

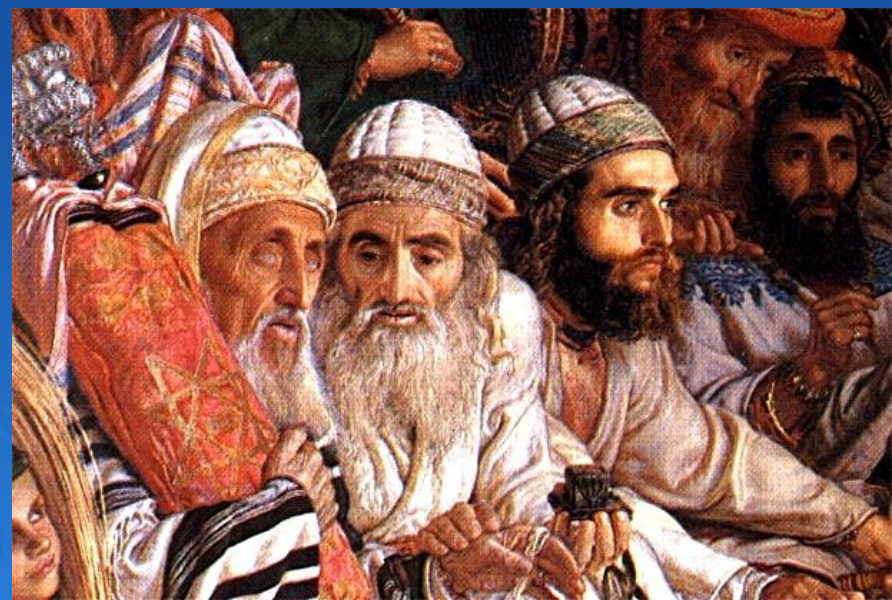
# BOOK OF ACTS: THE BRIDGE



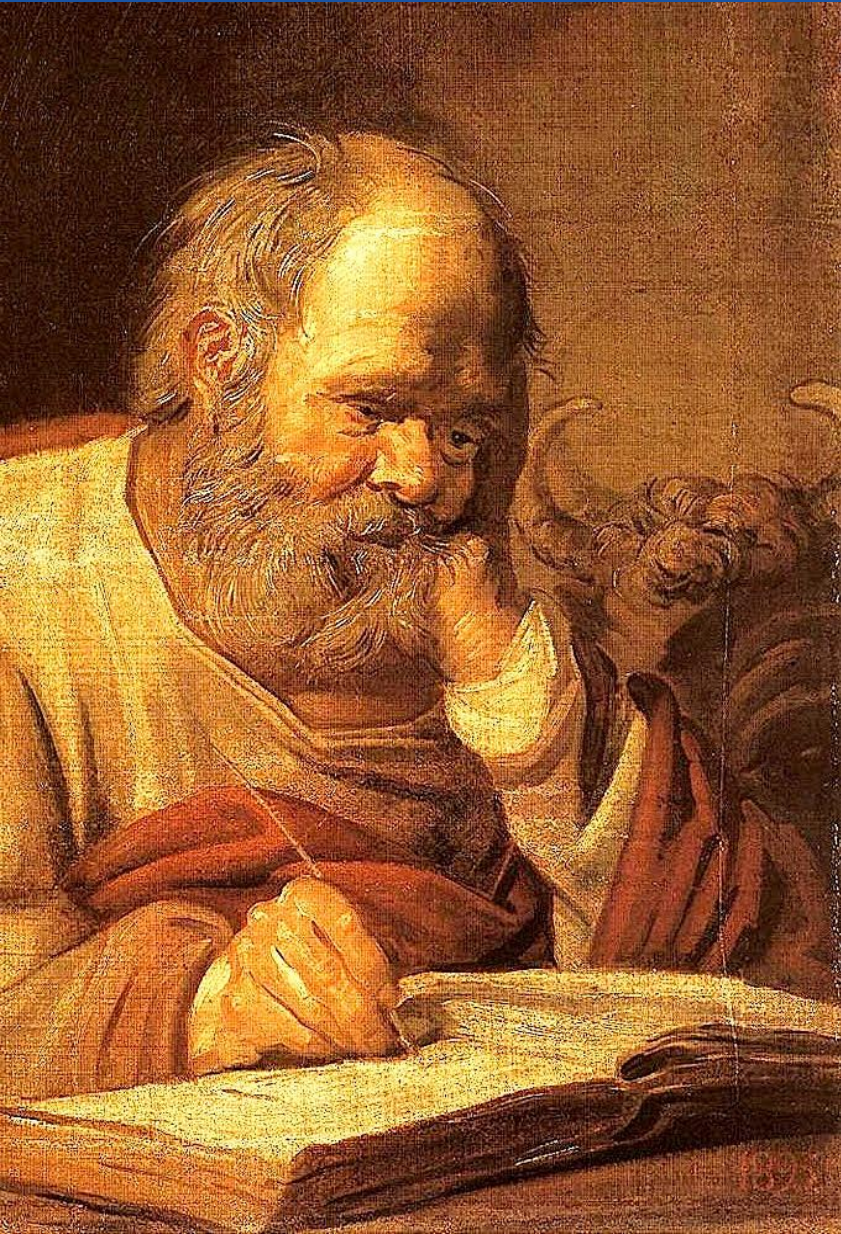
- Bridge: A structure carrying a road or a path across an obstacle such as a river or a ravine
- Matthew, the 1<sup>st</sup> Gospel, tells of the life and times of Yeshua the Messiah
- Book of Acts tells how followers of a Jewish Messiah, derived from a Jewish/Israelite religion, came to purposely include the gentile world

