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# **New Testament Survey**

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*International Educational Fellowship School of Ministry*

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# Introduction to the Survey of the New Testament

Atheism is morally and intellectually bankrupt. People will abandon atheistic ideals and look for new principles on which to base their lives. As intellectual Christians we must overcome the moody semantics of religion and spiritualism and be prepared to articulate Truth in word and deed.

## The Canon

*Canon* = (English) reed, cane. Used as a measuring rod, then came to mean standard.

The Reformation brought about a rediscovery of the concept of the NT canon as authoritative. Prior to that, Bishops spoke for God. The office, not the person, was important.

Oral tradition was good for generational transmission. However, the Gospel was meant for the masses and also had a Gentile mission.

Many early theologians spoke of the Gospel writings as Scripture:

- Clement of Rome (96)
- Ignatius, bishop of Antioch (110)
- Polycarp
- Justin Martyr
- Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth (170)
- Hegesippus

The Roman Emperor Diocletian (303) was the first emperor to realize that Jesus was more important than the emperor was, so he decreed the destruction of Christianity's sacred writings. The early Christians did not want to die for just a religious book. They had to know which books were the Word of God.

Athanasius of Alexandria (367) gives us the earliest list of NT books which is exactly like ours today.

F. F. Bruce wrote: "When at last a Church Council - The Synod of Hippo in AD 393 - listed the twenty-seven books of the NT, it did not confer upon them any authority which they did not already possess, but simply recorded their previously established Canonicity."

Since that time, there has been no serious questioning of the 27 accepted books of the NT by either Roman Catholics or Protestants.

Criteria of Canonicity: (tests of the Apostolic age)

1. Apostolic Authority.
2. Antiquity. (apostolic age)
3. Orthodoxy. (apostolic faith)
4. Catholicity. (acknowledged by the church)
5. Traditional use.
6. Inspiration.

Why study such ancient documents which comprise the NT?

1. Historical reason. Explains the phenomenon of Christianity.
2. Cultural reason. Permeated many cultures (esp. Western) and is associated with education.
3. Theological reason. Divinely inspired account of Jesus' redemptive mission; belief and practice of the church.
4. Devotional reason. The Holy Spirit uses New Testament brings people into a living and growing personal relationship with God through Christ.

## **Course Outline**

### **Part One: The Life Of Christ**

- Matthew
- Mark
- Luke
- John

## **Part Two: The Church and Apostolic Age**

- Acts

### New Testament Letters

- Romans
- 1&2 Corinthians
- Galatians
- Ephesians
- Philippians
- Colossians
- 1&2 Thessalonians
- 1&2 Timothy
- Titus
- Philemon
- Hebrews
- James
- 1 & 2 Peter
- 1, 2 & 3 John
- Jude
- Revelation

### **Conclusion**

# Chapter One

## The Life Of Christ

### Matthew

#### Background

Matthew, whose name means "gift of the Lord," was one of the original twelve disciples of Jesus. After the Gospels any record of Matthew is absent except for Acts 1:13. From Scripture we know that Matthew was a Jewish tax collector prior to becoming a disciple (Matthew 9:9-13). This previous occupation would require that he would be skilled in writing and keeping records. These abilities make Matthew an excellent candidate for writing a gospel about the life of Christ.

The early church historian Eusebius wrote that Matthew wrote his Gospel before he left Jerusalem. Clement of Alexandria wrote that Matthew was in Jerusalem for 15 years after the death of Christ. From these writings we can deduce that Matthew wrote his Gospel between 45-50 AD.

Matthew was presenting Jesus as Messiah to a Jewish audience. His main purpose in writing was to convince the Jews of the fact that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament predictions about the Messiah. Because of the Jewish audience, Matthew is careful to use the language that would appeal to Jewish audience. Matthew uses words such as "Son of David" (nine times), "Kingdom of Heaven" (thirty-three times) and "Father in Heaven" (fifteen times). Old Testament prophecy is fulfilled sixty-five times according to Matthew.

Matthew contains five important discourses. These discourses are designated by the words, "When Jesus had finished saying these things." Many scholars believe that Matthew included these discourses in this way to parallel the five books of the Law. The Five discourses are:

- The Sermon on the Mount (chapters 5-7)
- Commissioning of the Twelve (chapter 10)
- Parables (13)
- Forgiveness (18)
- Scribes and Pharisees and Olivet discourse (chapters 23-25)

It is interesting to note that Matthew is the only Gospel that uses the word "church" (*ekklesia*). This word means "called out ones" and can be found in Matthew 16:18 and 18:17.

Matthew is not exclusive presenting the Gospel to the Jews alone. Matthew begins his Gospel by the revelation of the birth of King Jesus to the Magi (2:1-12). The Magi did not worship the God of the Jews and indulged in many practices that were contrary to the law. While this may have upset the Jews, God revealed, from the beginning of Matthew's Gospel, that his plan of salvation was for all men and not only the Children of Abraham. Also the Gospel ends with the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). In this passage Christ commands his followers to make disciples of all nations, once again presenting God's plan of salvation to all men. Matthew begins and ends with the presentation of God's great plan to bring salvation to all men.

### **Subject**

Present Jesus to the Jews

### **Outline and Content**

- I. The Prophecies of the Messiah realized (1:1-4:11)
- II. The Principles of the Messiah announced (4:12-7:29)
- III. The Power of the Messiah Revealed (8:1-11:1)
- IV. The Program of the Messiah Explained (11:2-13:53)
- V. The Purpose of the Messiah Declared (13:54-19:2)
- VI. The Problems of the Messiah Presented (19:3-26:2)
- VII. The Passion of the Messiah Accomplished (26:3-28:10)
- VIII. Epilogue (28:11-20)

# Mark

## Background

John Mark was not an Apostle but is mentioned in the New Testament. The first mention of Mark is in connection with his mother, who had a house in Jerusalem where believers gathered. It can be said that Mark was brought up in an environment of wealth, piety, culture and Christianity. He was a relative of Barnabas and accompanied Barnabas and Paul on the first missionary journey. Mark was young and pampered and because of the persecution, Mark left Barnabas and Paul early into the journey. To Mark's credit he continued in ministry throughout his years working with Peter in Rome and ultimately once again being useful to Paul (2 Timothy 4:11). Mark was connected with Christianity from the beginning and did much to help its spread throughout the Roman Empire during the years 30-65AD.

Many early church historians wrote that Mark wrote down Peter's memories of Jesus from their conversations and Peter's preaching. A possible hidden reference to Mark in the Gospel may be found in Mark 14:51-52. Papias (AD 115), quoted by Eusebius (AD 375) said: And John the Presbyter also said this - Mark being the interpreter of Peter, whatsoever he recorded he wrote with great accuracy, but not, however, in the order in which it was spoken or done by our Lord, for he neither heard nor followed our Lord, but as before said, he was in company with Peter, who gave him such instruction as was necessary, but not to give a history of our Lord's discourses: wherefore Mark has not erred in anything, by writing some things as he has recorded them; for he was carefully attentive to one thing, not to pass by anything he heard, or to state anything falsely in these accounts.

Mark, in his Gospel, was presenting Jesus Christ to the Romans. The Gospel of Mark is concise, clear and pointed. This style would appeal to the impatient Roman reader. The primary purpose of this Gospel seems to be evangelistic. Christianity was heavily persecuted



in Rome so Mark adds "and persecutions" in Mark 10:30. Also, because of his closeness with Peter, Mark adds "and Peter" in Mark 16:7.

Mark writes the shortest and simplest Gospel. The Gospel is one of ACTION and REACTION. In being a Gospel of action it records 70 deeds of Jesus and uses the word "immediately" 40 times. In being a Gospel of reaction Mark uses words such as "amazed", "afraid", "puzzled", "astonished", "bitterly hostile". In Mark one is able to see the human side of Jesus. The many different emotions of Jesus are presented throughout the Gospel.

Mark is a brief, clear-cut and forceful look into the life of Jesus. Mark is like a photo album, peering into the life of Jesus. There is a steady progression by Jesus to His goal. After the death and resurrection of Jesus, the reader is left to make his/her own decision concerning the personality who is portrayed as a man, and yet as so much more than a man, as God.

