



In his book *Profiting from the Word*, A. W. Pink writes, “Like a chemist engaged in making interesting experiments, the intellectual searcher of the Word is quite elated when he makes some discovery in it.”¹ One discovery that has helped my understanding of Scripture and left me elated has been the discovery that the Scriptures were written by men. This is not to take away from their divine nature,² but it does give me – a man – something I can relate to. The authors of the Word of God sinned as I do, loved God as I do, and battled the tension in between, just as I do.

These men had a history that included sin, repentance, conversion, worship, and other elements present in my own life. Many of these men lived lives that God used in amazing ways (as you will see below). These men struggled to serve their God, to worship Jesus Christ, and to lead those under their charge. The fact that they were mere human beings does not take away from the authoritative and divine nature of the Scriptures; rather, it shows that our amazing God can use an errant man to produce an inerrant book.

The following article examines the lives of the men who wrote the New Testament in chronological order. Due to the fact that the entire New Testament was written in the first century, this article will include the specific time of writing (as opposed to the general time of writing as described in “The Men Who Wrote the Old Testament”).

I. JAMES

Time of Writing: A. D. 44–49³

Books Written: James⁴

Biography: There is not a lot of biblical information available concerning this first author. His first mention in the New Testament is in a list of Jesus’ brothers. After Jesus spoke in His hometown, His audience said “Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas” (Matt 13:55)? Because James is mentioned at the front of the list of brothers, it is logically assumed that he was the oldest child (Mk 6:3).⁵

James adopted the same attitude as that of his younger family members concerning Jesus’ ministry. John 7:5 says “For not even His [Jesus’] brothers were believing in Him.” This attitude of unbelief changed, however, some time after Jesus’ resurrection. Paul mentioned James as one who saw the resurrected Christ (1 Cor 15:7) and became an apostle (Gal 1:19). James became a believer some time after Jesus rose from the grave (Acts 1:14).

While James’ brothers became believers (1 Cor 9:5), it was James himself who stood above the rest with respect to church leadership. He became an overseer of the church in Jerusalem (Gal 2:9), the most influential church in the first century. Although the Scriptures are silent about his demise, early church history states that James was the first apostolic martyr.⁶

Highlights:

1. Being mentioned as the oldest of Jesus’ four younger brothers (Matt 13:55; Mk 6:3)
2. Adopting a skeptical attitude about Jesus’ claims and ministry, along with his brothers and sisters (Matt 12:46–50; Mk 3:31–35; Lk 8:19–21)
3. Witnessing the resurrection of Jesus (1 Cor 15:7) and, as a result, believing Jesus’ claims and becoming an apostle (Gal 1:19)
4. Overseeing the church in Jerusalem (Gal 2:9)

II. PAUL

Time of Writing: Galatians (A.D. 49–50); 1 Thessalonians (A.D. 51); 2 Thessalonians (A.D. 51–52); 1 Corinthians (A.D. 55); 2 Corinthians (A.D. 55–56); Romans (A.D. 56); Ephesians (A.D. 60–62); Colossians (A.D. 60–62); Philemon (A.D. 60–62); Philippians (A.D. 61); 1 Timothy (A.D. 62–64); Titus (A.D. 62–64); 2 Timothy (A.D. 66–67)

Books Written: Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon

Biography: A study of the life of Paul is rewarding in many ways. According to F. F. Bruce,

[I cannot] think of any other writer, ancient or modern, whose study is so richly rewarding as his. This is due to several aspects of his many-faceted character: the attractive warmth of his personality, his intellectual stature, the exhilarating release effected by his gospel of redeeming grace, the dynamism with which he propagated that gospel throughout the world . . . Of all the New Testament authors, Paul is the one who has stamped his own personality most unmistakably on his writings. It is especially for this reason that he has his secure place among the great letter-writers in world literature.⁷

As is shown below, if not for Luke, there would be little to no information available concerning the history of the early church. If not for the way God chose to use the Apostle Paul, however, there would be no early church.

The Apostle Paul was a product of his city of birth. He was born in Tarsus (Acts 21:39), a city known for its extensive learning.⁸ Paul was also a Roman citizen (Acts 22:28) and would have had certain inherent privileges that came with this honor.⁹ He grew up as a zealous Pharisee and “a Hebrew of Hebrews” (Phil 3:5). He also studied under Gamaliel (Acts 22:3), a famous Jewish rabbi (Acts 5:34).

