four gospels can be seen as composites, rather than 'originals'. Even Mark seems to have its own 'expansions'. There are places where Matthew and Luke appear to be following Mark closely, and both break off at exactly the same point, when it might have made more sense to continue with the Markan narrative. How would they have known to stop at the same place if the Markan Gospel they were working with were not a more primitive version than the Mark we have today?

What are we to say about these things? As Christians we accept all of these writings as inspired whether or not they are composites. Moreover however much they have in common, they are each very much their own gospel. Neither Mark nor John have details about Jesus' birth or childhood, but that by itself is not evidence that nothing was known about it. It certainly does not by itself mean that there was no annunciation, no manger, no magi, or no magnificat. Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. It is merely that certain facts which were preserved in some accounts were not included in other accounts. Matthew contains the story of the magi, but Luke does not. Luke contains the story of Jesus teaching in the temple, but none of the other gospels preserve this account. What if God designed each of the gospels to be incomplete without all of the others? Why would this be? If these gospels were themselves composites, made up of other gospels, why were these not then further combined into a single gospel? Well such a fusion of the four gospels did take place around the year 170 A.D.. The Diatessaron, written by Tatian became the official gospel among Syriac Christians until its replacement by the Peshitta.

The very people who compiled these many and varied sources, wrote their own gospels somewhat selectively. Though the Diatessaron seems to be the first major attempt to compile a gospel from source material and not leave anything out, it is certainly not fair to say that these writers of sacred Scripture deliberately omitted certain things. A

simpler explanation is that each writer felt compelled to present Jesus to the world in accordance with the leading of the Holy Spirit. The situation here suggests circumstances quite the opposite of those described by scholars in their assessments of what Scriptures appeared when. Consider this; if the composers had had any notion that the verses they left out would be lost forever, would any of them have felt they had the luxury of leaving anything out? Each gospel writer had certain goals in mind when writing their gospels. Nowhere is this demonstrated more clearly than in the Gospel of John 20:30 & 31, “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God; and that through believing you might have life in his name.” John here clearly states that he had a world of things he could have contributed, but constrained himself to write certain things over others for a purpose - that the reader might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Any notion, therefore, that these people followed timelines and formulas slavishly, or were merely dispassionate compilers and historians, is seriously flawed, for it flies in the face of what they have themselves said and Biblical Scholars have long since affirmed. John here is admitting openly that his entire purpose was to persuade the reader to believe; and through belief, find life. He even mentions this again in the next chapter, for John 21:25 states, “And there are also many things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.” Now John is not referring to outside sources, for just before this statement, in verse 24, he declares that unlike Luke, his account is first-hand by saying, “This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true.” By contrast, Luke’s prologue (Lk 1:1-4) begins by saying: “Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered

them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed."

Now when Luke said that he was going to write an orderly narrative, he evidently did not mean every single word available to him, for he only used about fifty percent of Mark in his narrative. Matthew, by contrast, managed to incorporate about ninety percent of Mark into his gospel, so this almost certainly means that Luke left out material that was at his disposal. Since he evidently underutilized this source, it must clearly mean that he never intended his particular gospel to represent the fullest extent of the truth, or indeed an exhaustive account - unless it is conceded that he only had available to him an earlier, more primitive version of Mark than the one we now know, which would only serve to underscore the fact that these documents were very nearly constantly undergoing revision. Obviously Luke's limited usage of Mark implies that he never felt the need to reproduce it in its entirety, for by his own admission a great many had done so before he wrote. (Mark would have just been one, so who were these great many others?) Indeed, he describes it merely as a systematic, orderly narrative based on eyewitness accounts which have been thoroughly researched so that his reader, Theophilus, might realize that the teaching that he was receiving was in fact reliable.

