



READING THE

Apostolic Fathers

A Student's Introduction

Second Edition

CLAYTON N. JEFFORD



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Rededicated to the memory of two colleagues and friends—

William L. Petersen

(January 19, 1950, to December 20, 2006)

and

Boudewijn Dehandschutter

(April 2, 1945, to March 28, 2011)

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Preface to the Second Edition

When the original edition of this volume was published in 1996 under the title *Reading the Apostolic Fathers: An Introduction* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson), it was assumed that such a book, written in clear language and presented in an attractive format, would provide students with a welcome overview of some of Christianity's oldest writings beyond the New Testament. The text was designed to engage a general audience, to reflect consensus perspectives where these were available, and to offer more specific observations when such were warranted. I foresaw that a classroom setting would offer the best context in which to generate a work that might address the sort of questions that students most often bring to new literature. And so the volume was contrived with the help of two students who wanted to learn more about the Apostolic Fathers, Kenneth J. Harder and Louis D. Amezaga Jr. I am most grateful for their hard work in that process and am reassured that they have benefited greatly from the task.

Of course, we were hopeful for a successful reception of the volume, but I could hardly have anticipated the positive reaction that resulted. It did indeed seem that classroom instructors and individual students of early patristic literature were ready for an accessible new introduction that provided a general survey of the literature. We have received many encouraging comments over the years, often directed toward the broad view that appeared throughout the volume and the general utility of its materials.

As with most such volumes, certain reviewers sought more detailed analyses than the volume was designed to provide. Yet the general success of our survey now seems evident in two ways. First, from general observation, most serious students of scripture now appear better aware of the link between

biblical literature and the larger world of ancient Christian texts. This is quite exciting to those of us who, like many students before us, firmly believe that the literature of the first and second centuries must be seen within a common context beyond any consideration of canon. Second, other researchers have taken notice of this trend and in recent years have produced additional efforts to introduce the Apostolic Fathers. Such volumes generally are well conceived but, unlike our own work, tend to be much more complex in scope and are dependent on diverse contributors and perspectives. Those works may be better suited for the more advanced student of the corpus.

Now, some fifteen years after the production of our first introduction, I am especially grateful to Baker Academic for inviting me to revise the volume for a new generation of students. Previous readers will continue to find here the mainstay of observations that appeared in the first edition, the bulk of which remain as dependable considerations of the Apostolic Fathers from the perspective of the majority of patristic scholars. At the same time, advances in the field have generated further materials that deserve to be incorporated into the survey, and these appear as occasional additions throughout. Likewise, the titles of more recent important studies have been incorporated into the bibliographies of each section, with a separate listing of titles in French, German, and Italian for use by readers of those languages. Finally, since some now broaden the category of Apostolic Fathers to include other writings, it seemed prudent to insert an additional chapter concerning the fragmentary literature about the bishop Papias, whose lost writings are only preserved in part by secondary authors.

Finally, I offer special thanks to James Ernest of Baker Publishing Group, who has encouraged the present revision and republication of the original study. I have greatly valued his friendship over the years, and I prize his vision for making the present volume possible for a new generation of readers. So too, I once again offer my continued appreciation to Professor Richard C. Stern of the Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology, who took precious time from his sabbatical schedule in the spring of 1995 to offer numerous valuable corrections to the original text, and to Patrick H. Alexander, formerly of Hendrickson Publishers, for his interest in the original project and for his patience in its production.

Clayton N. Jefford

October 2011

For the Reader

It is my hope that this volume will serve as a quick and simple introduction to a unique collection of early Christian writings, the so-called Apostolic Fathers. This survey is intended to function only as a guide to the materials under review. The reader certainly will need to read the writings themselves and will find a list of English translations provided below. From among these options, the translations by Michael Holmes and Bart Ehrman are currently the most readily available and widely used by English-speaking students.

Other, more extensive surveys of the Apostolic Fathers are available, of course, but these are not designed to be as readily explored by students who are new to the literature, instead serving better the needs of specialists in early church history. The present book attempts to avoid some of the typical problems of many introductions. It was originally conceived with the input of students and is designed for those who read and work at the college, seminary, or graduate level. The book does not assume that the reader has any particular knowledge of early church history or any broad background in biblical studies or ancient Christian literature. The goal of the introduction is to be clear and concise, easy to read, intelligible, and suitable for review in short periods of time as the student's schedule permits.