### **Subject**

Presenting the Gospel to the Romans

### **Outline and Content**

I. The Servant: Who He is and how He came (1:1-13)

II. The Servant's Work: Not to be ministered unto, but to minister (1:14-10:52)

III. The Servant in Jerusalem: Presented as King and Rejected (11-13)

IV. Giving His Life a Ransom For Many (14:1-15:47)

V. The Servant Highly Exalted, Risen and Ascended: His commission to His servants and working with them (16)

## **Luke**

### **Background**

Luke was a Gentile by birth. Probably a native of Antioch, Syria. He was a well educated Greek. Colossians 4:14 tells us that he was a physician. Luke was a close

companion of Paul as can be seen in implications in Acts, and mentions in II Timothy 4:11 and Philemon 24. Luke is no spectator, viewing Christianity from the outside, but an active missionary and preacher himself.

Luke 1:1-4 gives us a glimpse into how the Gospels were assembled and written. Verses 1 and 2 tell us that there were other sources that spoke of the life of Christ. These works were assembled from the teachings of those who were eyewitnesses and servants of the Word. In verse 3 Luke tells us that this is his account that he has carefully investigated for himself. With this, Luke tells his readers that he is writing the truth. The critics have had a very hard time trying to disprove Luke. Luke writes an orderly account to the "most excellent" Theophilus. Theophilus means "one who loves God." The title "most excellent" is reserved for those in government positions. In verse 4, Luke shares that the purpose of his writing is that Theophilus will be certain of the things he had been taught. If Theophilus was a government official desiring to become a Christian it would have been important for Luke to present Christianity as non-subversive.

The addressing of this gospel to Theophilus provides us with a clue for Luke's authorship. Acts is also written to Theophilus and contains "us" passages when Luke is traveling with Paul. This will be discussed later while covering Acts.

Luke would have to be written prior to Acts. Acts ends in 63-64, so, Luke would have to be written prior to this date.

Luke especially presents Jesus' ministry to the poor. Examples of this are the Publican and the Pharisee (Lk. 19), Zacchaeus (Lk. 19), and children (7:12; 8:42; 9:38). Also, thirteen women are mentioned in Luke that do not appear in the other Gospels. Jesus is the cosmopolitan savior that comes for all men especially those that need him the most (the poor and outcasts).

Luke is writing to the Greeks presenting Christ as a divine God/man that had a mission. The key verse of Luke is 19:10, "For the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost."

Luke 19:10 provides the purpose, and the entire Gospel fully expresses this concept. Luke's narrative is so real and well expressed that it makes Jesus come alive as an actual person and not just a figure of a novel. Luke portrays Jesus as the Son of Man who lived among humanity, loved these people and what He ultimately did for them.

### **Subject**

Present the Gospel to the Greeks - A Gospel of historical certainty

### **Outline and Content**

- I. The Birth and Childhood (1-2)
- II. The Beginnings of His Ministry (3-4:13)
- III. The Ministry in Galilee (4:14-9:50)
- IV. The Journey to Jerusalem (9:51-19:27)
- V. In Jerusalem (19:28-21:38)
- VI. His Rejection, Suffering and Death (22-23)
- VII. His Resurrection and Ascension (24)

## **John**

### **Background**

John, the son of Zebedee (also known as the son of thunder) was a fisherman by trade and was friends of Peter and Andrew before they all became Jesus' disciples. John was the disciple that Jesus loved (John 13:23). He was part of the inner circle of Jesus' friends: Peter, James, and John.

John had that special relationship with Jesus. He was an active eyewitness to the events of the life of Christ. Jesus loved and trusted John so much that he entrusted his mother and her well-being to John at His death on the cross. This special relationship with Jesus coupled with his knowledge of the Jewish life makes John's Gospel an interesting and accurate look at the life of Jesus.

John, according to tradition, was the only apostle that was not martyred for spreading the Gospel. Because of this we can estimate that he lived a long life and wrote his Gospel at a later date. This would help explain John's different perspective than that of the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke).

The Gospel of John uses similar language as I-III John. Some key words used in Johanne literature are:

- Light
- Love
- Truth

The Gospel of John presents Jesus as God (5:18) and also Jesus as man (11:35). This is an important part to salvation and Christianity and gives the reader a total picture of Jesus.

There is a strong emphasis (chapters 12 - 21) on Christ's final (Passion) week.

Special characters that John emphasize include:

- Nicodemus
- Philip
- Thomas
- Mary & Martha
- Mary the mother of Jesus

John is the universal gospel. It was written so that all men may come to know Christ. While there are no parables in John, the emphasis of the Gospel is the miraculous works of Jesus. The key verse of John is 20:30-31, "Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of His disciples which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

John uses three prominent words in his gospel. They are:

1. Signs - the revelation of God
2. Believe - the reaction the signs are designed to produce
3. Life - the result that belief brings

## **Subject**

The universal Gospel - John 20:30-31 reveals its the purpose

### **Outline and Content**

I. The Only-Begotten, The Eternal Word, His Glory and His Manifestation (1:1-2:22)

II. Eternal Life Imparted: What It Is and What It Includes (2:23-17)

III. "I Lay Down My Life, That I Might Take It Again" (18-21)

## **Chapter Two The Church and Apostolic Age**

### **Acts**

#### **Background**

Acts was written by Luke to Theophilus (see Gospel of Luke). Although Luke's name never appears in the book there are several "we" and "us" passages (16:10-17; 20:5; 21:18; 27:1; 28:16). Acts is helpful in that it links the travels of the Apostles (especially Paul) to the epistles. Because of this it is a very important book and the critics have tried to prove it wrong. However, because of Luke's very accurate writing the critics have failed.

Several options for the purpose of Acts have been offered by scholars. The purpose of Acts may be:

1. To present a history. While the Gospels provide an accurate historical picture of the life of Christ, Acts provides an accurate historical picture of the Body of Christ, the church.

Acts tells of the beginnings of Christianity, including the church and its distinct beginnings, the spread of the Gospel, and important apostolic patterns and teachings. The importance of this purpose can not be overestimated.

2. To give a defense. Acts provides the truth of Christianity through the integrity of its message and its messengers. Acts may have been used by Paul as a defense at his trial in Rome. Acts shows that it was not Paul, nor Christianity, that caused problems, rather it was

others who were disruptive and causing trouble. It would have been important for Theophilus to know that Christianity was not subversive.

3. To provide a guide. The church is to exist until Christ returns. Luke presents a guide that contains basic principles that were applied to specific situations. These principles will help the church through problems and persecutions until Christ returns.

4. To present the victory of Christianity over and in the face of strong persecution. The success of the church in various situations and different parts of the world show the universality of Christianity. The church was not a mere work of man, but rather built by Christ (5:35-39).

### **The Characteristics of Acts:**

1. It is historically accurate.
2. It is literary excellence.
3. It is dramatic description.
4. It is an objective account.

Acts ends with Paul in his first imprisonment in Rome. Paul had reached Rome, the Gospel had been preached to the known world. Why did the Gospel end with Paul in Rome? Why was not more written? Perhaps:

1. Luke's job was done when Paul reached his goal of taking the gospel to Rome.
2. That was all Luke knew at the time of writing.
3. Luke had planned on writing a third volume to Theophilus.

Acts is a thoughtful record of the Christian Movement of the first century.

### **The Chronology of The Acts**

<i>Event</i>	<i>Date</i>
Pentecost (Acts 2:1)	AD 30
The stoning of Stephen (7:1)	AD 33/34
Paul's conversion to Christianity (9:1)	AD 34/35

Paul's first missionary journey (13-14)	AD 46-48
The apostolic council at Jerusalem (15:1-29)	AD 48/49
Paul's second missionary journey (15:36-18:23)	AD 49-53
Paul's third missionary journey (18:23-21:17)	AD 54-58
Paul's arrest in Jerusalem (21:27-33)	AD 58
Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea (24:27)	AD 58-60
Paul is taken to Rome for trial	AD 60-61
Paul remains for two years under house arrest (28:30)	AD 61-63

Here the book of Acts ends. The following events and dates are based on Patristic traditions of the second and third centuries.