Paul, whose original name was Saul (the author of Acts began to call him “Paul” soon after his conversion – see Acts 13:9) began to persecute the early church from its inception. Consequently, he witnessed the death of the first Christian martyr (Acts 7:57–60). Acts 8:1 states that “Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him

to death.” Shortly afterward he began to persecute the church with an unusual passion. Acts 8:3 says,

But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison.

Soon afterward he received a vision of the risen Christ on the way to persecute the church in Damascus (Acts 9:1–9) and quickly believed the gospel (Acts 9:10–22). Paul quickly became the greatest missionary of the early church and arguably the greatest missionary of all time.

After his conversion, he made three missionary journeys (Acts 13–14; 15:30–18:22; 18:23–20) and one final trip to Rome (where the book of Acts ends). During these missionary journeys, Paul endured unimaginable hardships. Second Corinthians 11:23–28 describes some of his sufferings:

Are they servants of Christ? – I speak as if insane – I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep.

I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches.

Yet in spite of such tremendous difficulties, Paul would write in another letter: “But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world” (Gal 6:14).

Next to his writings and his tremendous missionary zeal, Paul’s greatest contribution to the early church was his ministry to the Gentiles (non-Jews). After the Jerusalem Council’s official decision that Gentiles were to be included in the church along with Jews (Acts 15:1–29), Paul and his fellow missionaries began to spread the gospel throughout the known world.

Paul soon traveled across several continents and numerous countries to tell Jew and non-Jew alike that salvation was now available through the blood of Jesus Christ. Because of his boldness and the growing hostility to his message (see the quote from 2 Corinthians 11:23–28 above), Paul eventually was arrested in Jerusalem (Acts 21:27–23) and sent to Rome to present his case before Caesar (Acts 27–28). When the Book of Acts ends, Paul is living in “rented quarters” in Rome and awaiting his trial (Acts 28:30–31).

Highlights:

1. Witnessing Stephen’s death at the hands of a Jewish mob (Acts 7:57–60)
2. Persecuting the church with a fanatic zeal (Acts 8:3)
3. Experiencing a miraculous appearance of the risen Christ on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1–9) and, consequently repenting and believing the gospel (Acts 9:10–22)
4. Embarking on his first missionary journey from Cyprus to Perga/Antioch to Iconium to Lystra/Derbe and back (Acts 13–14)
5. Confronting Peter concerning his incorrect stance on the place of circumcision in the life of a believer (Gal 2:11–21)
6. Embarking on a second missionary journey from Macedonia to Philippi to Thessalonica to Berea to Athens to Corinth and back (Acts 15:30–18:22)
7. Embarking on a third missionary journey from Ephesus to Troas/Macedonia to Corinth (Acts 18:23–20)
8. Being arrested at Jerusalem (Acts 21:27–23); tried before Felix (Acts 24), Festus (Acts 25), Agrippa (Acts 26); and sent to trial in Rome (Acts 27–28)
9. Surviving a shipwreck on a voyage to Italy (Acts 27)

III. MATTHEW

Time of Writing: A.D. 50–70

Books Written: Matthew

Biography: Matthew’s gospel, “according to the citations found in early Christian writers, was used more than any of the other gospels.”¹⁰ It is strange, therefore, that his life is not given much attention in the New Testament or in early church writings.

Matthew’s name¹¹ first appears when Jesus calls him from his previous profession to become His disciple. Matthew 9:9–10 records the event:

As Jesus went on from there, He saw a man called Matthew, sitting in the tax collector’s booth; and He said to him, “follow Me.” And he got up and followed Him. Then it happened that as Jesus was sitting at the table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and His disciples.

Matthew’s response to Jesus’ invitation to follow was to invite all his friends and coworkers to a meal in honor of Jesus (Matt 9:10).

Aside from this event and his name in the list of apostles (Matt 10:3; Mk 3:18; Lk 6:15; Acts 1:13), nothing else in Scripture is mentioned concerning Matthew.