The format of the book is designed to be convenient either for the classroom setting or for individual study. A general statement about the history and literature of the Apostolic Fathers is provided at the beginning, followed by ten chapters featuring the individual writings commonly included among the Apostolic Fathers. To assist the reader, each chapter is divided into four main sections:

- Answers** (*a brief summary of information about the relevant text*)
- Questions** (*an exploration of those details that make each text unique*)

—**Contents** (*an outline and summary of what can be found in the text*)

—**Related Literature** (*a brief list of relevant studies*)

I realize that a student can best come to understand history and its literature only to the extent that she or he reflects upon the **Questions** of any particular writing, that is, those details that make a text unique (considered in the second part of each chapter). Yet there is something of a practical nature to an introduction that allows the student to begin with an **Answers** section—a concise, easy-to-find summary of data about each text for those times such as before a quiz, in the heat of group discussion, or in last-minute preparation of a paper.

In addition to the four-part division of each chapter, this book is simplified in a second way. The information in each chapter is arranged according to an outline format so that individual issues can be defined and discussed without confusion. As an aid for the reader, each item in the **Answers** section is numbered to reflect the location of the corresponding discussion in the **Questions** section. For example, a student who wants to find out who is generally thought to have written the Letter of Barnabas would look under the heading “1.1.3” (which indicates *chapter* 1 = Letter of Barnabas; *section* 1 = **Answers**; *item* 3 = Authorship). In order to discover how the author came to these conclusions, the student would then look under the corresponding heading “1.2.3” (which indicates *chapter* 1 = Letter of Barnabas; *section* 2 = **Questions**; *item* 3 = Who was the author?). My hope is that this reference system will help each reader to find specific information as quickly as possible.

Important, new, or difficult words and phrases appear in **boldface**. These are gathered into a glossary at the end of the book. Charts, lists, and maps are located throughout the volume as an aid to learning about the texts. There are no footnotes or endnotes for the student to ignore or skip. Abbreviations of technical terms are avoided in order to keep the text clear and obvious.

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Introduction

What Are the Apostolic Fathers?

Historians have assigned the phrase “apostolic fathers” to a narrow collection of early Christian texts that date from the first and second centuries AD. These texts, which were written by leaders of the early church over the course of nearly one hundred years, originally did not circulate as a single collection. Instead, they were assembled into one form or another over the centuries; ultimately they became a vaguely unified selection of materials. The title “apostolic fathers” itself was not applied to these materials in antiquity but is instead a modern designation that distinguishes the writings from other collections of early Christian literature, such as the New Testament and the so-called New Testament **Apocrypha**.

Most church historians think the phrase “apostolic fathers” was first applied to the texts during the late seventeenth century. In 1672 the French scholar J. B. Cotelier, a specialist in the field of **patristics**, used the Latin phrase *patres aevi apostolici* (in English translation, “fathers of the apostolic period”) as part of the title for his two-volume work on these early Christian writings. Cotelier reflected the common view of the times that each writing in the collection had come from an early Christian author who knew one or more of the first-century apostles (the first followers of Jesus of Nazareth) or who at least had received instruction from the disciples of the apostles. As a result, the teachings and sources contained in these writings were believed to reflect some of the earliest witnesses of faith in the ancient church—the testimonies of the original apostles of Christianity.

There is little question that the collection includes several texts that are as old as the writings of the New Testament itself. Early Christian writers, much like the New Testament authors, generally recognized the Hebrew scriptures



(which Christians know today as the Old Testament) as their source of literary authority. At the same time, certain passages in the Apostolic Fathers have parallels in New Testament literature; but in a way these did not reflect any particular awareness of the usage and setting of those parallels. Finally, numerous early church theologians and historians considered some of these texts themselves to carry the authority of scripture, though ultimately none of them were included in the final form of the Christian biblical **canon** of today.