Presumably Theophilus, whoever he might have been, had questions about the ordering and reliability of these events. It may be that the traditions that were then in circulation were somewhat confusing, or perhaps sketchy, or even seemingly contradictory, but more likely he is simply trying to show that infancy stories, such as the annunciation; sayings sources, such as the "Q" Gospel, and Narrative Gospels, such as Mark do indeed harmonize, which is evidently the case. He seemed to be trying to illustrate that all Scriptures are

compatible with all other Scriptures. Ostensibly, Luke feels compelled to reassure him about issues of research and credibility, but he does not himself seem to question these matters. Luke frankly and openly reveals to Theophilus here that despite the number of gospels and gospel writers, they have the quality of being fully compatible with one another, and that there is nothing wrong with a faithful and knowledgeable Christian trying to do so. He might have said that what these other writers had put out was false or inaccurate, but he didn't. He might have said only a few, select individuals had ever dared to do such a thing, but he made it clear that many had. To even suggest that other gospels had to be of later origin or of questionable accuracy is hardly to be found in this or most any other New Testament passage.

One wonders, however, if there was more to the story of Jesus' life that would have been preserved if the goal of any of these writers had been completeness, rather than the various reasons given for their compilations. Perhaps these gospel accounts were so ample at that time that these writers of Scripture felt free to be selective. Luke might have thought it unnecessary to reproduce all of Mark because The Gospel of Mark was already in wide circulation at the time. It is also possible that the birth, infancy and childhood narratives of Jesus were also only partially preserved for similar reasons. It's possible that it was not altogether necessary to include them in every detail because people at the time could consult other documents which focused primarily on these things. In other words we may have had early infancy gospels, and early post-resurrection gospels that were the impetus for the seeming paucity of these details when compared to what we now call the apocryphal gospels. The usual explanation given for such long and detailed birth, infancy, and childhood narratives that have been passed down to us is that they were expansions of the 'canonical' accounts. Put another way, some people felt that one or two chapters concerning these things was simply not enough. Surely there had to be more significance to these events than either Matthew or Luke included, so people took it

upon themselves to write all kinds of spurious gospels to satisfy the curiosity of the masses. This is thought to be true of much of the New Testament Apocrypha. Many of these stories are full of seemingly fanciful details, inaccuracies, apparent contradictions, and are otherwise problematic. They are frequently difficult to reconcile with each other and with the canonical accounts.

All of these factors have contributed to their perceived unreliability among scholars. The fact that they were once extremely popular, and were widely read for over a thousand years seems puzzling if they were really just fakes. It is, moreover, somewhat puzzling that they don't always seem to fit well together if they were written so long after the canonical accounts. Why would anyone who wanted to pass off some kind of bogus Scripture as genuine include such difficulties? Could there be a valid explanation for all of this?

While it is impossible to go back in time to witness these events ourselves, there might be just enough evidence left to us to untie some of these difficult knots. As I mentioned before, the goal of the gospel writers does not appear to be to preserve all of the details of Jesus' life from beginning to end. When these accounts were drawn up, there probably was not a sense that so much of the gospel tradition was soon to be under attack. We know of dozens of gospels from the first two centuries through patristic citations as well as various gospel fragments, sections, and even whole gospels that have come down to us in various ways. It would seem that no sooner had the four gospels emerged as "superior" to the rest, that the others began to fall out of favor. Their loss, it would seem, was probably a direct result of preferring some accounts over others.

This is somewhat ironic, and, it would seem, contradictory to the spirit that produced the canonical gospels in the first place. The gospels that were preserved seemed to be as a celebration of the variety and multiplicity of accounts that were then in circulation, and the ones that were rejected, as a result of a turning away from that spirit. How could

traditions that were apparently so widespread at the time that it almost seemed unnecessary to include them in the received gospel accounts eventually be forgotten only to be replaced by 'others' in the Second Century - and fakes at that! If the gospels were never written to strictly define everything that was true about Jesus, then it does not follow logically that anyone could use them as a basis for the exclusion of other gospels. To publicly sanction Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John as being *the* four gospels creates the idea that the others are inferior. The very idea means an almost certain death sentence for the rest. Why not rather take Luke and John at their word? Luke affirms in his prologue that many people were compiling Gospels at the time, and John in his conclusion points out that the words and deeds performed by Jesus were far too numerous to write down. Luke's stated purpose is merely to harmonize various accounts that he had received, and John's is to write in such a way that one might believe in Jesus Christ and have life in his name. As a matter of fact, if the writers of Matthew and Luke added material to Mark - which focuses exclusively on Jesus' ministry and passion - then the only conclusion one can draw from Matthew and Luke was that they saw the need to build a link between the Infancy and Resurrection Gospels to the Ministry and Passion narrative compiled by the author of Mark.