Highlights:

1. Working as a Roman tax collector (Matt 9:9)
2. Being called by Jesus to “Follow Me!” and immediately leaving his profession to do so (Mk 2:14; Lk 5:27–28)
3. Hosting a “big reception for [Jesus] in his house” and inviting all his friends (Lk 5:29; Matt 9:10; Mk 2:15)

IV. MARK

Time of Writing: A.D. 50–70

Books Written: Mark

Biography: “Mark’s lasting impact on the Christian church comes from his writing rather than his life.”¹² While more is known about Mark’s life than Matthew’s, Mark’s life is similar to Matthew’s in that his most lasting contribution to the church was the Gospel that bears his name.

Mark’s¹³ first mention in the Scriptures is found in the book of Acts, where the early church is said to have met at his mother’s house during Peter’s imprisonment. After his miraculous release from prison (Acts 12:5–11), Peter traveled to Mark’s house to inform the other believers of his newly acquired freedom. Acts 12:12 tells what happened next:

And when he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John who was also called Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying.

Mark was soon taken with Paul and Barnabas on a mission to Jerusalem (Acts 12:25). He would later abandoned Paul and Barnabas during another missionary journey from Paphos to Perga (Acts 13:13). The reason for his abandonment is never mentioned. He later sailed with Barnabas on a missionary journey to Cyprus and was the cause of the cessation of Paul and Barnabas's missionary partnership. Acts 15:37–39 states,

Barnabas wanted to take John, called Mark, along with them also. But Paul kept insisting that they should not take him along who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. And there occurred such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus.

Mark and Paul later made amends, however. In Colossians 4:10, Paul told the Colossian believers to welcome Mark if he came to them. And later, during his imprisonment in Rome, Paul told Timothy, “Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service” (2 Tim 4:11).

Highlights:

1. Having the early church gather in his mother's house during Peter's imprisonment (Acts 12:12)
2. Traveling with Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (Acts 12:25) and leaving the journey early for an unknown reason (Acts 13:13)
3. Sailing with Barnabas on another missionary journey to Cyprus (Acts 15:36–39)
4. Finishing his ministry well, as he was considered “useful to [Paul] for service” (2 Tim 4:11)

V. LUKE

Time of Writing: A.D. 60–61

Books Written: Luke, Acts

Biography: Colossians 4:14 sheds some light on this New Testament writer. Here Paul calls Luke “the beloved physician” and gives an indication of his present or past

occupation. In Philemon 24, Paul also states that Luke is a “fellow worker” with the apostle. Whatever Luke's previous occupation, his writings include an account of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ and the early church. In fact, if it were not for the labors of this man, there would be little information available today about the history of the early Christians. According to one New Testament scholar, “Our knowledge of the earliest days of the [Christian] community comes from Luke.”¹⁴

In Luke 1, the author tells his readers whom he was writing his letter to, why he was writing it, and where he received his historical information:

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as they were handed down to use by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught (vv. 1–4).

Luke's name is first mentioned in Colossians 4:14, where Paul refers to him as “the beloved physician.” He is also mentioned by name a few other times in Scripture (2 Tim 4:11; Philemon 24). But his use of the word “we” in his description of Paul's travels tells us that he must have accompanied the apostle from Troas (Acts 16:10–11) all the way to Philippi (Acts 17:1). He would later travel with the apostle from Philippi to Troas and on to Jerusalem (20:6–21:18). Luke would also travel with Paul during his last journey mentioned in the book of Acts (27:1–28).

Highlights:

1. Serving as the only non-Jewish author to write a New Testament book¹⁵
2. Carefully compiling a historical account of the early church “from the beginning” (Lk 1:1–4)
3. Serving alongside Paul as a Gentile missionary and a physician of some sort (Col 4:14)
4. Accompanying Paul on several of his missionary journeys (Acts 16:10–17:1; 20:6–21:18; 27:1–28)

VI. PETER¹⁶

Time of Writing: 1 Peter (A.D. 64–65); 2 Peter (A.D. 67–68)

Books Written: 1 Peter, 2 Peter

Biography: Of the twelve apostles who followed Jesus during his earthly ministry, none was as prominent as Peter. “Peter’s name is mentioned in the Gospels more than any other name except Jesus. No one speaks as often as Peter, and no one is spoken to by the Lord as often as Peter.”¹⁷ It could be argued that while God used Paul to build the church, He used Peter to lay its foundation.