As is the case with the New Testament, the number of texts in the collection has become defined through a slow process. In his own edition, Cotelier included the Letter of Barnabas, the Letters of Ignatius, the Letter of Polycarp to the Philippians, the Martyrdom of Polycarp, 1–2 Clement, and the Shepherd of Hermas. A century later, in 1765, A. Gallandi added the Letter to Diognetus to this collection, together with the Apology of Quadratus and the Fragments of Papias. Since its rediscovery in the late nineteenth century, the Didache also has been included within this list of texts. Most recent editions of the Apostolic Fathers usually include these writings, though the materials of Quadratus and Papias are not always considered (e.g., the Apology of Quadratus is not introduced separately in the current introduction).

The majority of these texts were virtually unknown until the sixteenth century. The few manuscripts that contain the various writings that now form the corpus are preserved primarily in monasteries and libraries scattered throughout Europe. These texts presumably were safe from the general lack of respect for ancient literature that characterized the Middle Ages. Unfortunately for modern scholars, however, some of the manuscripts were edited and reshaped by copyists of devout faith who wanted the writings to represent either their own theological perspectives or the doctrinal positions of the times. The best illustration of this process is found perhaps in the Letters of Ignatius, which were expanded and corrupted by scribes over the years. Other texts remained outside of general circulation for centuries and for all practical purposes were lost. It was only through accident, for example, that the text of the Didache was rediscovered in the archives of a library in 1883, while that of the Letter to Diognetus was identified among wrapping paper at a fish market in 1436.

The Nature of the Collection

The Apostolic Fathers include a variety of different literary styles. The most common form is the letter or epistle. Included here are the seven genuine Letters of Ignatius (which some traditions have combined with six letters from a later, unknown author), a letter from Rome that has become associated with

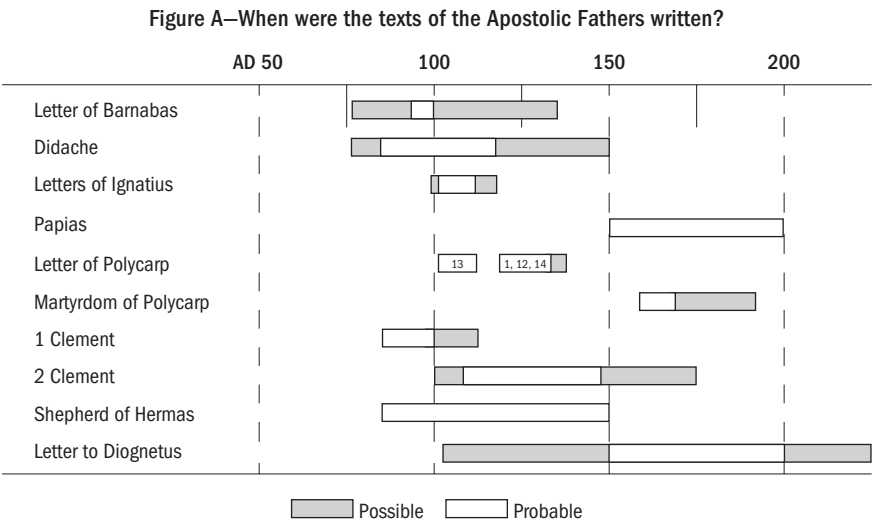
the early bishop Clement (1 Clement), and a letter by the bishop Polycarp. Three other texts are preserved in the form of a letter, though scholars question whether these writings were ever really intended to function as such: 2 Clement, which is probably an ancient homily or short sermon that has been attributed by tradition to Clement of Rome; the Letter of Barnabas, which is a sermon or theological tract by an unknown author; and the Letter to Diognetus, an early **apology**, or defense of the Christian faith, that appears to have combined a short, ancient letter and a fragment of an early homily.

In addition to the letter form, the works of the Apostolic Fathers exhibit other literary genres that circulated widely in the early church. The Shepherd of Hermas, for instance, consists of several early Christian sources that combine to form an example of what is known as **apocalyptic literature**, writings considered to be the direct revelation of eternal truths by divine figures. A widely recognized example of this literary style outside of the Apostolic Fathers is the book of Revelation in the New Testament. The Didache represents yet a third category: an early manual of Christian teachings designed to instruct new converts to the faith and to direct community leaders in their work. Such manuals may have been popular in the early church, and later examples sometimes depended on the Didache for their form and teachings.

