

BIBLE OVERVIEW 5.

Acts to Revelation

1 Corinthians 10:11-12

These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

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BIBLE OVERVIEW

23. PETER

MAIN EVENTS: Start of the early church

MAIN PEOPLE: Peter, John, Philip, Stephen

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: Acts 1-12

BIBLE VERSE: *Acts 1:4-5 Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. 5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."*

TIME: AD 30-40

WORLD EVENTS AT THIS TIME:

Kushan Dynasty rules in northern India.

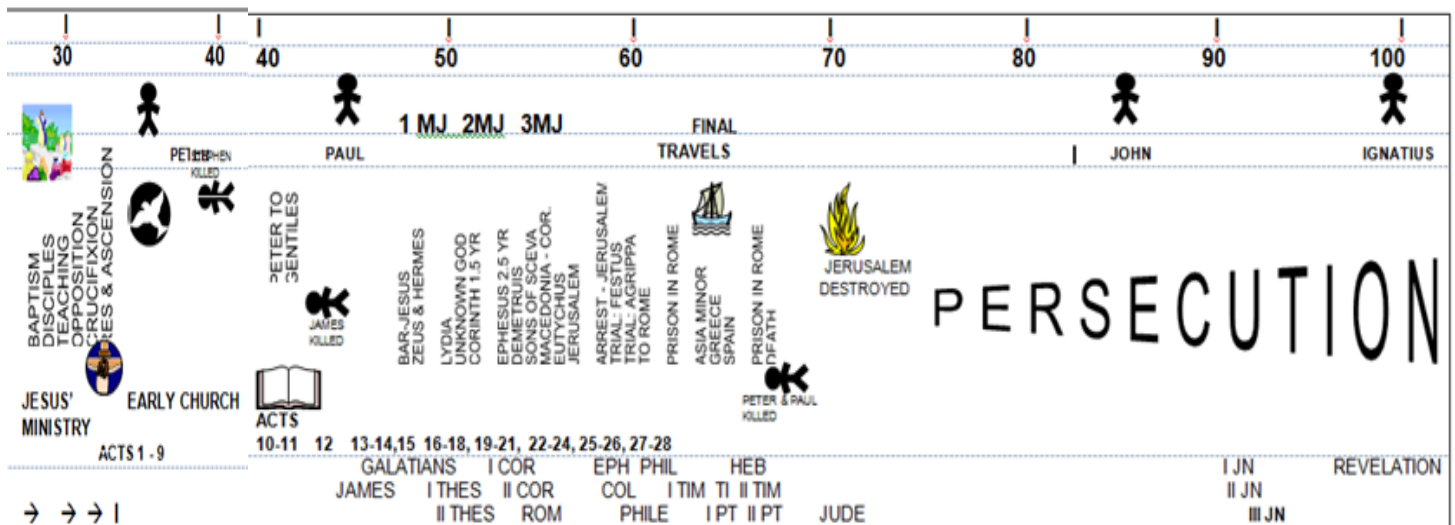
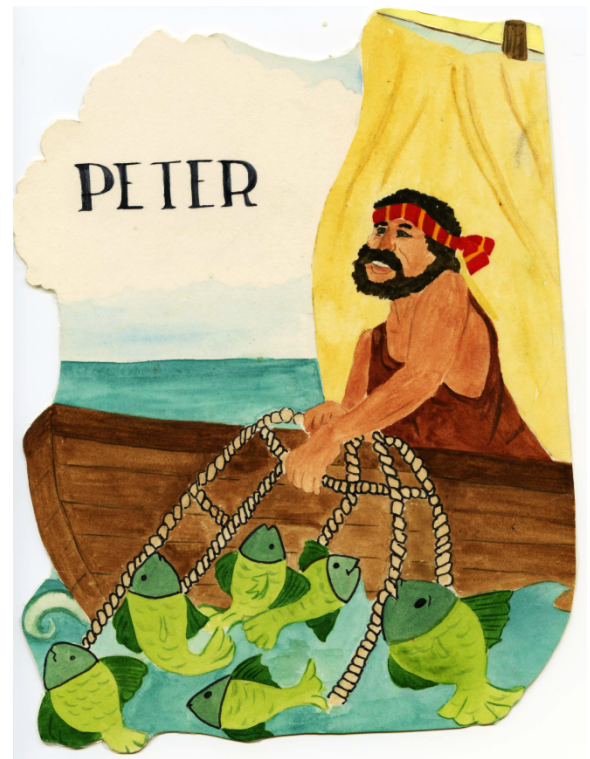
Han Dynasty started in China. It brought Buddhism to China

Roman Emperor Caligula is assassinated

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Palestine (Judea, Samaria)

Peter is the first leader of the early church following Jesus. His denial of Jesus humbled him so he was open to let God work in him instead of doing things in his own strength. John, brother of James, was with him helping in leadership as well. The early church needed someone gentle and encouraging to get started and Peter was the perfect man for the job. Filled with courage and wisdom from the Holy Spirit, he oversaw the work of the growing church in Jerusalem.

During this time James, the brother of John, was killed and James, the half-brother of Jesus, wrote the book of James. He was one of the leaders in the early church as well. Peter also wrote two books later on, but we will include them in this section since the focus is on Peter.



ACTS:

EARLY CHURCH

TITLE: After the ACTions of the Holy Spirit

AUTHOR: Luke

DATE of WRITING: About 63 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Various places

TIME COVERED: AD 30 - 60

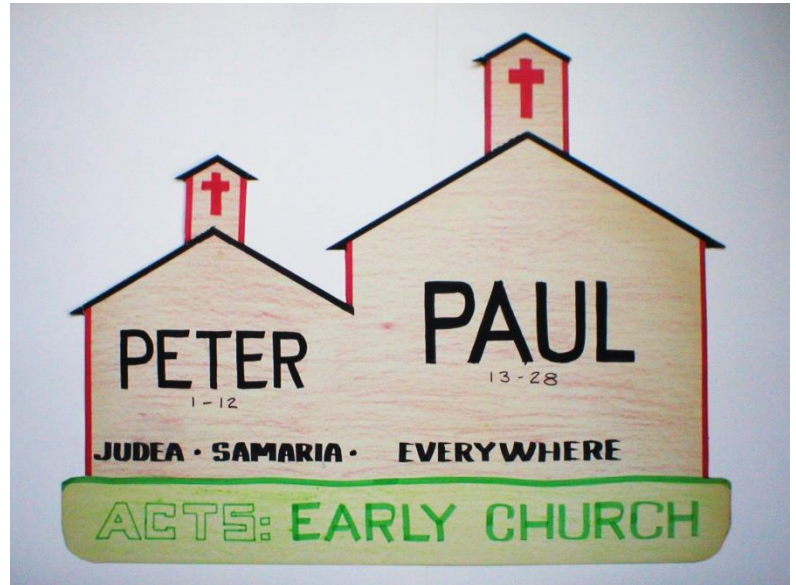
RECIPIENTS: Theophilus, then everyone

KEY VERSE: *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."* (Acts 1:8)

KEY WORD: "Holy Spirit" (54 times); "name" (33 times), "witness" (12 times)

PURPOSE: The Gospels contain the facts of Jesus' earthly life. Acts continues the story about the start of the early church and sets the background for understanding the epistles.

THEME: To continue the record of the works ('acts') of the risen Lord.



The Old Testament shows our need of a Redeemer and God's promise to send One. The Gospels show how that was fulfilled in Jesus. The book of Acts picks up the story after Jesus' ascension back to heaven (1:1-26). It shows how a handful of believers, filled with the Holy Spirit, started the church and spread God's message to the world. The epistles are letters written to churches and individuals during the time of Acts. Revelation shows the final fulfillment of all the ages.

LUKE THE WRITER Luke wrote both Luke and Acts. While Paul wrote the most books in the New Testament, 13, and John was next with 5, Luke wrote the most pages. His book called Acts was a follow-up to his Gospel of Luke. It is an historical book, a transitional book. It is not a theology for us to apply in every detail, but it is an accurate historical record of the transition from Law to Grace, from Israel to Church, from Jew and Gentile to Bride of Christ. Any transition takes time and goes through various stages. This was true of the early church, too.

The book follows the outline laid down in 1:8: *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

I. "JERUSALEM" (1-7) In the first section of Acts the focus is on Jerusalem. Peter leads the early church. The account is picked up with the ascension of Jesus to heaven (1). The start of the early church in Jerusalem is recorded – Pentecost (2). Events of the young church are then listed: a cripple cured (3), Peter and John arrested and released (4), Ananias and Sapphira killed for deception (5), 7 deacons chosen to help with the work load (6) and the death of Stephen (7).

II. "JUDEA & SAMARIA" (8-12) God used this first wave of persecution against the Christians in Jerusalem to cause them to scatter with the gospel. They should have done this before but didn't, now they must. Philip's preaching in Samaria and to the Ethiopian eunuch, (8), Paul's conversion (9), and Peter's evangelism of the Gentile Cornelius and his household (10-11) comprise the historical elements. The church has gone from Jews in Jerusalem to Jews and Gentiles throughout Palestine.

III. “ENDS OF THE EARTH” (13-28) In this third section the focus shifts to Paul and his missionary journeys - 3 of them (13 - 20). Paul was the one to take the gospel to Gentiles and start churches in Asia Minor and even into Europe itself. The book ends with Paul’s arrest and trip to Rome for trial (21-28). After his release he continued to travel, then was martyred in Rome. Now it’s our turn to take the gospel and spread it. Like in a relay race, each one has his turn to do his part. Now is your turn as part of this generation. Don’t drop the baton!

chapter	1-7	8-12	13-28							
area	JERUSALEM	JUDEA - SAMARIA	ENDS OF THE EARTH							
people	JEWS	SAMARITANS	GENTILES							
men	PETER	PHILIP (Peter/Paul)	PAUL							
church	ESTABLISHMENT	EXTENSION	EXPANSION							
time	2 YRS (AD 33-35)	13 YRS (AD 35-48)	14 YRS (AD 48-62)							
	1. A scension of Jesus 2. B aptism of the Holy Spirit 3. C ure of the Cripple 4. D ischarge of Peter and John 5. E mbezzlement by Ananias & Sapphira 6. F ellows, 7 Deacons 7. G rave of Stephen	Missionary Journey Chapters Years 8. Philip Preaching 9. Paul Perceiving 10-11. Peter Pioneering 12. People Praying	1MJ	J e r u s a l e m C o u n c i l 1 5	2MJ	3MJ	Rom e 1 21- 28	Trip	Rom e	...
			13-14		16-18	19-20				
			1 ½		2 ½	4	5	5	1	...
Books		James	Gal		1 Thes 2 Thes	1 Cor 2 Cor Rom	Eph Col Phil e Phil	1 Tim Titus	2 Tim	Jn 1 Jn 2 Jn 3 Jn Rev

OUTLINE OF ACTS

I. ESTABLISHMENT (Peter to Jews in Jerusalem) AD 33-35 1-7

- A. **A**scension of Jesus 1
- B. **B**aptism of the Holy Spirit 2
- C. **C**ure of the Cripple 3
- D. **D**ischarge of Peter and John 4
- E. **E**mbezzlement by Ananias and Sapphira 5
- F. **F**ellows, 7 Deacons 6
- G. **G**rave of Stephen 7



II. EXTENSION (Philip to Samaritans in Samaria) AD 35-48 8-12

- A. Philip Preaching 8
- B. Paul Perceiving 9
- C. Peter Pioneering 10-11
- D. People Praying 12

III. EXPANSION (Paul to Gentiles Everywhere) AD 48-62 13-28

- A. First Missionary Journey 13-14
- B. Jerusalem Council 15
- C. Second Missionary Journey 16-18
- D. Third Missionary Journey 19-20
- E. Trip to Rome 21-28

JAMES: TRUE FAITH

TITLE: Named for the author

AUTHOR: James, half-brother of Jesus

DATE of WRITING: 45 AD (1st NT book)

PLACE of WRITING: Jerusalem

TIME COVERED: 45 AD

RECIPIENTS: Jewish Believers everywhere

KEY VERSE: *"You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?"* 2:20

KEY WORD: "faith" (16 times); :works: (15 times)

PURPOSE: For James to communicate with Jewish believers wherever they were. Since salvation wasn't by works, then what role did good works have in the Christian life?

THEME: True faith produces true works.



Suppose someone in your church fell over and didn't move. How would you know if they were dead? You'd check for signs of life: a pulse and breathing. When there is breathing there is physical life, when there is no breathing there is no life. James says the same thing is true spiritually. How is one to know if a body has spiritual life? If there are good works there is life, if there are no good works there is no spiritual life. It's that simple. "Faith without works is dead" is James' theme.

FAITH AND WORKS James is the first New Testament book written. Four hundred years of silence are broken. Nothing has been inspired since Malachi. Now God's Spirit again moves man to write. Their first problem is the relationship of grace and works. The second book written, Galatians, is about this same theme. Each seeks to avoid an extreme.

Now that Jews could become Christians without having to keep all the Jewish laws, what is the place of holy living? If it doesn't gain salvation, why live a godly life? If salvation is free, what does it matter how we live? Good works don't earn our salvation, but they do show that we already have salvation. They are a sign of faith. If faith is true, it will be manifest in how one lives. Salvation by faith will result in changed priorities, godly motives, humility, love, a desire to witness, and a life like Jesus.

JAMES THE MAN was the brother of Jesus. He became the leader of the early church in Jerusalem, along with John, when John's brother James was killed. This James grew up with Jesus but didn't believe until he saw His half-brother after the resurrection.

I. TRUE FAITH AND TRIALS (1 - 2) James starts by talking about faith in times of trials and testing. It's one thing to say we believe in God and trust Him, it's another to show it when life is painful and unfair. It's interesting that James should start the New Testament by dealing with the problem of pain. The first book in the Old Test., Job, is about the same subject! True faith will triumph over obstacles.

II. TRUE FAITH AND TALK (3) A second way true faith is shown is by our words. Since they show what is in our hearts, when our hearts change so will our talk. When we seek God's wisdom then we will become more like Jesus and our life will show it in all areas. In order for our life to show this,

though, we must seek God's wisdom, not the world's wisdom. God's ways are different than man's ways. God's priorities and values differ from the world's.

III. TRUE FAITH AND TROUBLES (4) Another evidence of spiritual life is how one faces temptation. All will be tempted, and temptation is not sin, but continual progress over sin in life will be seen when one lives by faith. There doesn't have to be total victory immediately, but there must be progress in that direction. Faith results in one turning from worldliness.

IV. TRUE FAITH AND TRUST (5) Staying on the theme of materialism, true faith sees things as temporary and not the main thing in life. True faith will result in patience, godly speech and prayer.

Now, can you prove that YOU are alive? OK, physically you are breathing, so you have physical life. What about spiritually? Do you have spiritual life? Are there good works in your life, fruit of the Spirit, Christlikeness being reproduced in you? If not, what needs to happen in your life now to bring about the good works God requires?

OUTLINE OF JAMES

Greetings 1:1

I. TRUE FAITH AND TRIALS (Works) 1-2

- A. True Faith is Tested 1:2-18
 - 1. The Purpose of Trials 1:2-12
 - 2. The Pedigree of Trials 1:13-16
 - 3. The Purpose of God 1:17-18
- B. True Faith will Triumph 1:19-2:26
 - 1. By the Word 1:19-27
 - 2. With the Brethren 2:1-13
 - 3. In His Beliefs 2:14-26

II. TRUE FAITH AND TALK (Words) 3

- A. True Faith Controls the Tongue 3:1-12
 - 1. The Tongues Bridling 3:1-4
 - 2. The Tongues Boasting 3:5-12
- B. True Faith Needs Teaching 3:13-18

III. TRUE FAITH AND TROUBLES (Worldliness) 4

- A. True Faith Rebukes Temptation 4:1-13
 - 1. Cause of Worldliness 4:1-2
 - 2. Consequences of Worldliness 4:3-6
 - 3. Cure for Worldliness 4:7-10
 - 4. Characteristics of Worldliness 4:11-13
- B. True Faith Ignores the Temporal 4:14-17

IV. TRUE FAITH AND TRUST (Warning) 5

- A. True Faith Seeks Not Treasure 5:1-6
- B. True Faith Produces Trophies 5:7-20
 - 1. Trophy 1: patience 5:7-11
 - 2. Trophy 2: godly Speech 5:12
 - 3. Trophy 3: Prayer 5:13-18
 - 4. Trophy 4: Repentance 5:19-20



1 PETER: SUFFERING

TITLE: Named for the author

AUTHOR: Peter

DATE of WRITING: 63 AD

PLACE of WRITING: 'Babylon'
(Rome?)

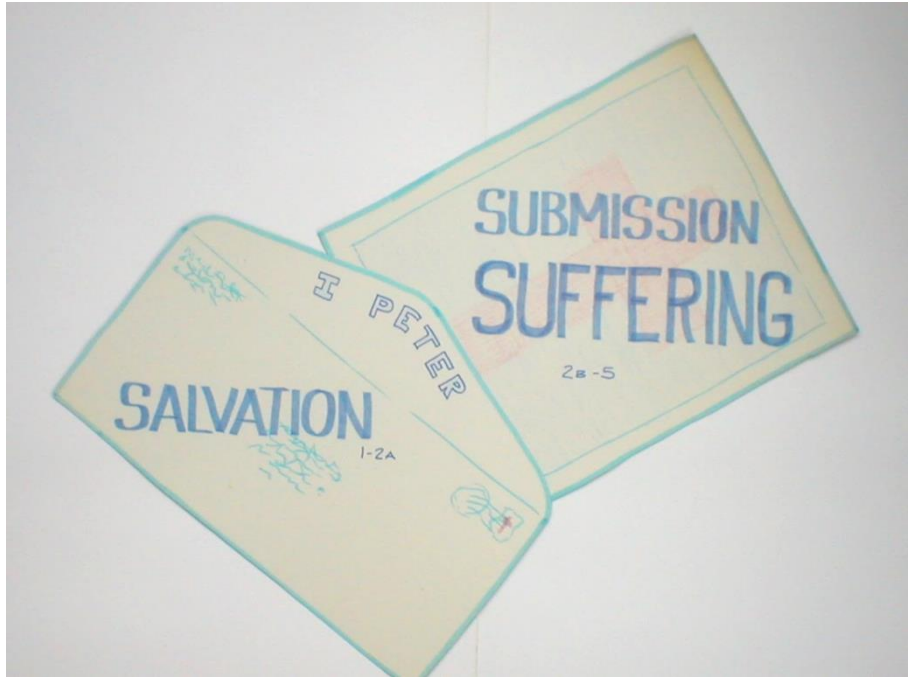
RECIPIENTS: Jewish believers
scattered everywhere

KEY VERSE: *Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you.* 13 But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. 4:12-14

KEY WORDS: "Suffer" (16 times, implied 6 more); "glory" (16 times); "grace" (10 times)

PURPOSE: Peter wants to console persecuted Jewish believers who are scattered everywhere. He also wants to prepare them for the trials that are still ahead. He does this by showing them the wonderful hope that lies ahead (1:13) and by Christ's example to us (2:21-23).

THEME: Encouragement to persecuted and suffering Christians



When you suffer for doing something wrong, like breaking the speeding limit and getting a ticket, its relatively easy to bear the consequence,s for you know you are getting what you deserve. But when you suffer for doing something right, like getting fired from your job for telling the truth, that is much harder to bear. We have two options in how to respond: like the world (revenge, retaliation, bitterness) or like Jesus.

Many early Christians suffered unjust persecution for their beliefs. Jewish believers had it especially hard for they also were persecuted by Judaism and lost their family, friends and income. Peter writes to all, but especially to Jewish Christians, to help them stay faithful despite this persecution.

I. SALVATION (1:1 – 2:10) First Peter goes back and reminds them of their salvation and all they have in Christ. When you suffer always remember what you get FAR outweighs what you lose!

II. SUBMISSION (2:11 – 3:12) Throughout 2:11 – 3:12 two themes run side by side: submission and suffering. Peter encourages them to submit to their government, wives to husbands, other believers, church leaders and even to unbelievers to have a good testimony to them. Because we have salvation we are to submit no matter what happens.

III. SUFFERING (2:11 – 3:12) Suffering is a natural result of submitting instead of being hard and revengeful. We suffer even when we don't submit, but when we do, we often suffer all the more. Jesus is our example. Peter says that suffering for Christ brings God glory and that we must trust in and depend on God to get us through it. Every Christian must come to grips with the Christian world view of suffering. It is to make us more like Jesus and to bring God glory as we trust Him through it. Is that true of you? It certainly should be!

OUTLINE OF 1 PETER

Opening 1:1

I. SALVATION (Belief) 1:2-2:10

- A. To Elect and Scattered Pilgrims 1:1-2
- B. Inheritance 1:3-5
- C. Joy in Testing 1:6-9
- D. Revelation of Salvation 1:10-12
- E. Live the Christian Life 1:13-16
- F. Trust God 1:17-21
- G. Supremacy of Salvation 1:22-25
- H. Obey the Bible 2:1-3
- I. Christ Our Rock 2:4-8
- J. Priestly Privileges 2:9-10

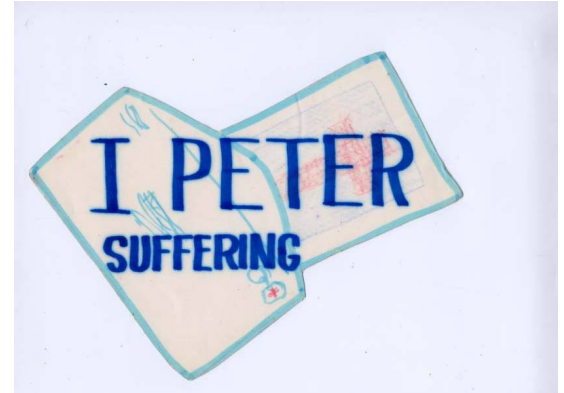
II. SUBMISSION (Behavior) 2:11-3:12

- A. Submit to Governments 2:11-17
- B. Submit to Unjust Suffering 2:18
- C. Wife Submit to Husband 3:1-6
- D. Husband Love Wife 3:7
- E. Harmony with Other Believers 3:8-12
- F. Give Witness to Others 3:15
- G. Christ Our Example 3:22
- H. Live In Awareness of Coming Judgment 4:7
- I. Service and Fellowship in Love 4:8-12
- J. Church Leaders 5:1-4
- K. Submit to Other Believers 5:5
- L. Be Humble to be Blessed 5:6-7

III. SUFFERING (Buffeting) 3:13-5:11

- A. Suffering Unjustly 2:18-20
- B. Jesus Suffered for Us 2:21-25
- C. Suffer for Good, Not Evil 3:13-14, 16-17
- D. Jesus Our Example of Suffering in Death 3:18-22
- E. Jesus Our Example of Suffering in Life 4:1-6
- F. Suffering For Christ Brings Glory 4:12-16
- G. Trust in God 4:17-19
- H. Resist Satan by Faith 5:8
- I. Example of Other Believers 5:9
- J. Suffering Brings God's Blessings 5:10

Closing 5:12



2 PETER:

KEEP THE FAITH

TITLE: Named for the author

AUTHOR: Peter

DATE of WRITING: 64 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Unknown (Rome?)