Peter’s name is first mentioned in Scripture when he and his brother Andrew are called to be Jesus’ disciples. Mark 1:16–18 describes the event:

As He was going along by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.” Immediately they left their nets and followed Him.

It can be safely assumed that Peter and Andrew were in some sort of partnership with James and John, the sons of Zebedee (Lk 5:10). Peter was also married (Matt 8:14–15) and eventually took his wife with him on his missionary travels (1 Cor 9:5).

Peter was an apostle of many “firsts.” He was the first, along with Andrew, to be called by Jesus (Mk 1:16–18) and he was the first to be named an apostle (Mk 3:14–16). He was first among the apostles. His name was at the head of every list of the apostles, and he served as a leader of the twelve. His tendency to take the lead proved to be both a strength and a weakness.

Sometimes he had to take a step back, undo, retract, or be rebuked. But the fact that he was always willing to grab opportunity by the throat marked him as a natural leader.¹⁸

Peter was also the first to recognize Jesus as the Messiah. In Matthew 16:16, Peter told Jesus “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Because of this confession, Jesus told Peter, “I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it” (Matt 16:18).

Peter was the first apostle to witness the resurrection. According to 1 Corinthians 15:3–5,

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas,¹⁹ then to the twelve.

Peter was also the first apostle to proclaim salvation to the Gentiles. In Acts 10, Peter received a vision in which he was told, “What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy” (Acts 10:15). He eventually understood this to refer to Gentile believers, and immediately after the vision ceased, he journeyed to the home of Cornelius, a Roman centurion (Acts 10), and said, “I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him (Acts 10:34–35). With the utterance of this statement, Gentiles were welcomed into the Christian churches.

Peter’s life contained many fascinating events, such as seeing Jesus heal his (Peter’s) mother-in-law (Mk 3:13–19); walking on the sea near Capernaum (Matt 14:25–33); preaching a sermon on the Day of Pentecost and bringing about the conversion of 3,000 people (Acts 2:14–41); and healing a man who had been lame from birth (Acts 3:1–8).

Highlights:

1. Working as a fisherman before becoming a disciple of Jesus (Matt 4:18; Mk 1:16; Lk 5:10)
2. Witnessing Jesus heal his mother-in-law (Matt 8:14–15; Mk 3:13–19)
3. Walking on the sea near Capernaum after the example set by Jesus (Matt 14:25–33; Jn 6:16–21)
4. Being the first apostle to confess that Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt 16:13–19)
5. Denying any association with Jesus (Lk 22:54–62) after Jesus had prophesied that he would do so (Lk 22:31–34)
6. Being the first apostle to see the risen Christ (Lk 24:34; 1 Cor 15:5)
7. Preaching a sermon on the Day of Pentecost, bringing about 3,000 conversions (Acts 2:14–41)
8. Commencing the incorporation of Gentile believers into the church (Acts 10–11)

VII. JUDE

Time of Writing: A.D. 68–70

Books Written: Jude

Biography: Not much is known of Jude aside from his identification in the first verse of his epistle, where he calls himself “Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James.” His statement that he was a “brother of James” would have made him a half-brother of Jesus Christ Himself. Matthew 13:55 identifies him, along with his brother James,

Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?²⁰

Jude did not believe, along with his brothers, that Jesus was the Messiah (Jn 7:5) until after Jesus’ resurrection.

Acts 1:14 says,

These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

It is safe to assume that, after his conversion, Jude became involved in some ministry, possibly missionary work, which was popular at the time. Some time shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem (which occurred in A.D. 70), he penned the words of his New Testament epistle.

For more information concerning Jesus’ relationship with his earthly family, see the section on James above.

Highlights:

1. Denying Jesus’ messiahship along with the other members of his family (Jn 7:5)
2. Later believing that Jesus is the Messiah and joining the early church along with the other members of his family (Acts 1:14)
3. Identifying himself as the brother of James and the servant of Jesus Christ, instead of identifying himself as the half-brother of Jesus Christ (Jude 1)

VIII. JOHN

Time of Writing: Gospel of John (A.D. 80–90); 1 John (A.D. 90–95); 2 John (A.D. 90–95);²¹ 3 John (A.D. 90–95);²² Revelation (A.D. 94–96)²³

Books Written: Gospel of John, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Revelation

Biography: Unlike Matthew and Mark, the Scriptures give quite a bit of detail concerning the life of the Apostle John. “Aside from Luke and the apostle Paul, John wrote more of the New Testament than any other human author. Scripture is therefore full of insights into his personality and character.”²⁴

John was the son of Zebedee (Matt 4:18–22). His father was a man of some importance since he owned a boat and hired servants (Mk 1:19–20). He was also the brother of another apostle, James (Mk 1:16–20). While Jesus loved all His disciples (Jn 13:1–2), John calls himself “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (Jn 13:23; 20:2; 21:7) due to his unique relationship with the Lord.