Paul's release from first Roman imprisonment	AD 63
Paul's "fourth missionary journey"	AD 64/67
Paul's second Roman imprisonment and subsequent death	AD 67/68

## **Subject**

The Acts - Acts 1:8

1-7 Jerusalem and Judea; 8-12 Samaria; 13-28 the world (1-12 Peter; 13-28 Paul)

## **Outline and Content**

I. The Witness To Jerusalem, The Advent Of The Spirit And The Formation Of The Church, The Offer To Israel And Israel's Rejection (1-7)

II. The Witness To Samaria, Saul's Conversion and Peter's Witness In Caesarea (8-12)

III. The Witness To The Gentiles, The Apostle To The Gentiles, and His Ministry And Captivity (13-18)

## **Peter's and Paul's Journey's**

<i>Place</i>	<i>Happenings</i>	<i>Reference</i>
<i>Peter's Journey:</i>		
1. Jerusalem	Day of Pentecost - guiding the church	Acts 2-7
2. Samaria	Helped Philip lay on hands for baptism	8:14-25
3. Jerusalem	Returned from Samaria	8:25
4. Lydda	Healed Aeneas of palsy	9:32-35
5. Joppa	Dorcas raised - housetop vision	9:36-10:22
6. Caesarea	Met Cornelius and preached to Gentiles	10:23-48
7. Jerusalem	Returned from Caesarea	11:1-12:25
8. Antioch	Met with Gentiles	15 and Gal. 2:11

*Paul's 1st Missionary Journey:*

Antioch	Paul and Barnabas commissioned to go	Acts 13:1-3
1. Seleucia	Embarked and left	13:4
2. Salamis	Preached in the synagogue	13:5
3. Paphos	Encounter with the sorcerer	13:6-12
4. Perga	John Mark left them	13:13
5. Antioch in Pisidia	Preaching and persecution	13:14-50
6. Iconium	Preaching and strife	13:51-14:7
7. Lystra	Lame man healed - Paul stoned	14:8-19
8. Derbe	Made many disciples	14:20-21
9. Lystra	Confirmed the disciples	14:21-23
10. Iconium	Confirmed the disciples	14:21-23
11. Antioch in Pisidia	Confirmed the disciples	14:21-24
12. Perga	Preaching the Word	14:25
13. Attalia	Embarked for Syria	14:26



14. Antioch in Syria	Reported to the disciples	14:26-28
15. Jerusalem	Attended council	15:1-29
16. Antioch in Syria	Stayed and preached	15:30-35

*Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey:*

Antioch	Paul & Barnabas disagreed	Acts 15:36-40
1.Syria and Cilicia	Confirmed the churches	15:41
2.Derbe and Lystra	Timothy joined	16:1-3
3.Iconium	Delivered decrees	16:4-5
4.Antioch in Pisidia	Delivered decrees	16:4-5
5.Galatia, Phrygia, Mysia, Troas	Received the Macedonian vision	16:6-10
6.Samothracia and Neapolis	Landed	16:11
7. Philippi	Lydia and the Jailer	16:12-40
8. Amphipolis	Passed through	17:1
9. Apollonia	Passed through	17:1
10. Thessalonica	Planted a church	17:1-9
11. Berea	Preaching and strife	17:10-14
12. Athens	Address on Mars' Hill	17:15-34
13. Corinth	Church planted - Aquila	18:1-19
14. Ephesus	Left Aquila and Priscilla	18:18-21
15. Caesarea	Landed	18:22
16. Jerusalem	Saluted the church	18:22
17. Antioch in Syria	Spent some time there	18:22-23

*Paul's 3rd Missionary Journey:*

Antioch	Departed	Acts 18:23
1-5. Galatia, Phrygia, Ephesus	Established disciples	18:23, 24
6. Troas	Did not find Titus	II Cor. 2:12-13
7. Neapolis	Gave exhortation	Acts 20:1-2
8. Philippi	Gave exhortation	Acts 20:1-2
9. Amphipolis	Gave exhortation	Acts 20:1-2
10. Apollonia	Gave exhortation	Acts 20:1-2
11. Thessalonica	Gave exhortation	Acts 20:1-2
12. Berea	Gave exhortation	Acts 20:1-2
13. Corinth	Spent three months	20:3
14-18. Back to Philippi	Set sail	20:4-6
19. Troas	Eutychus restored	20:6-12
20. Assos	They took Paul in	20:13-14
21. Mitylene, Chios, Samos, Miletus	Visit with Ephesian elders	20:14-38
22. Coos, Rhodes, Patara	Changed ships	21:1-3
23. Cyprus and Tyre	Abode seven days	21:3-6
24. Ptolemais	Abode one day	21:7

25. Caesarea	Philip's daughters and Agabus	21:8-14
26. Jerusalem	Report of Paul's ministry	21:15-26

*Paul's Voyage To Rome:*

Caesarea	Trial & Appeal to Caesar	
1. Sidon	Entertained by Julius	Acts 27:1-3
2. Cyprus	Winds were contrary	27:4-5
3. Myra, Cnidus	Changed ships	27:5-7
4. Crete	Warning of Paul	27:7-13
5. Sea of Adria		
to Melita	Shipwrecked, rescue at Melita	27:14-44
6. Melita	Miracles of Paul	28:1-11
7. Syracuse	Tarried 3 days	28:12
8. Rhegium	Paul found brethren	28:13-14
9. Puteoli	Paul found brethren	28:13-14
10. Appii forum	Met by Roman Brethren	28:15
11. Three taverns	Met by Roman Brethren	28:15
12. Rome	Conference with the Jews	28:16-29
13. Rome	Preached in his own hired house	28:30-31

## Letter Writing in the 1st Century

### New Testament Letters

22 of the 27 books of the New Testament are letters (epistles).

Why do people write letters? Letters are sent for communication. Letters of the Greco-Roman world were *epideitic*. *Epideitic* is the rhetoric of praise or blame.

## **Size**

- In Roman times a private letter would consist of approximately 90 words.
- Paul's average letter is 1300 words (Greek) [Philemon 335; Romans 7,101]
- Paul invented a new literary style, just like the Gospels.
- Average papyrus 9 1/2" by 11".

## **Process**

Papyrus was very coarse, difficult to write on. Often times the author would dictate to a scribe or *amanuensis*.

- Author would dictate to the amanuensis
- Amanuensis would mold and develop the writing
- Author would then edit

## **Form**

- Greeting - grace and peace; sender and recipient
- Main Body - spiritual teaching and practical teaching
- Farewell - sometimes a signature

The four parties involved in the NT letters were:

1. Author
2. Amanuensis (sometimes) - secretary (Rom. 16:22; 1 Pet. 5:12)
3. Messenger - (Eph. 6:21-22)
4. Recipient

The change in secretaries (amanuensis) would help to explain changes in style between books by the same authors.

## **Collection**

1. Circulated to different churches (Col. 4:16)
2. Letters are Scripture - Authoritative (2 Pet. 3:16); this led to the canon

## **The Travels of Paul**

### **Luke's Geographical Interests**

- 32 countries
- 54 cities
- 9 Mediterranean islands

### **Luke Mentions 95 Different Persons**

- 62 are not mentioned in other NT books
- 27 are non-believers (civil or military leaders)

There are six sections in Luke's presentation of Christian Expansion:

#### **First Period - Acts 1:1-6:7**

- Early happenings in Jerusalem church including Pentecost and Peter's preaching.
- key verse - 6:7

#### **Second Period - 6:8-9:31**

- Extension of Church into Palestine. Stephen's preaching and martyrdom.
- key verse 9:31

#### **Third Period - 9:32-12:24**

- Extension of church to Antioch. Peter and the conversion of Cornelius.
- key verse 12:24

#### **Fourth Period - 12:25-16:5**

- Extension of Church into Asia Minor. Paul's first missionary journey. Controversies with Jewish Christians. Jerusalem Conference.
- key verse 16:5

#### **Fifth Period - 16:6-19:20**

- Extension of church to Europe. Paul's second and third missionary journey.
- key verse 19:20

#### **Sixth Period - 19:21-28:31'**

- Extension of church to Rome. Paul's first imprisonment in Rome.
- key verse 28:30-31

(outlines are modern construction and are not necessarily the intentions of the author.)

Paul's Missionary Journeys: (from Acts)

1. Paul's first missionary journey (13-14) AD 46-48
2. Paul's second missionary journey (15:36-18:23) AD 49-53
3. Paul's third missionary journey (18:23-21:17) AD 54-58

Peter dominates the first 3 sections of Acts with Stephen and Philip, while Paul dominates the last 3 sections of Acts with Barnabas and James (the brother of Jesus). Of these six figures it is interesting that only one (Peter) was a part of the original 12 disciples.

## **Romans**

### **Background**

No one is sure how the church in Rome had begun. There had been no formal missionary work recorded in Scripture prior to Paul's writing. Acts 28:14-15 speaks of Christians in Rome. Here are some possibilities concerning Christianity's spread to Rome. After the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:10) believers return home to start a new church. This is unlikely because it would be difficult to start a church without some form of training. Also a spontaneous church many have sprung up. In Acts 11:20 a spontaneous church in Antioch appears. Also, because of its commerce, Antioch and Rome were in constant contact. Possibly believers shared faith as well as goods.