The Dates of Composition

The dates for the Apostolic Fathers are uncertain in most cases, yet it seems that the final form of each text falls sometime between AD 90 and the end of the second century. Of course, a text's final form says nothing about the date of the sources behind it. Sources may come from as early as AD 50, when the apostles Paul and Peter preached throughout the Mediterranean world. The collection is special in that it contains information about the early expansion of Christianity not found in the New Testament. The Letter of Barnabas, for example, gives us a clue about the views of early Christian authors who most likely were in Egypt, a region where Christianity quickly grew into a strong religious presence but about which little is known today. The Didache is a list of instructions for use in the late first- and early second-century church. It reflects early community efforts to establish some understanding of how the institutional church should conduct its activities. The Letters of Ignatius, together with the Letter of Polycarp to the Philippians, tell us much about the development of early Christian doctrines in Asia Minor (modern Turkey) after the time of Paul's work in that same region. The letter of 1 Clement reveals the continuing struggle of Christianity at ancient Corinth in Greece from the

perspective of the church in Rome, once again after the time of Peter and Paul. Together with the Shepherd of Hermas, 1 Clement (and perhaps 2 Clement) affords additional insight into the situation in Rome at the beginning of the second century. The Letter to Diognetus, which is without question the most recent writing in the collection, was written as a defense for the Christian faith as Christianity began to spread throughout the Mediterranean world.



The Apostolic Fathers and Early Christianity

As a collection, the literature of the Apostolic Fathers includes texts that originated throughout the Roman Empire. It is only natural that many different forms of early Christian thought, worship, and church organization are represented in this small group of writings. This variety of perspectives and insights certainly enhances their value as a resource for study. Beyond this witness to the thoughts of the early church, many of the texts preserve early sources and traditions that otherwise would have been lost. Included here, for example, are ancient hymns and creeds. The texts also reflect the thoughts and beliefs of Christian thinkers whose views were often rejected by later theologians. The modern reader can find traditions here that were used in early worship services and that served as the guides for how Christian communities conducted their daily affairs.

Many scholars place a significant value on the texts because of the bridge that these writings form between the texts of the New Testament and those

of later Christian authors. In many respects they parallel the literary forms and theological interests of New Testament documents. They address the immediate problems that arose in specific Christian communities, and at the same time, they reveal a pastoral sensitivity when their authors were forced to confront the broad issues of God's revelation to humanity as it intersected with the rise of the religious traditions of human faith. In many respects, the Apostolic Fathers preserve an additional piece of history about the course of early Christianity following the death of the first apostles, reflecting the church's response to the struggles of that period.

The Apostolic Fathers are significant for yet another reason. Before the broader church agreed on a single, authoritative collection of writings—the **canon**—that ultimately became the scriptures of Christianity, many of the writings in the Apostolic Fathers were considered to have the authority of scripture. Thus the modern reader often finds that portions of the Apostolic Fathers have been quoted as scripture among the later theologians of the church. By the time of **Athanasius**, the bishop of Alexandria who listed those texts that he considered to be authoritative for the church in AD 367, the Apostolic Fathers had been excluded from the New Testament **canon**.

Figure B—Who read the Apostolic Fathers?

	Barn	Did	Ignat	Papias	Poly	MartPol	1Clem	2Clem	Shep	Diog
Irenaeus (ca. 130–200)	?		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150–215)	✓	✓	?				✓		✓	✓
Tertullian (ca. 160–225)	✓				✓	✓	✓		✓	
Hippolytus (ca. 170–236)									?	
Origen (ca. 185–254)	✓		✓	?		✓	✓		✓	
Eusebius of Caesarea (ca. 260–340)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	?
Athanasius (ca. 296–373)		✓	✓						✓	
Jerome (ca. 342–420)	✓		✓	✓			✓		✓	