# THE CONTEXT IS 2<sup>ND</sup> TEMPLE JUDAISM

- R. Joseph Shulam *“NT is a Jewish document...of the Jewish community...of 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple period....”*
- Acts best NT book to help understand that time period
- Study of OT is crucial before studying NT
- Like coming late to a play and seeing only the 3<sup>rd</sup> act
- Conclusions incomplete or far off the mark



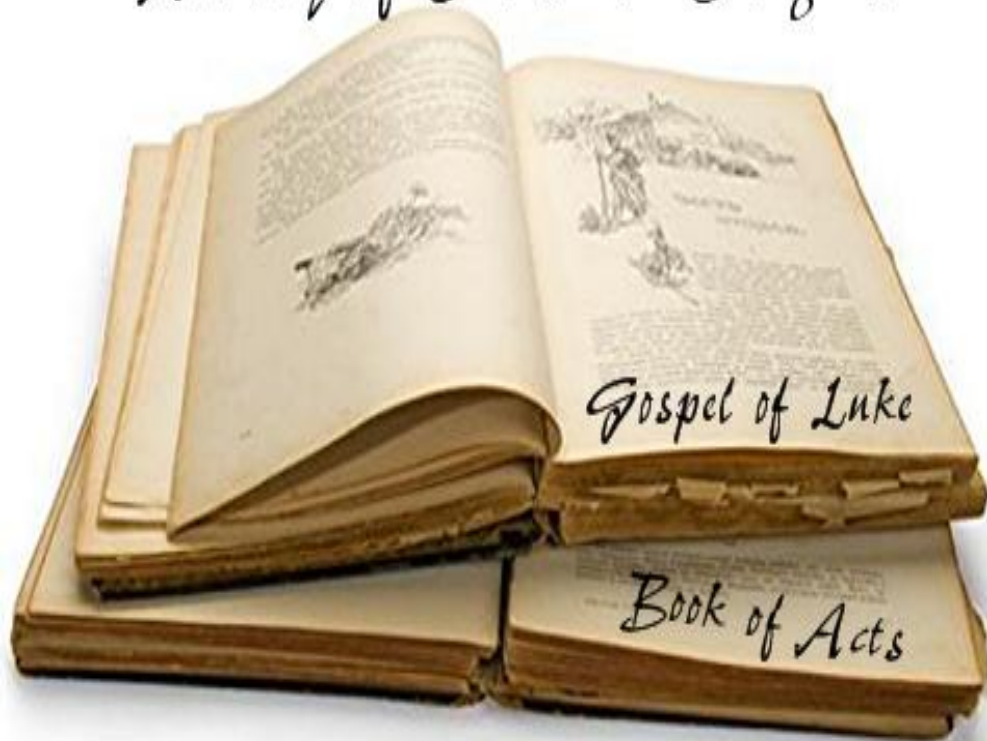
# AUTHOR OF ACTS: LUKE



- Most Bible scholars agree it is Luke
- Also wrote Gospel of Luke
- 1) Gospel and Acts both addressed to Theophilus
- 2) Same literary style
- 3) Author's own words say Acts is a sequel to Gospel of Luke
- Luke 1:1 – 4
- Acts 1:1 – 3
- Gospel: everything Yeshua set out to do and to teach
- Acts: What happened after Christ's resurrection