Paul is the undisputed author of Romans (Rom. 1:1) The doctrinal and practical sections are consistent with comparison with his other letters. Paul had three purposes in mind when he penned his Epistle.

1. Paul wrote to prepare the people for his coming and to prepare the way for his future mission to Spain.

2. Paul wanted to share the rich theology of salvation that this congregation had probably never heard from an apostle before.

3. Paul sets forth the relationship of Jews and Greeks and how it all fit God's plan.

There are four special characteristics to Romans.

- This is the most Theological of all of Paul's writings. This writing reads more like a theological treatise rather than a letter.

- There is a strong emphasis on Christian doctrine. There are many theological themes Paul addresses: sin, salvation, grace, faith, righteousness, justification, sanctification, redemption, death, and resurrection.

- Paul uses many Old Testament quotations.

- Paul shows a deep concern for Israel. Paul is careful to put forth her present status in the Kingdom and show her relationship with God and her final outcome.

## **Subject**

- Law and Grace
- Sovereignty of God
- Gift of Righteousness Through Faith in Jesus Christ

## **Outline and Content**

I. Doctrinal: The Salvation of God (1-8)

A. Introduction (1:1-17)

B. The Need of Salvation Demonstrated: The Whole World is Guilty and Lost (1:18-3:20)

C. The Righteousness of God Revealed and Justification, What it is and What it includes (3:21- 5:11)

D. In Christ: The Sanctification of the Believer, his Deliverance from Sin and the Law; Children and Heirs (5:12-8)

II. Dispensational: God's Dealings with Israel (9-11)

A. Israel and God's Sovereignty (9)

- B. Israel's Failure and Unbelief (10)
- C. Israel's Future (11)
- III. Exhortations and the Conclusion (12-16)
  - A. The Exhortations (13-15:13)
  - B. The Conclusion (15:14-16)

## **Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians**

### **Background**

Corinth was the cosmopolitan capital of Achaia. It was a city of great commerce and trade. Corinth included harbors and the trade made this city very prosperous. The population of Corinth was approximately 250,000 free persons and 400,000 slaves. With its great population and wealth Corinth was a cultural center as well. The entertainment of the city was second to none and their sports were second only to the Olympics. For their sporting games Corinth had built a 20,000 seat auditorium. Corinth was also a very religious city as well. There were 12 temples throughout the city. The most famous temple of Corinth was the Temple of Aphrodite. This temple included worship through temple prostitutes (there were 1,000 temple prostitutes in all). This is probably why Paul uses 1 Cor. 13 to describe real love to those who had a perverted concept of love. Corinth possessed all the brutality of the West and all the sensuality of the East. 1 Cor. 6:1-11 helps to set a context of setting for first century Corinth.

Paul's travels to Corinth are recorded in Acts 18. It is here where he meets Priscilla and Aquila. I Cor. 16:8,19 correspond with Acts 19, which most likely indicates Paul wrote this epistle from Ephesus around 56/57.

The New Testament does not include all the letters of each apostle, only those that are inspired and authoritative. It has been argued that there were more than two letters written by Paul to the Corinthian church.



## **The Curious Case of the Corinthian Correspondence**

The evidence found from the two canonical Corinthian letters reveals that there may have been at least four letters written to Corinth by Paul.

- I Cor. 5:9-11 mentions a previous letter written to the Corinthians which may be concluded as lost.

- II Cor. 2:3-4; 7:8-12 mentions a severe letter or one that caused grief and repentance. I Cor. does not seem to fit the description of the severe letter as it seems to have been written in answer to specific questions and is not (does not seem) harsh enough to have caused the reaction Paul speaks of in II Cor.

From the evidence we have, the letters may have been arranged thusly: The third trip of Paul to Corinth is only probable. The Bible does not record a third trip. However, in II Corinthians tells of the certainty of his coming and it is most likely that Paul kept his word.

In 1 Cor., Christianity meets the pagan world head on. Basic ordinances of the Church were being abused and Paul had to address very specific practical problems within the church. Paul also explains how the Church and Christians should operate as a body with its giftings. Although Paul had to be firm with the Corinthians he possessed a true concern for Corinth (4:14-15).

### **Subject**

Apostolic Church (up close and personal)

### **Outline and Content**

I. The Church and the World: Separation and Testimony (1-10)

A. Divisions in the Church

B. Moral and Ethical Issues in the Life of the Church

C. Marriage

D. Instruction on Questionable Practices

II. The Church as the Body of Christ (11-14)

- A. Instruction on Public Worship
- B. Spiritual Gifts
- III. Resurrection and the Hope of the Church and Conclusions (15-16)
  - A. Instruction on the Resurrection
  - B. Personal Matters

## **Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians**

### **Background**

II Cor. is the most autobiographical and personal of all of Paul's writings (13:10). This letter was sent soon after I Cor. because the Corinthian church had become infiltrated by false teachers that questioned Paul's integrity and authority as an apostle. Paul writes a defense of himself and his ministry. Paul asks them to consider his actions and life-changing ministry while among them. Paul also warns them that he will return to see them again. This seems to be a call to continue collecting for the hurting church in Jerusalem and take care of the false teachers.

The letter falls into three sections:

1. Paul explains the reason for changing his itinerary (chapters 1-7)
2. To continue collecting for the Jerusalem church so that Paul can take the money with him when he comes to visit (chapters 8-9)
3. Paul tells of the certainty of his coming and that he will use his apostolic authority to take care of problems if they still exist upon his arrival (chapters 10-13)

### **Subject**

The Apostle (up close and personal)

### **Outline and Content**

- I. True Ministry as Manifested in the Life and Character of the Apostle (1-7)
- II. The Ministry of Giving (8-9)

### III. The Apostle's Self-Defense and Vindication (10-13)

## **Paul's Epistle to the Galatians**

### **Background**

The churches in Galatia were located in central southern Asia. Some of the cities located in this region conquered by Rome in 25 BC are Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. Paul is the author of this epistle. Acts tells that Paul visited this region regularly. Acts 13 says Paul visited Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe on his first missionary journey. Acts 16:6 and 18:23 speaks of Paul traveling through Galatia on his second and third missionary Journeys respectively. Depending on after which trip to Galatia was the epistle written will provide one with the date. Scholars have estimated the date somewhere between 48 and 56.

Galatians is unique in that it is the only Pauline epistle absent of a thanksgiving section at its beginning. Paul is determined to get his point across right from the beginning. Paul was being persecuted by the Judaizers. The Judaizers were Jewish Christians who believed that a number of the ceremonial practices of the Old Testament were still binding on the New Testament Church, such as circumcision. These Judaizers would follow Paul and tell those who had listened to him that he was not an authentic apostle and was preaching his own diluted gospel. Paul counters the work of the Judaizers in this epistle by establishing his apostolic authority and thus substantiating the gospel he preached.

This epistle carries a sharp tone. In verse six of chapter one Paul rebukes his readers for quickly forgetting and turning to different gospel. Paul uses this writing to prove his apostleship. Because of this, Galatians is like a autobiography of Paul.

Galatians is an important book theologically because it stresses the concept that man is justified by faith in Jesus Christ and nothing else. Man is not tied to legalistic obligations to provide salvation, rather to obediently rely on the work of Jesus Christ on the cross for one's salvation. This was an important book that when studied inspired the Great Reformation.

Galatians is sometimes referred to as "Luther's book." Galatians 2:16, "Know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by our faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by serving the law no one will be justified."

### **Subject**

Freedom in Christ - Galatians 5:13

### **Outline and Content**

I. The Testimony of Paul Concerning His Apostolic Authority (1-2)

II. Contrasts Between Law and Grace (3-4)

III. The Walk of the Justified Believer, as Not Under the Law But Under Grace (5-6)

## **The Prison Epistles**

The Epistles Paul Wrote While In Prison In Rome Were:

- Ephesians
- Philippians
- Colossians
- Philemon

Paul had been in prison many times (II Cor. 11:23). Acts 23-26 gives the account of Paul's two year imprisonment under Felix. Paul was afraid for his life because of the influence of the Jews in the area so he used his Roman citizenship and appealed to Rome. Paul may have just wanted to go to Rome and evangelize the capital of the world before his death. After his difficult journey to Rome, Paul finds himself once again in prison under house arrest even though he was innocent of all charges that were brought against him. Paul was in prison in Rome for two years where he was free to preach the Gospel under house arrest (Acts 28).