The Apostolic Fathers could hardly be regarded as a rich source of theological speculation or religious philosophy, unlike the writings of Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, or Karl Barth. Instead, the Apostolic Fathers

are more concerned with practical problems that emerged with the development of individual church communities in the first and second centuries. How should churches conduct their worship services? What should new converts be taught about Christian ethics and their duty within the fledgling community? Who has the authority to speak for the resurrected Christ in each community? Who makes the final decision when disputes arise between communities? Should Christians preserve the teachings and customs of Judaism, or should such traditions be avoided? What should a community do about Christians who have strayed from the gospel faith but now wish to return to the fold? Which images from the Old Testament are most acceptable as prophecy for the new Christian faith? What does it mean to be a Christian?

Most of these questions have been answered in some form long ago for modern Christians by the guidelines of evolving church doctrines and the convictions of individual faith traditions. The various roots for the establishment of these doctrines and traditions often may be found in the Apostolic Fathers. They themselves exemplify how this very process was initiated within the church. Unfortunately, many of the same concerns and issues that were raised by these texts and that plagued early communities persist among Christians today.

The authors of the literature of the Apostolic Fathers have been enshrined in the memory of the Christian tradition. Here are the thoughts and concerns of the prestigious leaders of the ancient church—from the Christian leadership of Rome’s empire in the West, such as Clement (bishop of Rome), to the Christian authorities of Rome’s empire in the East, such as Ignatius (bishop of Antioch) and Polycarp (bishop of Smyrna). In the writings of these figures from history the modern student can discover the concerns for theology and salvation that challenged the rise of early Christians and their views of life. These people lived in a time of religious transition. They stood at the forefront of a new age of faith. It was in the hands of such persons that the hammers and chisels of religious speculation shaped Christianity’s earliest confessions of belief. The writings of the Apostolic Fathers preserve the results of their labors for later generations. They offer specific comments on issues that have come to form the basis of modern theology and ethics.

The Theologies of the Apostolic Fathers

The theologies of the Apostolic Fathers reflect the common mentality of the Roman Empire at its height, yet they preserve the divergences of individual communities in their quest to determine what it meant to be a Christian in the early days of the church. Although the perspectives of the Apostolic Fathers

are not unified, they do tend to share various assumptions, some of which may be readily identified as follows.

The future of the church. The first Christians were convinced that Jesus of Nazareth—the man whom Christian faith proclaimed had been crucified, was resurrected, and had ascended into heaven—would return to earth in their lifetime to establish the heavenly reign of God. This conviction, though evident throughout several perspectives in the New Testament, is most clearly expressed in Paul’s letters. Historians find some support for a similar belief in the Letter of Barnabas, the Didache, the Letters of Ignatius, and the Shepherd of Hermas. At the same time, however, the general mood of the Apostolic Fathers reveals a basic shift in the early Christian assumption concerning the return of Christ (also known as the *parousia*). For the most part, the early second-century church had come to accept that any such return had been delayed. Consequently, it became imperative for church leaders to determine how Christians could regulate their daily affairs while living as a community of believers. Foundational concerns in this regard soon arose. Who would direct the church, and how would its members relate to one another? What traditions accurately represent the teachings of Jesus and the directives of the apostles? What are the appropriate forms of worship and liturgy in the Christian assembly? Who could be included within the early Christian communities, and what was to be done when problems arose? The Apostolic Fathers address questions such as these, making them an indispensable resource for understanding the development of the institutional church.

Creator, Christ, Holy Spirit. There does not appear to be any unified perspective among early Christian thinkers with respect to the nature of God. While the New Testament Gospels, especially those of Matthew and Luke, reveal a murky perception of how God can be understood, the primary understanding of God in the early church was oriented toward the Jewish confession of monotheism: there is but one God! This view was only natural, of course, since the earliest Christians were in fact Christian Jews whose faith developed as they continued their lives within the framework of Judaism, its culture, and its institutions. The inclusion of non-Jews, or the nations (Gentiles), however, introduced new ways by which to understand God. The writings of the Apostolic Fathers reflect a time in which the early church embraced a variety of ways of understanding God, before the issue was broadly defined by later church councils.