Getting back to Luke's prologue, and Theophilus' need for reassurance about the veracity of these accounts, We see that Luke includes an infancy narrative. Luke himself states that he was using written sources, so the annunciation of both John and Jesus were from written sources earlier than Luke's gospel. Could this possibly be taken as evidence that such gospels didn't come into existence until the second and third centuries? Certainly there had to be some kind of written source circulating at the time Luke wrote his gospel. All evidence seems to indicate that Luke's account is an abridgment. Consider Luke 2:51,52: **“His mother took careful note of all these things. And Jesus, precocious as he was, continued to excel in learning**

and gain respect in the eyes God and others." Now if his mother took such notice of Jesus' learning and precocity during his childhood, how come Luke does not give us even one real example of it? He tells us that Jesus was able to impress the teachers of the law with his wisdom, but we are not even given the foggiest notion of what he said that so impressed them. This does not have the appearance of the best preserved account of this discourse. It really just looks like a summation. In addition, it would seem that the likeliest person to have told this story in the first place would have been Mary, or at least someone who was intimately associated with her. In any case, Luke's omission of Jesus' words would certainly have aroused curiosity in people who would have liked to have known just what he did say to these teachers. If an account of this dialogue had come down to us, a plausible explanation for it would be that someone fabricated it to satisfy people's curiosity. But in light of the fact that Luke probably knew more about it than he actually wrote, and also probably realized that people would have been curious, the scenario that makes the most sense is that such an account at that time needed little or no elaboration because some tradition, either oral or written was probably already in circulation.

If Mary took such careful note of these things, then what is the point of telling us this if we have absolutely no way of knowing what it is that she took note of? The likeliest explanation is that the Infancy narrative or narratives Luke had before him was or were possibly even more well known than Mark, for he feels free to omit about half of Mark, but judging from the seeming paucity of the infancy and childhood narratives he seems to omit even more from them. Given this assumption, Luke was very possibly only providing a rudimentary structure upon which Theophilus and others who had these documents could take occasion to consult. In addition, had any or all of these sources been even nearly as popular as Mark, it hardly seems likely the stories they contained could have disappeared completely in the span of

fewer than a hundred years that separated the written documents that Luke admittedly and Matthew presumably used. Even if one supposes that the documents did disappear for a time, they could have re-emerged somehow. Had these documents fallen out of favor for a time and later turned back up, they might have been labeled as forgeries by the powers then current. Documents disappear and reappear all the time, which is precisely how we have come to possess the wide variety of manuscripts extant today.

Though this fact does not prove that the apocryphal gospels such as the Protevangelion of James, or the Gospel of Mary, or the Infancy Gospels of Thomas or Pseudo-Matthew were themselves the sources that either Luke or Matthew had at their disposal, it does open the door to an alternative explanation for their immense popularity; and it does provide a theory that allows for the questioning of the assumptions we have inherited from our Church Fathers.

This book is not intended for the Biblical Scholar or the Traditionalist. The Biblical Scholar is motivated primarily by the spirit of scholarship, which approaches scriptures on the basis of historical context, theology, and textual criticism. The Traditionalist is motivated primarily by a spirit of upholding what other people have written and said and thought. The Scholar effectively puts his or her faith in the rules of scholarship, and the Traditionalist effectively puts his or her faith in the judgments of others who came before them. Though the Biblical Scholar could rightly be said to be more open to the idea of truths within noncanonical documents, he or she is equally open to the idea of falsehoods contained within canonical documents, and therefore loses all sense of what is - or indeed even can be considered sacred. The Traditionalist by contrast typically adheres rigidly to canonical and doctrinal boundaries, assuming that the answers to most biblical questions have been worked out already. Arguably the Traditionalist is the more spiritual of the two, but if the Biblical Scholar is guilty of subordinating the Scriptures to 'objective' criteria, the

Traditionalist is guilty of subordinating the Scriptures to an almost entirely 'subjective' frame of reference.