# ORIGINALLY A 2 VOLUME SET

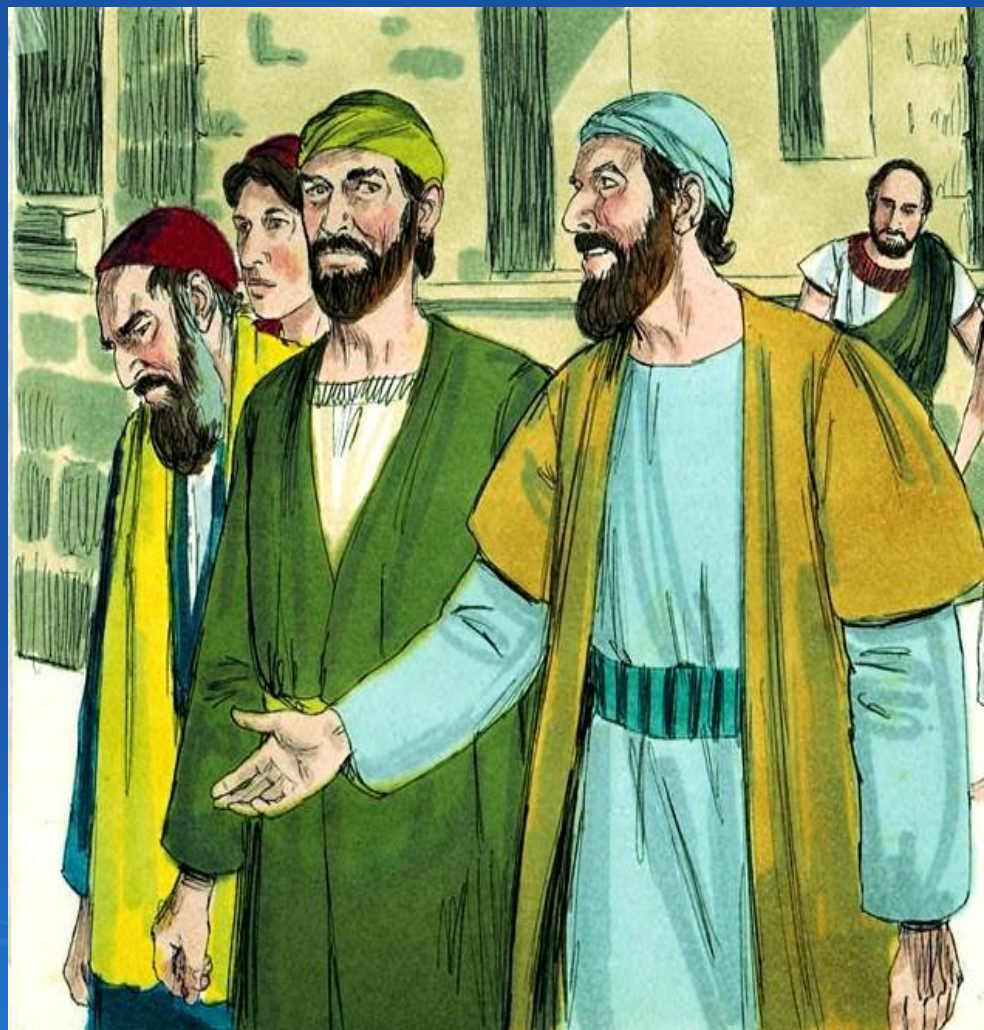
*"History of Christian Origins"*



- At first it circulated as one unified work
- Later it was separated into two books, each given a separate identity
- Most NT books were letters and monographs, written for specific purposes for specific congregations
- Were NOT considered as Holy Scripture until about 200 A.D.
- Range of date created from 65 – 115 A.D.
- BEFORE 70 A.D. and destruction of Jerusalem is the most likely

# LUKE: PART TIME COMPANION OF PAUL

- The “we” sections of Acts
- Acts 16, 20, 21, 27 & 28
- Some of Paul’s letters refer to traveling with Luke
- Col. 4, 2Tim. 4, Phil. 24
- Most of Luke’s writings he took from documents, eyewitness reports, etc.
- Some of his writings came from first hand knowledge and being personally involved with Paul