RECIPIENTS: Jewish believers scattered everywhere

KEY VERSE: *But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves.* 2:1

KEY WORDS: “Knowledge” (16 times); “judgment” (4 times)

PURPOSE:

THEME: To strengthen and confirm believers against attack by false teachers.



Peter was the first leader of the early church, Paul the second. The first half of the book of Acts is about Peter, the second about Paul. Sanguine Peter nursed the newborn church along so it could get established and start to grow. Choleric Paul whipped the adolescent church into shape and protected it against false teachers and those who would mislead it. Peter was with Jesus when He lived on earth, Paul was not. Peter was a common fisherman, Paul a well-trained upper class religious leader. Peter ministered mainly to Jews, Paul mainly to Gentiles. Yet despite these differences they served the same Lord at the same time. Both were martyred in Rome during the first great persecution. Peter was crucified upside down, Paul beheaded (an easier death because he was a Roman citizen). Each of them wrote their final book shortly before their deaths. Paul's was 2 Timothy, Peter's was 2 Peter. Both of them knew they would soon die when they wrote and gave encouragement to their followers to stay faithful no matter what happened. Both expressed deep faith and confidence in God. Both warned against apostasy in those 'last days.' The theme of 2 Timothy is 'Faithful Service.' The theme of 2 Peter is 'Keep the Faith.'

Peter wrote 1 & 2 Peter to the same audience – Jewish believers wherever they may be. In 1 Peter he talked about suffering from without the church: persecution, etc. In 2 Peter he talks about suffering from within the church: false teachers and apostates. This 'poison in the pew' is the worst kind. The only defense is to 'keep the faith.' Stay faithful to true Bible doctrine. The best defense is a strong offense. That's true against false teachers, too.

I. CONVICTIONS OF THE FAITH (1:3-21) Peter pleads with his readers to continue to walk with God no matter what. He says this is the only way to be for now, and it will bring rewards for all eternity. He uses his own testimony as well as the authority of Scripture to back this up. When believers are healthy and sound in their beliefs, false teachings won't be able to get a foothold among them.

II. CONTENTION FOR THE FAITH (2:1-22) Peter reminds them that there always have been and always will be false teachers. They counterfeit the truth, making what they teach seem like the truth. They secretly undermine the truth and subtly replace it with error, ever so slightly here and there until it finally takes hold. Peter says they will be judged and condemned, like the angels which fell with Lucifer, like the people in Noah's generation, like those in Sodom and Gomorrah. He exposes their conduct, their claims and their converts. However in all these cases God spares the godly.

III. CONSUMMATION OF THE EARTH (3:1-18) One of the major heresies of the false teachers was the denial of the second coming of Jesus. If Jesus doesn't return it means He lied, He isn't God, unbelievers won't be punished and believers won't be rewarded. Peter goes into detail telling what that Day of the Lord will be like. He reassures his readers that those who are believers will be spared, but others will be judged. He tells them that the only reason it hasn't happened yet is God's mercy, waiting for more to repent. Peter concludes by using this as motivation to stay faithful. Be ready, he says – Jesus will return at any minute! Are you ready? Are you living in light of Jesus' soon return? What if He came today? Are you ready?

[[OUTLINE OF 2 PETER

Opening 1:1-2

I. CONVICTION OF THE FAITH (Growing in Grace) 1

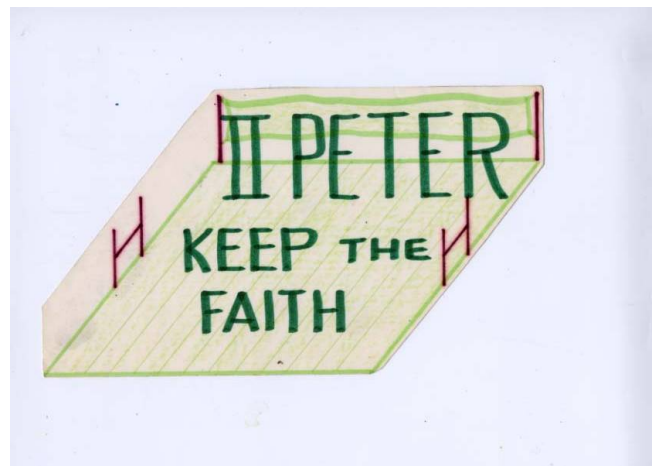
- A. Charge to Walk With God 1:3-11
 - 1. The Secret of Commencing Well 1:1-4
 - 2. The Secret of Continuing Well 1:5-9
 - 3. The Secret of Completing Well 1:10-11
- B. Challenge by Word of God 1:12-21
 - 1. The Testimony of an Apostle 1:12-18
 - 2. the Authority of Scripture 1:19-21

II. CONTENTION FOR THE FAITH (Growing in Knowledge) 2

- A. Doctrine of the False Teachers 2:1-3a
- B. Doom of the False Teachers 2:3b-9
 - 1. the Nearness of That Doom 2:3b
 - 2. The Nature of That Doom 2:4-9
- C. Deeds of the False Teachers 2:10-22
 - 1. Their Conduct is Exposed 2:10-14
 - 2. Their Claims Are Exposed 2:15-19
 - 3. Their Converts Are Exposed 2:20-22

III. CONSUMMATION OF THE FAITH (Growing in Expectation) 3

- A. Denial of the Day of the Lord 3:1-9
 - 1. Denial of Supernatural Intervention in the Past 3:1-7
 - 2. Denial of Supernatural Intervention in the Present 3:8-9
- B. Deliverance by the Day of the Lord 3:10-13
 - 1. Deliverance of Nature 3:10
 - 2. Deliverance of Believers 3:11-12
- C. Delay of the Day of the Lord 3:14-15a
 - 1. Delay in Diligence – Believer 3:14
 - 2. Delay of Doom – Unbelievers 3:15a, 9b
- D. Doctrine of the Day of the Lord 3:15b-18
 - 1. Declaration of Paul 3:15b-16a
 - 2. Distortion by Ignorant 3:16b
 - 3. Defense in the Word 3:17
 - 4. Dependence on Christ 3:18



BIBLE OVERVIEW

24 . PAUL

MAIN EVENTS: Growth of the early church

MAIN PEOPLE: Paul and his helpers

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: Acts 13-26, James, Epistles of Paul

BIBLE VERSE: *2 Tim 4:7-8 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day — and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.*

TIME: AD 34-96

WORLD EVENTS AT THIS TIME:

Thomas arrives in India and starts a church there

Rome finishes the conquest of Wales

Claudius poisons her husband and makes her son Nero the emperor (later he kills her)

Rome burns

Judea rebels against Rome, Jerusalem destroyed by Titus in 70 AD

Mt Vesuvius explodes, 20,000 killed

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Mediterranean area, Palestine to Spain



As the early church grew and spread, it faced opposition from within and without. A strong person was needed to keep the church along the right path. Peter's gentle personality protected the first coals until they burst into flame and started to spread. Then someone like Paul was needed to control the fire and to get it to grow in the right direction. Paul was just the man, by education and by personality. God used Paul to form the early church, but He also used the church to form Paul and make him more like Jesus.

The time of miracles which started with Jesus continued during this time, but miracles done by the disciples soon faded and stopped. In about 38 AD, Peter was in Lydda ministering when God used him to heal a man named Aeneas (9:32-35). In nearby Joppa he brought a woman named Dorcas back to life (9:36-43). God used these things to get a hearing for the gospel. Note that these miracles were done with a word or touch. Healing was instantaneous and 100% total and forever. All were healed, not just some. Organic diseases were healed and the dead were brought back to life. As time went on, though, the testimony of a changed life lived among people became the proof that the gospel had power. In AD 35 all were healed (Acts 5:16). By 60 AD some were healed. Epaphroditus (Philippians 2:25-27) and Paul's own thorn in the flesh were not healed. In 67 AD few were healed. Trophimus (2 Timothy 4:20) and Timothy's stomach were not healed. Today God uses the testimony of a changed life as proof of His power to touch and changed lives. That's one reason it is so important for us to live a holy life for Jesus in this time.

24A. PAUL, BACKGROUND

Paul was one of those people who does everything 100%, whether he was opposing or supporting the church. He never did anything half way.

ANCESTRY Paul was his Latin (Roman) name and Saul his Jewish name, which was used at home. His great-grandfather, from the tribe Benjamin, left Giscala in Galilee to move to Tarsus.

HOME TOWN Tarsus was a prosperous, self-governing city-state of ½ million people. It was a leading center of finances and education. It was a very worldly city for a Jew to grow up in.

PARENTS Paul's father was a wealthy Pharisee. He made tents from the long black wool of local sheep. He was also a burgess of Tarsus and a Roman citizen, which was a proud privilege for anyone. Not much is known about Paul's mother. Perhaps she was sickly, maybe having died when his sister was born. Somehow his sister ended up in Jerusalem, it could have been she was raised by relatives there when her mother died.

EDUCATION Paul was mainly home educated. In the synagogue he was taught Hebrew. By 13 he would have mastered Jewish history, poetry and prophets. He had an excellent mind and marvelous memory.

LANGUAGE Paul, as most everyone in his day, was multilingual. He knew Greek from infancy, it was the main language of the day. Aramaic was the common language Jews used in their homes. Hebrew was the scholarly language boys learned to study the Bible. He also had a good working knowledge of Latin.

CAREER Tent making was a humble occupation, but the Jews believed that all boys should learn a craft and know what it is to work. Tents were common and were used by caravans, nomads and armies. Paul would have spent many hours weaving cloth, pushing the shuttle back and forth. This would have left his mind free to think. His mind probably focused on God and Jewish beliefs.

FAITH While he lived in Tarsus, he didn't feel at home there. Baal worship, immorality, and persecution of those who worshipped God would have turned his heart to the land of his ancestors.

HOME LIFE Paul's home seemed to have been a haven of piety with obedience to God emphasized. Perhaps there was a stern over-emphasis on external conformity.

GROWING UP Paul went through bar mitzva at 13, which is probably when he took his first trip to Jerusalem. He would have gone with his father and other men who were making the trip for various spiritual and/or business reasons. This was not only a special time religiously, but Paul got to see his sister. Sometime later Paul returned for training and study with the famous Rabbi Gamaliel. Jesus had spent time with him when He went to the temple for His Bar Mitzvah several years earlier. Paul's training would have been long and hard. He would have to master not only the Hebrew Scriptures but also Jewish interpretations and commentaries on them: the Mishna, Gemerra and the Targum. He quickly outstripped his contemporaries with his intellectual giftedness. He had a very logical mind, and excellent memory, fertile imagination and analytical reasoning. Because he always expected much of himself and others, he didn't seem to have many close friends. Many others in training were only concerned about external conformity (hypocrisy) and impressing others. Paul was always concerned about doing the right thing for the right reason. Outside he seemed to attain perfection, but inside he struggled with pride, lust and materialism.

RETURN TO TARSUS In his early 30's, Paul returned to Tarsus and became a leader in the synagogue there, teaching the Scriptures while supporting himself by making tents. Perhaps it was in tent making that he met Barnabas.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE Paul seems to have been athletic, strong and in good physical condition. Tradition says he was under 5 foot, broad shouldered, with closely knit eyebrows and a thick beard. He had a long, crooked nose. He became prematurely gray and then bald. From his conversion experience he had eye troubles. Friends said he was ugly, enemies preferred the term 'repulsive.' His great impact on the world didn't come from his physical appearance.

MARRIAGE While much in Paul's life is unknown, from information in his writings, knowledge of Jewish history, and traditions, we can piece together some things about him. It seems he was married at one time and probably had a son. Perhaps both died in an epidemic which was so common in those days. How that must have broken his heart and depressed him! It may have been that, along with the events of April 14, 33 AD, that caused him to return to Jerusalem. On that day it got dark everywhere at 12 noon. At 3 PM an earthquake shook the world and the light again shone. These things were obviously supernatural. When word from Jerusalem about the strange events surrounding the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth came, Paul was intrigued. Being a strict Jew, Paul would have wanted to do anything he could to stamp out this new heresy. Perhaps all the hurt and pain, the depression and emptiness came out in anger and hate to those who saw this Jesus as the Messiah. Paul ended up in Jerusalem opposing this new movement with everything he had.

PAUL THE PERSECUTOR Throwing himself into this new venture would help him escape the memories of his lost family as well as give him a new challenge, something to fill the empty void inside. It was a reason to keep going. He lived and worked on the street of the tentmakers in Jerusalem but spent as much time as he could with the religious rulers. He became a leading Pharisee in Jerusalem. Men that he had admired and respected, such as Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and Stephen, now became his hated enemies. Paul was one of the youngest Sanhedrin members, and thus one of the most influential men in Israel. His whole future was before him.

SPIRITUAL YEARNINGS Yet obviously Paul was empty, searching for real meaning and purpose in life. The harder he worked at being a perfect Jew the more he felt empty. Eventually he stopped striving after that elusive peace that evaded him. He felt crushed under the burden of the law and tradition, but knew of no other way to seek God. All these frustrations and fears he took out on those he saw as the enemies of Judaism. When they claimed to have the answers and the peace he was looking for, he overreacted all the more against them, making it a personal battle against them.

ONLY JESUS SATISFIES Paul had everything the world could offer, everything one could want. He had a well-to-do, important, supportive and loving family. He had the finest education one could have in both Judaism (Hebrew) and secular (Greek) knowledge. He had a successful career as a tentmaker and also as a rabbi. He was in the Sanhedrin (the top 70 men in Israel world-wide with the power to govern in all areas of Jewish life). He was on the rise, for he was still quite young. He was near perfect in his religion, exhibiting outward sinlessness. He seemed to have it all. But he was empty and searching inside. He missed the one thing that alone can satisfy – Jesus. He had heard plenty about Jesus being the answer to his needs. His good friend Stephen told him often. At least they had been good friends from the same synagogue when Paul had been in Jerusalem before to study. Stephen was as mellow as Paul was abrasive. Stephen had the peace, and the answers that Paul sought. Paul couldn't counter Stephen's arguments proving Jesus as the Messiah. Paul grasped the full implication of it all, what it would mean to him personally and to Judaism as a whole if Jesus of Nazareth really had been the promised Messiah. It would take away the one thing Paul built his life on – Jewish law and practices. Finally, since he couldn't silence Stephen's words any other way, he used his authority as a member of the Sanhedrin to have Stephen stoned to death.

FULL-BLOWN PERSECUTION That didn't settle the matter for Paul, though. In fact, things got worse. He attacked Christianity like a mad man. His personality and his zeal for the things of God, the pain from the loss of his wife and son, the emptiness he felt spiritually, and the jealousy he experienced towards Christians who seemed to have everything he sought, all seemed to drive him to destroy and kill. He would burst into homes and synagogues. He imprisoned or killed old men and women as well as children. Others were beaten and crippled. During all this, though, Paul was coming in deeper and deeper contact with the gospel. As he unfiltered their services and heard their defense at their 'trials,' he learned more and more about this Jesus. He heard from those who were eye witnesses of Jesus miracles and who had memorized whole speeches Jesus had given. He saw that the great pain he inflicted on them didn't take away their joy. Nothing did. They had something he lacked and he hated them all the more because of it.

CHRISTIANITY SPREADS Finally the Christians in Jerusalem were driven out of town or so deeply underground that they couldn't be easily found. Jerusalem seemed safe from this new cult, but instead of putting it out, Paul discovered he had just spread it around. Like kicking a fire apart to put it out, only to realize that each spark caught on and started a new fire where it landed, Paul realized that those who left Jerusalem were taking their message elsewhere. Not content to just purify Jerusalem, Paul wanted the belief totally eradicated everywhere. He knew that if he didn't stop it soon it would spread beyond his ability to destroy it. It was already getting a strong footing in Damascus to the north. If that was allowed to take root and grow, there was no telling where this heresy would spread and what damage it would do!

ON TO DAMASCUS Damascus had a large Jewish population, which made it ripe for the spread of this new message. Paul got the official papers he needed, gathered Jewish soldiers (Levites) and other officials, and set out to move his headquarters to Damascus. There he would end, once and for all, this blasphemy. Damascus was a 4-day donkey trip to the north, 150 miles away. They traveled through Galilee, past the Golan Heights, then by Mt Hermon. These brought to mind the adventures of God with His people at these places. Why couldn't Paul find this victory and satisfaction in God that his ancestors seemed to find? He was filled with guilt, emptiness and no peace. He even had doubts about the eventual success of his mission, although he kept shoving them to the back of his mind every time they surfaced. He was grieved by the pain his persecution was causing so many people, but he justified it as necessary to rid Judaism of its enemies. Still, there was something about these Christians ...

CONVERSION! Suddenly a light greater than the sun, the Shekinah Glory itself, shown on Paul and the whole group he was traveling with. They all fell down before it. All heard a sound, but only Paul the words: "Why are you persecuting Me?" They were spoken by a Man about Paul's own age, and instantly Paul knew Who it was, even though he had never seen the Man before. To confirm his suspicions Paul asked, "Who are you?" The answer was what he expected, "I am Jesus." In a second that seemed like an eternity, Paul knew that He loved those whom he was persecuting, and He loved Paul. Immediately Paul broke in surrender. All his old theological arguments melted away. It no longer mattered what his Jewish contemporaries would think or what future in Judaism he was giving up. Stephen was right, Paul was wrong – it was that simple. Accepting that brought what Paul had been seeking his whole life, for instantly sweet peace flooded over his soul. He surrendered his life 100% to the authority of Jesus of Nazareth, the Jewish Messiah, God Himself come to earth as man. Paul had a new Master Whom he served with unswerving dedication the rest of his life.

THE FIRST FEW DAYS OF NEW LIFE Paul was blind for the next 3 days. In fact, his eyesight was affected for the rest of his life. It was a constant reminder of when God broke him, as Jacob's limp reminded him of a similar event in his life. Those three days were spent without food or water, for he had no desire to eat. He was so focused, so overwhelmed with the newness of this it was all he could think about. Proud, independent, self-sufficient Paul had to be led by the hand into Damascus

and cared for by others. He was no conquering hero, but a conquered prodigal. He had plenty of time to think. Stephen was a time bomb that detonated in his mind. He recalled point after point that Stephen made, word for word, and each one hit home like a sharp sword. How could he have been so blind? How could he have missed it? It was so clear, so very clear to him now. Guilt and remorse washed over him in waves, followed by grace and peace. The words of Stephen would stay with him forever. They would become the framework, the basic structure for the words Paul himself would speak. Now Paul would be speaking Stephen's words. It was as if Stephen still lived – certainly his message lived on. Then God sent a man named Ananias to Paul. That was quite an act of faith for Ananias who had been praying Paul wouldn't come, and if he did wouldn't find him! Through Ananias, Paul received his sight and publicly showed his new faith by adult baptism (immersion). Paul spent the next few days in Damascus and at once preached that Jesus was the Messiah in the synagogues. What a time that must have been! Some probably thought, though, that he was using this as a trick to sneak into the church and find out who was a Christian so he could have them killed. Because of this uproar, he wasn't able to stay in Damascus long, though.

BASIC TRAINING Paul spent the next two years in the Arabian desert, from the summer of 35 to the summer of 37 AD. He fled partly to protect his life but also to learn more about his new faith. He learned to depend on God during these years. God taught him spiritual truths and how to apply the information he already knew about the Old Testament to Christianity. He learned more, perhaps meeting with Jesus directly for instruction. He had time to think, reflect, digest and integrate this new world view into his life. He witnessed to and taught others he happened upon, learning to share his new faith. He had time to grow spiritually. Something similar happened to Moses in the same desert. God used this time for Paul to grow spiritually.

APPRENTICESHIP From the summer to the fall of 37 AD, Paul spent back in Damascus for a while, then in Jerusalem and finally in Tarsus. He started to apply his new knowledge in practical situations, gaining experience teaching and preaching about Jesus. Jerusalem was especially hard on Paul, for his conversion account wasn't believed by the Jews, who didn't trust him. Only his old friend Barnabas stood by him and encouraged the others to accept him as a brother in the faith. With the persecution now over and Paul helping spread the word, a period of peace and growth came to the church. It seems Paul went home to Tarsus during this time, too. I wonder how his father and others there responded to this change in Paul's life? He must have really desired to see them put their faith in Jesus, but we don't know if any did or not. It seems he was scourged 5 times by the synagogue leaders, so he wasn't any quicker to quit than they were to believe. Some say this is what undermined his health and that he was bowlegged the rest of his life. A complete break from family and Judaism occurred here and now.

BEGINNING MINISTRY Then Paul went to Syria and Cilicia from the fall of 37 to spring of 43 AD – 5 ½ years. He ministered, but he learned as well. He traveled on his own as God was preparing him for the upcoming missionary journeys he would lead. He preached, planted and strengthened churches, and learned patience through suffering. He may have even experienced death and come back to life during this time (2 Corinthians 12:1-10). There was a complete, total change in his life and heart. Now he had the satisfaction and peace which had eluded him for so long. His life totally turned around. Outwardly he went from the top to the bottom (a leader in Judaism to a disciple of Jesus). Inwardly, though, things went from the bottom (turmoil and guilt) to the top (peace and satisfaction). Eventually Paul ended up in Antioch where a very strong Christian church had begun, and where believers were first called 'Christians.' It was at this place that the story 'Ben Hur' takes place. Paul became a leader in the church there – not one of the top men but a leader in training. God was preparing him for the upcoming missionary outreach to Gentiles which Paul would soon spearhead.

24B. 1ST MISSIONARY TRIP

The church at Antioch found itself as the center of the new movement of believers in Jesus the Christ. Persecution had moved the central focus from Jerusalem, and it ended up in Antioch, where believers were first called 'Christians'.