For example, on the one hand, the Didache offers no clear distinction between faith in God and faith in Christ, as is evident from the frequent use of the term “Lord,” which can be interpreted as the reader might choose. The author of 2 Clement, on the other hand, admits a formal association between God and Christ yet shows no particular concern for the place of the Spirit.

At the same time, the Shepherd of Hermas is specifically concerned for the function of the Spirit within the Christian community. As part of the imagery used to depict the Spirit's role, the author gives a more concrete vision of Christ as the master who directs the construction of the church. Thus, the modern reader can see that the Apostolic Fathers reflect the gradual development of early Christian speculation about the nature of God. Eventually this speculation came to form the doctrinal confession of the church that God is one being with three distinctions: Creator, Christ, Holy Spirit. Although no single text of the Apostolic Fathers makes such an explicit confession, each of them reveals the struggles of its author to formulate a uniquely Christian understanding of the divine nature.

How to live as a Christian. Perhaps one of the most distinctive and pervasive concerns in the Apostolic Fathers is appropriate Christian lifestyle. Those texts that appear to preserve portions of early Christian homilies—Letter of Barnabas, 2 Clement, Shepherd of Hermas, Letter to Diognetus—directly charge specific communities to live by a certain ethical teaching. In many cases this teaching tends to be primarily Jewish and depends largely upon Old Testament standards, as in the case of Barnabas 18–20 and Didache 1–5. In other instances there is a clear influence from Greek philosophy (though not from pagan religion) and a more general understanding of what it means to live appropriately, as is apparent in the Shepherd of Hermas and the Letter to Diognetus. Extensive evidence throughout this literature attests that the church was concerned to establish itself as a responsible religious expression within the Mediterranean world. This effort was undertaken in the face of persecutions by Roman emperors—Nero, Domitian, Trajan—and in the light of the realization that the Roman Empire officially recognized only two forms of religion: worship of the emperor and classic paganism. For early Christians to assume a lifestyle that was distinct from common practices, therefore, was to invite disaster. It was only natural that eventually a text like the Shepherd of Hermas was needed to address the problem of Christians who, though they had once denied the church in the face of persecution, wished to return to an active life of faith within the walls of the Christian community.

The struggle for self-definition. From its beginnings, Christianity identified closely with its mother religion of Judaism. Over the years, however, non-Jews were attracted to the Christian faith, and their presence strained the traditional structure of the Jewish synagogue. Born out of this strain and without a clear sense of self-identity, the church was forced out of the synagogue into a hostile world of competing religious perspectives. Some writers (including the bishop Ignatius and the authors of the Letter of Barnabas, the Martyrdom of Polycarp, and the Letter to Diognetus) were quite concerned to distinguish Christianity

from Judaism. The ideas and actions of the Jews are attacked in these texts in an attempt to justify the claims of Christianity as a new and pure worship of God. Yet a second threat to Christian attempts at self-identity came from non-Jewish religions. Ignatius, for example, speaks boldly against the teachings of the **mystery religions** and **docetism**, which characterized much Greek thought of the time. Idol worship is similarly denounced in the Letter to Diognetus, and pagan lifestyles are rejected by the Didache. While the Apostolic Fathers represent a period of uncertainty in which the early church attempted to define itself as a valid religious faith, the struggle to legitimate Christianity continued among Christian theologians and historians until the early fourth century, when the faith gained official and legal status under **Constantine the Great**.

There is no specific starting point in a quest to understand the Apostolic Fathers. In some respects it would be best to begin with the oldest writings of the collection and then proceed to those that reflect more recent historical situations. Unfortunately, however, it is not always easy to assign a date to many of the texts. At the same time, the concerns and issues in each of the writings are distinctly associated with the community for which they were produced. There is no clear, traceable course of theological development or institutional awareness from one author to the next. For these reasons, it seems best to introduce the writings in a geographical sequence beginning with Egypt (at the southeastern corner of the Roman Empire), moving around the coast of Palestine to Asia Minor (at the northeastern corner of the empire), and concluding with the city of Rome (the political hub of the empire). This approach is beneficial in that it introduces the reader to most of the older texts first, though it should be noted that there are some exceptions to this general rule, and scholars sometimes debate the date of many of these works. In any case, a certain breadth of understanding can be gained by viewing the rise of early Christianity from the distant regions of the Roman Empire before attempting to assess the church in Rome, which ultimately became the center of Christianity in medieval Europe.