Paul is at a new point in his life. He has spent close to 4 years in prison and has had time to ponder many areas of Christianity. He is now an older and wiser apostle as well. Paul is a different man. He is:

- off the traveling mission field.
- in prison (total of 4 years).
- seeing things with a new mature perspective

Likewise, the Church is different. This church is:

- more mature
- more confused

## **Ephesians**

### **Background**

Acts tells us that Paul traveled to Ephesus at least twice. On the second missionary journey (Acts 18:19-21) and stayed for three years on the third missionary journey. Ephesus was located on the west coast of Turkey. Many scholars say that Ephesus was the most important city in Asia. Because of its coastal location it was center of a major trade route. Ephesus was a very religious city. Ephesus a center for the occult and there was a radical devotion to the goddess Artemis (Diana). When people began to follow the teaching of Paul and forsaking Artemis the city rioted.

The ministry in Ephesus began with disciples of John the Baptist (Acts 19:4). Paul told them of Jesus, the person John the Baptist proclaimed as the Messiah. Paul also introduced them to the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Paul had much success in Ephesus and later sent his close companion Timothy to pastor the growing (and by this time troubled) church.

Ephesians is a unique letter in that it does not address any particular error or trouble, instead Paul unfolds God's eternal plan for the Church. Paul, while writing this letter in prison, is interested in the readers understanding their high purpose in the Church of God. It is likely that the letter to the Ephesians is what is called a circular letter. A "circular letter" is one that was passed around to the different churches in a given area. A good example of a

circular letter is Colossians (Colossians 4:16). Ephesians is probably a circular letter because the early manuscripts of Ephesians do not contain the phrase "in Ephesus" in 1:1. Also, a letter written to an church that Paul loved and spent a lot of time with would be more personal with many greetings. Ephesians is absent of these sentimental touches of Paul.

Throughout the theme of Ephesians is the Church. The epistle was written to those who were not ignorant of the faith. These people were spiritually strong and steadfast and most likely desired to fully understand their purpose. The first section of this epistle (chapters 1-3) deals with the sovereignty of God and presents in great detail His plan from the beginning. The second section (chapters 4-6) shares the practical work of the life of the believer.

An interesting note to this book is that Paul uses the phrase "in Christ" thirty-five times (more than any other epistle). It is quite possible that Paul has seen many come to the Lord and seen many churches established, he now had time to contemplate the meaning of this new organism.

## **Subject**

Glory of the Church (universal)

## **Outline and Content**

### I. The Masterwork of God

- A. The Godhead at Work (1)
- B. The Production of the Masterwork and its Destiny (2:1-10)
- C. The Mystery Now Made Known (2:11-3:21)

### II. The Practical Manifestation in the Life of the believer (4-6)

- A. Walking Worthy of the Calling (4:1-6)
- B. The Ministry and its Purpose (4:7-16)
- C. The Walk in Holiness and Righteousness (4:17-5:21)
- D. Personal Relationships (5:21-6:9)
- E. The Christian and Spiritual Conflict (6:10-20)

### III. Conclusion (6:21-24)

## Philippians

### Background

The Philippian church was one of Paul's favorite. In this relatively short letter, Paul uses the personal pronoun "I" fifty-two times (more than any other epistle). The church in Philippi was devoted to Paul and very supportive in their gifts of encouragement. There was a strong bond between Paul and the Philippians.

Paul traveled to Philippi after receiving the Macedonian Call (Acts 16:9). It seems that Luke has left Paul by this time because the "we" sections end at Acts 16. From Acts one finds out that this is the first European church because of its location in ancient Greece. Philippi was a city built on a major trade route called the Ignatian Way that connected all of Macedonia. Philippi was a military town, and while there was no synagogue, there was what was called a "place of prayer" (Acts 16:13). This is where Paul ministered.

Much can be learned about Paul's ministry to the Philippians from Acts 16. A woman by the name of Lydia was Paul's first convert. Paul casts out an evil spirit of a girl. Paul is beaten and thrown in jail. Paul and Silas prayed and sang and God sent an earthquake that opened the jail. Paul and Silas led the jailer and his family to the Lord and they rejoiced greatly because they came to believe in God. This is also the first time Paul relies on his Roman citizenship to provide himself with an apology from the city officials. To be a Roman citizen in this time would allow an individual greater standing in the law. In this case Paul was beaten publicly without a trial. Roman citizens were always provided a trial and even with a trial Roman citizens were never to be beaten. The city officials apologized and then requested that Paul and Silas leave the city.

One of Paul's themes in Philippians is the Gospel. He uses the Gospel in these ways:

- The fellowship of the Gospel (1:5)

- The confirmation of the Gospel (1:7)
- The progress of the Gospel (1:12)
- The defense of the Gospel (1:16)
- Worthy of the Gospel (1:27)
- Striving for the Gospel (1:27)
- Striving for the faith of the Gospel (1:27)
- Service in the Gospel (2:22)
- Labor in the Gospel (4:3)
- The beginning of the Gospel (4:15)

While Gospel is never given a definition in Philippians, it is evident that Christ's sacrifice on the cross is for all men (2:8) and that all men can possess His righteousness before God (3:9).

Paul's main theme in this epistle is joy. While Paul's circumstances may have looked low, writing from prison, his remembrance of the Philippians was joyful. Not only did Paul possess fond memories but he also had a firm and true faith that looked beyond the disaster of this world and looked to the glorious future. This dynamic faith was in direct contrast to the state of Paul's world.

### **Subject**

Joy

### **Outline and Content**

- I. Christ, The Controlling Principle of the Believer's Life (1)
- II. Christ, The Believer's Pattern (2)
- III. Christ, The Object and the Goal (3)
- IV. Christ, The Believer's Strength, Sufficient for all Circumstances (4)

## **Colossians**

### **Background**

While there is nothing written about Colossae in Acts, it is known that it is located in Asia Minor east of Ephesus. During the Persian Empire (500 BC), Colossae was a major



city. By the first century AD, Colossae had slipped to become a second rate city. Apparently Paul had never been to Colosse (2:1), however, one knows that the gospel went out to towns like Colossae (Acts 19:10). Also, Epaphras, who was from Colossae, was with Paul at the time the letter was written.

There are many similarities between Ephesians and Colossians. This may be due to them both being circular letters. While there are similarities there are also differences. These are:

Colossians - Christ is the Head

Ephesians - Church is the Body

Colossians - Confrontational/Controversial

Ephesians - Mellow/Meditative

Colossians - More Specific

Ephesians - More General

Colossians - Warning Against False Doctrine

Ephesians - Praise for Blessing in Christ

Paul provides a very important passage which gives his readers a better understanding of Christ. This passage is Colossians 1:14-22.

There is no doubt that Paul is addressing a mysterious heresy in the churches to whom this epistle is traveling to. Scholars can not figure out what the Colossian heresy was. So, what were the characteristics of the Colossian Heresy?

1. Its Christology
2. Its philosophical characteristics

3. Its Jewish environment
4. Its angel worship
5. The elements of the world
6. Exclusivism

## **Subject**

All Sufficiency of Christ - Col. 2:10

## **Outline and Content**

- I. The Person of Christ, His Glory and His Work (1)
- II. Complete in Him, in Whom All The Fullness Dwells (2)
- III. The Practical Results, Living as Risen With Christ (3:4-4:18)

## **First Thessalonians**

### **Background**

Paul traveled to Thessalonica on his second missionary journey after visiting Philippi (Acts 17). Thessalonica was the capital city of Macedonia with an estimated population of 200,000. This city was equipped with a synagogue where Paul preached and was ultimately forced out by the Jews. Even with this persecution a strong church emerged.

Paul wrote Thessalonians during his stay in Corinth (Acts 18). This is one of (if not the) earliest of Paul's epistles written around 51/52.

Within this letter, Paul provides encouragement in the face of persecution. There is a call to holiness in this the final hour. There is a very long section on the second coming of Christ (4:13-5:11). This seems to be the main doctrinal theme. Since this was one of the earliest epistles in the New Testament, it is the first full discussion of this doctrine. While this is the first written mention of the "*parousia*" (*parousia*=second coming), it is a well established doctrine among the apostles and even the teachings of Jesus.