The Scriptures should be thought of as spiritual in origin by those who have faith in them, and as such can only be properly understood by those who accept them as spiritual. If most people were truly spiritual in their understanding of the Scriptures, then why does there exist so much confusion, contention, and variation among the congregations and their leaders? It should therefore be apparent that what the majority of people think about the Scriptures themselves and the things that are written in them cannot be reconciled except through the Spirit of God. Paul puts it this way in I Corinthians 2:10-16: “This God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the spirit scrutinizes everything, even the depths of God. Among human beings, who knows what pertains to a person except the spirit of the person that is within? Similarly, no one knows what pertains to God except the spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the spirit that is from God so that we may understand the things freely given to us by God. And we speak about them not with words taught by human wisdom but with words taught by the Spirit, describing spiritual realities in spiritual terms. Now the natural person does not accept what pertains to the spirit of God, for to him it is foolishness, and he cannot understand it, because it is judged Spiritually. The spiritual person, however can judge everything but is not subject to judgment by anyone. For ‘who has known the mind of the Lord, so as to counsel him?’ But we have the mind of Christ.” If, then, we are spiritual, why do we listen to the words of mere men? Spiritual realities are contrary to earthly realities, although they are even more sound.

If the spirit scrutinizes everything as Paul says, then it is very puzzling, to say the least, that most Christians are almost completely unaware of even the existence of these writings. Their leaders, moreover, seem almost never to inform them of their existence. Logic would seem to indicate that a process that took over three long centuries

as the canonization process of the Scriptures did, would be an indication that this selection process was no easy task. If it was indeed this difficult to arrive at consensus, it is understandable that religious leaders would shy away from the subject as much as possible - but understandability is far from intellectual honesty. When were these things decided; and by whom? And why do we accept what mere mortals have said about the Scriptures without putting them to the test ourselves? Can we really assume that the judgments of people we don't know anything about concerning our most sacred trust can be relied upon? Ought we really to treat books that were once held sacred among some early Christians as profane? Would such a trial of God's word yield the same result today as it did over sixteen centuries ago? If nearly four centuries passed before anything resembling a general consensus ever emerged, then we do not resemble the original Christians in the least, but some subsequent version. If we presumably cannot trust documents that emerged in the second and third centuries, how can we base our faith on a version of Christianity that emerged in the fourth?

In our society, we give even the vilest of criminals as fair a trial as possible. We hold that every criminal has the right to an attorney; and has the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty by a jury of his or her peers. Moreover, in the case of a condemned criminal, there is no statute of limitations, and any new evidence that comes to light can be used as a basis for an appeal. I therefore see it as my moral obligation to act as counsel for the accused.

Ordinarily, before any case can come to trial prosecutors and defense lawyers wrangle over the evidence to determine which facts are admissible and which are not. In this case, however, it is the facts themselves which are on trial, and therefore all evidence should be presented completely, and without preference or bias.

In speaking for the accused, that is to say the rejected books, it must be realized that the prosecution rested its case nearly two thousand years ago, and judgment has been passed on the defendant since that

time. There is, moreover, scant evidence of the proceedings of that trial that remains to this time, so if there is any basis for an acquittal, it will also be necessary for the prosecution to reexamine its case against the accused.

As there is no precedent, I shall take as my basis Job 12:11-25: "Does not the ear test words as the palate savors food? Is wisdom with the aged? Does long life bring understanding? With God are wisdom and power. To Him belong counsel and understanding. If He pulls down there is no rebuilding; if He imprisons, there is no release. If He holds back the waters, there is no drought; if He lets them loose, the earth is overwhelmed Strength and success belong to Him, deceived and deceiver are His to use. He makes counselors behave like madmen and turns judges crazy; He looses the bonds imposed by kings and removes the girdle of office from their waists; He makes priests behave like idiots and overthrows those long in office; trusted counselors He strikes with dumbness. He robs the old of their judgment. He pours scorn on princes and abates the arrogance of nobles. He unveils mysteries deep in obscurity and into thick darkness He brings light. He leads peoples astray and destroys them. He lays them low, and there they lie. He deprives the nations' rulers of their wits and leaves them wandering in a trackless desert; without light they grope their way in darkness and are left to wander like drunkards."