God had assembled a leadership cadre from various nations and ethnic backgrounds to lead the fledgling church there. One of the lesser men in that group was a man named Saul. He had been brought there by Barnabas, perhaps the main leader, to help with the teaching (Acts 12:1).

APRIL, 48 God was obviously already working in the hearts of some of them to take the Gospel to those who haven't heard. Perhaps Barnabas and Saul, who were friends from way back, had talked about going to Cyprus with the plan of salvation. Mountain ranges rimmed the north, desert the east, and Jerusalem was to the south. The natural direction to go was to the west.

When the church there was seeking God's guidance and worshipping His greatness, the Spirit showed them that they should send Barnabas and Saul on this journey (v. 2). The church prayed and fasted about this, committed them to the work, and committed themselves to pray for them and support them (v 3).

APRIL - JUNE, 48 Barnabas and Saul went to **Seleucia, Cyprus** and **Salamis** (4-5). Wherever they went they preached, first in the synagogues, then wherever people could gather (5).

JUNE 48 While in **Paphos** they had a run-in with a Jewish sorcerer who worked by Satan's power, named Elymas (6-12). God blinded him in such a way that He was glorified and many came to faith (12). A change in leadership took place here, though. Verse 7 says "Barnabas and Saul" went there, then Saul was used by God to defeat Satan's forces (9-11). From here on we see Saul as the leader. "Paul and his companions" (13).

Saul (Hebrew name) is now called Paul (Roman name) because the focus of his ministry switches to Gentiles here. Naturally they would call him 'Paul.'

Paul's natural leadership skills came to the forefront and he took over leadership. Notice, though, that he waited patiently until the time was right for this transition. He didn't push himself to the front. Notice, too, that Barnabas wasn't competing with him and let the change naturally come. He didn't care if he was first or second, just so God's work was done and Jesus glorified. We certainly need more people like Paul and Barnabas today!

Not everyone then was like them, either. In fact, Mark, who came along to help, returned home shortly after that. Didn't he like Paul taking over leadership from his uncle Barnabas? Was the trip too long and hard for him? Was he homesick? Lovesick? Was he discouraged about the response? Did he not want to see Gentiles saved? Was he concerned about illness? It seems Paul may have contracted malaria at this time and was nursed back to health in Galatia. Did Mark fear this? Whatever the cause, his defection really hurt Paul who wouldn't let him come along on the second missionary journey. Barnabas took him and they went on their own trip. Later, however, Paul and Mark were reunited and again worked together for the cause of Christ.

EARLY TO MID JULY, 48 Paul and Barnabas then sailed to **Perga** in **Pamphylia**, then to **Pisidian Antioch** (13-14). Paul gave a long message about Jesus to those in the synagogue here (14-41). It was typical of his messages to Jews that were living in Gentile cities. First he shows that a Savior is

promised (16-25). He quotes Old Testament scriptures and uses historical examples to show a Savior is needed. Then he talks about a savior being provided (36-37). He explains about Jesus' life, crucifixion and resurrection. He concludes with an invitation to accept Jesus as their Messiah and Lord (38-41). He also warns them about what will happen if they don't turn to Jesus.

MID JULY TO MID SEPT, 48 The response to this message was so positive that the people wanted to hear more, so Paul and Barnabas stayed in **Pisidian Antioch** for two months, teaching and preaching. The Jews rejected their message, but the Gentiles welcomed it (42-52). The word spread throughout the whole geographical area, including Galatia. Paul did some traveling there during this time, forming a close report with the people there. His malaria got so bad they had to nurse him back to health (Galatians 4:13-15). These people were rough, independent and in many ways uncivilized. After Paul returned to Antioch at the end of this missionary journey, he wrote back to the people. It was his first letter that is recorded in the Bible, the book of Galatians. Eventually those who rejected the message had Paul and Barnabas sent out of town, so they went to **Iconium**.

OCTOBER 48 TO END OF FEB., 49 AD At **Iconium** Paul and Barnabas went to the synagogue first, as was their pattern (Acts 14:1-5). Some Jews believed, but many rejected and stirred up the Gentiles against them. To avoid physical harm they fled.

MARCH TO MID JUNE 49 Paul and Barnabas went to the **Lycoanian** cities of **Lystra** and **Derbe**. These were small, rural villages. The whole area was rough and primitive. Timothy, Lois and Eunice lived in Lystra. God used Paul and Barnabas to heal a crippled man in Lystra (8). The people believed that they were gods and wanted to offer sacrifices to them (9-13). Local tradition said that in the past Zeus and Hermes, the gods, came to Lystra, but were rejected, so they destroyed the town. Folklore said they would one day return. Paul and Barnabas looked like them, and the miraculous sign seemed to prove it to the people.

They denied being deity, though (14-18), and tried to point the people to Jesus. Still, the local people wanted to deify them. Then some Jews who had traveled 100 miles just to oppose Paul, Barnabas and the Gospel arrived and turned the crowd against Paul and Barnabas. They stoned Paul and drug him outside the city, leaving him for dead (20). It seems he really did die and God brought him back to life. Paul tells about this time in 2 Corinthians 12:1-5. What an encouraging, motivating experience that must have been for Paul!

END OF JUNE 49 The next day, Paul and Barnabas went to **Derbe**. The response there was great and positive (21). They could have taken a short cut home through the Cilician Gates to Paul's home town of Tarsus, but retraced their steps so they could revisit, encourage and strengthen the churches they had just started (22-23).

JULY - SEPTEMBER 49 They traveled through Lystra, Iconium and Antioch on the way (21), then Pisidia, Pamphylia, Perga and Attalia. They were glad to see that the churches they started were growing.

SEPT 49 - APRIL 50 Back in Antioch they told of how God had worked in Jews and Gentiles alike. They spent several months there. Paul wrote the Letter to the Galatians during this time. The time had been successfully spent, for many Gentiles had responded to the Gospel. Soon God would put it on Paul's heart to revisit those churches and travel even further until the Word spread to us now.

24C. JERUSALEM COUNCIL

We all know the words “salvation by grace,” but still we often add ‘conditions’ to salvation or the Christian life. When I was a new believer, I was disciplined by some fine Christians who unfortunately exposed me to some very subtle but strong legalism. What I came away believing was that if I did (or didn’t do) certain things I would be more spiritual. I could instantly be among the older, more mature believers if I talked and acted certain ways. I really didn’t have many decisions to make, for it seemed everything had already been decided about Christian behavior. Dress, hair length and styles, activities, entertainment, use of time and money – all was clearly set down. I had only to follow.

God led me out of that, and I don’t want to be judgmental or critical. I do appreciate the grace I now have in Jesus. It’s funny, but my Christian life even now is outwardly very similar to the way it was then. It’s my inner motive for what I do that has drastically changed. I am acutely aware of the danger in doing things to impress others, to impress God or to impress myself. All I do must be done out of love and a response of faithfulness to Jesus. That must be my first and only motive for all I do. For me, any other motive is legalism. It includes me trying to earn or deserve something from God. There is absolutely NOTHING I can do to impress God. All I have or ever will have is by His grace. The only thing that ever impressed Him was the work of Jesus on the cross. Satan, in his pride, would feed into ours and have us think we can do something for God but we can’t. Satan will do whatever he can to keep the focus off of God’s grace and on man’s works instead.

I thank God for His amazing grace. I want to always live in it. I want to make sure I don’t in any way influence others to jump through hoops of legalism and externals. I can’t imagine what it would be like if we did have to do (or not do) certain things for salvation or the Christian life. God could have made it that way, but praise His name He didn’t.

FALL, AD 49 -- CHURCH PROBLEM All this is nothing new. Early Christians were Jews who grew up keeping the law, then accepting Jesus as Savior. Then, as the kingdom spread, many Gentiles started believing in Jesus, accepting His free gift of salvation. Some early church leaders, though, taught these Gentiles that they also had to keep the Jewish law (Acts 15:1). This means circumcision, dietary regulations, sacrifices and offerings, dress codes, festivals, tithes, Sabbath observances and every area of life. Paul and Barnabas greatly opposed this (v. 2a) for they had seen how God worked in Gentiles on their first missionary journey. The whole issue of if a Christian had to observe the Jewish law or not became such a big thing that they realized they would have to go to Jerusalem and consult the apostles and leaders there (2a). Going to those in spiritual authority over you is always important. Let those who are more experienced and mature spiritually decide.

MEETING #1 When they arrived in Jerusalem (v. 3) they were warmly welcomed (v. 4a). They told the apostles everything that happened on their missionary journey (v. 4b). This was a private meeting between Paul, Barnabas and the leaders. It seems Titus was with them as well (Galatians 2:1-2). He was a Gentile who came to salvation in Jesus without the law.

MEETING #2 Next was held a general, open meeting to discuss the problem. Those who said it was necessary to keep the law along with salvation spoke first (v. 5; Galatians 2:3-5). Paul and Barnabas told of their experiences as well.

MEETING #3 Then the apostles and leaders met alone to discuss and consider the question (v. 6). Peter shared his testimony about Cornelius and what God had showed him (v. 7-11). Barnabas and Paul shared what God had done through them as well (v. 12).

Then it was James' turn to speak. He was head of the early church, so the final decision fell to him. He based his decision on the Bible, not personal experience (v. 15-18). Too often today we are influenced by the person who has had this or that experience, when our final determining authority is the Word of God. James went back to the Word and based his decision on it.

He quoted Amos 9:11-12, stating that Gentiles can also find God. They don't have to become Jews to do so. James uses this for his decision. Note they didn't have everyone vote. Democracy is fine, but God's system of government has always been a godly sovereign, not rule by the majority of the people.

Anyway, James' decision was that Gentiles didn't have to keep the law for salvation or Christian living (v. 19). What a difference that makes for us today! If the decision would have been different, we'd be living, eating, dressing, talking and acting like the Pharisees in Jesus' day! Can you imagine witnessing for that!

Still, they warned the Gentiles to now use their new freedom to set a stumbling block before their Jewish brethren. The Jews couldn't put a stumbling block (the law) before them, and they can't do that to their Jewish brethren. They had to be considerate (v. 20-21). They could not take advantage of their freedom, nor do anything that would offend the conscience of the Jews. We, too, must be considerate of other believer's consciences and not exert our freedom in a way that might cause them to stumble in their Christian life.

MEETING #4 The word was spread, and men were chosen to take it to other churches (v. 22). Especially important was Antioch, for that was becoming the new center of Christianity and rapidly replacing Jerusalem.

To make sure everyone knew who was behind this decision, and people didn't just say Paul was making this up, they wrote a letter to send along (v. 23-29).

WINTER, AD 49-50 Antioch was glad for the decision, and the church went through a new growth spurt (v. 30-35). It seems after every challenge they successfully faced, there was a growth spurt. That's how God works.

It was during this time that Paul had to publicly reprimand Peter for compromising with those who were legalistic in their view (Galatians 2:11-14).

APRIL, AD 50 With this issue settled, Paul wanted to go back and visit the churches he had started, to encourage and strengthen them (v. 36). They sharply disagreed about taking Mark, so ended up splitting up (v. 37-40). Barnabas took Mark, but Paul took Silas instead. The story in Acts follows Paul and Silas through Syria and Cilicia (v. 41).

While this 'sharp disagreement' obviously hurt these two friends, it just shows how human God's servants are. Later Paul was reconciled with Mark and did recognize his contribution to the ministry, but Mark had done a lot of growing by then, too. At least God was glorified and all things did work for the good, because now there were two missionary teams going out.

Be careful in your life, to make sure you don't put faith or pride in anything you do. All we have and are is by grace alone. Don't ever judge others by outer appearances. We can evaluate fruit, but never judge motives. Show others as much grace as you want God to show you!

GALATIANS: CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

TITLE: Named for the recipients

AUTHOR: Paul

DATE of WRITING: 49 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Antioch

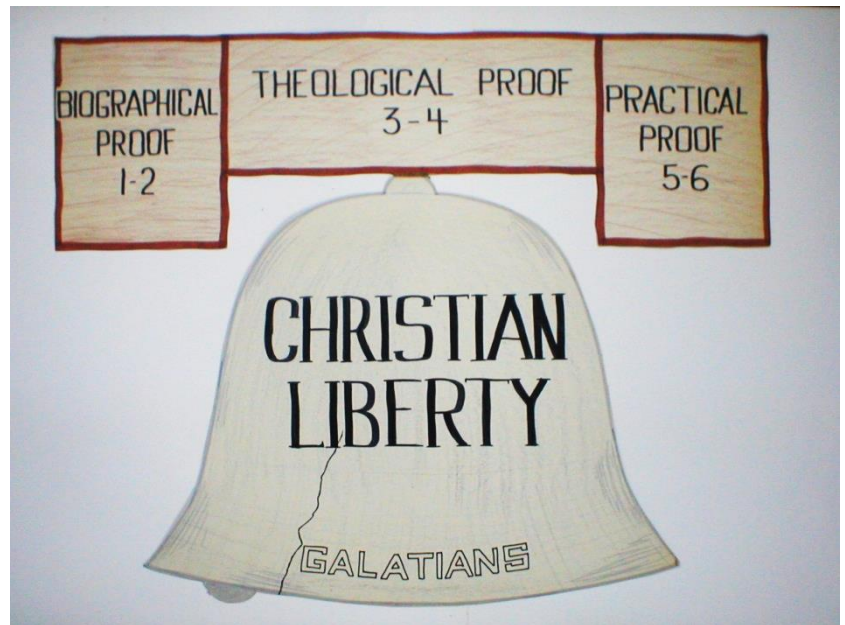
RECIPIENTS: Churches in Galatia (Asia Minor)

KEY VERSE: *"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."* 5:1

KEY WORDS: "Christ" (43 times); "law" (32); "Flesh" (18); "Faith" (22); "spirit" (15)

PURPOSE: To show the readers that the purpose of the law is to lead us to Christ (3:24) and the purpose of Christ is to free us (5:1), bring Christian liberty.

THEME: To show that the believer is free from the law and legalism.



When I was a new Christian I was invited to join the Mormon church as well as Herbert W. Armstrong's Radio Church of God. As I checked into these groups I found they each had at their core a set of practices that one must adhere to. The big things, even the little things in life, were regulated and specific responses were set for most any event. That didn't seem too unusual, though, because the Baptist church I was a member of was pretty much the same way. New members took their cue from the older ones about how to dress, act, talk and think in most any situation. If one didn't know, they had only to ask and the answer was given. Everything was black and white. At first that was nice because I didn't have to make decisions on my own. They were all made. As a new Christian, I could act and look just like those who had been Christians their whole lives. Instant spirituality was available to any who would just follow the 'rules.' However, before long, I realized that my Christian life was being lived by and for other Christians, not Christ. Fear of what others would think motivated all I did. It was empty. Oh, it appealed to my pride, but where was the 'personal relationship' I so longed for?

Then in Bible College, the first book of the Bible I studied in depth was the book of Galatians – just what I needed! Paul was writing to people who were facing the same dilemma I was. He had just completed his First Missionary Journey, going through Asia Minor into the area of Galatia in the middle of it. Several churches were started there, but after Paul left, Jewish Christians who said one had to keep all the Jewish law in order to have salvation came in and misled the people. So when Paul got back to Antioch, he wrote them to straighten them, and me, out about the relationship of law and grace. What he did was give three proofs why we are free from any form of law. These are as follows:

I. BIOGRAPHICAL PROOF (1:10-2:21) - An Independent Revelation First Paul talks in detail about himself, something he does in no other book. However, in no other book is he writing to people who distrust him and his motives. He must prove that God is speaking through him or no one will listen to anything he has to say. Thus he gives his credentials first.

Paul points out that he got his message directly from Jesus, not Jewish rabbis, for they were opposed to him (1:10-14), nor from the apostles for they kept away from him (1:15-17). Neither did

he get his message from the churches in Judea for he didn't learn from them (1:18-24) nor from anyone else (2:1-18). He himself had kept the law better than any of them ever could, yet he knew from experience that that was empty (2:19-21).

II. THEOLOGICAL PROOF (3:1 - 4:31) - Failure of Legalism Having shown that his readers could trust the source of the message (Paul), he now focuses on the message itself. He reminds them that if grace is how they were saved, that should be how they live the Christian life (3:1-5). Any system that focus on impressing or pleasing man or God fails because the focus is on outer actions, not inner attitude. Paul even uses Abraham as an example of salvation and Christian living by faith, before God gave him any laws (3:6-22). Actually the law makes us slaves, not free (4:8-31).

III. PRACTICAL PROOF (5:1 - 6:10) - THE Effect of Liberty After showing that trying to keep the law is an inferior way to live, Paul shows the superior way of following Jesus. Legalism is under God's judgment, for it seeks to add to the finished work of Jesus. It elevates our work of the flesh and feeds our pride. God wants us to obey and serve Him out of love. When we obey and serve out of love the results will be evident in our lives: the fruit of the Holy Spirit, humility and meekness, faithfulness, perseverance, to name a few (5:25-6:10).

A woman worked for a man whose wife had died. Every day he gave her a list of chores and jobs to do and she did them because he paid her at the end of the week. Eventually they got to love each other and married. She found she was doing the very things he had paid her to do and more, but there was no list and no pay. She now did them out of love. Her motive had changed. What is your motive in serving God? If it isn't love, it isn't right.

OUTLINE OF GALATIANS

Opening 1:1-9

I. BIBLICAL PROOF OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY (An Independent Revelation) 1-2

- A. Independent of Human Teaching 1:10-17
- B. Independent of Judean Churches 1:18-24
- C. Independent of Judaizing Brethren 2:1-10
- D. Independent of Apostolic Pressure 2:11-18
- E. Independent of Selfish Interest 2:19-21

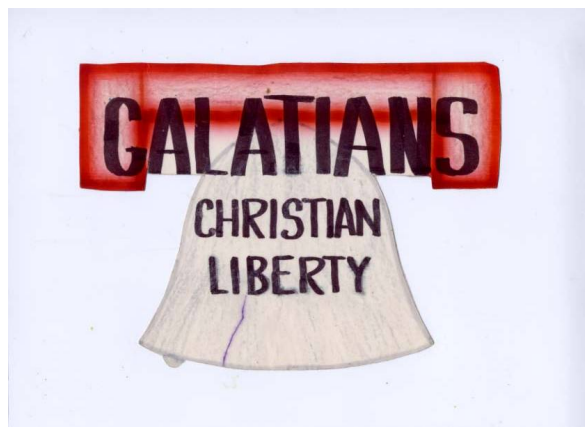
II. THEOLOGICAL PROOF OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY (The Failure of Legalism) 3-4

- A. Shown by Personal Experience 3:1-5
- B. Shown by Old Testament Teaching 3:6-14
- C. Shown by Priority of Promise 3:15-22
- D. Shown by Superiority of Mature Faith 3:23-4:7
- E. Shown by Danger of Reaction 4:8-11
- F. Shown by Contrasting Motives 4:12-20
- G. Shown by Example of Hagar 4:21-31

III. PRACTICAL PROOF OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY (The Effect of Liberty) 5-6

- A. Consequences of Legalism 5:1-12
- B. Definition of Freedom 5:13-15
- C. Individual Practice 5:16-24
- D. Social Practice 5:25-6:10

Closing 6:11-18



24D. 2ND MISSIONARY

TRIP

Paul wasn't good at staying put. He always wanted to move ahead for God: spreading the good news, starting churches and encouraging believers. Six months after the return from the first missionary journey he was on the road again. During those 6 months he went to the Jerusalem council (Acts 15) and wrote to the Galatians. Now he wants to visit them again.

MAY 50 Paul headed overland into Asia Minor this time, stopping at Derbe and Lystra (Acts 16:1) where Timothy joined them.

LATE MAY TO MID JUNE 50 Paul, Silas and Timothy then went to Iconium (v. 2-3) and ministered there. He had Timothy, who was half Jew, circumcised so he wouldn't be a stumbling block to sincere, seeking Jews who might think they were flaunting their freedom from the law. They spent the next 6 weeks visiting churches in the area and telling them about the decision of the Jerusalem Council (v. 4). This brought another growth spurt in the church (v. 5).

JULY 50 They traveled through Phrygia and Galatia (v. 6), stopping in places like Colossae, Laodicea, Hierapolis, Philadelphia, Sardis, Thyatira, Pergamum and Smyrna. They wanted to push on into northern Asia Minor but God's Spirit showed them that that wasn't His will (v. 6b-7). Instead they went to Troas (v. 8). There Paul had his well-known vision of a man calling them over to Macedonia (v. 9-10) so that is where they went.

AUGUST 50 The first place they stopped in Macedonia was Philippi (v. 11-12). When they went to the place where the Jews gathered they found only women (v. 13). Here was the well-trained and highly motivated Paul, clearly directed by God to enter the continent of Europe to spread the gospel there (although others had brought the gospel to Europe with them already). What kind of a reception does he get for all his labor and work? A handful of women are all that show up! We tend to notice such things too clearly. Paul didn't seem disappointed at all. He met the leader, Lydia, who listened to Paul's message, accepted Jesus and was baptized along with her whole household (v. 14). The men even stayed at her home (v. 15).

Others joined the new church there: a slave girl who was delivered from demons by Paul (v. 16-24) and the jailer who was life was spared when Paul and the others didn't escape prison after an earthquake (v. 25-34). Others became part of the church such as Clement, Euodia, Sytche and more. Paul left soon after the earthquake event, though (v. 35-40). It was time to take the gospel and plant it in other locations.

NOVEMBER 50 In Thessalonica (Acts 17:1) Paul, as was his custom, went into the synagogue first (v. 2-3). Some Jews, many Gentiles who had been won to Judaism and a number of prominent women believed and followed Paul (v. 4). The Jewish leaders were so jealous they started a riot to have Paul and the others with him harmed (v. 5-9).

FEBRUARY 51 Paul, Silas and Timothy slipped away at night to protect themselves (v. 10). They planned on returning as soon as things settled down but other events prevented that, so Paul later sent Timothy back to help them (2 Thessalonians 3:2). Meanwhile they went to Berea, where there

was a much more mature, open response to the gospel among the Jews. Many believed and became fine students of the Word (Acts 17:11-12). Soon, however, Jews came from Thessalonica and stirred people up against Paul, so he again had to flee for his life while Silas and Timothy stayed to continue the work in Berea ((v. 13-15).