Some scholars have questioned the length of Paul's stay in Thessalonica. Acts records that Paul ministered there three Sabbath days (Acts 17:2). Many say that this is too short amount time for a church to become established. Elsewhere in the Bible one can see that Paul worked in Thessalonica (I Thes. 2:9), Paul received aid in Thessalonica (Phil. 4:16), and Paul trained leaders (I Thes. 5:12). No matter how long Paul was in Thessalonica, it was not up to him to build the Church. God and God alone will establish his people. Christ said He would build his church. Whether Paul was there for three weeks or three years, it does not matter. With the power of the Holy Spirit establishing the church, it is sure to succeed. I and II Thessalonians are letters of instruction, and this would show that the Thessalonian church was a young church and needed time to mature. It is very possible that Paul was only there for three weeks.

Paul has two themes in this epistle:

1. The first is praise for the Christians of Thessalonica standing firm against persecutions from the Jews.
2. Correct errors and misunderstandings that had come into the church.

### **Subject**

Congratulations and Comfort (2nd coming)

### **Outline and Content**

- I. The Church of the Thessalonians and its Blessed Condition (1)
- II. True Service, As Manifested in Apostolic Ministry (2)
- III. Afflictions and Comfort (3)
- IV. The Separated Walk and the Blessed Hope (4)
- V. The Day of the Lord and Exhortations (5)

## **Second Thessalonians**

### **Background**

II Thessalonians was written only months after I Thessalonians and seems to serve the purpose of clearing up the misunderstandings about "the day of the Lord is just at hand" (II Thes. 2:2). Paul's major theme in I Thessalonians was expressed so thoroughly that perhaps the readers misunderstood Paul's preaching on the Day of the Lord. There is also a possibility that some false teachers were attributing their false teaching to Paul.

Paul provides three major events that will preface the Lord's return:

1. A sudden acceleration of apostasy from godliness (2:3)
2. The removal of some restraining influence (2:6-7)
3. The complete unveiling of the incarnation of evil, who will be animated by Satan and who will oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God (2:4, 9)

While this section of teaching is unique to this epistle of Paul it sets up a sound doctrinal truth. Lawlessness will develop and Christ will be exalted and thus draw the battle lines in which Christ will ultimately conquer. The triumph will be the return to earth to destroy the antichrist and to reward his saints.

There is a warning against idleness at the end of Paul's letter. Obviously, some of those who had misunderstood Paul's teaching on the second coming became enamored with Christ's return. These people had quit working and began waiting for Christ's triumphant return. Paul encourages these people to return to work to earn a living and mind their own business.

### **Subject**

Postscript on the *Parousia* (second coming)

### **Outline and Content**

- I. The Revelation of the Lord Jesus From Heaven (1)
- II. What Precedes the Manifestation of the Lord (2:1-12)
- III. Thanksgiving, Prayer, Exhortations and Conclusion (2:3-3:18)

## Pastoral Epistles

Paul's Travels (62-68) After His First Prison Release:

1. **Rome** - released from prison in 62
2. **Spain** - 62-64 (Romans 15:24,28)
3. **Crete** - 64-65 (Titus 1:5)
4. **Miletus** - 65 (2 Timothy 4:20)
5. **Colossae** - 66 (Philemon 22)
6. **Ephesus** - 66 (1 Timothy 1:3)
7. **Philippi** - 66 (Philippians 2:23-24; 1 Timothy 1:3)
8. **Nicopolis** - 66-67 (Titus 3:12)
9. **Rome** -67
10. **Martyrdom** - 67/68

The Pastoral Epistles are:

- 1 Timothy
- 2 Timothy
- Titus

Paul knows that his time on this earth is running out and he must pass the mantle on to a younger, stronger generation of leaders. All of these letters were written during the fourth missionary journey or his final (second) imprisonment in Rome. History records that at the end of Paul's second imprisonment he was beheaded for the sake of the Gospel under the harsh persecution of the Roman Emperor Nero. Paul provides fatherly advice for his sons of the ministry.

There are certain themes that are a part of the Pastoral Epistles:

1. God the Savior (Titus 1:3)
2. Sound doctrine, faith and teaching (Titus 1:9)
3. Godliness (I Tim. 2:2)

4. Controversies (I Tim. 1:4; 6:4; II Tim. 2:23; Titus 3:9)

5. Trustworthy sayings (I Tim. 1:15)

## **First Timothy**

### **Background**

Timothy was a close companion and understudy of Paul. Timothy began traveling with Paul on his second missionary journey (Acts 16:1-3). Timothy was an active part of the preaching of the Gospel with Paul. Timothy was perhaps also an amanuensis for some of Paul's writings. Timothy was with Paul in Rome during the first imprisonment and was imprisoned himself (Heb. 13:23). Timothy was young (probably around age 30) and seemed to be immature (I Tim. 1:6-7; 5:23). Timothy was now serving the church at Ephesus (I Tim. 1:6-7). This epistle was to strengthen and encourage Timothy in his great task.

Timothy had ceased the exciting life of a traveling evangelist where he saw tremendous results for the Kingdom. Timothy was now faced with the opportunity to stay in one place at an established church that was experiencing trouble. Most likely the excitement was gone and the results were minimal.

Paul begins his epistle by defining the task and giving a charge to Timothy. Paul discusses the order of worship and church leadership. Paul specifically addresses prayer, the role of women, qualifications for church leadership, the trouble with false teaching, and discipline within the church. There is various practical teaching on slaves and masters, wealth, and men of God.

### **Subject**

Procedure for taking care of problems

### **Outline and Content**

I. Concerning Sound Doctrine (1)

II. Concerning Prayer (2)

III. Concerning the House of God (3)

IV. Concerning the Latter-Day Apostasy (4)

V. Instructions and Exhortations (5-6)

## Second Timothy

### Background

This is Paul's final letter to Timothy, the one he considers his son in the faith.

Here are possible reasons for Paul's writing:

1. Paul was lonely (4:10). Everyone had left him except for Luke. Paul so desired the company of Timothy.

2. Paul was concerned for the Gospel because of the persecution of Nero. Paul shares with Timothy:

- Guard the Gospel (1:4)
- Persevere (3:14)
- Keep preaching (4:2)
- Suffer for it (1:8; 2:3)

3. Paul wanted to write to the Ephesian church through Timothy

(4:2 - you is plural)

The main themes of II Timothy are:

1. Personal sentiment
2. Administrative policy

There are three beautiful pictures of the Christian life found in this epistle:

- Soldier - A soldier is to civilian as Christian is to pagan.
- Athlete - One cannot win if you do not know the rules
- Farmer - The farmer must work hard but only God provides the life and growth

This epistle strengthens Timothy for the tremendous task which Paul is about to relinquish. This is Paul presenting and passing the call and responsibility of the Gospel onto

a younger, worthy man. II Timothy 4:1-6 should be carefully studied by every candidate for ministry.

### **Subject**

Farewell my son

### **Outline**

- I. Paul's Personal Word To Timothy (1)
- II. Faith's Conflict and the Believer's Path (2)
- III. The Last Days and their Perils (3)
- IV. The Last Words of the Apostle (4)

## **Titus**

### **Background**

Titus was a Gentile in Antioch who accompanied Paul to the Jerusalem Conference in 48 AD. They debated about uncircumcised non-Jews becoming Christians. Titus was a symbol of Paul's determination to extend the Christian faith to the Gentiles. Even though Titus is absent from Acts he appears in II Cor. 2, 8, 12; Gal. 2; and II Tim. 4.

Titus was the pastor of the church on the island of Crete. From this epistle one discovers that this church was discouraged, unorganized, lazy, and careless. This was a difficult job for Titus because there was no balance of grace and holiness. There were no morals or ethics. Paul continually encourages them to do good works (six times).

The epistle to Titus is very similar to I Timothy only there is a stronger emphasis on sound doctrine in a more highly developed church. The life and teaching of the church had to become conformed to the Apostles' Doctrine.

### **Subject**

Doing what is good

### **Outline and Content**



- I. Instructions and Warnings (1)
- II. Things Which Become Sound Doctrine (2)
- III. In Relation to the World and False Teachers (3)

## **Philemon**

### **Background**

Paul addresses this epistle to Philemon, a believer in Colossae. Philemon was a slave owner, which was a sign of wealth. Onesimus, a slave, had run away from Philemon. Not only had he run away but he also had stolen from Philemon. This major crime was punishable by death.

After escaping from Philemon, Onesimus (whose name means “useful”) met Paul and through his ministry became a Christian. Onesimus is confronted and must return to his master.

