

READING THE NEW TESTAMENT IN 2021 Week 37 (September 13-17)

("Let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly" ... and bear fruit in our lives) – Colossians 3:16.

Historical Context (Paul's third missionary trip).

62 AD Paul appears before Emperor Nero and acquitted. This is the earliest date for Luke to have written **Acts**, as Luke tells us in the last sentence (28:30) that Paul lived two whole years in Rome at his own expense.

Prior to this, Luke wrote the gospel of Luke, as he refers to it at the beginning of the book of Acts (1:1).

Thinking about **John's** writings ...

- It is interesting that Luke did not make use John's gospel, even though John was an apostle, active in the early chapters of Acts (1:13- 4:23), and Luke claims to have "investigated everything carefully" including what had been passed down from the original eye-witnesses of Jesus (Luke 1:1-4). This would suggest that the Gospel of John had not yet been written.
- At the same time, the three letters of **1st, 2nd, and 3rd John** have the tone of a church living in a fairly peaceful time. This suggests that they were written prior to the great fire in Rome (64 AD), which led to intense persecution, as the three letters make no reference to these troubles. Troubles that will continue beyond the time of John's death.
- The three letters also touch on people traveling between the churches; and the growing problem of splintered teachings. We find this same growing problem in Paul's letter to the Philippians (1:13-18), and in his first letter to Corinth (1:10-12). Since Paul is the one who so vehemently and regularly argued for the purity of the faith – even with those who were seen as pillars of the church (Galatians 1:6 - 3:1), is there the possibility that John's letters may reflect a time when Paul is off the field – like during his time in Rome?

It is not likely that John, called the "disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 21:20), wrote the three letters from Jerusalem (from which he will escape around 66 AD) about 62 AD?

Although John had connections in Jerusalem with the High Priest's family of Caiaphas (John 11:49 and 18:15), his family appears to have been fairly well off in Galilee: owning a fishing boat, and having hired workers for the boat (Mark 1:19-20). The family also had business connections with Peter and Andrew who had their own boat (Luke 5:1-11).

<u>Day</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Clarification from original language – Greek word in parentheses</u>
Mon.	I John 1 (:3)	Fellowship = (koinonia) It means to have a share in; fellowship; to have in common together, as one (common + union = communion). It came to represent the ideal in human relationships. It was also the hoped for ideal of people's relationship with the gods.

“In the Greek and Hellenistic world *koinonia* was a term that meant the evident, unbroken fellowship between gods and men. Even Philo (the Greek-Jewish philosopher from Alexandria who lived from 20 BC to 50 AD), spoke of the ‘sublime fellowship of Moses with the father and creator of the Universe.’ (Dictionary of New Test. Theology – Vol. 1.)

Tues.	I John 2	(:18)	The last hour = (eschatae hoora) As there is not a definite article before “last hour” in the Greek, a more precise reading is “a last hour.”
Wed.	I John 3	(:6)	Sins = (hamartanei) This is a present active verb, meaning it describes a continuing action, or undefined action, that is happening right now.
Thurs.	I John 4	(:2)	Confesses = (homologeï) This is also a present active verb. It is not something that has happened in the past, or will happen in the future: it is happening right now.
Fri.	I John 5	(:21)	Idols = (Eidoloon) In Greek culture, it did not usually refer to images of the gods. Instead, it referred to ... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the phantoms and shades of Hades, • unsubstantial forms, an image reflected in a mirror or water, • an image or idea in the mind.

In the Greek translation of Paul’s day, call the Septuagint, it refers with out exception to images of gods. (Cf. Isaiah 44:9-20 which refers to the silliness of idols – things of wood, that in the making, half is used to bake by the artisan for food and burned to keep warm.)