LATE FEBRUARY 51 Meanwhile Paul went to Athens where their idolatry so distressed him that he spoke to them about Jesus being their 'unknown god' (v. 16-34). The response was small there, as often is the case in urban areas of higher education and 'enlightenment.'

MARCH 51 Being very disappointed with the attitude of the Athenians, Paul moved on to Corinth (Acts 18:1). There he stayed and worked with fellow tent-makers Aquilla and Priscilla (v. 2-3). Every Sabbath he preached in the synagogue (v. 4). These were hard days for Paul. He was lonely, drained physically and emotionally, financially broke, sorrowful about so many rejecting salvation and upset about the immorality and idolatry in Athens and Corinth. Then Silas and Timothy rejoined him (v. 5) and the ministry improved. A new church began (v. 6-7) and many came to salvation.

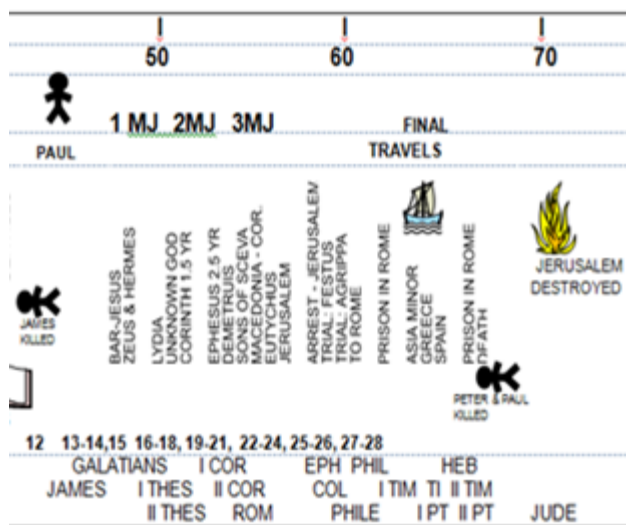
Then God appeared to Paul in a night vision and encouraged him to keep on preaching in Corinth despite how bad things were (v. 9-10). Paul stayed there for 1 ½ years (v. 11). During that time he planted churches in Corinth, Cenchrea (Romans 16:21) and Achaia (2 Corinthians 1:1). He wrote letters to Thessalonica. The first was in the early summer of 51. Timothy took the letter to them and stayed awhile. Paul wrote to them again later the same summer.

When the year and half were almost up, Paul was brought to court but the judge kicked the case out (v. 12-17). Soon after that he left to head back home (v. 18).

SEPTEMBER TO NOV 52 Paul had his hair cut off at Cenchrea because of a vow he had taken (v. 18b), then went to Ephesus (v. 19) where he left Priscilla and Aquilla to work. They wanted Paul to stay, and he wanted to spend more time in Ephesus, but told them he would return (v. 20-21).

Then he sailed to Caserea and greeted the church, then returned to Antioch (v. 22), where he stayed until the spring of 53.

SPRING TO SUMMER 53 Paul just couldn't sit still! He continued to travel throughout Galatia and Phrygia (v. 23). Meanwhile Apollos, a gifted speaker of John the Baptizer's message, came to Ephesus. Aquilla and Priscilla updated him on the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus (v. 24-26). He became an outstanding evangelist for the early church (v. 27-28).



1 THESSALONIANS: JESUS IS COMING AGAIN

TITLE: Named for the recipients

AUTHOR: Paul

DATE of WRITING: 51 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Corinth

RECIPIENTS: Church at Thessalonica

KEY VERSE: *for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead-Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath. (1:9-10)*

KEY WORDS: "comfort" (6 times); "coming (of the Lord)" (4)

PURPOSE: To commend the Thessalonian believers for their faith and to defend himself against criticism. He also instructs them in areas of difficulty: sexual purity, love & especially the Second Coming of Christ.

THEME: The Second Coming of Christ



When Gideon's 10,000 potential soldiers went to drink, only 300 of them were chosen. These were the ones who drank looking up. For us to defeat our enemies today we must be found 'looking up' as well. That's Paul's message to the Thessalonians.

Paul started a church in Thessalonica on his Second Missionary Journey. It was only the second church established on European soil. It had much opportunity but faced a lot of persecution. Paul wrote to them from Corinth to encourage them in their times of suffering.

LOOK AWAY FROM: Troubles (chapter 1) Paul starts off praying for them, encouraging them in faithfulness. He commends them for their fruit: receiving the gospel and passing it on. Their godly reputation had been spreading quickly. Paul wants them to look to God and what He has done for them, not to focus on their suffering and persecution.

LOOK AWAY FROM: Temporal (chapter 2) Then Paul defends himself against attacks and criticism some in Thessalonica have been spreading about him. He assures them that both his motives and methods were pure. His focus was on serving God, not on gaining money or a reputation for himself. He encouraged them, too, to not focus on this temporary world during the hard times they were facing.

LOOK AWAY FROM: Temptation (chapter 3) Paul tells them he sent Timothy to help them faithfully endure their trials, and Timothy's good report about them really encouraged Paul as well. He concludes this section praying that he will be able to visit them in person very soon. After telling them what to look away from, he then tells them what to look towards:

LOOK UP TO: Trumpet (chapter 4) Paul challenges them to be pure in their lives, for some of them continued in their old pagan immorality. He emphasized that they are to love each other. He corrected those who said they didn't have to work because Jesus was coming back soon. Then he gave the most complete description on the Rapture in the Bible (4:13-18). The trumpet will one day

sound and those who have accepted Jesus as Savior will have their bodies instantly changed and taken to heaven. Those who have already died have temporary bodies in heaven and their earthly bodies will be raised at that time and taken to heaven, too. Thus we don't have to fear death nor grieve the loss of believers who die before us. Those killed in persecution just get to heaven first! Jesus could return any day, ending their earthly suffering. Thus they are to live looking up, awaiting the trumpet.

LOOK UP TO: Triumph (chapter 5) Immediately following the rapture will be the Tribulation. The persecution they were enduring was not the Tribulation. Believers are not under God's judgment ('wrath' v. 9; Romans 8:1). Until this time, they must live victorious Christian lives, growing and ministering to others. Paul concluded by praying for their total being. He prayed they would live a holy Christian life until Jesus returned for them. By knowing and remembering that Jesus was coming back for them, they could keep the sufferings of this life in proper perspective. He assured them that God would preserve them. Then he ended with his typical request for prayer on his behalf, a greeting, a charge and a benediction.

One day a business came to a school and promised the children that one day he would return and bring a special present for all who had their desks clean when he arrived. A certain girl in the class room really wanted to receive this prize so she committed herself to clean her desk every Monday morning. Knowing that it wouldn't stay clean long, for the girl wasn't normally a very neat person, the teacher asked her what happened if the man came on Friday. She decided to clean her desk Monday and Friday. Then when asked about if he would come on Wednesday, she decided she needed to clean her desk every morning. But what if he came at the end of the day? Finally she realized that what she needed to do was keep her desk clean at ALL times. Paul wants us, like the Thessalonians, to always be aware of and ready for Jesus' soon return. Don't focus on your problems or difficulties, but on His return!

OUTLINE OF 1 THESSALONIANS

Opening 1:1

I. LOOK AWAY FROM 1-3

- A. Troubles 1
 - 1. Prayer of Thanksgiving 1:2-4
 - 2. Proofs of Election 1:5-10
- B. Temporal 2
 - 1. Paul 2:1-12
 - 2. Thessalonians 2:13-20
- C. Temptation 3
 - 1. Concern of Paul 3:1-5
 - 2. Comfort of Timothy 3:6-10
 - 3. Concluding Prayer 3:11-13

II. LOOK UP TO 4-5

- A. Trumpet 4
 - 1. Conduct of the Believer 4:1-12
 - 2. Consolation of the Believer 4:13-18
- B. Triumph 5
 - 1. Day of the Lord 5:1-11
 - 2. Duties of the People 5:12-22
 - 3. Concluding Prayer 5:23-24

Close 5:23-28



2 THESSALONIANS: JESUS IS COMING SOON

TITLE: Named for the recipients

AUTHOR: Paul

DATE of WRITING: 51 AD, shortly after 1 Thessalonians

PLACE of WRITING: Corinth

RECIPIENTS: Church at Thessalonica

KEY VERSE: *This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you. (1:7b-10)*

KEY WORDS: "Day of the Lord"

PURPOSE:



1 THESSALONIANS	2 THESSALONIANS
Teaches the WHAT of the Rapture	Teaches the WHEN of the Rapture
Teach something NEW - Rapture	correct WRONG - time of Rapture
Mainly about the church	Mainly about Satan, Antichrist, world

THEME: to tell the Thessalonian believers Christ would return BEFORE the Tribulation, and to explain to them how they were to live until Christ came.

The truth of the Rapture is one of the most glorious of all Christian doctrines. It is wonderfully encouraging and uplifting. Knowing Jesus will return soon to take those who believe in Him to heaven to be with Him forever is comforting and motivating. Yet, despite its simple truth, much confusion and misunderstanding has arisen around this simple doctrine. It's easy to understand that Satan would do what he can to confuse and cloud this beautiful truth. He did the same thing in Paul's day, too.

Not long after Paul wrote to the church at Thessalonica, telling them about Jesus' coming back for them, wrong ideas started to develop which took away from the comfort of this truth. For instance, some false teachers in Thessalonica said the persecution they were then facing was the Tribulation which had already started. Yet Paul said the Rapture came before the tribulation. What was true? Who was right?

I. THE ANXIETY ABOUT THE RETURN OF CHRIST (chapter 1) Again Paul starts with thanksgiving for their faithfulness in times of suffering. He assured them that God was not unfair in permitting them to experiences the trials they were going through. He reminded them about what the future held if they didn't die before Christ returned. If they had accepted Jesus as Savior they would be taken to heaven immediately when Jesus returned. If they hadn't accepted Him they would live on into the Tribulation and find themselves under god's judgment.

Paul then prayed God would continue to work out His will in their submissive lives, and they would glorify Him. He assured them they were doing right and weren't under God's judgment, for the Tribulation had not started yet. Then he goes on to prove that they couldn't already be in the Tribulation.

II. THE ANSWER ABOUT THE REVELATION OF ANTICHRIST (chapter 2) No, Paul says, you haven't missed the Rapture and entered into God's judgment. His proof is that the Antichrist has not yet been revealed, and when the Tribulation really begins the Antichrist will be right there. In fact, he can't be revealed until after the Rapture, when the Church and the Holy Spirit are gone. The Antichrist couldn't possibly be revealed yet, for the Rapture must come first. The fact that they were still here proved the Rapture hadn't come.

Paul then builds on the many details given by Daniel and Ezekiel about the Antichrist and his actions on earth. Paul then gives thanks for their spiritual standing as seen in contrast to the deceived world around them. He encouraged them to stand fast in what he had taught them while there and in his first letter.

III. THE APPLICATION ABOUT THEIR RETURN TO WORK (chapter 3) Paul then tackled the final problem that had arisen about the Rapture. Some refused to work because the Rapture could come at any time, so why bother? Paul got very strong with them, telling them that if someone wouldn't do his share to support himself, no one should do anything to help him! That's how important it is for God's people to live a holy Christian life.

We can't and won't know exactly when it is time for the Rapture, but we can tell when the season gets closer (Matthew 24:36-39). Contractions can be felt earlier, but labor doesn't begin until the pains ('signs') come close and hard.

Paul then closed with prayer. He asked that they would be conscious of God's presence, peace and grace. After a final benediction and greeting, the book closes.

OUTLINE OF 2 THESSALONIANS

Opening 1:1-2

I. THE ANXIETY ABOUT THE RETURN OF CHRIST (Encouragement) 1

- A. Thanksgiving 1:3-10
- B. Intercession 1:11-12

II. THE ANSWER ABOUT THE REVELATION OF THE ANTI-CHRIST (Explanation) 2

- A. Correction of a Misconception 2:1-2
- B. Revelation of the Man of Sin 2:3-
 - 1. His Character 2:3-5
 - 2. His Restrainer 2:6-7
 - 3. His Ministry 2:8-10
- C. Judgment of Unbelievers 2:11-12
- D. Thanksgiving and Prayer 2:13-17

III. THE APPLICATION ABOUT THEIR RETURN TO WORK (Exhortation) 3

- A. Call to Prayer 3:1-5
- B. Call to Discipline 3:6-15

Close 3:16-18



24E. 3RD MISSIONARY TRIP

When Paul returned from his Second Missionary Journey, he continued to travel in Galatia (Acts 18:23), but 6 months after getting back Paul again left for another missionary journey.

SEPTEMBER 53 As he had promised, Paul went back to Ephesus to spend time with friends there. It was the largest, most important and influential city in Asia Minor and an important location for the church. In fact, the center of Christianity, which shifted from Jerusalem to Antioch, will soon move to Ephesus, and then finally to Rome. John and Mary, the mother of Jesus, will stay here, too.

After hearing Paul, who had only heard of John's baptism, believed in Jesus and received the Holy Spirit, uniting them with all Jews and Gentiles who also had accepted Jesus as Savior (Acts 19:1-7). Speaking in foreign languages they didn't know was the sign that they were included, just as the others who had received this sign: Jews (Acts 2), half Jews (Acts 8), Gentiles living in Palestine (Acts 10-11) and Gentiles living elsewhere (Acts 19). It was the last time this gift would be given, for no other mention is made of it except Paul's correcting of the Corinthians excesses.

SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER 53 Paul spoke boldly in the synagogue for 3 months, until the Jews hardened their hearts against him, and then he left (Acts 19:8-9).

DECEMBER 53 - DECEMBER 55 For 2 years Paul taught daily in a local lecture hall (v. 10). Everyone in Ephesus and its surrounding area was exposed to the gospel during that time. Miraculous things happened, showing that God's power is greater than the demonic power behind the idols they worshipped there (11-20). Tradition says Paul taught 5 hours a day in addition training the disciples Apollos, Aquilla, Priscilla and others and witnessing in town (Acts 20:20f). He probably worked some at making tents for an income. He was instrumental in starting churches in Colossae, Laodicea, Hieroppolis, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and other places. He was jailed at least once (2 Corinthians 11:23-27). This is his longest recorded stay in one place.

Paul was no super-hero. He faced all the same problems and frustrations we do. He was plagued with the carnal Corinthians and wrote 2 letters to them, one lost and the other is our 1 Corinthians. He wanted to take the money he had gathered to Jerusalem but wasn't able to do that (v. 21-22). He had terrible trials and sufferings there, things he referred to as "fighting with beasts" (Acts 20:17-19; 1 Corinthians 15:30-32; 2 Corinthians 1:8-11). There was much opposition without and stress within (Acts 20:19). Still, he persevered one day at a time on God's strength.

SPRING 56 When a great disturbance arose against him from those who made idols of Diana, Paul realized it was time to leave and minister elsewhere (Acts 19:23-41). God often used riots and rejection to cause him to move on to a new group. Too often we quit all together when God just wants us to move on to work with someone else.

SUMMER 56 Paul went to Troas where he wrote a third (lost) letter to the Corinthians. He was distracted by Titus' failure to return from Corinth so he went to find him (2 Corinthians 12:13).

LATE SUMMER 56 Paul landed at Neapolis, then went to Philippi. The church there was the most fault-free, supportive church of all the ones he started, so it must have been encouraging and helpful to spend time with them. Even though they couldn't afford it, they kept sending money for his support. They were going through much persecution and many were being killed.

EARLY FALL 56 Paul then moved on to Thessalonica and Berea (Acts 20:1-2). Timothy rejoined Paul, who was suffering much from his thorn in the flesh. He was depressed and distracted by the problems the Corinthian believers were causing. Then Titus arrived from Corinth with good news of the repentance of many in sin in Corinth. Still, many there were bitterly opposed to Paul.

Paul then went to Nicopolis, a better climate for his health, and wrote his forth letter to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians). He also visited Illyricum, which was a vast province which was out of his way and contained aggressive, warlike people with old pagan religions (Yugoslavia and Albania today).

NOVEMBER 56 Paul returned to Corinth to spend the winter (Acts 20:2b). He encouraged the believers to be faithful and reach out to other churches in the area in Athens, Cenchrea, etc. His plan was to go on to Spain and Rome, but that had to be put off because he had to take the money collected for the poor, suffering believers to Jerusalem first. Therefore, he wrote a letter to the Romans saying he would come a little later and containing a summary of the messages he wanted to give them. His disappointment is our blessing, for now we have the Book of Romans written down.

MARCH - MAY 57 Even those plans changed because of a plot against his life (Acts 20:3) so he went back through Macedonia instead, which must have tried his patience. His interruptions are even interrupted. His change in plans have to be changed again and again. No one is immune from that. He did have friends come along for fellowship and protection (v. 4-5). **April 6** they set sail from Neapolis, the seaport for Philippi. It took 5 days to sail to Troas and they waited there **April 15-19** for others to join them. Then they ministered there **April 20-25**. This is when Eutychus fell asleep and fell out the window and died, but God brought him back to life. Paul, Luke and others went by boat to Assos, Mitylene, Kios, Samos, Miletus and Ephesus **Monday, April 25 to Sat, April 30**. He stayed in Ephesus until **Monday, May 2**. During this time he had a long talk with the leaders. Leaving Ephesus was a hard, tearful event for all concerned. Paul took a ship to Tyre, arriving **Tuesday, May 10**. During his 7 days there he was urged to not go to Jerusalem because God was showing that troubles awaited him there. He traveled by foot to Caesarea (**May 20**) and stayed at Philip's home. Agabus again warned him about being arrested, but Paul followed God's leading and arrived in Jerusalem on **Tuesday, May 27**. Paul's last major missionary trip was over. God had an entirely new type of assignment awaiting him.

1 CORINTHIANS: WORLDLY WISDOM

TITLE: Named for recipients

AUTHOR: Paul

DATE of WRITING: 55 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Ephesus

RECIPIENTS: Church at Corinth

KEY VERSE:: *For God is not a God of disorder but of peace.*

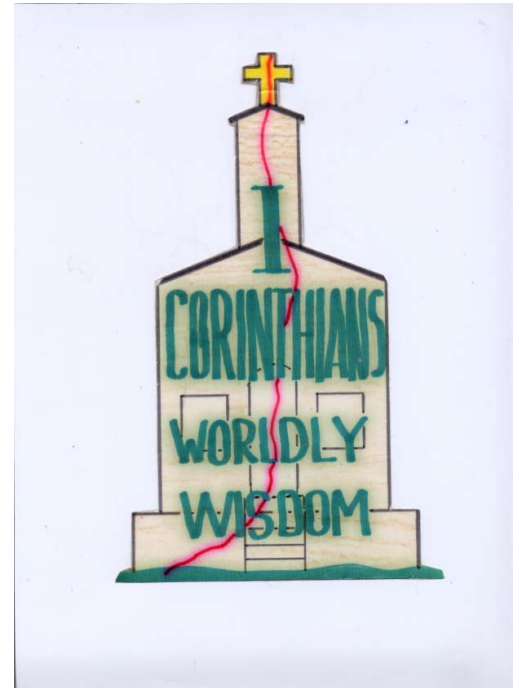
... But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

... But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 14:33; 14:40; 15:57

KEY WORDS: "Wisdom, love, resurrection, cross, Spirit, body, gifts, corruption"

PURPOSE: Address certain situations of worldliness that were defeating the Corinthian church.

THEME: To correct errors in Christian conduct by going by God's wisdom instead of man's worldly wisdom.



We generally think that the greatest danger to the church today comes from without: persecution, oppression, etc. The real danger, however, comes not from without but from within. We are often our own greatest enemy! That is especially true of the church in Corinth. They were believers, but they lived like unbelievers. The church wasn't influencing society. Society was influencing the church.

CORINTH The city of Corinth was in present-day Greece. It was Greek, but very 'Roman' since it was the capital of the whole area. It was large (1/4 million people) and full of pride and pleasure. It had a reputation for being very immoral. To call someone a 'Corinthian' was a great insult. Paul was there on his Second Missionary Journey, 50-52 AD. When he was kicked out of the synagogue, he started a church and stayed 1 ½ years. He actually wrote 4 letters to the church there. We have the second (called 1 Corinthians) and fourth (called 2 Corinthians) in our Bible. Paul then visited them again for 3 months. It was a very worldly, carnal church. The people were believers, but their world view, their motives, their priorities and their thought processes were the same as they were before salvation. They were living by the world's ways and wisdom, not God's. That is why Paul writes to them.

I. DIVISIONS (1 – 4) Because of their ungodly viewpoints and values, they were having the same problems after salvation that they had before. They were comparing themselves with each other and putting down those who were different. They had groups based on who they followed: Paul, Apollos, Peter or Christ (the 'super-spiritual' ones claimed this). They also divided over social status and material means. They even made some spiritual gifts superior to others and had divisions over that. This undermined their unity and brought other problems.

II. DISORDERS (5 – 6) In taking the world's outlook on things, they opened themselves to sins. Incest, lawsuits against fellow believers, and immorality in general were tolerated and accepted. Paul has to warn them and show them how they are wrong in these things.

III. DIFFICULTIES (7 – 14) While only some were involved in the immorality and lawsuits, it seems everyone was affected in other ways. By still following their beliefs and views from before salvation,

they were experiencing troubles in other areas. What about marrying someone who wasn't a believer? If one became a Christian and their mate didn't, could they leave that mate? Why not divorce when things got tough like the rest of the culture? What was wrong with sex before marriage or sex outside marriage? Was it OK to eat cheaper meat which had been offered to idols? Why should a woman have to submit to her husband? Why did a man have to take the lead in his family? What was wrong with observing the pagan love feasts and adding the Lord's Supper to them? Why wasn't one who had an impressive spiritual gift like tongues superior spiritually to one who didn't have that gift? What was wrong with showing off one's gift during the church service? On and on the list went.

IV. DISBELIEF (15) The culmination of these worldly thoughts and attitudes was that the resurrection was questioned. It didn't make sense to think of one coming back from death. But without the resurrection, what was left of their faith? If Jesus never raised from the dead there is no power, no hope, no forgiveness – nothing but another belief system which is no better nor any worse than the others. That's where their thinking was going, and that's why Paul was so committed to write to them as quickly and directly as possible.

What about you? What about your world view, your value and belief system? Does it line up more with the world or the Bible? I don't mean just what you profess to believe, I mean what you practice in daily life. How different are you from the unbelievers around you in values and goals, in priorities and motives? There are many modern Corinthian believers today – make sure you aren't one of them!