We ought, therefore, to test these words as the palate savors food. It also should be quite clear from the rest of these words who will be right and who will be wrong, since it is obviously not persons such as myself who have occupied the offices of judge, priest, or king. Nevertheless, the truth will out, so let us be forthright with the facts.

Any trial that involves more than one witness takes into account at least two important factors: the credibility of each witness individually, and the evidence of all the witnesses taken together. If the credibility, or the motivation of any witness is questionable, that by itself is not usually enough to exclude his or her testimony, but is weighed against

the testimony of other witnesses, along with other evidence. The reason for this careful approach is simply that it does not follow logically that a person with a motivation to deceive necessarily will deceive. People have many motivations to do dishonest things in everyday life, and yet most people are upright, law-abiding citizens. It would also create a motivation for either the prosecution or the defense to distort evidence by intentionally questioning the motivation of any witness whose testimony might be detrimental to his or her case.

Similarly, if the powers that accepted or rejected books for inclusion into the canon were themselves motivated by dishonesty, who is to say that the abuse that these books suffered at their hands was not for the convenience of those same people? What we would have to do then as a next step would be to attempt to compile as much evidence as remained to us into a 'single gospel' in order to determine if the evidence did indeed warrant their exclusion, or if we rather have a case of witness tampering.

In compiling evidence, there is really only one basic principle to adhere to in a case such as this: fairness. There is no other way to judge them properly but to first give them the benefit of the doubt. If there are found to be faults and deficiencies in these writings, we ought first to examine the canonical writings for similar "errors", so that we don't maintain any double standard when it comes to our sense of justice. We cannot say that our aim is truth when we act or judge hypocritically. It may be that such features exist in the canonical writings for the very purpose of excusing these same characteristics in the extrabiblical accounts. We also must allow for the same qualities that exist in the accepted Scriptures to be assumed in these others. If we say that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John hold equal weight as gospels, then it will be necessary to extend this benefit to other gospels such as Thomas, The Protevangelion, and Nicodemus. This is the only way to judge these matters fairly, since if we do not, we have already passed judgment upon them, and our trial of them is thus a mockery of justice.

In extending the benefit of the doubt to these books, we are not placing less of a burden upon them, but, rather, we are placing an even greater demand upon their integrity than currently exists. Because we now assume them to be faulty, defective, and misleading, it shall take nothing less than an act of God to convince us otherwise. Naturally, if the argument is convincing, it should be apparent what is the power that lies behind them.

For my part, in composing this gospel, I have judged it necessary to adhere to the same high standards that I expect from others. This is not to say that it is "perfect" in the sense that there is only one way to integrate all of these texts. To be sure, there are times when it is difficult to determine the proper ordering of events, but these difficulties also arise when studying the four canonical gospels. Jesus' ministry, for instance, seems to take only one year in Matthew, Mark, and Luke; but three years in John. When people write a "harmony of the gospels", or a "combined gospel", they usually choose John's structure of three years, but only with a certain degree of caution, since so much of that gospel is regarded as "theological", and not, strictly speaking, "historical". It is, however, the more inclusive of the two possibilities.

I have not knowingly left out any facts or details. There were many times when details would get "in the way" of textual integration, and would require me to spend hours or even days trying to make sense of the whole. Even so, I always worked with the facts given, although the result would more often than not be quite different from any of the accounts taken alone, which even caused me to question my own efforts. I had to keep reassuring myself that all of the facts had to be treated as though they were all true. By taking this path and no other I felt I could put together something worthwhile; and I believe I had the Lord's help along the way.