The purpose of this epistle is Paul making a personal appeal for Philemon to accept Onesimus as a Christian brother. This powerful letter of Paul provides us an example of forgiveness and restoration.

### **Subject**

Making right the wrong.

### **Outline and Content**

- I. The Greeting (1-3)
- II. Recognition of Philemon's Faith and Love (4-7)
- III. Concerning the Reception of Onesimus (8-21)
- IV. The Conclusion (22-25)

Paul uses a persuasive style of writing to convince Philemon to accept Onesimus as a Christian brother. In verses 4-10 Paul builds rapport with Philemon. In verses 11-19 Paul

uses persuasion of the mind. Finally, Paul uses emotions to move Philemon in verses 20-21. Onesimus is not even mentioned until verse 10. The appeal to Philemon (verse 17) is not made until after Paul uses persuasion of the mind.

## Hebrews

### Background

The rapid growth of the Gentile church that was independent of Judaism both by heritage and by conviction could only result in a sharp and final separation between the two. A breach was immanent. There were two factors to this separation:

1. The idea of a universal Christianity was repugnant to the Jew. The Jewish way of life was exclusive.

2. The fall of Jerusalem (70) left Judaism orphaned. Judaism is based in:

- a. A Political System
- b. A Land (Promised Land)
- c. A Temple

At the fall of Jerusalem, outward expression of worship was denied. This brought a stronger reliance on law keeping and legalism.

While the destination of Hebrews is unknown it was written to help heal the dilemma between the Jews and Gentiles. It was written to the Diaspora (the Jews scattered after the fall of Jerusalem). Hebrews 13:24 may mean that Hebrews was written from Rome.

The authorship of Hebrews is one the greatest puzzles in the New Testament. But what do we know about the author?

1. High literary ability - Classical Greek
2. Was not an immediate disciple of Christ (2:3)
3. Well versed in the Old Testament
4. He was most likely a Jew

5. A friend of Timothy (13:23)

Many have offered their opinion who the author was. Clement of Alexandria said Paul wrote Hebrews in the Hebrew language and then Luke translated it to Greek. Tertullian attributed it to Barnabas. Martin Luther attributed it Apollos. Some even attribute this epistle to Priscilla. Origen said it best when he said "God Only Knows!"

There are a few hints within Hebrews that lead one to realize a later date of publication:

1. Second generation Christians (2:14)
2. Forgotten former days (10:32)
3. Leaders had died (13:7)
4. Timothy in prison and now out - (13:23)
5. Persecutions were eminent (10:32-36; 12:4)

The author of Hebrews encourages his readers:

- Let us fear . . . 4:1
- Let us therefore give diligence to enter 4:11
- Let us hold fast our confession 4:14
- Let us draw near . . . to the throne of grace 4:16
- Let us press on unto perfection 6:1
- Let us draw near 10:22
- Let us hold fast the confession of our faith 10:23
- Let us consider one another 10:24
- Let us . . . lay aside every weight 12:1
- Let us run the race 12:1
- Let us have grace 12:28
- Let us therefore go forth unto him 13:13
- Let us offer up sacrifice of praise 13:15

The subject of Hebrews is a "better" faith. The "better epistle":

1. Better messenger (1-2:18)
2. Better Apostle (3:1-4:13)
3. Better Priest (4:14-7:28)
4. Better Covenant (8:1-9:28)
5. Better Sacrifice (10:1-31)

## 6. Better way: Faith (10:32-12:29)

### **Subject**

The entire theme of the epistle is built around the word "better."

### **Outline and Content**

I. Christ, the Son of God and His Glory (1:1-2:4)

II. Christ, the Son of Man, His Glory and His Salvation (2:5-4:13)

III. Christ as Priest in the Heavenly Sanctuary (4:14-10)

A. Christ the Better High Priest

B. Sacrificial Work of Christ the Better High Priest

IV. Practical Instructions and Exhortations (11-13)

## **James**

### **Background**

James the half brother of Jesus (I Cor. 15:7) became very prominent (even the head) of the church in Jerusalem. James did not believe in his brother Jesus until after the Resurrection. At that time he became very important in the church:

1. He was one of the select individuals Christ appeared to after His resurrection (I Cor. 15:7)
2. Paul called him a pillar of the church (Gal. 2:9)
3. Paul, on his first post-conversion visit to Jerusalem, saw James (Gal. 1:19)
4. Paul did the same after one of his missionary journeys (Acts 21:18)
5. When Peter was rescued from Prison, he told his friends to tell James (Acts 12:17)
6. James was the leader in the important council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:13)
7. Jude could identify himself as "a brother of James" (Jude 1:1), so well known was James. James was martyred in 62.

The epistle of James was written to the "twelve tribes scattered abroad the nations" (1:1).

This introduction indicates:

1. A Jewish audience
2. Probably scattered after the stoning of Stephen
3. An audience accustomed to persecutions

James provides simple teaching and this makes the epistle difficult to outline. The theme seems to be topical discussion of various aspects of the Christian life.

The distinctive characteristics of James are:

1. Jewish in nature
2. It emphasizes vital Christianity, characterized by good deeds and faith that works
3. Simple organization
4. Its familiarity with Jesus' teachings preserved in the Sermon on the Mount

Some have said that the theology of Paul and the theology of James contradict each other. This is not the case, Paul and James do not contradict each other. Each is discussing a different part of the complex Christian faith. One scholar put it this way, Paul speaks of saving faith while James speaks of saved faith.

### **Subject**

Practical Christian living - "How to. . ."

### **Outline and Content**

- I. Trials and the Exercise of Faith (1)
- II. The Royal Law: Faith and Works (2)
- III. The Evils of the Tongue Corrected (3)
- IV. Further Exhortations to Right Living (4)
- V. The Coming of the Lord and the Life of Faith (5)

## **First Peter**

### **Background**

Persecution was beginning to become more harsh at the time of the writing of the Petrine epistles. Before the late 60's, Christianity was seen as a legitimate faith because it was considered a cultic sect of Judaism. This status of being linked with Judaism made Christianity protected by the state. As long as there was no disturbance, Christianity was ignored. Paul's death marked new politics for Christianity. What was casual tolerance had turned to hostile criticism. The shadow of persecution was the context in which Peter wrote.

Peter says he wrote this epistle from "Babylon" (5:13). Babylon probably refers to Rome:

1. Mark is in Rome (Col. 4:10) and Mark and Peter were together at the end of Peter's life.
2. Patristic fathers give evidence of Peter in Rome at the end of his life.
3. There are many extra-biblical references to Rome as Babylon.

Even with the brevity of this epistle there is much to be said about Christian doctrine and life. Different readers find different themes because of the many various topics covered in the writing. Peter says he has written, "encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God." (5:12). The epistle contains many exhortations that run from 1:13 - 5:11.

## **Subject**

Handling Pressure From Without

## **Outline and Content**

- I. The Suffering of Believers and Exhortations to Holy Living (1:1-21)
- II. The Blessings and Privileges of All Believers (1:22-2:10)
- III. Christ the Pattern for his Saints (2:11-3:9)
- IV. The Comfort in the Midst of Trials and Suffering (3:10-4)
- V. Exhortations Concerning Service and Conflict (5)

## **Second Peter**

### **Background**

II Peter was written around the same time as I Peter in the shadow of persecution. In this epistle however, there is not only trouble from without there is now trouble from within because of trouble with doctrinal soundness.

It is obvious that the audience of II Peter is familiar with Peter and the writings of Paul. This is the first indication of Paul's letters carrying the same authority as the Old Testament Scripture. This was probably not a new understanding, but rather a confirmation of what was known by most of the church.

This epistle shares with its readers the importance of knowledge and the inspiration of Scripture. It also deals with the return of Christ and the vindication of His followers.

### **Subject**

Handling pressure from within

### **Outline and Content**

- I. The Gracious Provisions of God (1)
- II. The Evils to Come Through False Teachers (2)
- III. The Future of the Earth and the Conclusion (3)

## **First John**

### **Background**

While there is no internal name given as to the authorship of this Gospel, there is strong external evidence from Polycarp, a disciple of John. Internal evidence would include:

1. Writer was an eyewitness (1:1)
2. The many similarities between John's Gospel and this epistle.
3. John, being an aged apostle at this point, would use the term "little children".