OUTLINE OF 1 CORINTHIANS

Opening 1:1-9

I. DIVISIONS (“Wisdom”) 1-4

- A. Physical Divisions 1:10-4:21
- B. Material Divisions 11:22-23, 33-34
- C. Spiritual Divisions 12:16-17, 21-25

II. DISORDERS (“Righteousness”) 5-6

- A. Incest 5:1-13
- B. Lawsuits 6:1-8
- C. Immorality 6:9-20

III. DIFFICULTIES (“Sanctification”) 7-14

- A. Marriage 7:1-40
- B. Personal Liberty 8:1-11:1
- C. Subjection 11:2-16
- D. Fellowship 11:17-34
- E. Conduct 12:1-14:40

IV. DISBELIEF (“Redemption”) 15

Close 16:1-24

2 CORINTHIANS:

A GODLY MINISTRY



TITLE: Named for recipients

AUTHOR: Paul

DATE of WRITING: Late 55 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Ephesus

RECIPIENTS: Church at Corinth

KEY VERSE: *For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ... We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.* 4:5; 5:20-21

KEY WORDS: "Ministry" (18 times), "glory, boast" (20 times)

PURPOSE:

1 CORINTHIANS	2 CORINTHIANS
Objective & Practical	Subjective & Personal
Insight into the character of an early church	Insight into the character of Paul
Deliberate Instruction	Impassioned Testimony
Warning against pagan influences	Warning against Judaistic influences

THEME: Paul defends himself as a true minister of the Gospel and reestablishes a good relationship with the Corinthians.

BACKGROUND Paul spent 1 ½ years at Corinth on his Second Missionary Journey. He left for Ephesus and Apollos stayed at Corinth awhile. Then Paul wrote a letter to the Corinthians condemning immorality and asking them to start a collection for the poor. We don't have a copy of this letter. As reports came to Paul in Ephesus about the problems arising in Corinth, he wrote to them the letter we call 1 Corinthians. Timothy went to Corinth to help get things settled, but more difficulties arose. To counter Paul's recent letter, his apostolic authority was being questioned. Timothy personally went to Paul with this matter and Paul stopped by Corinth for a short visit during which he was grossly insulted by someone in the church. After he left, Paul sent a letter about the money they were collecting for Jerusalem, a letter we don't have. Titus delivered this letter and then was to bring a report back to Paul. Paul was so anxious to find out the news that he started out to meet Titus. They ran into each other half way, and Paul rejoiced in Titus' good report of their godly response to Paul's words. This made Paul so glad he immediately wrote another letter to them, which we call 2 Corinthians. Later Paul went there and stayed for 3 months, during which time he wrote the letter to the Romans. 2 Corinthians is the most autobiographical of Paul's Epistles. It provides insight into his personal life and ministry not seen elsewhere. Because of the false charges against him, Paul reveals things about himself and his ministry he would never have written down. If it sounds like bragging, it's really just self-defense. Paul knows they won't believe God's truth unless they see him as God's true messenger. Thus we get rare insight into the warm, human side of Paul. This letter comes from his heart, unlike Romans which comes from his head.

I. COMMISSION OF PAUL (1:12 – 7:16) False teachers caused Paul a lot of trouble. They often carried fake letters of commendation so they could minister in churches and be paid by those

churches. While doing so they viciously criticized Paul's appearance and poor speaking ability. They said he didn't have apostolic authority since he wasn't one of Jesus' 12 disciples. Paul answer their charges and talks about what he had been doing and why. He shows that his words are from God, and that therefore they are correct in believing and accepting them. He shares from his heart about what he has been through and why.

II. CONTRIBUTION FOR THE SAINTS (8:1 – 9:15) Wherever he went, Paul encouraged the Gentile churches to collect money to send to Jerusalem to help their poor brothers there. The gospel came through the Jews to the Gentiles, and now they can help them back. Jews in Jerusalem who became believers lost their families, jobs, everything. Paul talked to the Corinthians about this, too, showing it is all of our responsibility to help believers in need.

III. CREDENTIALS OF PAUL (10:1 – 13:10) Paul answered charges about his being too easy on some in the church. He refers to Jesus' example of forgiveness and mercy. He is accused of not accepting support for his ministry, and he explains why he chose to not exercise that right. He even told them of a time he died and went to heaven before coming back to life. What a wonderful experience that was!

In conclusion, Paul tells them to repent and turn 100% from false teachings and teachers to God, so things would be fine when Paul got there. He said he wanted to come in love and joy, not with scoldings or disciplining. He promised he would come soon and prove beyond doubt that God supported him and his teachings.

OUTLINE OF 2 CORINTHIANS

I. COMMISSION OF PAUL (Explanation) 1-7

- A. Confidence of the Ministry 1:1-2:11
- B. Character of the Ministry 2:12-6:10
 - 1. Triumph in the Ministry 2:12-16
 - 2. Qualifications for the Ministry 2:17-3:6
 - 3. Basis for the Ministry 3:6-4:6
 - 4. Trials in the Ministry 4:7-12
 - 5. Prospects in the Ministry 4:13-5:10
 - 6. Program of the Ministry 5:11-21
 - 7. Description of the Ministry 6:1-10
- C. Commitment to the Ministry 6:11-7:16

II. CONTRIBUTION FOR THE SAINTS (Exhortation) 8-9

- A. Collection from Macedonia 8:1-9
- B. Collection in Corinth 8:10-9:15

III. CREDENTIALS OF PAUL (Vindication) 10-13

- A. Commendation of the Ministry 10:1-18
- B. Conduct in the Ministry 1:1-12:18
 - 1. Paul's Actions 11:1-15
 - 2. Paul's Sufferings 11:16-33
 - 3. Paul's Vision 12:1-10
 - 4. Paul's Unselfishness 12:11-18
- C. Concern for the Ministry 12:19-13:14



ROMANS: SALVATION

TITLE: Named for the recipients

AUTHOR: Paul

DATE of WRITING: 56 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Corinth

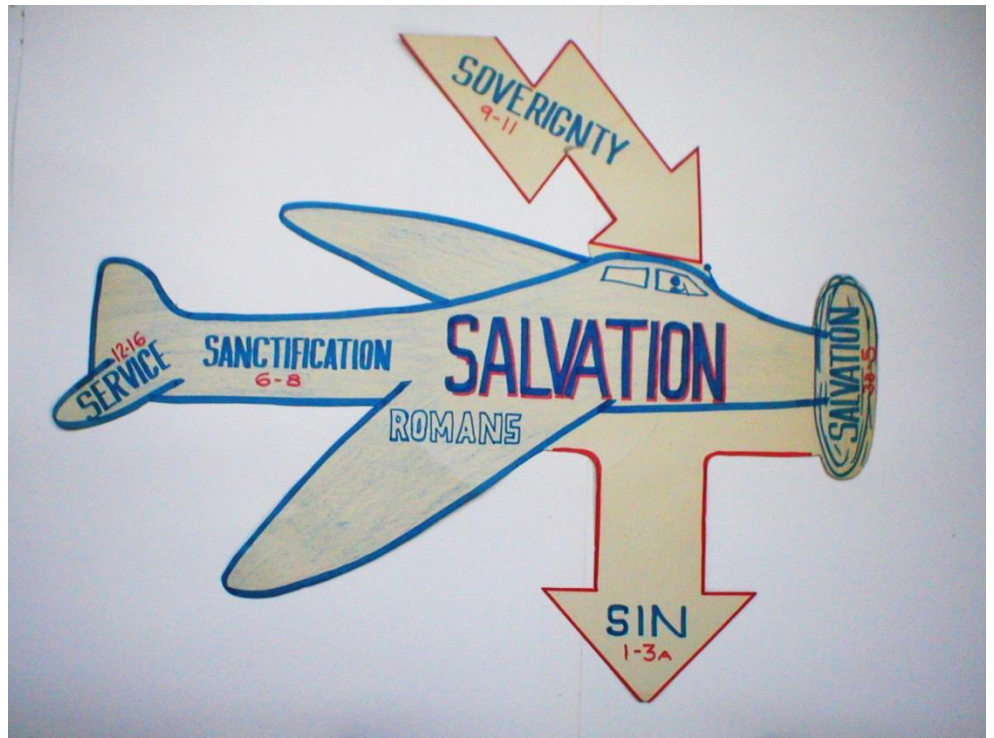
RECIPIENTS: Church at Rome

KEY VERSE:: *I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."* 1:16-17

KEY WORDS: "Christ" (39 times), "faith" (37 times), "justify" 17 times

PURPOSE: To teach the basic truths of the Christian faith to a place he has long wanted to visit but hasn't been able to visit.

THEME: All about salvation and living the Christian life.



Every preacher's dream is to have one time in his life when he can say whatever he wants with no time limit and no interruptions. Perhaps that's why so many of us dream of writing a book. Most of us will have to wait until heaven, though, for the chance to preach and teach without a time limit. Few of us get that chance on earth. Paul is one of the fortunate ones. He was known to preach all night long, but he still had time constraints. He started in Athens giving his total overall teaching of salvation and the Christian life, but he didn't get to finish. Finally, in writing to the Romans, he was able to say it all!

THE GREATNESS OF ROMANS Romans is perhaps the finest book in the New Testament. Many would say that if they had to pick just one book of the Bible to keep and use it would be the book of Romans. It has led to more great revivals than any other book and, because of its breadth and scope, stands head and shoulders above other books. Paul's other writings were to address specific problems or doctrinal issues. In Romans he is free to choose his topic, and he chose salvation and its results in our life. There is no greater topic to be had.

LIVING BY FAITH Paul starts off stating his theme in 1:16-17: "The righteous shall live by faith." This is actually quoted from Habakkuk and led to Martin Luther's conversion and the Reformation. It is actually a play on words in the Aramaic by Paul. First he says that those who become justified shall have eternal life by faith, accepting God's free gift of salvation. That is expanded in Romans 1-4. Then he also says that those who have become justified by faith shall live their daily lives by that same faith. This is expanded in Romans 5-15. This not only summarizes the book but our own lives.

I. SIN – guilt of all (1:18 – 3:20) Before showing the solution, Paul shows the problem – sin. Those without God’s revelation (Gentiles) are guilty of sin. Those with God’s revelation (Jews) are also guilty of sin. In fact, ALL are guilty and condemned.

II. SALVATION – provision for all (3:21 – 5:21) God provided for our sins in the person of Jesus Christ (3:21-31). It is up to us to freely accept this gift of salvation by faith (4:1-25). When we do, we have all the blessings and benefits of salvation (5:1-11). This is all freely given in Jesus (5:12-21). However the book doesn’t end here. Salvation is just the start, then comes the command to live for Jesus.

III. SANCTIFICATION – provision for all believers (6:1 – 8:39) After salvation we must live a holy life unto God. Our sin has been paid for and removed, so in actual practice we are to not live in sin (6:1-23). We are freed from the power of sin to control us. Grace is not an excuse to sin. We’ll never have victory over sin by trying to keep the law, for that isn’t its purpose (7:1-25). We have freedom only in Jesus (8:1-39). If Romans is the crown jewel of the Bible, then Romans 8 is the focal point of most beauty in this whole jewel. It is certainly a chapter well worth memorizing. It shows the victory we have in Jesus.

IV. SOVEREIGNTY – provision for Jews & Gentiles (9:1 – 11:36) With Gentiles now accepted by faith, what about Jews? God sovereignly chose them through Abraham. Even though they disobeyed and failed Him, He won’t reject them. He may temporarily set them aside so Gentiles can come to salvation, but they will one day turn to Jesus for salvation and be restored as God’s chosen people.

V. SERVICE – provision for daily life (12:1 – 15:13) Paul concludes, as he always does, by applying the doctrine he has just taught to daily life. He changes from teacher to preacher. He talks about our daily life (12:1-21), daily conduct (13:1-14), and daily relationships (14:1 – 15:13).

Spend time in this most special book. It’s a treasure mine of special promises and blessings.

OUTLINE OF ROMANS

Opening message 1:1-17

I. SIN (The Need of Salvation) 1:18-3:20

- A. Those Without the Bible are Guilty 1:18-32
- B. Those With the Bible are Guilty 2:1-3:8
- C. All Mankind is Guilty 3:9-30

II. SALVATION (The Way of Salvation) 3:21-5:21

- A. God’s Provision – Christ 3:21-31
- B. God’s Condition – Faith 4:1-25
- C. Man’s Free Benefit 5:1-11
 - 1. Justification 5:1a, 9a
 - 2. Peace with God 5:1b
 - 3. Access Into God’s Grace 5:2a
 - 4. Exult in Hope 5:2b-4
 - 5. Love of God 5:5a, 6-8
 - 6. The Holy Spirit 5:5b
 - 7. Saved from God’s Wrath 5:9b, 10b
 - 8. Reconciled to God 5:10-11
- D. Christ’s Free Provision 5:13-21

III. SANCTIFICATION (The Life of Salvation) 6:1-8:39

- A. Free from Sin 6:1-23
- B. Free from Law 7:1-21
- C. Free from Flesh 8:1-39
 - 1. New Freedom 8:1
 - 2. New Law of Life 8:2
 - 3. New Power 8:3-4
 - 4. New Desires 8:5
 - 5. New Results 8:6
 - 6. New Attitude 8:7
 - 7. New Sphere of Life 8:8-10
 - 8. New Guarantee 8:11
 - 9. New Allegiance 8:12
 - 10. New Duty 8:13
 - 11. New Guidance 8:14
 - 12. New Intimacy with God 8:15
 - 13. New Relationships 8:16-17
 - 14. New Privilege 8:17-18, 20-22
 - 15. New Hope 8:23-25
 - 16. New Prospect 8:17b, 18b, 19
 - 17. New Assistance 8:26-27
 - 18. New Confidence 8:28-30
 - 19. New Assurance 8:31-39



IV. SOVEREIGNTY (The Scope of Salvation) 9:1-11:36

- A. Israel's Past: Election 9:1-29
- B. Israel's Present: Rejection 9:30-10:21
- C. Israel's Future: Salvation 11:1-36

V. SERVICE (The Service of Salvation) 12:1-15:13

- A. Daily Life 12:1-21
 - 1. Service and Self 12:1-2
 - 2. Service and Gifts 12:3-8
 - 3. Service and Believers 12:9-16
 - 4. Service and Unbelievers 12:17-21
- B. Daily Conduct 13:1-14
 - 1. Service and Government 13:1-7
 - 2. Service and Love 13:8-10
 - 3. Service and Dedication 13:11-14
- C. Daily Relationships 14:1-15:13

Closing Message 15:14-16:27

24f. Trip to rome

This time in Paul's life could be called the beginning of the end. While he will live and minister for almost a dozen more years, he will no longer be the foremost evangelist and church planter. He will no longer be in the vanguard of the church as it grows and spreads. He will still write many important books, thus having a key role in formulating doctrine, but he won't be the point man as the church moves forward. No one man will replace him, but instead God will raise up a group of men such as Timothy, Titus, Mark and many others to work in various areas. The church is too spread out for any one man to coordinate and lead it all anymore. Faithful Luke stays with Paul no matter what and records for us what Paul goes through (Acts 21-28) from 57 to 62 AD.

FRIDAY, MAY 27, 57 Despite being warned that he would be imprisoned, Paul continued to Jerusalem to finish his mission. He delivered the offering money to help the poor Jewish believers there and reported to James about what God was doing among Gentiles throughout the world. Jewish believers in Jerusalem were very strict about believers having to keep the law. They were reluctant to move quickly from law to grace. This caused problems between them and Gentile believers. The Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) was to resolve such an issue. Because of his great involvement with Gentiles, and because his main emphasis wasn't to force them to obey the Jewish law, Jewish believers in Jerusalem were accusing Paul of telling them to NOT keep the law. This was not true, but rumors can be a terrible things to stop.

None of the leaders wanted the church divided into a Jewish church and a Gentile church. With Paul's high visibility, some would gravitate to him and others gather in opposition to him. Paul thought he could avoid this by doing something to show that he wasn't opposed to the keeping of the law, if it was done for the right reason (to honor God, not to earn salvation). Thus it was decided that he would pay for the sacrifices for four Jews who wanted to offer them but couldn't afford them. This should show he wasn't against keeping the law.

SUNDAY, MAY 29 Saturday was the Sabbath so nothing was done, in honor of keeping it free from work, but on Sunday Paul paid for the sacrifices for these men for 7 days.

THURSDAY, JUNE 2 As was his habit, Paul went to the temple every day to study, teach, pray and worship. Some long-time enemies from Asia saw him in the temple. They had seen him in town earlier with an Ephesian Gentile and thus jumped to the conclusion that Paul still had the man with him in the temple. When this rumor spread a riot ensued, for the penalty of bringing a Gentile into the forbidden part of the temple was immediate death for the Gentile. No Gentile was found, but the mob of those who were opposed to Paul because he was a Christian grew and spread out, until they found him and tried to kill him. Roman soldiers from Antonia rescued Paul and carried him away because he was too wounded from his beating to walk. The Romans thought Paul was a trouble maker and were surprised to find he was an educated Roman citizen. He got permission to speak to the crowd that had followed along and gave a short summary of his life. When he got to the part about God providing salvation for Gentiles as well as Jews, the mob erupted again and tried to kill him, so the Romans put him in prison for safe keeping.

FRIDAY, JUNE 3 The Sanhedrin, the ruling body of Israel, sent some leading men to tell the Romans why they hated Paul. Paul, not realizing the speaker was the high priest, verbally insulted him and a Jewish guard slapped Paul for it. When Paul realized who the man was he apologized. Then he started talking about the resurrection, which started the Sadducees and Pharisees, the 2

main political parties in the Sanhedrin, to argue heatedly, for each believed differently. That night, while Paul slept, Jesus appeared to Paul and told him to take courage, for he would testify about Jesus in Jerusalem. That had been Paul's dream for many years. Little did he know how it would come about.

SATURDAY, JUNE 4 Meanwhile, a group of 40 Jews banded together and pledged to not eat until Paul was dead. They conspired as to how they could most easily end his life. Somehow Paul's nephew, who was in Jerusalem, found out about this plot and told Paul, who told the Roman authorities. To protect his life, the Romans decided to transfer Paul to Caesarea where security was stronger and Jewish opposition lest severe. Paul was moved by night, guarded by a large detachment of Roman soldiers. They made one stop on the way and arrived in Caesarea safely.

THURSDAY, JUNE 9 Felix was an ex-slave who stole his wife from her first husband. He was a fine military man but didn't make the transition to political leadership too well. Religious leaders and their fancy lawyers arrived from Jerusalem to press charges against Paul before Felix and his court. They accused Paul of treason and stirring up trouble. Paul gave his own defense. Felix said he would issue a decision later and placed Paul under house arrest so his friends could have access to him.

MID-JUNE Soon after that trial, Felix held another trial with his wife Drusilla, who was a wild woman with some Jewish background. They heard Paul's testimony again, didn't make a decision, and said they would listen more later. They were stalling for a bribe, after which they would release him.

JULY 59 Two years passed with Paul still under house arrest. Felix was replaced by Festus who was honorable, fair and good to the Jews, who were quite difficult to rule. The religious rulers in Jerusalem petition Festus to have Paul transferred to Jerusalem for trial as a favor to them, a show of good will. Paul refused, for he knew he would be ambushed and killed before reaching Jerusalem. When Festus wanted him to go to Jerusalem Paul appealed to Caesar, a special right that Roman citizens had, like appealing to our Supreme Court. Nero was the Caesar at that time.

LATER IN JULY 59 Agrippa heard Paul's case, along with his sister/wife Bernice. Agrippa was a shrewd politician. His father had beheaded James. Festus asked his advice on how to handle Paul's appeal to Caesar, for there really weren't any charges against Paul except some religious ones by the Jews. He couldn't be sent to Caesar on those charges, but to release him would bring down the wrath of the religious rulers. That would not be a wise political move at all.

THE NEXT DAY Paul spoke to them all, giving his testimony again and inviting them to believe. They stalled and put Paul off. Now they couldn't release him because he had appealed to Caesar.

MID AUGUST – OCT 4, 59 Paul sailed to Crete.

OCTOBER 5 They arrived in Fair Havens. It was too late to sail to Rome because the weather became dangerous, but the centurion didn't want to wait until spring so decided to chance it.

OCTOBER 10-24 Sure enough, they ran into a terrible storm which swept the ship onto a beach.

OCTOBER – FEB 60 Paul and others spent the winter on Malta. Paul spent the winter ministering.

EARLY MARCH 60 Paul arrived in Rome by the Appian Way. During his 2 years in prison there he wrote letters to Ephesus, Colossae, Philippi, and Philemon, letters in our Bible today.

EPHESIANS:

“IN CHRIST”

TITLE: Named for recipients

AUTHOR: Paul

DATE of WRITING: 60 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Rome (prison)

RECIPIENTS: Church at Ephesus

KEY VERSE: *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ... As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.* 1:3; 4:1

KEY WORDS: “In” (93 times); “grace” (12 times); “walk” (8 times); “body” (8 times)

PURPOSE: “In Christ” key phrase

Romans: We are justified “in Christ” (3:24)

1 Corinthians: We are sanctified “in Christ” (1:2)

2 Corinthians: We are vindicated “in Christ” (11:19)

Galatians: We are liberated “in Christ” (2:4)

Ephesians: We are exalted “in Christ” (1:3)

Philippians: We are exultant “in Christ” (1:26)

Colossians: We are complete “in Christ” (2:9)

Philemon: We are graced out “in Christ” (15)

1 Thessalonians: We are hopeful “in Christ” (1:3)

2 Thessalonians: We are glorified “in Christ” (1:12)

1 Timothy: We are faithful “in Christ” (1:18)

2 Timothy: We are triumphant “in Christ” (14:6)

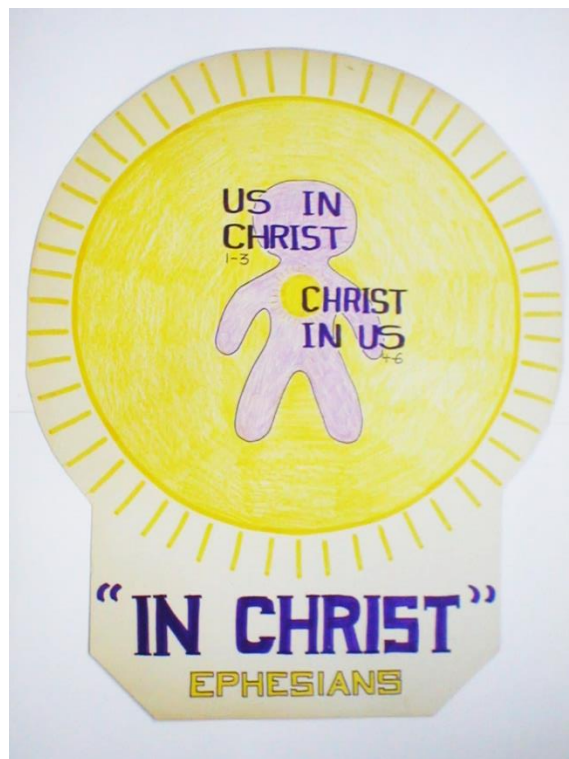
Titus: We are made examples “in Christ” (2:7)

THEME: The heavenly position of the believer and the daily life which corresponds to this position.