Another difficulty I faced was where to place sayings that had no obvious location. Most of these sayings were easy to find because they either already existed as an addition or a variant in one or more

manuscripts, or otherwise showed some affinity to an already known saying. For example, the Gospel of Thomas says in saying 93: "Don't give what is sacred to dogs, for they might throw them upon a manure pile. Don't throw pearls to pigs, or they [...] it." The only place this saying can go is with Matthew 7:6, which reads: "Do not give what is holy to dogs, or throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them underfoot and turn and tear you to pieces." In examples such as these, reconstructions are quite simple, and relatively orthodox. The resulting text reads, "Do not give hallowed things to dogs, or else they might fling them onto a pile of manure. Do not toss your pearls in front of pigs, either, because they might just trample them right into the mud [grinding it,] and turn on you, tearing you to pieces."

Other sayings were more difficult to place. In saying 85, for example, Jesus says: "Adam came from great power and great wealth, but he was not worthy of you. For if he had been worthy he would not have tasted death." At first there doesn't seem to be any "proper" place to put this in the canonical tradition, but there is a connection between this saying and saying 46: "Jesus said, From Adam to John the Baptist, among those born of woman no one is so much greater than John the Baptist that his eyes should not be averted. But I have said that whosoever among you becomes a child will recognize the father's imperial rule and will become greater than John." I therefore placed verse 46 immediately after verse 85, and then I continued with Matthew 11:12 which reads: "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and men of violence take it by force." The resulting text thus reads, "Adam came from great power and great wealth, but he was not worthy of you. For if he had been worthy he would not have tasted death. From Adam to John the Baptist, among those born of woman no one is so much greater than John the Baptist that his eyes should not be averted. But I have said that whosoever among you becomes a child will recognize the father's imperial rule and will become greater than John. And from the days of John the Baptist

until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and men of violence take it by force." It would seem that many sayings can be strung together and then placed in context so that as long as one sticks closely to internal cues, longer, more meaningful sections may thus self assemble, and then attach to an appropriate location. We thus have a greater and more powerful image of the entire picture. Adam's "power" and "wealth" arose from a different source from that of Jesus' disciples, who from corruption must achieve the Adamic state, ultimately making their achievement greater than his. Now if corruption is to be overcome by becoming a "child" and thus recognizing the kingdom, the contrast is between "force" and "violence" as opposed to "worthiness" and "child-like" innocence. Thus the Justification for integrating texts lies in whether or not the parts by themselves actually reveal a greater mind than the pieces taken apart.

Earlier I asked why God would spread the gospel out into separate gospels so that they would each be incomplete without the others. The answer would seem to be that there is a greater truth that is revealed by so doing; that just as there are "gospels within gospels", so there would be a greater "gospel among the gospels". This is probably why the Syriac Church so valued the Diatessaron. It would seem that they had the idea that just as Matthew and Luke, and possibly John combined sources in their day, so too ought they to follow suit - seeing the process of combining Scriptures as a natural and, indeed, a logical continuation of what the Apostles themselves did.

Perhaps this progression was merely stifled by a spirit of formalism - going by the letter of the law rather than the spirit of the law. Suppose such a spirit had existed when Matthew and Luke were composed. Their gospels might have been rejected in favor of Mark's gospel alone, or perhaps the "Q" gospel also. Suppose further that such a spirit existed when Mark's gospel was composed. We might have only had scattered stories, sayings, and miracles attesting to Jesus' ministry, and little or no narrative to make sense out of them. What ought to be

readily discernible is that whatever had happened - either way - would have eventually been accepted because people go more by convention than by faith. Fortunately this is the easiest of the points I have to present. To this day, the three largest Christian denominations differ in their respective canons. The Protestants do not accept any of the so-called "apocryphal" books of the Old Testament; the Roman Catholics accept about 13 of these books (or parts of books), and the Eastern Orthodox Church accepts 4 more than even the Catholic Church. We may thus easily dispense with the idea that these judgments are somehow "meant to be", and rather, see them as mere conventions based on consensus.