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The Letter of Barnabas

1.1 Answers

- 1.1.1 Manuscript tradition—two Greek texts (complete); nine short Greek texts (chapters 5–21) combined with Polycarp; one Latin text (chapters 1–17); quotations in Clement of Alexandria; brief Syriac fragments; reflections in *Apostolic Church Order*; parallel in Didache 1–6
- 1.1.2 Literary form—letter constructed from a homily (or treatise) and a code of conduct
- 1.1.3 Authorship—unknown Christian (name of Barnabas applied for authority)
- 1.1.4 Date—AD 70–135 (perhaps closer to AD 96–100)
- 1.1.5 Setting—most likely Egypt (probably Alexandria) or perhaps Syria
- 1.1.6 Purpose—to support Christian faith with the knowledge of God’s three doctrines
- 1.1.7 Primary elements—redefinition of Judaism; concern for end times; superior knowledge
- 1.1.8 Special images—scapegoat; red heifer; Jesus revealed in the number 318
- 1.1.9 Relationship to scripture—primary focus on thematic collections of Old Testament texts; specific focus on Jewish and allegorical interpretations of scripture

1.2 Questions

1.2.1 *Where did we get our text?*

The text of Barnabas appears in numerous places in our collections of ancient manuscripts. Of these instances, two complete sources are considered to be among the primary witnesses for the text:

(a) The oldest complete copy of the text of Barnabas is contained in **Codex Sinaiticus** (commonly indicated by the Hebrew letter **ש**). This fourth-century manuscript was identified by the German scholar Constantin von Tischendorf in 1844 at St. Catherine's monastery on Mount Sinai. Here one can find both the Old (in part) and New Testaments, followed immediately thereafter by the texts of Barnabas and Shepherd of Hermas. This manuscript, which has been identified with the Alexandrian textual tradition, suggests that Barnabas was somehow closely associated with manuscript preservation and research in ancient Christian Egypt. Its inclusion toward the end of such an important collection of biblical texts suggests its important status for that tradition. Several later corrections have been made to the manuscript that date to the seventh century.

(b) The second important copy of the text is the Greek version of Barnabas included in **Codex Hierosolymitanus** (previously known as Codex Constantinopolitanus). This **codex** was identified in 1873 by Archbishop Philotheos Bryennios of Nicomedia in the Holy Sepulcher Church of Constantinople (modern Istanbul). According to a note that was preserved together with the **codex**, this text was copied by an otherwise unknown eleventh-century scribe, Leo. The text has been dated to June 1056. Along with this copy of Barnabas, the manuscript contains a *Synopsis of the Holy Scriptures* compiled by **John Chrysostom**, the only complete texts of the Didache, Greek versions of 1–2 Clement, the long form of the Letters of Ignatius (thirteen of them), and an explanation of the genealogy of Jesus. The text of Barnabas that appears here is similar to the one in **Codex Sinaiticus**, as described above.

Elsewhere, the text of Barnabas has been preserved in abbreviated forms only. Some of these are quite important to a clear understanding of the manuscript tradition. They include the following:

(c) Nine Greek texts contain a defective (partial) form of Barnabas that is attached to Polycarp's letter to the Philippians. As a result of some scribal confusion, in each text the materials of Polycarp's Letter to the Philippians 1–9 are followed immediately by Barnabas 5–21 without a break, suggesting that the entire work was attributed to the bishop Polycarp by the tradition. The oldest example of these texts has been traced to the eleventh century.

The manuscripts undoubtedly should be considered together as a family of witnesses, all of which stem from a single literary tradition.

(d) There is one Latin version of Barnabas that contains chapters 1–17 only. These chapters are somewhat abbreviated in form in comparison with the longer Greek witnesses. It is not clear whether this abbreviation was made deliberately by the scribe who translated the text from the Greek or instead represents a shortened Greek source itself.