Suppose you had a long lost relative who died, leaving their whole estate to only you. The lawyers had tracked you down and are at this moment trying to contact you to tell you all these riches are now yours. It's already yours, you just don't realize it yet! It might seem impossible, but this is true. God is trying to contact you. Ephesians is the letter He is sending about all your inherited riches and blessings. It's not about material possessions which will decay and be left behind, it's about something yours eternally.

EPHESUS The city of Ephesus was one of the top 3 cities of its day, similar to New York City. Paul spent 3 years there. It was a very strategic location for a church.

US IN CHRIST (1 – 3) Paul starts talking about salvation, how God the Father planned it (election past, present & future – 1:4-6) He was the Architect who drew the blueprint. Then Paul writes about God the Son who provided it (redemption past, present and future – 1:7-12). He is the builder Who followed God's blueprint. Finally he writes of God the Holy Spirit Who applied our regeneration past, present and future – 1:13-14. He is the One Who delivers the title deed to that which Jesus built according to God's blueprint.



Of course, this is all by grace (2:8-9). God loves us. He knows everything about us and loves us anyway. There is nothing we have done or can do to earn His love. It is given freely and unconditionally. This is grace. There is nothing we can do to earn His love or lose His love. If we wish, we may reject His love, or even reject God Himself. But He will never stop loving us. When we decide to recognize and accept His love, we will feel a joy like we've never known before.

CHRIST IN US (4 – 6)

(1-3) LIVE what	you ARE (4-6)
POSITION of the believer	PRACTICE of the believer
Heavenly Standing	Earthly State
Our heritage in Christ	Our life in Christ
DOCTRINE	PRACTICE

As is his pattern, Paul applies in the second half of his writings what he teaches in the first half. Because of our position in Christ we should live like Him. We must live a holy life. WWJD. He applies this specifically to husbands, wives, parents, children, slaves and masters. He concludes with a most important section on spiritual warfare and our armor. Those who seek to live like Jesus and for Jesus better be prepared to fight for their spiritual growth, for the enemy will oppose any attempts to grow spiritually.

OUTLINE OF EPHESIANS

Opening 1:1-2

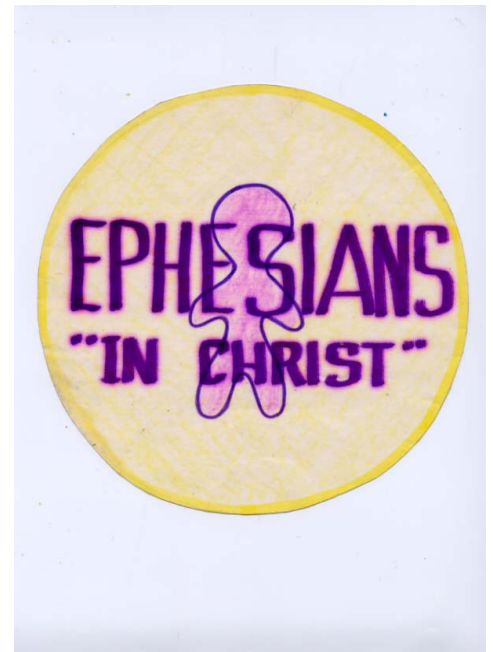
I. US IN CHRIST (Position of the Believer – Heavenly Standing) 1-3

- A. Chosen & Sealed 1:3-23
 - 1. Spiritual Blessings 1:3
 - 2. God the Father Planned It 1:4-6
 - 3. God the Son Provided It 1:7-12
 - 4. God the Holy Spirit Applied It 1:13-14
 - 5. Paul Prays 1:15-23
- B. Saved by Grace 2:1-10
 - 1. The Problem 2:1-3
 - 2. The Solution 2:4-8
 - 3. The Condition – Faith 2:8-10
- C. United in One Body 2:11-22
- D. Equal in the Body 3:1-21

II. CHRIST IN US (Practice of the Believer – Earthly State) 4-6

- A. Relation to Other Believers 4:1-6
- B. Relation to Spiritual Gifts 4:7-16
- C. Relation to Former Life 4:17-32
- D. Relation to Evil 5:1-17
- E. Relation to Holy Spirit 5:18-21
- F. Relation to Home Life 5:22-6:4
- G. Relation to Slaves & Masters 6:5-9
- H. Relation to Satan 6:10-20

Close 6:21-24



PHILIPPIANS:

JOY

TITLE: Named for recipients

AUTHOR: Paul

DATE of WRITING: 60-61 AD

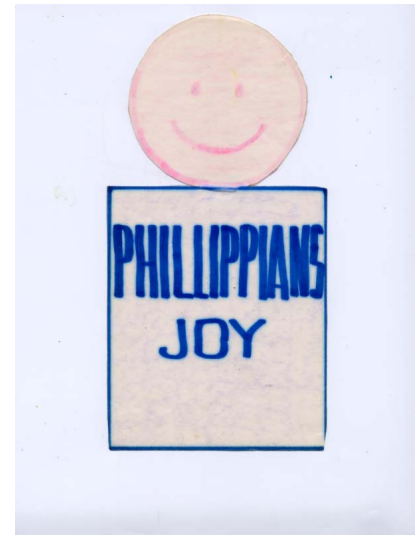
PLACE of WRITING: Rome (in prison)

RECIPIENTS: Church in Philippi

KEY VERSE: *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!* 4:4

KEY WORD: "Joy (rejoice)" 18 times; "Mind/think" 10 times

PURPOSE:



	GALATIANS	EPHESIANS	PHILIPPIANS
Style	Logical Arguments	Teaching & Application	Inform & Console
Main subject	Salvation (free from law)	Christ (possessions of believer 'in Christ')	Life of joy
Purpose	Correct	Instruct	Inspire
Tone	Sharp Rebuke	Calm, Victorious	Tender, Joyful

THEME: Rejoice in the Lord!

The famous German philosopher Nietzsche once said about Christians: "I would believe in their salvation if they looked a little more like people who have been saved!" The early church made a profound impression on their world because of their joy. Paul wrote to one of his favorite churches, the church at Philippi, to encourage them in their joy. There is no problem to correct, just joy to share – and Paul wrote it from prison!

PHILIPPI The city of Philippi was near Thessalonica. It was a Greek city which Paul had visited on his third missionary journey, about 6 or 7 years before writing to them. When the believers in Philippi heard that Paul was in prison, they sent Epaphroditus to Rome to see how Paul was doing and to deliver a gift of money. He needed money to pay for his quarters and food, for he was in house arrest and had to provide for these things himself. Epaphroditus realized Paul was needier than they thought, so he stayed and worked for money to give to Paul. During this time he got sick and almost died. When he recovered, Paul sent him back to Philippi with this letter. He wanted his friends there to rejoice that Epaphroditus was OK and that Paul was OK, too. Our book of Philippians is the letter Paul sent with him.

I. JOY IN SUPPORT (1:3-11) Paul begins by thanking them for their concern and support for him. He prays for them. Then he gets right to the heart of something he wanted to say.

II. JOY IN SUFFERING (1:12-30) They felt that prison had ended Paul's ministry, but Paul says NO! He pointed out clearly that his afflictions actually promoted the gospel, for he could witness to the guards and Caesar's household (many of whom became believers), and had lots more time to pray. Plus his being in prison had stimulated believers and churches everywhere to take up his work as well as to pray for him. Also, he used this time to write an important part of our New Testament: Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon. Truly "all things work together for the good of those who love the Lord" (Rom 8:28).

In addition, Paul saw his sufferings as making him more Christ-like. He exhorted them to remain steadfast and fearless when they, too, faced suffering.

III. JOY IN SUBMISSION (2:1-30) Paul then calls on them to make his joy complete by putting Jesus first in everything. He calls them to unity, humility and self-sacrifice. He uses Christ, Timothy, Epaphroditus and himself as examples. No matter what life brings them, they are to submit to it as God's will for them. This will bring them great joy and peace.

IV. JOY IN SALVATION (3:1 – 4:3) Paul warns them against the false teachers that are so prevalent everywhere. They aren't submitting to anyone and they don't have God's joy. Paul challenges them to follow his example, not the false teachers.

V. JOY IN SUFFICIENCY (4:4-19) Paul prays they will continue to have peace and joy in all they do. He rejoices at God's power to provide for him in prison and rejoices over their concern and sacrifice. He knows they can't afford to send him money but did. Their concern means more to him than the amount of money. He assures them that God will bless and reward them for their sacrificial giving and assures them he is well provided for.

Paul then concludes in typical letter-writing style for his day. He sends greetings and short messages to some of those in Philippi and passes on greetings to them from some of the men with him. His love for them is evident, as is theirs for him. Thus they rejoice in each other. What about you? Do others notice your joy and give Jesus the credit? Are you full of a joy that draws others to the Savior? If not, ask God for this fruit of His Spirit now!

OUTLINE OF PHILIPPIANS

Opening 1:1-2

I. JOY IN SUPPORTING 1:3-11

- A. Paul's Thanksgiving For Them 1:3-8
- B. Paul's Prayer For Them 1:9-11

II. JOY IN SUFFERING 1:12-30

- A. Afflictions Promote the Gospel 1:12-18
- B. Afflictions Exalt Christ 1:19-26
- C. Exhortation to the Sufferings 1:27-30

III. JOY IN SUBMISSION 2:1-30

- A. Exhortation 2:1-4
- B. Example 1: Christ 2:5-11
- C. Application 2:12-16
- D. Example 2: Paul 2:17-18
- E. Example 3: Timothy 2:19-24
- F. Example 4: Epaphroditus 2:25-30

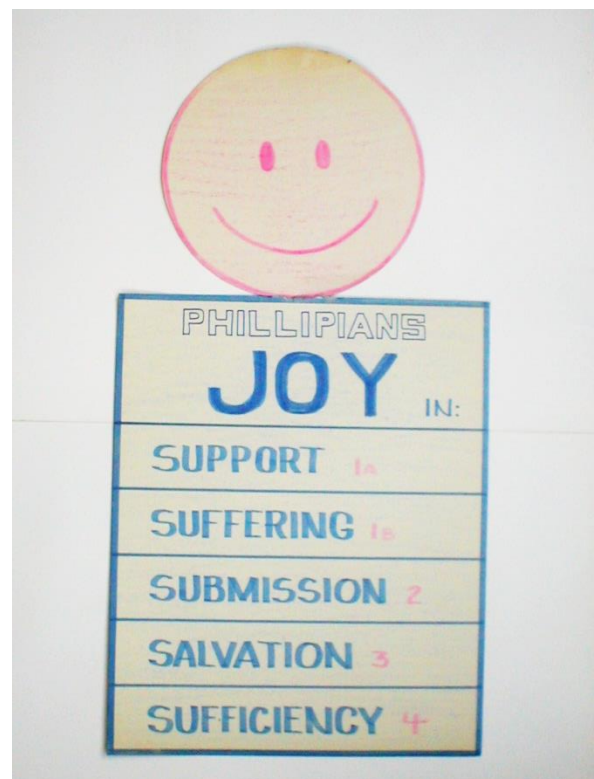
IV. JOY IN SALVATION 3:1-4:3

- A. Admonition 3:1
- B. Danger of Judaizers 3:2-6
- C. Purpose of Paul 3:7-16
- D. Exhortation 3:17-4:3

V. JOY IN SUFFICIENCY 4:4-19

- A. Peace 4:4-9
- B. Power 4:10-13
- C. Provision 4:14-19

Close 4:20-23



COLOSSIANS: CHRIST IS SUPREME

TITLE: Named for the recipients

AUTHOR: Paul

DATE of WRITING: 60 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Rome (in prison)

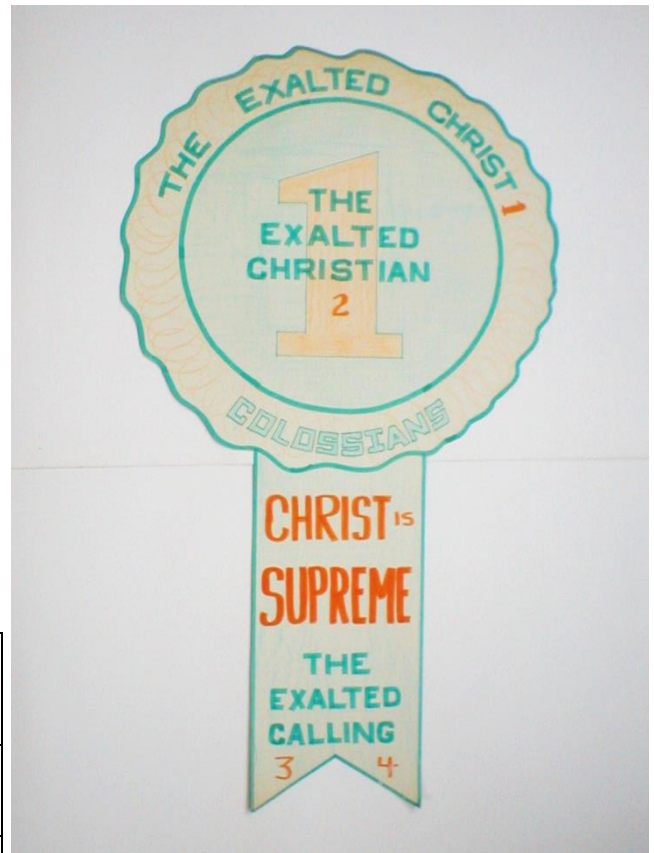
RECIPIENTS: Church in Colossae

KEY VERSE: *and who also told us of your love in the Spirit. ... and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.* 1:8; 2:10

KEY WORD: "head" (3 times)

PURPOSE:

	TO GIVE TRUE TEACHING	TO CORRECT FALSE TEACHING
ABOUT SALVATION	Romans	Galatians
ABOUT CHRIST	Ephesians	Colossians



THEME: Show the preeminence of Christ – the head not only of the church but of the whole universe.

In my hometown is a gray concrete building just off the main street. It's not the largest, nor the smallest building in town. I first remember seeing it when a child and often went past it but never paid much attention to it. Oh, I'd been inside a time or two, but didn't have any special memory of it. Then one Sunday I went inside to worship with a church that met there and I found good fellowship, times of praise and worship, and a source of learning and growth. Now the building has an entirely different meaning to me when I pass it.

There's a book in the New Testament that is quite similar. It's not the biggest nor the smallest. We all know it's there and go by it often, even stopping in from time to time. However we often don't take the time to really to see what's inside. It's the book we call Colossians.

BACKGROUND Colossae was a small town near larger Laodicea. Although he was in the nearby region, we have no record of Paul's ever having gone to Colossae. The church there was started by some of the nearby churches which Paul had started. Paul wrote this letter to them while in prison in Rome. Because it is so similar in content to the book of Ephesians, it is often ignored and Ephesians chosen to be studied.

Paul wrote to encourage them to stay true to God and watch for the false teaching called "Gnosticism." Jude and 1 John also refute this heresy. Gnostics believed that an intellectually enlightened few were far above the masses of humanity. To them, 'god' was an impersonal force and they rejected salvation for sin. Many of their lies Satan is recycling today under the label of 'New Age.' Paul refutes this heresy, not by showing its inconsistencies and inaccuracies but by showing the truth of Jesus. That's a good lesson for us, too. Instead of attacking another's false teaching, lift Jesus up as the Truth. Paul shows that Christ is Supreme over everyone and everything.

I. THE EXALTED CHRIST (1:15-29) Christ is exalted as the head of all creation and the church. He is also extolled as the reconciler of all things, the only One who reunites God and man. He points out that He did it by His work on the cross as our substitute. Paul says that true wisdom only comes by knowing Jesus, not through any counterfeit system which claims to have all the answers themselves.

II. THE EXALTED CHRISTIAN (2:1-23) Paul says that Christ is exalted over philosophy and appeals to them to totally turn from all false teachings and teachers. He points out that any system of legalism fails, that we are free from all that through Christ's death, burial and resurrection. Paul also shows Christ is greater than any mystical teaching or any system of asceticism.

III. THE EXALTED CALLING (3:1 – 4:6) Soon Jesus will return for us, so Paul says even now we are to be like Him for then we will be totally like Him. He then applies this to various areas of our lives: everyday life, family relationships, work responsibilities, and our own individual spiritual lives as well.

It's been said that if Christ is not Lord OF all, He's not Lord AT all. Make sure He is first in your life, the Supreme One who is exalted above all else. If He is not all in your life, He's not in His proper, deserving place!

OUTLINE OF COLOSSIANS

Opening 1:1-4

I. THE EXALTED CHRIST (All-Sufficiency of Christ) 1

A. Christ's Character 1:15-23

1. The Head of All Creation 1:15-20

2. Reconciler of All Things 1:21-23

B. Christ's Commission 1:24-29

II. THE EXALTED CHRISTIAN (Heresy About Christ) 2

A. Exalted Over Philosophy 2:1-10

B. Exalted Over Legalism 2:11-17

C. Exalted Over Mystical Teaching 2:18-19

D. Exalted Over Asceticism 2:20-23

III. THE EXALTED CALLING (Resurrection Life From Christ) 3-4

A. Certainties of our Calling 3:1-4

B. Characteristics of our Calling 3:5-4:6

1. In Everyday Life 3:5-17

2. In the Home 3:18-21

3. In Servant-Master Relationships 3:22-4:1

4. In Prayer 4:2-4

5. In Witness and Speech 4:5-6

Closing 4:7-18



PHILEMON:

CHRISTIAN COURTESY

TITLE: Named for recipient

AUTHOR: Paul

DATE of WRITING: 60 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Rome (in prison)

RECIPIENT: Philemon, a rich and influential believer in Colossae

KEY VERSE: *So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. 18 If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. 19 I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back-not to mention that you owe me your very self. 17-19*

KEY WORDS: "Love," "beseech," "profitable," "servant"

PURPOSE: Paul intercedes with Philemon to be gracious to his slave

Onesimus who ran away and is not returning to his service.

THEME: Christian courtesy and forgiveness



Several years ago Readers Digest printed the following. Talking with a friend recently, I remarked that status symbols are getting hard to come by. A great many people, if they want one badly enough, can have a new car, a fur coat, a Florida vacation, a boat, a cottage, a country-club membership, or even a college degree. "What's left," I asked, "to distinguish a man?" "Manners," he replied, "just good manners." The short letter of Philemon distinguishes Paul as a great man, a man of manners.

BACKGROUND Paul wrote to Philemon from prison just before his release. Onesimus, a slave of Philemon, ran away from Philemon after robbing him. He ended up in Rome meeting Paul, who led him to salvation. Onesimus stayed with Paul and helped him, becoming very useful to Paul while in house arrest. Philemon was a close friend of Paul. Paul had led him to salvation years before. He was one of the leaders in the church at Colossae. One of the house-churches that made up the church in Colossae met in his home. Now Paul is sending Onesimus back to his master with a letter asking for Philemon to forgive him. When the letter is closely studied one can see many ways in which Paul exercises Christian courtesy.

Paul begins by writing Philemon friend to friend. He doesn't 'pull rank' and use his apostolic authority. Courtesy is made up of petty sacrifices, putting others first. It must come from the heart, an attitude of true love for others.

I. PRAISE OF PHILEMON (4-7) Paul begins by praying for Philemon, asking God to bless him. He then praises him for all the good he has done for Paul and the Gospel. Complimenting people is very important and shows very good manners. Criticizing people is easy and does no one any good.

Remember that this letter was first read before the whole church. It wasn't delivered just to

Philemon, but was for the whole church. Having Paul praise him was good for Philemon, setting the groundwork for the request that was coming.

II. PLEA FOR ONESIMUS (8-17) Paul wants Philemon to have the same gracious forsaking of rights for Onesimus that Paul has for Philemon. He wants him, too, to be polite and kind, based on love. Paul is showing Philemon love by sending Onesimus back to him and not using force to make Philemon forgive him. Paul wants Philemon to show love to him by forgiving Onesimus and accepting him back. Paul even points out that Onesimus has been very useful to him in prison, and that accepting him back without pressing charges would be like accepting Paul himself. He is using every argument he can to make sure Philemon comes to a godly, courteous decision in this matter. He isn't trying to force or manipulate him, or he wouldn't have sent Onesimus back. He sincerely wants to make it easier for Philemon to do the right thing. Paul is treating Philemon as he would want to be treated in similar circumstances – the Golden Rule in operation.

Paul says he is Philemon's friend, fellow-worker, brother and partner. To reject Onesimus would be to reject Paul and such a thing is unthinkable. Notice Paul never tries to sort out the reason Onesimus left. Whose fault was it? What went wrong? It's very hard to get to the bottom of things that way, often it just makes things worse. Christian courtesy means forgiving without having to prove guilt or innocence.

III. PROMISE OF PAUL (18-22) Paul says he will even pay Onesimus' debt so Philemon doesn't have to take the loss. Of course Philemon would never charge Paul for such a thing. Paul is very positive in what he expects of Philemon, saying he knows he will do the right thing. That is much more effective than being critical or condemning. Paul concludes by saying he will come for a visit when released from prison, and he probably soon did come. Thus we see valuable insights into Paul the man and his relationships with other believers. It's a fine example for us, too. Remember, you can't be too courteous!