Actually, there are other "canons" held by other denominations, such as the Greek and Ethiopic Churches, which have even more books. If these authorities cannot be trusted in these matters, why should we take their judgments as inspired concerning the New Testament? Of course there are no disagreements among them concerning the New Testament canon, but even so, does not their disagreement concerning the former cast some doubt on their agreement on the latter? Furthermore, this agreement did not exist from the beginning, but was only arrived at formally in the fourth century. The point is that as a consequence of certain people's judgments what is considered to be inspired by some believers as the word of God is discounted and even reviled by others who call themselves believers, so that holiness is in the eye of the beholder. Is this how Jesus would have wanted it? Jesus himself says in Matthew 12:25 & 26 that **"A house divided against itself cannot stand. If Satan's kingdom cannot stand if it is divided, how much less the Kingdom of God?"**

Today we see a house divided against itself. If we ask the question: "when did this divisiveness enter into the church?", the answer would be before the gospels were even written, since Paul, whose writings are believed to be among the oldest in the New Testament continually warns against factious people, such as in Romans 16:17 & 18: **"I urge**

you, brothers, to watch out for those who create dissensions and obstacles, in opposition to the teaching that you learned: avoid them. For such people do not serve our Lord Christ but their own appetites, and by fair and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the innocent." **Philippians 3:18-21** adds: "For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. I have often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears. Their end is destruction; their god is the belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that enables him to make all things subject to himself."

Someone who is perceptive will realize that since Jesus himself has not yet conformed us to the body of his glory, that we must now be in the body of our humiliation. But why does Paul bring up the subject of the body right after the subject of the enemies of the cross? It is because he is not merely referring erring to the physical body, but also the body of Christ. Our leadership will be corrupt until Christ comes "by the power that enables him to make all things subject to himself." What is this power? What is the power that enables us to overcome? Revelation 12:10 & 11 make this very clear by saying: "**Then I heard a loud voice in heaven proclaiming, 'Now have come the salvation and the power and the Kingdom of our God and the authority of His Messiah, for the accuser of our comrades has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. But they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.'**" A little later Revelation 19:11-13 adds: "Then I saw heaven opened, and there was a white horse! Its rider is called faithful and true, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems; and he has a name inscribed that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is called the Word of God."

If his name is called the Word of God, why does it say that no one knows his name but him alone? Could it be that no one knows that his name is "Called the Word of God"? If he is called faithful and true, and no one knows his name but him alone, then is it because no one else knows faithfulness and truth? Perhaps it is because of our unfaithfulness and falsity that we have yet to apprehend God's word.

This gospel, the one who stands accused before the world, if it is the word of God, has thus suffered a great injustice in the hands of unjust people. In Ephesians 5:25-26, Paul gives us an invaluable key to understanding the Scriptures: "...just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the Word.

When I said that I could use Job 12:11-25 as a basis for acquittal in this case, the word "water" was the most crucial part of that section and hence had to be obscured by God in the language of parables. In the otherwise innocuous sounding verse: **"If He holds back the waters, there is no drought; if He lets them loose, the earth is overwhelmed"** lies God's plan of holding back His word (waters) so as to overwhelm the world with them. The words that have been held back by Him are the apocryphal books, as well as the proper understanding of the canonical Scriptures. The trial that is destined to occur concerning them in the last day is spelled out in verse 12, where it says: **"Does not the ear test words as the palate savors food?"** He makes it clear that since the strength and the success belong to him, that He will use both the deceiver and the deceived to go around in their mutual error until the time that He **"overthrows those long in office"** and **"unveils mysteries deep in obscurity"**. One cannot "unveil" something that isn't already veiled. Where was the mystery of Christ veiled if not in the Old Testament? So it is clear that the Scriptures themselves are the things that are veiled, along with the means to decode them - which is the name of Jesus.

Since Revelation 19:13 lets us know that **"his name is called the Word of God"**, we thus understand that inasmuch as Jesus was unfairly

put on trial, and railroaded by the authorities that were then in power, so also the Word of God was put on trial, severely beaten and put to an open shame before the face of all the people present at his "trial". According to this understanding, the Jews would not have been the only ones to put Jesus to death, but, rather, the Church having rejected the Word becomes, parabolically speaking, the "chief rulers of the synagogue", and the "scribes", and the "Pharisees" - literally, that becomes their function. These words are directed at the authorities that have vaunted themselves all this time - "those long in office" whom He overthrows by revealing "mysteries deep in obscurity". There is something chilling and disturbing in all of this, because when I said before that very little of "that trial" remains to the present, I actually knew that it did, but I had to make the case for it first before I could assert that, in a manner of speaking, it still did exist.