James and John were called to follow Jesus after the Lord’s baptism (Mk 1:19–20). They, along with Peter, would soon become Jesus’ most intimate apostles. They were with Him when he healed the daughter of Jarius (Lk 8:51), was transfigured (Matt 17:1–9), and endured the horrible agony of Gethsemane (Mk 14:33–42). John and Peter were also given the honor of making preparations for the Lord’s Supper (Lk 22:8).

While John was known as “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” he and James also received another nickname: “the sons of thunder,” due to their volatile nature (Mk 3:16–17). These two would prove to be some of Jesus’ most passionate apostles. In Luke 9:51–56, James and John asked the Lord to call down fire on a Samaritan village when its inhabitants rejected Jesus. Here is Luke’s version of this event:

When the days were approaching for His ascension, He was determined to go to Jerusalem; and He sent messengers on ahead of Him and they went and entered a village of the Samaritans to make arrangements for Him. But they did not receive Him, because He was traveling toward Jerusalem.

When His disciples James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?” But He turned and rebuked them, and said, “You do not know what kind of spirit you are of; for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.” And they went on to another village.

The two would later ask for the right to rule with Jesus on his right and left hand in his coming kingdom (Mk 10:35–37).

At His crucifixion, Jesus gave John the responsibility of caring for Mary (Jn 19:26–27), a request which would have carried with it a great deal of trust. After the crucifixion, Jesus prophesied that John would live until the Lord comes (Jn 21:20–25). John explains this prophecy in John 21:23:

Therefore this saying went out among the brethren that that disciple [John] would not die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but only, “If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?”²⁵

After Jesus’ ascension, John continued to serve with the other apostles in the establishment of the early church (Acts 1:13) and was present when Peter healed a lame man at the Jerusalem Temple (Acts 3). John would die as a prisoner on the island of Patmos, where he received the visions he recorded in the book of Revelation (Rev 1:9).

Highlights:

1. Observing Jesus’ transfiguration with Peter and his brother James (Matt 17:1-9)
2. Trying to prevent a non-apostle from casting out demons in Jesus’ name (Mk 9:38) and receiving correction for doing so (Mk 9:39)
3. Asking for permission, along with his brother James, to call down fire on a Samaritan village that refused to receive Jesus (Lk 9:51–56)
4. Secretly asking for the right, along with his brother, to sit at Jesus’ side and rule in His coming kingdom (Mk 10:35–37, 41)
5. Keeping watch/sleeping with Peter and James while Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mk 14:33–42)
6. Fleeing, with the other disciples, from the angry mob on the night of Jesus’ arrest (Mk 14:43–40)

X. ANONYMOUS

The only anonymous book in the New Testament is the book of Hebrews. Concerning the authorship of this book, an ancient Christian scholar named Origen summed it up well when he said, ‘While the thoughts are Pauline, only God knows who wrote it.’²⁶

Endnotes

¹ *Profiting from the Word* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1998). This quote is taken slightly out of context. Here, Pink is actually discussing the pride that arises when such discoveries are made. He goes on to write:

... but the joy of the latter is no more spiritual than would be that of the former. Again, just as the successes of the chemist generally increase his sense of self-importance and cause him to look with disdain upon others more ignorant than himself, so alas, it is often the case with those who have investigated Biblical numerics, typology, prophecy and other such subjects (9).

² *Inerrancy*, ed. by Norman L. Geisler (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1980). One would ask, at this point, “How could the Bible be the Word of God while written by sinful men?” A quote from Paul D. Feinberg answers this important question: “[I]t is the Scriptures, not the writers, that are inspired or God-breathed” (278). For a fuller understanding of this quotation, see the biblical passage that Feinberg was discussing: 2 Timothy 3:16.