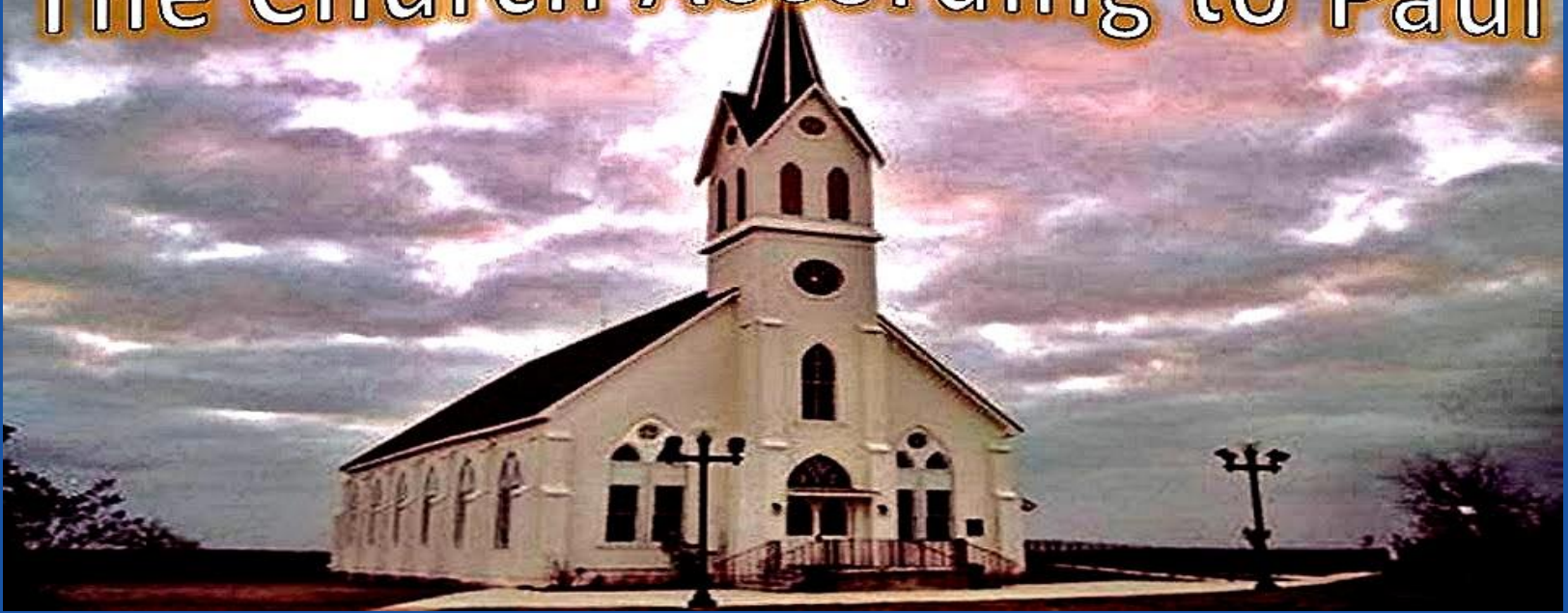




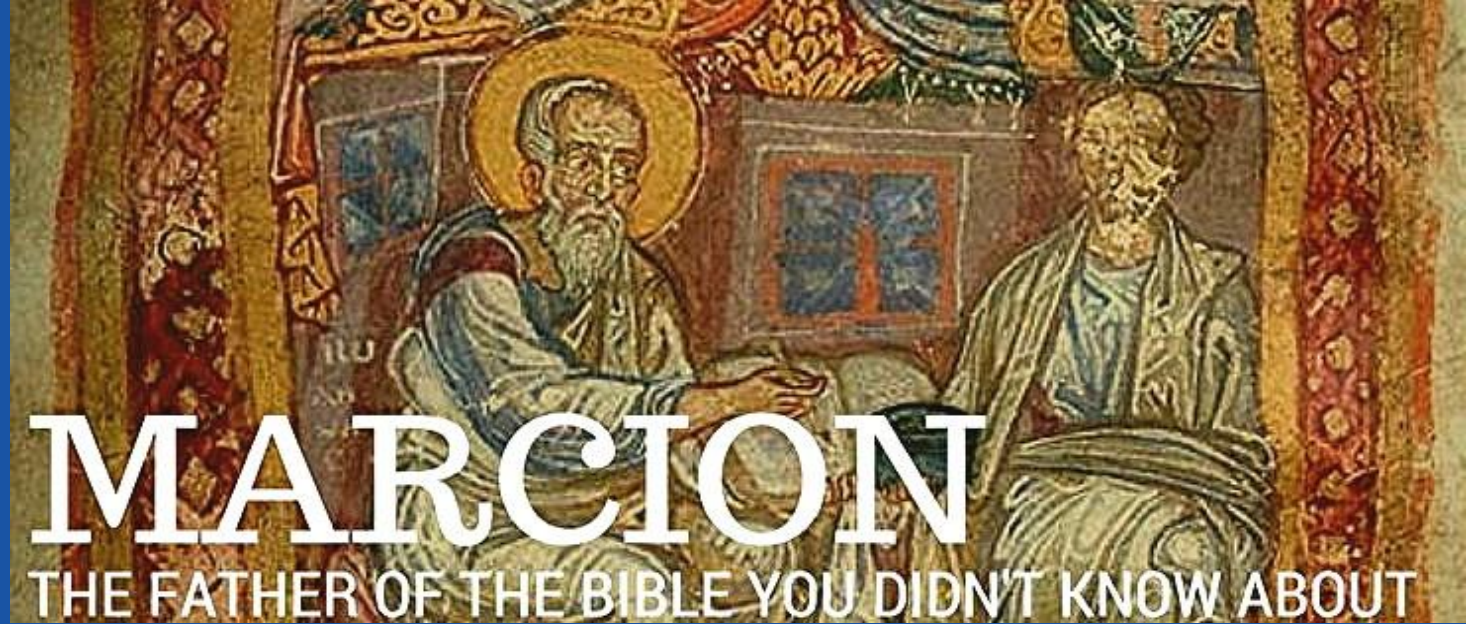
# THE JEWISH PAUL

- We first learn of Paul in Acts, not in his Epistles
- In Acts we learn about Paul in his Jewish context as a new Believer
- Acts gives us the foundational background for understanding who Paul is
- Paul is an enigma, seemingly contradicting himself in various of his letters
- 2Peter 3:15 – 16
- Peter found Paul “hard to understand”