Pilate, for example, represents the rest of the worldly powers that would have accepted the whole word of God had the Church not been so adamant about its destruction. The missing details are filled in by other gospels, and I have ordered them the best way I could in this harmony.

As for the bitterness of the message, I can only say that this, too, is covered in the Scriptures. Revelation 10:8-11 reads: **"Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me again, saying, 'Go, take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land.' So I went to the angel and told him to give me the little scroll; and he said to me, 'Take it, and eat; it will be bitter to your stomach, but sweet as honey in your mouth So I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it; it was sweet as honey in my mouth but when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter. Then they said to me, 'You must prophesy again about many peoples and nations and languages and kings.'"** It is apparent that John was both pleased and sickened by the message as a function of the reading of a scroll given him by an angel whose feet were planted on two foundations; the

message gave him the power to prophesy again, as in a second time.

I Corinthians 1:13 asks this question: **"Has Christ been divided?"** I, too, am asking this question. Paul was asking this question before Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were presumably written, which ought to tell us that what was then testified concerning Jesus was considered to be a unity - one gospel, as he so often puts it. Since these factions that Paul is referring to began to proliferate even in his day, isn't it at least plausible that they are the types of people that could have led to the destruction of the other gospels? It is written that Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss. If Jesus is the Word, then the one who showed an apparent love for the word was the very same one who was most responsible for his mockery of a trial, and his humiliation on the cross.

By spreading the 'gospel' out over several gospels, God is demonstrating to us that His revelation can only be apprehended if we take all the facts into account. If there had only been a single gospel that contained all of the information that we currently accept, and no others to compete with it, then none of the arguments which I have raised would be possible. But in light of the fact that these assertions can be made, we should not be too ready to discount them. If such arguments are possible, and the result would be the fulfillment of so many prophecies, such as the last being first, and the first being last, or any of the things which I have discussed here, then maybe there is some truth to them.

Of course this idea is quite condemning to the Church, and naturally they will not accept it. For a while, they will be able to oppose it by throwing their weight around, by persecution and character assassination - a sign of their own ignorance and that of the present body of believers, whose ignorance they have cultivated for the purposes of exploiting them for money and power and the glory of this world. Of course not all Christians are of this kind, but as it is written: **"A little leaven leavens the whole lump."** If God had inspired many gospels, but we only accepted four, then God could not be faulted for

not telling us the truth - rather, we would only have ourselves to blame for our stubborn refusal to accept His truth in its entirety. It is a means by which His mysteries can be concealed, and yet give Him an opportunity to say to us that He wronged us in no way whatsoever; and furthermore, if at any point in Church History, there had been this kind of faith in him, we could have been healed. But now it is the 'Third Day', the dawn of the third millennium, and these things can no longer be hidden - just as death could not hold him on the third day. He - that is to say the Word of God - is risen. Consider what it says in Mark 16:14&15, which interestingly enough is found in some manuscripts and not others, "He reproached them (his disciples) for their lack of trust and obstinacy, because they did not believe those who had seen him after he had been raised. And he said to them: 'Go out into the whole world and announce the gospel to every creature. '" As for the need for spiritual perception, consider Luke 24:45 & 46: "Then he prepared their minds to understand the Scriptures. He said to them, 'This is what is written: the Anointed will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day.'"

There were many who witnessed the miracles and teachings of Jesus; who passed on oral and written accounts, and some were believed and others were not. Jesus reproached even the Apostles for their unbelief. Was this admonition passed down to us merely for moral edification, or does it make more sense to see this also as a reproach to ourselves? What, then, is this preparation of their minds if not that their minds were not prepared even after his resurrection. We, for our own good, were not meant to understand these things until the proper time. Let us see ourselves, therefore, as modern-day John the Baptists, as it is written in Luke 3:4-6: "The voice of someone shouting in the wilderness: 'Make ready the way of the Lord!' 'Make his paths straight!' Every valley will be filled, and every mountain and hill leveled. What is crooked will be made straight, and the rough ways smooth. Then the whole human race will see the salvation of God.'"