OUTLINE OF PHILEMON

Preface of Paul 1-3

I. PRAISE OF PHILEMON 4-7

- A. Prayer for Philemon 4
- B. Praise for Philemon 5-6
- C. Pleasure in Philemon 7

II. PLEA FOR ONESIMUS 8-17

- A. Personalness of Paul 8-10
- B. Profitableness of Onesimus 11-16
- C. Paradox of Onesimus 17

III. PROMISE OF PAUL 18-22

- A. Payment for Onesimus 18-20
- B. Pledge of Paul 21
- C. Purpose of Paul 22

Personal haters of Paul 23-25



24G. FINAL TRAVELS

PAUL'S FINAL TRAVELS

MARCH 60 – MARCH 62 Paul spent 2 years in prison in Rome before being released. Paul was able to teach some of the church leaders, for there already was a strong church established there. Many Jewish leaders came and listened with interest as he told his story to them, too. Timothy, Epaphras, Luke, Onesimus, Mark, Demus and others spent time with Paul there. He wrote letters which have become books in our Bible: Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians and Philemon. Eventually he was released. The Jews never opposed his release; they knew they couldn't stop him.

OTHER EVENTS During this time other events were happening in the early church. Both Matthew and Luke wrote their gospels around 60 AD. In 62 AD James, the brother of Jesus, was martyred. At about that same time Peter went to Rome.

MARCH 62 – FALL 67 Paul was free during these 5 ½ years. He traveled and ministered, but time and trials had broken his health. Others were carrying the church forward, but God still had a place and job for Paul. While it's hard to tell with any degree of certainty, we can put together a rough itinerary of Paul's travels during this time.

SPRING - FALL 62 Paul went to Ephesus with Timothy and left him there (1 Timothy. 1:3).

WINTER 62-63 Paul went to Philippi, his favorite Macedonian church (Philippians 1:26; 2:24). The only place he loved as much was Ephesus. He spent the winter here. During this time he wrote a letter to Timothy, who was struggling with the church in Ephesus. Strong-willed women and false teachers were causing his stomach to knot with stress, and he wanted permission to leave Ephesus, but Paul told him to get tough and deal with the situation. He also gave lots of practical advice. Paul had planned on joining Timothy but wasn't able to, so he wrote the letter instead.

SPRING 63 – SPRING 64 Paul spent this year in Asia Minor. First he went to Ephesus where he was able to assist struggling Timothy. Ephesus was the center for operations for all the churches in the area and a very key location. John and Mary were living in Ephesus, too. Nearby were other churches (the 7 churches in Revelation 2-3) and Paul visited them, too.

In Laodicea and Hierapolis, Epaphras was the leader. He was a close friend of Paul, having visited Paul in prison. False teachers were rampant in the area and Paul went there to help solidify the truth in the churches. These two towns were in the same valley, 6 miles apart, with a river flowing between them. Colossae was somewhat further upstream, about 10 miles. Epaphras had delivered the letter to them after Paul wrote it, the book we call Colossians.

During this time, Paul made his first-ever trip to Colossae, although he had already written to them. Epaphras founded the church there while Paul was in prison. Philemon lived there, and Paul said he'd come visit him when he could. Also Onesimus was there and Paul wanted to make sure he was OK and thank him for all his help during Paul's arrest in Rome. Apphia lived there as well, another close friend of Paul's. Archippus was one of the pastors there and he knew Paul as well. He was a son of Philemon.

OTHER EVENTS While Paul was in the Ephesus area important things were going on elsewhere. Luke wrote Acts to his friend Theophilus as a follow-up to the Gospel of Luke. On July 18, 64 AD fire broke out late at night at the northeast end of the Circus Maximus. This colonnade of shops was highly flammable and strong winds fanned the fire. For 5 days it raged, burning much of Rome.

Rumor had it that Nero started it himself so he could rebuild Rome just the way he wanted it. To counter this, he used the Christians as a scapegoat. A great persecution then began.

It was during this time, in 64 AD, that Peter wrote the letter we call 2 Peter shortly before he was martyred by Nero.

SPRING 64 – SPRING 66 To please Nero local officials everywhere started killing Christians. Leaders were especially sought, and Paul above all others. For this reason he went to Spain, a trip he had been wanting to take for some time anyway. It was God's time for Peter to die but not Paul. His work in Macedonia and Asia Minor was done. Other pastors were now in leadership and doing a fine job. The persecution put things underground for the time anyway. Thus Paul sailed from Asia Minor to Massilia (today Marseilles), Spain.

There were Jews and God-fearers there in all the main cities. Paul wanted a fresh start to a new work where there was none, he didn't want to build on someone else's foundation. He found that in Spain. There were some believers there, but no organized church with outreach.

OTHER EVENTS While Paul was in Spain the letter to the Hebrews was written, quite possibly by Paul's student Priscilla. The Jewish war or rebellion against Rome also started. It would end in 70 AD with the Jews defeated and their nation destroyed.

EARLY SUMMER 66 Paul then went to visit Titus on Crete and helped organize the weak churches there. Judaism was flourishing and heresy was strong. Paul couldn't stay long enough to really do all that needed doing, but got things started.

SUMMER 66 Next Paul went to Miletus to join with Trophimus, an Ephesian who left Greece with Paul for Judea. In Jerusalem he was the innocent cause of Paul's arrest, the one they said Paul brought into the inner court. He got sick while there and couldn't travel on with Paul.

Paul then went to Ephesus where Onesiphorus helped him. Once again he risked himself to help Paul, as he had when Paul was in prison. Timothy was there, too. False teachers named Hymenaeus and Philetus were there, too.

While there, Paul wrote back to Titus, encouraging and advising him in the problems Titus faced. That letter is the book of Titus in our Bible.

FALL 66 Paul visited Carpus while there and left his cloak, books and parchments there. Then he traveled to Corinth to see Erastus who was helping lead the struggling church there. The plan was to have Titus join Paul at Nicopolis where they would winter together.

WINTER 66 – 67 Nicopolis was a good place to reach out to the surrounding area during the winter. Paul worked with all the churches of Illyricum during that time. Artemas and Tychius were there with him helping him.

SPRING – FALL 67 Paul next went to Macedonia and Greece. It would be his final place of ministry. It was nice he got to see his beloved Philippi churches one more time.

It's obvious God was behind the growth of the early church. He chose, trained and placed the leaders. He decided who would live and who would die. It is His church. He is the Head. Paul was willing to play whatever role God chose for him, great or small. He had a servant's heart and was a faithful worker for the kingdom – a fine example to us today.

PAUL'S 2ND TRIP TO ROME

It is not part of God's plan to reveal to us the time or manner of our homecoming. That is hidden in the heart of God. It's just as good we don't know. Often, though, we can read the signs and see it coming. Such was the case with Paul. God allowed him to surmise his coming death from the circumstances he was in.

FALL 67 Christians weren't safe anywhere. They were no longer protected as a sect of Judaism. They were arrested and killed, or sent to Rome for entertainment in the coliseum. Leaders were especially sought after. Paul still had the largest reputation of any Christian alive, so his capture was a real prize.

While in Ephesus, a coopersmith named Alexander saw a chance to get revenge and riches both, so he betrayed Paul and then testified against him for a fee.

Because of his status Paul was sent directly to Rome. The short ship trip was difficult in winter, and Paul was old and worn out. He felt betrayed, deserted, alone and rejected. Demas forsook him for the love of this world. Crescens went to Galatia the same way. Titus had to go to Salmatia to minister. Faithful Luke, however, stayed with Paul.

PAUL IN ROME It was a different Rome Paul entered this time, and a different Paul who entered it. He knew the end was near and he was ready. The fire had changed Rome, physically and mentally. Nero had brought persecution, fear and terror everywhere (like Hitler in Germany). Much of Rome was still in ruins. Other parts had newer, bigger buildings and streets.

Prison was more severe, too. This was no house arrest but chains in a foul cell. A few friends courageously visited him, putting themselves and their families at great risk. No one dared stand by him at trial, though, or they would have died as well. All were needed alive to preach and teach.

Paul's mind was still strong, but he knew his body was used up. He was content with his life and how he had used it. There were some things he would have done differently, like not kill Christians, but once he saw the light he, followed it.

He knew his trial would not be fair, that the sentence of death had already been passed. It was just a matter of time. No one was looking for the truth, just for an excuse to kill Paul. Because his cell was cold, dark and boring, Paul asked to have his cloak, books and parchments brought to him. He wanted to spend his final days studying God's Word.

Because he was Public Enemy #1, Paul was kept in the Carcer (later called Mamertine) prison. It was at the foot of Capitoline Hill. Paul himself was in a subterranean chamber, accessible only by a hole in the roof. There were no lights except what a friend might bring. Food was dropped in through the hole in the roof.

Knowing it would mean their deaths as well, Paul didn't want others to visit him and die. Each one was needed to keep the church healthy and growing. Tychius who was with him in prison last time now was in Ephesus. Erastus was in Corinth. Trophimus was in Miletus, Titus in Dalmatia (Illyricum) and Crescens in Galatia. Demas had left God's word for the world. Phygellus and Hermogenes had become apostates and were working against Paul. Loyal Luke was the only one still with Paul. What a bonding they must have developed over the years and all they had been through together. What comfort they must have brought each other. I'm sure God blessed Luke equally with Paul for all he did to help and support Paul. Without Luke, Paul wouldn't have been able to do all he did. One role is as important as the other. If you are in leadership, realize those who support you are crucial to your success. If you are supportive, remember that your role and reward is as great as the one you support.

That's not to say Paul didn't miss the others, especially Timothy and Mark. Timothy was in Ephesus, doing his best to get to Paul in Rome before Paul died. He was imprisoned awhile himself

because of his association with Paul. Mark had reunited with Paul years ago after their parting on the first missionary journey. Both had matured and grown greatly since then.

PAUL'S TRIAL #1 Paul was acquitted of the charge of leading Christians to burn Rome for there was no evidence against him. Alexander the Cooper Smith came all the way to Rome to testify against Paul. He was paid for his false testimony. Paul said, though, that he felt Jesus' presence with him in a special way, as we all will if put in such difficult circumstances. He didn't have any opportunity to preach or defend himself at this trial, however.

It was about this time, the fall of 67, that Paul wrote his final letter – to Timothy of all people. It was very interesting and even more important because of their relationship and feeling it might be their final contact. What a blessing those words were preserved for us today! “For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day-and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.” (2 Timothy 4:6-8)

PAUL'S TRIAL #2 Before Paul was tried by magistrates, now by Nero himself. Nero was at the end of his life, at his worst. He was stained with every crime: murderer of his mother, wives and best friends. Picture Paul in prisoner's clothes, bent, white-haired and bald, giving his life for the glory of God and man. How ironic that someone like Nero should be judging someone like Paul! That's how things go in this world, but not in the next! Paul had a godly attitude about it all, not one of self-pity or bitterness. “In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Timothy 3:12). We don't know if Paul had one final chance to share his faith at this trial, but knowing how God works I wouldn't be surprised if God gave him this one final privilege.

SPRING 68 - PAUL'S DEATH “So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, 9 who has saved us and called us to a holy life-not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, 10 but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. 11 And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. 12 That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.” (2 Timothy 1:8-12) “Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, 9 for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God's word is not chained. 10 Therefore, I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. 11 Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; 12 if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us; 13 if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.” (2 Timothy 2:8-13)

Because he was a Roman citizen he couldn't be tortured. Paul was decapitated by sword beyond the city walls. He was well protected to make sure Christians didn't attack to free him. Unbelieving onlookers saw it as his defeat, but in reality it was Paul's triumphant procession of victory. A note of interest is that Nero himself died a few months later. Two years after that Jerusalem fell (September 2, 70 AD) and with it the end of one era and the start of another. God's torch passed from the Jews to the Christians (temporarily).

1 TIMOTHY: CHURCH ORDER

TITLE: Named for recipient

AUTHOR: Paul

DATE of WRITING: 62 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Macedonia

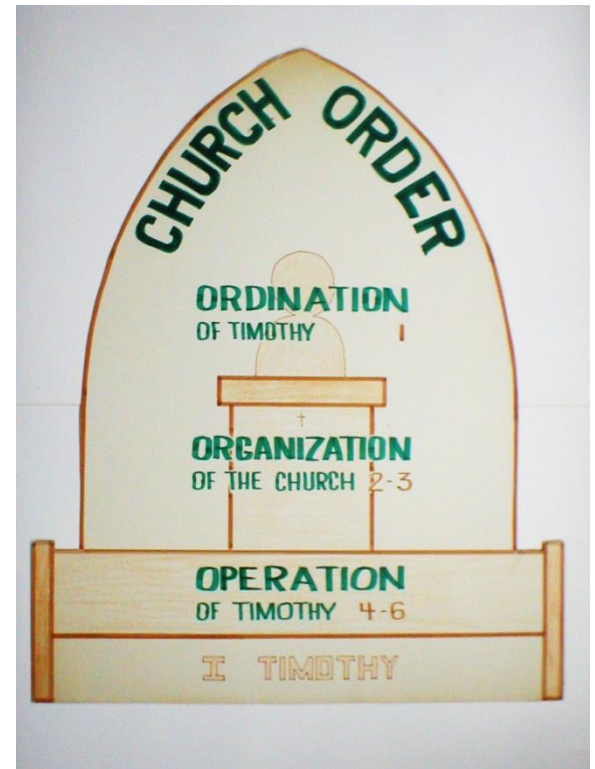
RECIPIENT: Timothy, a young pastor friend

KEY VERSE: *if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. ... But godliness with contentment is great gain. ... But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. ... Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, 3:15; 6:6, 11-13, 20*

KEY WORDS: "Good" (22 times); "godliness" (8); "doctrine" (8); "teach/teacher" (7)

PURPOSE: Paul is providing guidance for his young trainee as a pastor. He warns him about false teachers and explains how he should operate a church.

THEME: Correct church order.



Before we even knew if our firstborn would be a boy or girl, God laid it on both of our hearts to name him 'Timothy' because he would be a young pastor. Timothy in the Bible is a fine example for anyone to follow. Born to a Greek father and Jewish mother, he was led to salvation in Jesus by Paul on his first missionary journey. Both his mother, Eunice, and grandmother, Lois, had had a fine godly influence on him. Because of his spiritual gifts and rapid maturity, and also because he naturally got along very well with him, Paul asked Timothy to come with him and help on his second missionary journey. He helped Paul establish churches at Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea and Corinth. Paul sent him anywhere and everywhere as his official 'trouble-shooter,' to straighten out tough situations in churches which Paul himself was unable to visit. This went on for years. Timothy and Paul were very close to the very end. He was probably with Paul in Rome the second time Paul was imprisoned there. This arrest ended in Paul's execution. Timothy himself died as a martyr, killed by the Roman government.

BACKGROUND 1 Timothy was written about 3 years before Paul died. Timothy had been sent to Ephesus to iron out problems there while Paul ministered elsewhere. Paul expected to join him in Ephesus but was delayed, so he wrote this letter to Timothy instructing him how to carry on until he got there. Thus we have Paul's insight into how a church should run. Not being able to get to Ephesus was frustrating to Paul and Timothy, but certainly to our benefit.

I. ORDINATION OF TIMOTHY (1:3-20) Evidently things weren't going smoothly for easy-going Timothy. False teachers, domineering women, and church conflicts had him asking Paul if he could please leave Ephesus. It was so bad it was causing him stomach problems! Paul told him in no uncertain terms to stay and face up to the opposition. While that would not have been hard for Paul, Timothy was obviously natured quite differently. Thus Paul encourages and supports Timothy in this

difficult assignment. He gives him advice and guidance as well as reminding him of his obligation to stay and do the job. The church needed order and he was the one to bring it.

II. ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH (2:1 – 3:16) Paul then talks about the importance of prayer in the church and that it should be led by men. He exhorts that Christian women should be marked by the inner adornment of the soul, not by the outward dress of the body. Their lives should express modesty and good works. Men are to be the leaders, women the supporters. Evidently that wasn't happening in Ephesus.

Paul then told Timothy what the qualifications should be for elders and deacons. The male leadership needed straightening up there, too. Who to choose for church leadership is always a very important subject. Since Paul wasn't able to visit there as soon as he had hoped, he instructs Timothy about how to choose and use leaders.

III. OPERATION OF TIMOTHY (4:1 – 6:19) This last section of 1 Timothy relates to Timothy's own walk and work within the church. Paul warns him about false teachers and reminds him of his duty to be a godly teacher. Paul talks about the church as a family and encourages Timothy to treat the church people as he would treat family members: with respect and honor.

How does your church stack up against Paul's standards as listed in 1 Timothy? If it isn't meeting those principles something is wrong. If Paul were alive he'd come straighten things out. He isn't and he won't, but God is and He will. Be a Timothy and bring order to your church.

OUTLINE OF 1 TIMOTHY

Opening 1:1-2

I. ORDINATION OF TIMOTHY (Charge to Timothy) 1

- A. Paul Warns Against False Teachers 1:3-11
- B. Paul Testifies to God's Grace 1:12-17
- C. Paul Charges Timothy to Minister 1:18-20

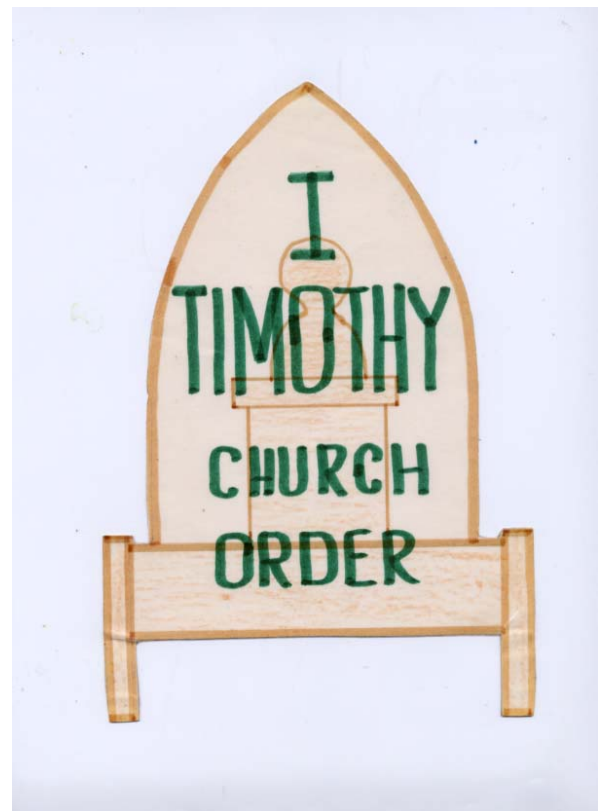
II. ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH (Challenges to the Church) 2-3

- A. Supplication of Prayer 2:1-8
- B. Subjection of Women 2:9-15
- C. Supervision of Leaders 3:1-16
 - 1. Elders 3:1-7
 - 2. Deacons 3:8-13
 - 3. Purpose of the Church 3:14-16

III. OPERATION OF TIMOTHY (Conduct of Timothy) 4-6

- A. Survey of Responsibility 4:1-15
 - 1. The Enemy: False Teachers 4:1-5
 - 2. The Duty: Be a Godly Teacher 4:6-16
- B. Support of Dependents 5:1-6:2
 - 1. To Those Younger or Older 5:1-2
 - 2. To Widows 5:3-16
 - 3. To Elders 5:17-25
 - 4. To Masters and Slaves 6:1-2
- C. Superiority of Godliness 6:3-19
 - 1. Over False Teachers 6:3-5
 - 2. Over Materialism 6:6-19

Close 6:20-21



TITUS:

DAILY WALK

TITLE: Named for recipient
 AUTHOR: Paul
 DATE of WRITING: 62 AD
 PLACE of WRITING: Corinth
 RECIPIENT: Titus, a young pastor Paul is training for ministry

KEY VERSE: *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. 12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly*

passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope-the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. ... But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. 8 This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone. 2:11-14; 3:4-8

KEY WORDS: "Good" (11 times); "good works" (6 times); "sound" (5 times)

PURPOSE:

1 TIMOTHY	TITUS	2 TIMOTHY
Mostly pastoral	Less pastoral	Mostly pastoral
Guard the gospel 6:20	Practice the gospel 3:8	Preach the gospel 4:2

THEME: How to live a godly life

After his third missionary journey, Paul went to Jerusalem where he was falsely accused and arrested. For his safety he was taken to Caesarea where he spent 2 years in house arrest. Paul appealed to Caesar and was taken to Rome. On the way he was shipwrecked. Eventually he was released because the Jews couldn't prove any charges against him. Paul then went to Ephesus and left Timothy there to help churches in that whole area. Paul continued on to northern Greece and wrote back to Timothy, encouraging him in his work and explaining about church order and organization (1 Timothy). Next Paul went to Crete and left Titus there to supervise those churches. Soon Paul left Crete and went to Corinth. From there he wrote back to Titus encouraging him. Eventually he ended up in Ephesus again where he was arrested for the second time and taken back to Rome for the crime of being a Christian. From prison there he wrote to Timothy again (2 Timothy).

BACKGROUND Sandwiched between 1 and 2 Timothy is the book of Titus which is very similar to 1 Timothy. Titus was a Gentile whom Paul led to salvation. Paul took him to the Jerusalem council to show the leaders a Gentile could be saved without being circumcised. At the end of the third missionary journey Titus again is mentioned. Paul sent him to Corinth to deal with delicate problems there (much the same as Timothy was sent to Ephesus). Mainly, though, Titus worked with the churches on Crete, just as Timothy worked with the churches in Ephesus.



I. CONDUCT OF THE LEADERS (1:5-16) Paul begins by reminding Titus how the church leaders were to live and act. Qualifications and requirements were given for deacons and elders. Paul also warns them about false teachers and their danger. Titus couldn't be everywhere on the island of Crete, so he needed dependable leaders to oversee the various house-churches there. This was the same set-up used in all the cities where there were churches.

II. CONDUCT OF THE LAITY (2:1-10) Paul tells Titus how all believers are to live. Older men are to be self-controlled, women reverent and faithful, younger men are to be sensible. All are to set godly examples for others. Servants, too, are to live godly, submissive lives.

In all things they are to live by grace. They are to turn from ungodly lusts and desires. They are to live remembering that Jesus could come back for them at any time and they are to always be ready. Holiness must characterize God's people.

In relationship to the government they are to be good citizens. To all people they are to be ready to do what is good, honest in all they say and do, gracious and forgiving to all, and considerate and humble at all times. This will show others what a Christian really is. They are to avoid strife and contentions among themselves.