³ All of the dates in this article, unless otherwise noted, are borrowed from John MacArthur’s *The MacArthur Bible Commentary* (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson Inc., 2006).

⁴ Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, Revised Edition (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1990). Even though the authorship of this epistle is in disputed in certain scholastic circles, there has been no conclusive evidence offered to disprove the historical view that James, the brother of Jesus, wrote this letter.

Although some of the arguments for alternative views are strong, yet none of these views has any better claim to credibility than the tradition. In these circumstances the authorship of James, the Lord's brother, must still be considered more probable than any rival (746).

⁵ *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, ed. by Ronald F. Youngblood (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995) 631.

⁶ MacArthur, 1879.

⁷ *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmann Publishing Co., 1977) 15.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 35. "They [the people from Tarsus] applied themselves to the study of philosophy, the liberal arts and 'the whole round of learning in general' – the whole 'encyclopedia' – so much so that Tarsus in this respect at least surpassed even Athens and Alexandria, whose schools were frequented more by visitors than by their own citizens. Tarsus, in short, was what we might call a universal city."

⁹ *Ibid.*, 38. "Wherever he went throughout the Roman Empire, a Roman citizen was entitled to all the rights and privileges which Roman law provided, in addition to being liable to all the civic duties which Roman law imposed."

¹⁰ Guthrie, 28.

¹¹ He is also known as "Levi" in the New Testament (Mk 2:13–17; Lk 5:27–32).

¹² Youngblood, 801.

¹³ Mark is also known as "John" in the New Testament (Acts 12:12).

¹⁴ F. F. Bruce, *New Testament History* (New York: Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc., 1969) 209.

¹⁵ Luke's identity as a Gentile has been deduced from Paul's mentioning him in Colossians 4:14 and Paul's not mentioning him in Colossians 4:10–11, where he gives a list of his fellow workers and then comments, "these are the only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are from the circumcision." Luke would not have been circumcised if he were of Gentile origin.

¹⁶ Peter is also named "Simon" in the Gospels (Mk 3:16).

¹⁷ John MacArthur, *Twelve Ordinary Men* (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2002) 39.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁹ "Cephas" is another name for "Peter;" see John 1:40–42.

²⁰ "Judas" can also be translated "Jude."

²¹ *The MacArthur Bible Commentary*, 1970. "The precise date of the epistle cannot be determined . . . most likely John composed the letter at the same time or soon after 1 John, C. A.D. 90–95, during his ministry at Ephesus in the latter part of his life."

²² *Ibid.*, 1974. "The precise date of the epistle cannot be determined . . . most likely John composed the letter at the same time or soon after 2 John, C. A.D. 90–95."

²³ Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 1–7: An Exegetical Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1992). There have been some questions over the genuineness of John’s authorship of the book of Revelation. Part of the debate centers around John’s unique use of grammar in this book. In his commentary on Revelation, Robert L. Thomas shows how this unusual grammatical style does not negate the apostle’s authorship:

Unusual grammatical phenomena are by no means limited to the Apocalypse in the Apostle John’s canonical writings. If John deviated from the normal usage in 1 John, why could he not have done so in the Apocalypse? No writer can be put into a straightjacket and required to have no deviations or to practice the same kind of grammatical deviations in everything he writes. It is shallow thinking, therefore, on the basis of this aspect of writing style to exclude the last book of the canon from among those written by the apostle John (8).

²⁴ *Twelve Ordinary Men*, 95.

²⁵ This “saying” that John records about himself in verse 23 is actually a misunderstanding. Jesus words in verse 22 clarify this misunderstanding in the conversation between Jesus and Peter: “Jesus said to him [Peter], ‘If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow Me!’” “The brethren” misinterpreted Jesus’ words in verse 22 (which the Apostle John clarifies in verse 23 – quoted above). Jesus did not say that John would not die; He said, “If I want him [John] to remain until I come.”

Such a statement cannot be taken literally, however, because Jesus did not return in John’s day. The Lord’s return, mentioned in Revelation 19, did not take place in John’s time and has yet to take place in our’s. Jesus’ statement, “If I want him to remain until I come” was spoken figuratively and, in the context of His conversation with Peter, sarcastically. It was as if he were saying to Peter, “Mind your own business and follow Me!”

²⁶ Quoted in Guthrie, 669.