This version was produced in the late second century. It has been preserved by a ninth-century manuscript (Codex Corbeiensis), now stored at St. Petersburg in Russia.

(e) In his well-known text *Stromateis*, **Clement of Alexandria** quotes at least seven times from Barnabas and uses similar materials on numerous other occasions. The early church historian **Eusebius of Caesarea** observes that Clement had also written a commentary on the text, though that work is now lost to scholars. Clement ascribed something of a scriptural authority to Barnabas and undoubtedly possessed a dependable manuscript version as a result of his proximity to the famous library of Alexandria.

(f) Fragments of Barnabas 1.1; 19.1–2, 8; 20.1 have been preserved in the Syriac language. Unfortunately, the value of such a small portion of the text is generally limited for the purposes of manuscript study.

(g) Some scholars have indicated that portions of the text of Barnabas (specifically 1.1; 19.2a, 9b; 21.2–4) were incorporated into the later Ethiopic *Apostolic Church Order*. Although this is possible, it seems more likely that the *Apostolic Church Order* has used parallel materials otherwise preserved in Didache 1–6.

(h) Barnabas 18–20 contains the so-called Two Ways tradition, which reflects materials that are primarily Jewish in origin. The Two Ways concept was widely regarded throughout the ancient world, having both Jewish and Hellenistic roots, and appears in parallel materials such as Didache 1–6 and *Manual of Discipline* 3.13–4.26 from Qumran. Some common heritage is suggested, though it is difficult to trace a firm historical relationship among these texts. In the case of the Didache, early scholars once argued either that Barnabas 18–20 was dependent on Didache 1–6 or that the Didache relied on Barnabas. Most recent authorities agree that the two texts have probably borrowed from some common source, though this matter remains an important point of debate.

1.2.2 What form does the text take?

The text of Barnabas is offered as a letter, or, by virtue of its formal nature, one might refer to it as an epistle. In this respect the text contains all

of the classic sections that characterize ancient letters. The reader finds here, for example, an introduction (1.1), a section of appreciation for the reader and the reason for writing (1.2–5), the body or main message (1.6–17.2), a call for ethical behavior (18.1–20.2), and a closing greeting (21.1–9). Authors throughout antiquity used this standard letter style, as is illustrated by the letters of Paul in the New Testament.

The current letter format of the text of Barnabas is not necessarily original to the work. Instead, some unknown editor most likely fashioned the current structure by combining two separate literary sources, neither of which was itself a letter. A close examination of the text reveals the presence of the first source in chapters 1–17, a passage that originally may have served as an ancient essay on the Old Testament. Most scholars believe that these chapters may even preserve an early form of a homily or sermon. Chapters 18–20 most likely come from a separate tradition, on the other hand, and contain materials associated with the well-known Two Ways pattern of instruction or code of conduct. This form of instruction was commonly used to teach Christians about what it meant to live an appropriate lifestyle. (For another example of this Two Ways pattern, the reader should consult the materials in *Didache* 1–6.) A later editor, or perhaps even the author on a separate occasion, probably joined these two sources and added words at either end of the text (1.1–5 and 21.1–9) to provide the framework of a letter to surround the combined texts. This may have been achieved in order to transmit both the treatise (or homily) and the Two Ways materials together to some other community. The motivation for circulating the material remains otherwise unknown.

In conformity with the letter format, Barnabas has been carefully crafted to include all of the typical elements of letters from the late first-century period. After the opening words of greeting and thanks for the presence of God's Spirit among the recipients, an extensive discussion arises around three elements of doctrine and belief: hope and faith, righteousness and judgment, joy and righteousness. These elements form the primary framework on which selected Christian themes are raised and thereafter discussed. One might consider these materials to form the *statement* of the letter. In response to this discussion, the Two Ways materials that follow serve as a command to the audience to respond appropriately to the themes that have just been offered. One might say that these latter materials form the *charge* of the letter. The reader thus receives a statement of doctrine and faith and thereafter is charged to fulfill the requirements of that statement. In conclusion, the author offers final warnings and blessings to the readers. This pattern of elements appears throughout most letters from antiquity, both in ordinary letters between family members and in correspondence between royal officials.