# The Church According to Paul



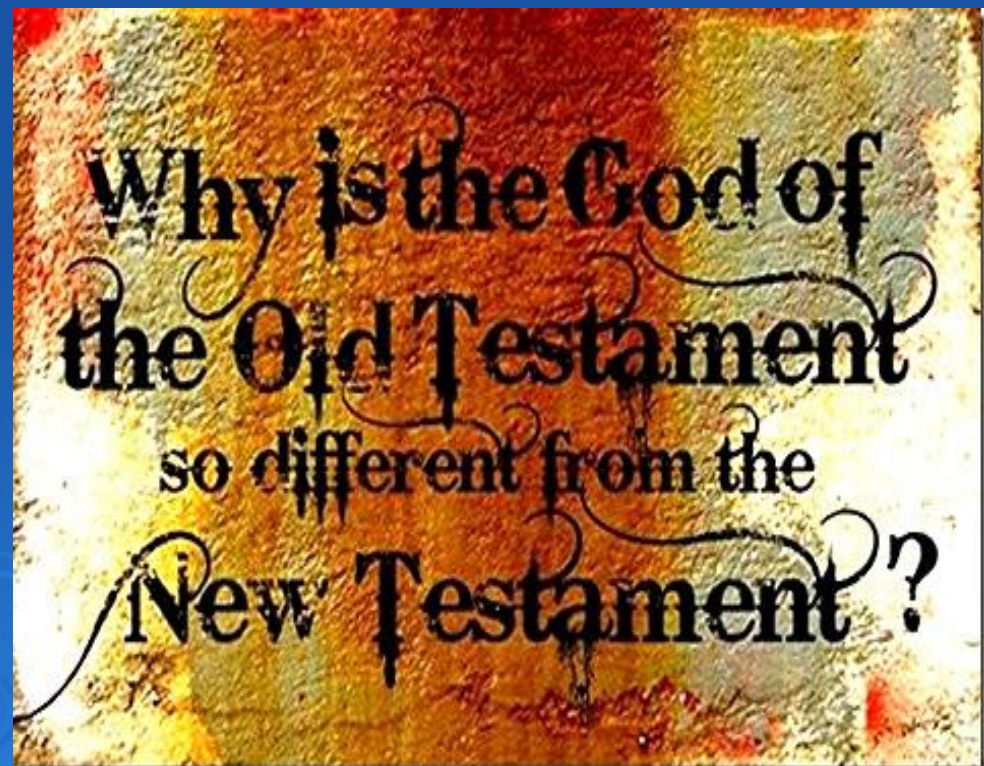
- Fracturing of Church partly due to picking which of Paul's statements to take as "doctrine"
- Institutional unwillingness to take Acts at its word
- Reluctance to research what the early Church Fathers had to say about Acts and about Paul
- Issue of how to interpret Paul begins with the Apostle Peter around 48 A.D.



