

Celestial Grace Temple

About Apocrypha

Who or What is Apocrypha, or The Apostolic Age

Apocrypha or The Apostolic Age of the history of Christianity is traditionally the period of the Twelve Apostles of Jesus Christ, dating from the Great Commission of the Apostles by the resurrected Jesus in Jerusalem, 33 AD until the death of the last Apostle, believed to be John the Apostle in Anatolia, 100 AD.

Traditionally, the Apostles are believed to have dispersed from Jerusalem, founding the [Apostolic Sees](#). It holds special significance in Christian tradition as the age of the direct apostles of Jesus Christ.

The major primary source for the "Apostolic Age" is the Acts of the Apostles, but its historical accuracy is questioned by some.

According to most biblical scholars, the followers of Jesus were composed principally from apocalyptic Jewish sects during the late Second Temple period of the 1st century.

Some Early Christian groups were strictly Jewish, such as the Ebionites and the early-church leaders in Jerusalem, collectively called Jewish Christians. During this period, they were led by James the Just.

According to Acts 9:1-2, they described themselves as 'disciples of the Lord' and [followers] 'of the Way', and according to Acts 11:26 a settled community of disciples at Antioch were the first to be called 'Christians'.

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Saul of Tarsus, commonly known as Paul the Apostle, persecuted the early Jewish Christians, such as Saint Stephen, then converted and adopted the title of "Apostle to the Gentiles" and started proselytizing among the Gentiles.

He influenced the leaders of the Jerusalem Church to allow Gentile convert exemption from most of the Jewish commandments at the Council of Jerusalem.

According to the Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, Paul's influence on Christian thinking is more significant than any other New Testament author, however, the relationship of Paul the Apostle and Judaism is still disputed today by some theologians.

After the Destruction of the Second Temple in AD 70 during the First Jewish-Roman War, or at the latest following the Bar Kokhba revolt of 132, Jerusalem ceased to be the center of the Christian Church, its bishops became "suffragans" (subordinates) of the Metropolitan bishop of Caesarea.

In the 2nd century, Christianity established itself as a predominantly Gentile religion that spanned the Roman Empire and beyond.

The **New Testament apocrypha** are a number of writings by early Christians that give accounts of Jesus and his teachings, the nature of God, or the teachings of his apostles and of their lives.

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Some of these writings have been cited as scripture by early Christians, but since the fifth century a widespread consensus has emerged limiting the New Testament to the 27 books of the New Testament canon.

Thus Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Protestant churches generally do not view these New Testament apocrypha as part of the Bible.

The apostolic period between the years 30 and 100 produced writings attributed to the immediate followers of Jesus Christ.

The period is traditionally associated with the apostles, hence the tags "apostolic times" and "apostolic writings". The early church associated the New Testament books with the apostles. Modern "liberal" scholarship has cast doubt on the authorship of some New Testament books - however, most accept that the New Testament books were written during this period.

In the traditional history of the Christian church, the Apostolic Age was the foundation of the church's history.

The Apostolic Age is particularly significant in Restorationism, which claims that the period exhibited a purer form of Christianity that should be restored to the church as it exists today.

The unique character of the New Testament writings, and their period of origin, is highlighted by the paucity of their literary form in later writing. Once the canon of the New Testament began to take shape, the style ceased to be used on a regular basis.

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Non-canonical writings persisted, but died out within a historically short period of time. Early patristic literature is dominated by apologetics and makes use of other literary forms borrowed from non-Christian sources.

The word "apocrypha" means "things put away" or "things hidden," originating from the Medieval Latin adjective apocryphus, "secret" or "non-canonical," which in turn originated from the Greek adjective ἀπόκρυφος (apokryphos), "obscure," from the verb ἀποκρύπτειν (apokryptein), "to hide away."

The general term is usually applied to the books that were considered by the church as useful, but not divinely inspired.

As such, to refer to Gnostic writings as "apocryphal" are misleading since they would not be classified in the same category by orthodox believers.

Often used by the Greek Fathers was the term antilegomena, or "spoken against", although some canonical books were also spoken against, such as the Apocalypse of John in the East.

Often used by scholars is the term pseudepigrapha, or "falsely inscribed" or "falsely attributed", in the sense that the writings were written by an anonymous author who appended the name of an apostle to his work, such as in the Gospel of Peter or The Æthiopic Apocalypse of Enoch.

Almost all books, in both Old and New Testaments, called "apocrypha" in the Protestant tradition are pseudepigrapha.

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In the Catholic and Orthodox traditions, what are called the apocrypha by Protestants include the deuterocanonical books.

In the Catholic tradition, the term "apocrypha" is synonymous with what Protestants would call the pseudepigrapha, the latter term of which is almost exclusively used by scholars.

The first Apostolic Christians are thought to be relatives of Jesus that lived in Nazareth since the 1st century. Some of them were prominent early Christians.

Among those named in the New Testament are his mother, Mary, and four of his brothers: James, Simeon, Joseph and Jude. It should be noted, however, that according to the Gospels, some of the family members opposed the mission and religion of Jesus.

The relatives of Jesus were accorded a special position within the early church, as displayed by the leadership of James in Jerusalem.

Some theologians believe that early Christianity was dominated by the conflict between Peter who was law-observant, and Paul who advocated partial or even complete freedom from the law. Later findings contradicted this hypothesis.

The allegedly continuous conflict was not supported by the available evidence. However, theological conflict between Paul and Peter is recorded in the New Testament and was widely discussed in the early church.

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Marcion of Sinope, an important leader in early Christianity, and his followers stated that the polemic against false apostles in Galatians was aimed at Peter, James and John, the "Pillars of the Church", as well as the "false" gospels circulating through the churches at the time.

Saint Irenaeus, Bishop of Lugdunum, and Tertullian, a prolific early Christian author argued against Marcionism's elevation of Paul and stated that Peter and Paul were equals among the apostles. Passages from Galatians were used to show that Paul respected Peter's office and acknowledged a shared faith.

It is believed that Peter was the "bridge-man" between the two other prominent leaders: Paul and James the Just. Paul and James were both heavily identified with their own "brands" of Christianity.

Peter showed a desire to hold on to his Jewish identity, in contrast with Paul. He simultaneously showed flexibility towards the desires of the broader Christian community, in contrast to James. (This balance is illustrated in the Antioch episode related in Galatians.

May the grace of God be with you always --- Amen.

Pastor Andy Andersson

Celestial Grace Ministry