There are three aspects of I John that are important:

1. Assurance of salvation
2. Doctrinal soundness to combat heresy
3. Strong practical teaching.

The heresy combated in 1 John may be Gnosticism. Gnosticism includes these beliefs:

1. Spirit is good, matter is evil
2. Salvation through knowledge of truth. Escaping from realm of matter to the realm of spirit.
3. This is achieved by knowing certain knowledge
4. Questioned Jesus as God because he was a man

### **Subject**

Concern with knowledge - you can know. . . .

### **Outline and Content**

- I. The Life Manifested (1:1-4)
- II. Light and Darkness and the Tests (1:5-2:17)
- III. Error and Truth (2:18-27)
- IV. Righteousness and Love as Manifested by the children of God (2:28-3:18)
- V. Hereby We Know (3:19-5:12)
- VI. The Conclusion (5:13-21)

## **Second John**

### **Background**

This short letter is similar to I John. The reason for John's brevity most likely is verse 12. John addresses this letter to "chosen lady and her children" (1:1). The lady and her children may be a literal lady and her family or it may be a church and its members.

John encourages the Lady to not entertain or show hospitality to false teachers, the enemies of the faith. John stresses two points in this epistle:



1. Love (as it has been commanded since the beginning).
2. Be careful

### **Subject**

Truth and love

### **Outline and Content**

- I. Salutation (1-3)
- II. Commendation (4)
- III. Exhortation and Warning (5-11)
- IV. Conclusion (12-13)

## **Third John**

### **Background**

This epistle of John is the shortest book in the Bible. In this epistle John paints a picture of church life. This letter addressed to Gaius (the most popular name in the first century) says that he should show hospitality to good teachers. Hospitality to true brothers is the theme of III John.

### **Subject**

Truth and love personalized

### **Outline and Content**

- I. Salutation (1-2)
- II. Commendation of Gaius (3-8)
- III. Condemnation of Diotrephes (9-10)
- IV. Exhortation to Gaius (11)
- V. Example of Demetrius (12)
- VI. Conclusion (13-14)

# Jude

## Background

Jude was a half brother of Jesus that shared a similar ministry as his brother James (the author of his own epistle). Jude probably:

1. Did not believe in Jesus until after his resurrection (John 7:3-8).
2. Gathered in the upper room (Acts 1:14).
3. Married (I Cor. 9:5).
4. Jude's ministry was to Israel and Palestine.

Jude is similar to II Peter in that it deals with false teachings. Some similar verses are:

1. Jude 6 - II Pet. 2:4
2. Jude 11 - II Pet. 2:15
3. Jude 7 - II Pet. 2:6

While there are similarities, there are differences also. While both epistles are combating false teaching they are writing to different people in different ways.

Jude quotes *pseudepigraphical* writings (writings whose authorship was attributed to an important person who did not write the book). *Pseudepigraphical* writings were not allowed in the canon because they were not inspired and did not hold the same authority. Jude quotes:

1. "The Assumption of Moses" - vs. 9
2. The "Book of Enoch" - vs. 14

It is not unusual for a New Testament writer to use extra-biblical sources in writing inspired Scripture. Some examples from Paul are:

- quotation of Aratus - Acts 17:28
- quotation of Menander - II Cor. 15:33
- quotation of Epimenides - Titus 1:12

These New Testament writers may have used these sources for several different reasons:

1. conformation

2. clarification, or

3. illustration.

The use of these quotations does not affect the validity or inspiration and authority of these canonical books.

Jude seems as though he wanted to write about salvation but the problems with false teachers were great and needed to be addressed. Jude warns of men among them spreading false teaching. These men were teaching that since they were saved by grace they possessed a license to sin. This was perverted teaching on God's saving grace. These men would be sure to find destruction while Christ would vindicate those who were true.

### **Subject**

Contend For The Faith - verse 3

### **Outline and Content**

I. The Introduction (1-2)

II. The Purpose and Occasion of the Epistle (3-4)

III. Examples From The Past (5-10)

IV. A Further Description of the Apostates (11-13)

V. The Testimony of Enoch (14-16)

VI. The Exhortation (17-23)

VII. The Conclusion (24-25)

## **John's Revelation**

### **Background**

John's Revelation embodies the expectation of the church. The church, the mystery of God, has its place as God's institution on the earth. This church is eagerly awaiting the

consummation of its mission. Persecution and oppression were advancing and Revelation is seeking to provide encouragement to those suffering for the faith.

Revelation is unique in that it is totally devoted to prophecy and is considered Apocalyptic Literature. Apocalyptic Literature characterized by:

1. Intense despair of present circumstances and an equally intense hope for divine intervention in the future.
2. By the use of symbolic language, dreams and visions
3. Introduction of celestial and demonic powers as messengers and agents in the progress of God's purposes.
4. Prediction of catastrophic judgment of the wicked and supernatural deliverance for the righteous.

Revelation includes all of these characteristics.

Since Revelation deals with prophecy there are different schools of interpretation. These schools are:

1. *Preterists* understand the book exclusively in terms of its first-century setting, claiming that most of its events have already taken place.
2. *Historicists* take it as describing the long chain of events from Patmos to the end of history.
3. *Futurists* place the book primarily in the end times.
4. *Idealists* view it as symbolic pictures of such timeless truths as the victory of good over evil.

Fortunately, the fundamental truths of Revelation do not depend on adopting a particular point of view. They are available to anyone who will read the book for its overall message and resist the temptation to become overly enamored with the details.

Revelation was written during one of these three emperors of Rome:

1. Nero - 54-68

2. Vespian - 69-79

3. Domitian - 81-96 - He is most likely because:

- a. strong external evidence
- b. first to realize Jesus was more powerful than he
- c. Eusebius said Revelation was written in the latter portion of his reign
- d. amount of time for churches to change
- e. Laodicea is prosperous. It was leveled by earthquake in 62 and would need

time to rebuild and become prosperous.

John wrote Revelation from the Island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea approximately 50 miles southwest of Ephesus. This was a rocky island filled with many wild beasts. This island was used by the Romans to house prisoners.

The epistle is addressed to seven churches in the province of Asia. These cities were connected by a circular road in Asia. These seven cities are:

- Ephesus
- Smyrna
- Pergamum
- Thyatira
- Sardis
- Philadelphia
- Laodicea

While these are actual cities, because of their diversity, one can see churches throughout history that parallel the state of the addressed churches.

Revelation emphasizes:

1. Faith over might
2. Immutability of God
3. Christianity the true philosophy of history

Revelation 1:1-3 provides the purpose and context of revelation. The person of Christ is revealed as He reveals the future.

**Subject**

## Encouragement

- The consummation of the Church's purpose
- The second coming

## Outline and Content

I. The Patmos Vision of the Glorified Son of Man (1)

II. The Things which are. The Seven Church Messages revealing the History of the Church on Earth (2-3)

III. The Things which are After These, The End of the Age, The Consummation, and the Final Messages (4-22)

A. The Heavenly Scene and Before the Throne (4-5)

B. The Opening of the Seven Seals (6-8:5)

C. The Sounding of the Seven Trumpets (8:6-11:18)

D. Satan's Power and Satan's Masterpieces (11:19-13)

E. The Power of God in Intervention: Grace and Judgment Manifested (14)

F. The Seven Angels Having Seven Plagues and the Vials of Wrath (15-16)

G. The Great Harlot, Babylon, and Her Judgment (17-18)

H. The Manifestation of the King and the Millennium (19-20:6)

I. After the Thousand Years and the Vision of the New Jerusalem (20:7-22:5)

J. The Final Messages (22:6-21)

# New Testament Survey Final Exam

1. Why should one study the New Testament?
2. What are the tests of Canonicity?
3. What does Luke 1:1-4 tell one about how the Gospels were assembled?
4. To whom was Matthew writing and how did he present Christ?
5. To whom was Mark writing and how did he present Christ?
6. To whom was Luke writing and how did he present Christ?
7. To whom was John writing and how did he present Christ?
8. What is the purpose of Acts?
9. Give a brief chronology of Acts.
10. Provide the definition of an amanuensis.
11. What is special about the Prison Epistles?

12. What is special about the Pastoral Epistles?
13. What are the pictures of the Christian life found in 2 Timothy?
14. What is the purposes of Romans?
15. What are the distinctive characteristics of James?
16. What is the theme of Hebrews?
17. What was the surrounding circumstances of 1 Peter?
18. Why would Jude use *Pseudepigraphical* writings?
19. What does Revelation emphasize?
20. Describe yourself in relation to the book of Revelation as either preterist, historicist, idealist, or futurist. Explain.



International Educational Fellowship School of Ministry

*New Testament Survey*

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