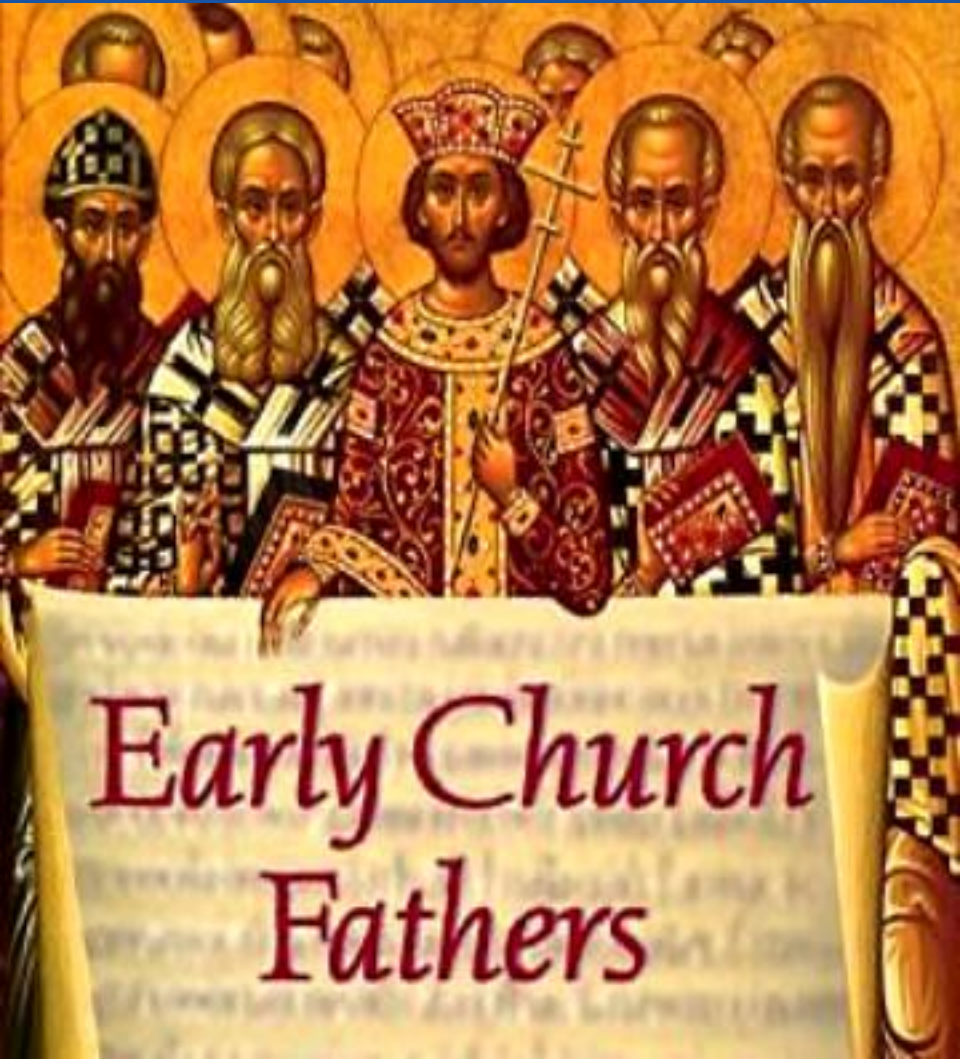
- Marcion decided it was time to have a “Christian” Bible
- He decided the only reliable Apostle was Paul
- 144 A.D. Marcion proposed his Bible to Bishop of Rome
- He believed: 1) We entered a new age with Christ
- 2) Jesus founded a new religion with no connection to any previous to it
- 3) Yeshua was Jewish only by accident of birth
- 4) OT prophecies had no bearing on who Jesus was



- Marcion saw the Israelite God of the OT as the “*old*” god, and Christ the God of NT as the “*new*” god
- Jesus superior to YHWH
- Marcion’s Bible had only 2 parts:
  - 1) Gospel
  - 2) Apostle
- Gospel an edited version of Luke’s Gospel
- Apostle an edited version of 9 of Paul’s letters
- Today’s Church retains some elements of Marcion’s thoughts and attitude (such as the OT being irrelevant for Christians)

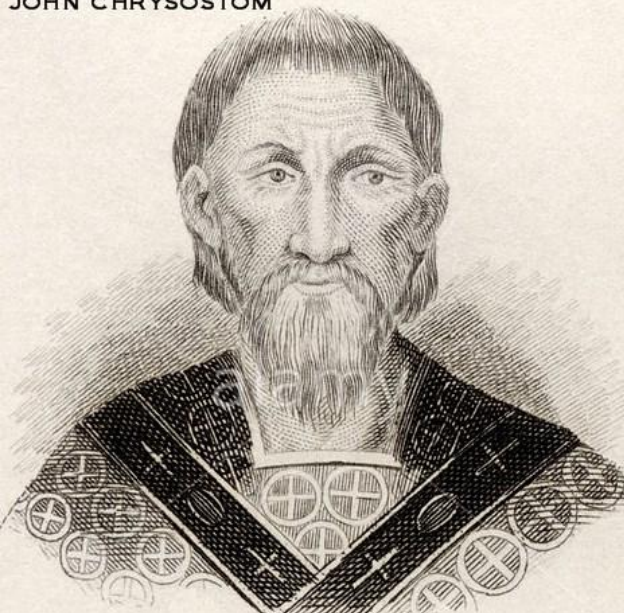


# BASIS FOR NT CANON CONSIDERED

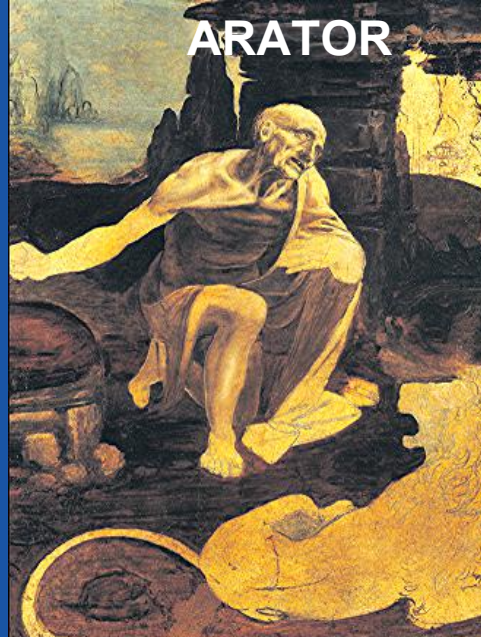


- Bishops challenged Marcion
- Began to consider level of authority to assign to each of the circulating letters
- Equal weight given to Matthew, Mark, Luke, John (other Gospels rejected)
- Acts renamed to “Book of the Acts of the Apostles” and validated as an authoritative work for the Church
- Yeshua’s Jewishness returned to Him, and Paul was recast in his Jewish heritage

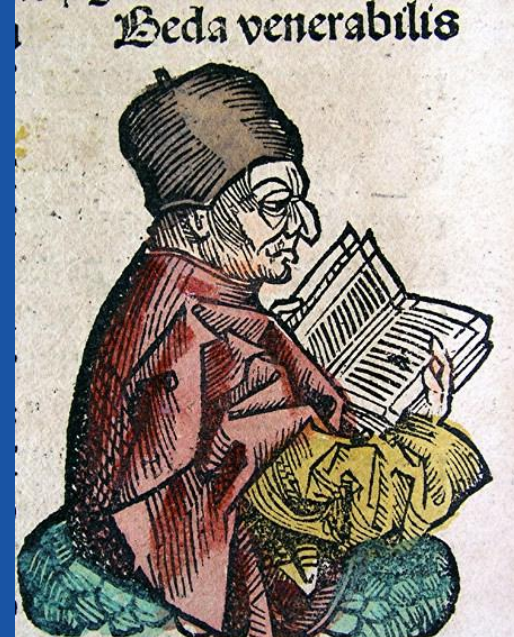
JOHN CHRYSOSTOM



ARATOR



Beda venerabilis



- 40 authors of the ancient Church wrote about Acts from 100 – 800 A.D., but we only have fragments
- 3 authors' complete works have survived
- Tertullian 200 A.D. "Against Marcion"
- If Acts is removed from the scene, we get a different Paul who will be understood differently
- Acts is Paul's foundational context
- Matthew 5:17 – 19 is Yeshua's foundational context

# HOLY SPIRIT



- The main character in Acts is God, expressed by Holy Spirit
- Holy Spirit mentioned 88 times in the NT
- Holy Spirit 40 times in Acts
- In both of his books Luke speaks of Holy Spirit 53 times
- Luke makes clear the God of the Church is the God of Israel
- Acts mainly about putting proper perspectives on Peter and Paul's ministries
- Reconciling relationship between Jewish and gentile Believers
- Gregory the Great, Pope, 590 – 604 A.D.