Any who don't follow these principles are to be disciplined so they repent or are removed. This will show the seriousness of sin and keep the church pure. Living the Christian life is mandatory, not optional. It is a requirement, not suggestion. How are you doing?

OUTLINE OF TITUS

Opening 1:1-4

I. CONDUCT OF THE LEADERS (Requirements for Elders) 1

A. In Relation to God, Self and Others 1:5-9

1. Reason for Elders 1:5

2. Requirements for Elders 1:6-9

B. In Relation to False Teachers 1:10-16

1. Description of False Teachers 1:10-12

2. Duty of Elders 1:13-14

3. Defection by False Teachers 1:15-16

II. CONDUCT OF THE LAITY (Regulations for the Church) 2-3

A. In Relation to Their Own Age and Status 2:1-10

1. Aged Men 2:1-2

2. Aged Women 2:3-5

3. Young Men 2:6

4. Titus 2:7-8

5. Servants 2:9-10

B. In Relation to the World 2:11-15

1. Live by Grace, Not World 2:11-12

2. Life for Rapture, Not World 2:13

3. Life for Christ, Not World 2:14-15

C. In Relation to the Government 3:1

D. In Relation to All People 3:1-7

E. In Relation to Ungodly People 3:8-11

1. Maintain Good Works 3:8

2. Avoid Foolish Strife 3:9

3. Discipline the Unruly 3:10-11

Closing 3:12-14



2 TIMOTHY: FAITHFUL SERVICE

TITLE: Named for recipient

AUTHOR: Paul

DATE of WRITING: 64 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Rome (prison #2)

RECIPIENT: Timothy, a young pastor

KEY VERSE: *Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage-with great patience and careful instruction. 3 For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. 5 But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry. 4:1-5*

KEY WORD: "Good" (5 times)

PURPOSE: Paul is providing more guidance for the young man he is training in the pastorate. He tells him how to live as a true servant in a time of apostasy. He also asks Timothy to come to him quickly, as he was about to be executed.

THEME: Paul's final words are to faithfully serve God.

Paul has been serving God faithfully for over 30 years. It's been 20 years since his first missionary journey. He has suffered much, sacrificed much, and been near death often. His brilliant, gifted mind and strong personality has led the early church through its tough growing years when false teachers and jealous political leaders tried all they could to destroy it. Now he is in prison again. In the 5 years since his first imprisonment Paul has been able to travel to see churches he has started as well as go start new ones in places he had never been. Now the end is near and Paul knows it. God has raised up a new generation of local leaders to take over the guidance of the church. Paul is worn out physically. He writes one final letter, to the one person (other than faithful Luke who was with him to the end) he loves more than anyone, his son in the faith, Timothy. 2 Timothy contains Paul's dying words, his final communication as he faces death. If a news reporter had interviewed Paul at this time they would have asked him if he had any doubts about how he spent his life. "Paul, was it worth it?" "Yes!" Paul would affirm, "and much more." "What final parting words do you have for your followers out there?" the reporter would ask. Paul answered "Be faithful." That, in effect, is the message of 2 Timothy. "Be faithful!"

BACKGROUND Persecution is getting worse for believers. Thousands are being martyred. They are considered enemies of Rome with no rights to a fair trial. Then when Nero burned Rome and blamed it on the Christians, things got worse. Everyone started blaming them for everything. Peter is also in prison, soon to be crucified upside down. Paul is public enemy number one. He was betrayed and deceived while in Ephesus, and thus he now finds himself in prison in Rome. He is not under house arrest but in a dungeon awaiting execution. This strips away all pretense and gets right to the heart and core of what is in a person. When one faces death all façade is stripped away. That's what makes 2 Timothy such a revealing letter.

I. FAITHFUL TO GOD (1:3-18) Paul begins by encouraging Timothy to stay faithful to God and use his spiritual gift of teaching for God's glory. With all the oppression going on, it seems Timothy was fighting depression and Paul does his best to encourage and motivate him to stay faithful to God and not be ashamed of the gospel. Paul doesn't want Timothy to feel badly because of his own sufferings. He says that it's a real privilege to suffer for the gospel. Many are defecting under pressure, but Paul tells Timothy to make sure he remains faithful to Jesus.



II. FAITHFUL TO SELF (2:1-26) Paul then uses seven illustrations of faithfulness as examples to Timothy: a teacher, soldier, athlete, farmer, workman, vessel and slave. Knowing that things will actually get much worse for Timothy, Paul wants to make sure he stays true.

III. FAITHFUL TO OTHERS (3:1 – 4:15) Despite how bad the circumstances are, Paul tells Timothy to stay faithful to God and his ministry. He assures him that he is in God's will and tells him to live on so he will be glad of it when he dies. Keep things in eternal perspective is Paul's message. Paul concludes with compliments for those who have been faithful to him. He wants to see Timothy one more time before he dies if possible. We don't know if he got there in time or not. Some say he was arrested himself when he tried to see Paul. If so he was released and ministered in Ephesus for some time with John until being martyred for his faithfulness.

Paul would tell us the same thing today – be faithful. That was Jesus' request of His followers as well. What about you. Are you faithful? Are you passing the test? Make sure!

OUTLINE OF 2 TIMOTHY

Opening 1:1-2

I. FAITHFUL TO GOD (Hold Fast to the Gospel) 1

- A. Responsibility to Be Faithful 1:3-18
 - 1. Use God's Gift 1:3-6
 - 2. Don't Be Ashamed 1:8
 - 3. Share the Afflictions of the Gospel 1:8
 - 4. Hold Fast the Truth 1:13
 - 5. Keep Your Ministry 1:14
- B. Reason to Be Faithful 1:3-18
 - 1. Nature of God's Spirit 1:7
 - 2. Purpose of Salvation 1:9
 - 3. Achievements of Jesus 1:10
 - 4. Purpose of Ministry 1:11-12
 - 5. Defections of Many 1:15-18

II. FAITHFUL TO SELF (Pass on the Gospel) 2

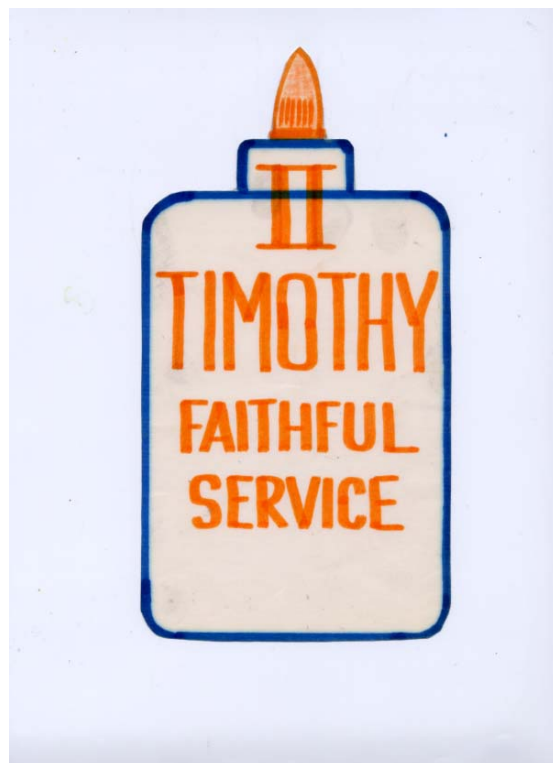
Pictures of Faithfulness

- 1. Teacher 2:2
- 2. Soldier 2:3-4
- 3. Athlete 2:5
- 4. Farmer 2:6
- 5. Workman 2:15-19
- 6. Vessel 2:20-22
- 7. Slave 2:23-26

III. FAITHFUL TO MINISTER (Protect the Gospel) 3-4

- A. Challenges to Faithfulness 3:1-9
- B. Comfort From Faithfulness 3:10-4:15
 - 1. Peace Despite Persecution 3:10-16
 - 2. Assurance of Being in God's Will 4:1-5
 - 3. A Good Finish in Life 4:6-7
 - 4. A Good Future After Life 4:8
 - 5. Good Friends in This Life 4:9-18

Closing 4:19-22



24H . EARLY CHURCH

During the life of Paul, the disciples who had been with Jesus also traveled and spoke , ministering for Jesus. Several of them wrote books. Most were martyred.

PETER and **PAUL** were both martyred in Rome about 66 AD, during the persecution under Emperor Nero. Paul was beheaded. Peter was crucified, upside down at his request, since he did not feel he was worthy to die in the same manner as his Lord.

ANDREW went to the "land of the man-eaters," in what is now the Soviet Union. Christians there claim him as the first to bring the gospel to their land. He also preached in Asia Minor, modern-day Turkey, and in Greece, where he is said to have been crucified.

"Doubting" **THOMAS** was probably most active in the area east of Syria. Tradition has him preaching as far east as India, where the ancient Marthoma Christians revere him as their founder. They claim that he died there when pierced through with the spears of four soldiers.

PHILIP possibly had a powerful ministry in Carthage in North Africa and then in Asia Minor, where he converted the wife of a Roman proconsul. In retaliation, the proconsul had Philip arrested and cruelly put to death.

MATTHEW the tax collector and writer of a Gospel, ministered in Persia and Ethiopia. Some of the oldest reports say he was not martyred, while others say he was stabbed to death in Ethiopia.

BARTHOLOMEW had widespread missionary travels attributed to him by tradition: to India with Thomas, back to Armenia, and also to Ethiopia and Southern Arabia. There are various accounts of how he met his death as a martyr for the gospel.

JAMES the son of Alphaeus, is one of at least three James referred to in the New Testament. There is some confusion as to which is which, but this James is reckoned to have ministered in Syria. The Jewish historian Josephus reported that he was stoned and then clubbed to death.

SIMON THE ZEALOT, so the story goes, ministered in Persia and was killed after refusing to sacrifice to the sun god.

MATTHIAS was the apostle chosen to replace Judas. Tradition sends him to Syria with Andrew and to death by burning.

JOHN is the only one of the company generally thought to have died a natural death from old age. He was the leader of the church in the Ephesus area and is said to have taken care of Mary the mother of Jesus in his home. During Domitian's persecution in the middle 90's, he was exiled to the island of Patmos. There he is credited with writing the last book of the New Testament--the Revelation. An early Latin tradition has him escaping unhurt after being cast into boiling oil at Rome.

HEBREWS:

CHRIST IS SUPERIOR

TITLE: Recipients are Hebrew Christians

AUTHOR: Unknown (Paul, Barnabas,

Timothy, Priscilla, etc.?)

DATE of WRITING: 65 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Unknown

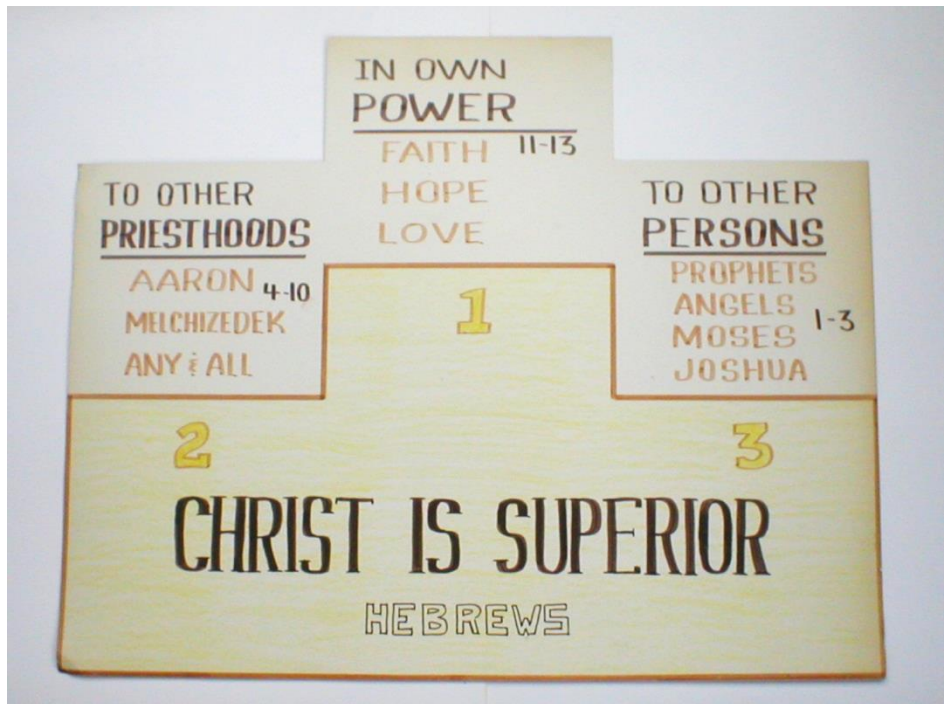
RECIPIENTS: Jewish Believers

KEY VERSE: *For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: "And on the seventh day God rested from all his work." 4:4*

KEY WORDS: "Eternal" (13 times); "heavens" (13); "better" (12); "perfection" (11); "partakers" (7); "faith" (31)

PURPOSE: Encourage Jewish believers to stay faithful to Jesus and not give in to persecution and go back to Judaism for salvation.

THEME: Christ is superior to all things (including the Old Testament, Judaism, angels, etc.)



Becoming a 1st Century convert to Christianity could definitely be "hazardous to your health." There was rejection, persecution and even cruel death. It was especially hard if you were a Jewish believer because your family and friends would turn on you. Your whole support system would put tremendous pressure on you to revert back to Judaism. You would lose your job, your family, your savings, your inheritance and your hope through Judaism. Because of this extra pressure, many Jewish believers who had put their faith in Jesus as the Messiah later recanted and went back to Judaism. This book was written to show them that Jesus is the **ONLY** way and that He is superior to everything in Judaism. It is essentially a commentary on Genesis through Deuteronomy showing how Jesus fulfilled and supersedes all the laws and practices written therein. The Old Testament is but a shadow, Jesus is the real thing.

I. SUPERIORITY OF THE PERSON OF CHRIST (1:1 – 4:16) In a majestically constructed opening paragraph the author introduces his readers to the surpassing greatness of Jesus. Without a standard opening the author jumps right into his subject. Jesus is greater than the **Old Testament Prophets (1:1-4)** because He is the creator and sustainer of all things, the express image of God and the One seated beside the Father in heaven.

Next the writer shows that Jesus is greater than the **angels (1:5 – 2:18)** as well. He is superior because He is God and because He alone provided salvation. Jesus died for human sin as a man and thus defeated the most powerful angel, Lucifer. By becoming lower than the angels, Christ lifted men up to a position spiritually superior to the angels.

Jesus is also superior to **Moses (3:1-6)**, the greatest Old Testament man to the Jews. Moses was a servant in God's house but Jesus was the builder of that house. In addition, Jesus is greater than **Joshua (3:7 – 4:16)**. Joshua may have led the Jews into the Promised Land, but even he didn't lead them into permanent victory or peace.

II. SUPERIORITY OF THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST (4:14 – 9:39) First the writer shows that Jesus is superior to **Aaron's priesthood (4:14 – 6:20)**. The Jewish high priest was in God's presence only one day a year, Jesus is continually there. He has unlimited access. He has no sin of his own to contend with as the Jewish priests did. They offered sacrifices for themselves and others, Jesus offered Himself as the sinless sacrifice for all and that ended the need for any sacrifices by any Jewish priests.

Jesus is even superior to **the priesthood of Melchizedek (7:1 – 8:13)**. He was a priest as well as a king, Jewish priests were never kings. Jewish priests were only priests from the age of 30 until their death, Melchizedek's priesthood was eternal, no beginning and no end.

Thus Jesus is superior to **all priesthoods (9:1 – 10:39)**. His sacrifice is a one-time offering that totally removes all sin and guilt forever. His work is finished. He is seated in God's presence. Jewish priests can't compare to that at all.

III. SUPERIORITY OF THE POWER OF CHRIST (11:1 – 13:19) Jesus overcomes **faithlessness (11:1-40)**. Examples of those with faith are listed in chapter 11. It was their faith that brought God's approval, not their keeping of the Old Testament system. All were rewarded for their faith, and the writer wants his readers to be rewarded for theirs as well.

Following Jesus overcomes **hopelessness (12:1-29)**. Don't be like Esau he warns them, and sell their future spiritual blessing for a moment of physical relief from distress. When they see their error later it will be too late.

Finally he shows how Jesus overcomes **lovelessness (13:1-19)**. He says that Jesus motivates His followers to treat each other in love.

Interspersed throughout the book are 5 warnings to them to not go back. Some use these to show that salvation can be lost, but that's not the context they are written in. They are written to Jews who have realized that Jesus is the Messiah but, under pressure, have decided to go back to Judaism. Before they knew about Jesus, when they were in their ignorance, Judaism was all right and God didn't hold them accountable for what they didn't know. Now that they know, however, they are responsible to act on that and they can no longer go back to their ignorance. Jesus is superior. Is there anything in your life that you have above Him?

OUTLINE OF HEBREWS

I. SUPERIORITY OF THE PERSON OF CHRIST 1:1-4:13

A. Superior to the Prophets 1:1-4

B. Superior to Angels 1:5-2:18

1. In His Divine Person 1:5-14

2. In His Saving Proclamation 2:1-4

WARNING 1: Don't Drift From the Truth

3. In His Delivering Purpose 2:5-18

C. Superior to Moses 3:1-6

D. Superior to Joshua 3:7-4:13

WARNING 2: Don't Harden Your Heart

1. Catastrophe of Unbelief 3:7-19

2. Consequences of Unbelief 4:1-10

3. Cure of Unbelief 4:11-13

II. SUPERIORITY OF THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST 4:14-10:39

A. Superior to Aaron's Priesthood 4:14-6:20

WARNING 3: Don't Move Back from Christ

B. Superior to Melchizedek's Priesthood 7:1-8:13

1. Portrait of Melchizedek 7:1-3

2. Preeminence of Melchizedek 7:4-8:13

C. Superior to All Priesthoods 9:1-10:39

1. Earthly Priesthood 9:1-10

2. Christ's Priesthood 9:11-14

3. Christ's Fulfillment of the Prophecies 9:15-10:39

WARNING 4: Don't Despise Christ

III. SUPERIORITY OF THE POWER OF CHRIST 11:1-13:19

A. Superior to Faithfulness 11:1-40

1. Description of Faith 11:1

2. Examples of Faith 11:2-40

B. Superior to Hopelessness 12:1-29

1. The Debatable Things 12:1-2

2. The Disciplines of Life 12:3-22

3. The Direction of Life 12:12-17

4. The Drive of Life 12:18-24

5. The Duty of Life 12:25-29

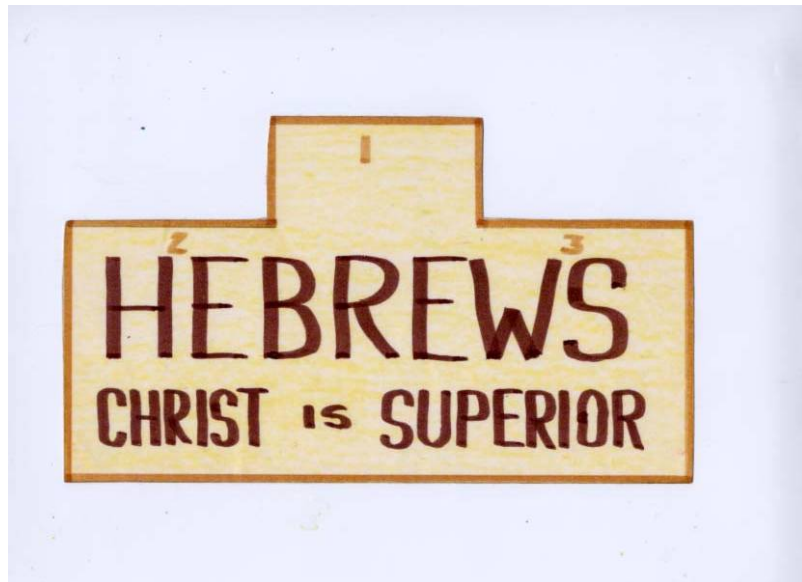
WARNING 5: Don't Reject Christ

C. Superior to Lovelessness 13:1-19

1. In Relation to Social Duties 13:1-5

2. In Relation to Spiritual Duties 13:6-19

Concluding Benediction 13:20-25



1 JOHN: FELLOWSHIP

TITLE: Named for author

AUTHOR: John

DATE of WRITING: about 90 AD

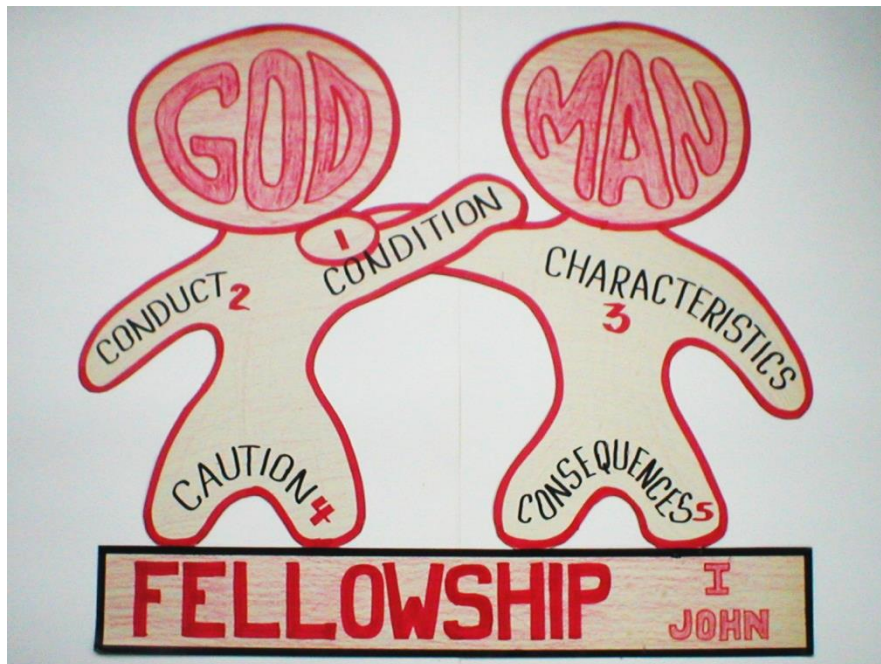
PLACE of WRITING: Ephesus

RECIPIENTS: Believers everywhere

KEY VERSE: *He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. 5:12-13*

KEY WORDS: "Love" (45 times); "know" (35); "world" (23); "life" (15); "light" (6)

PURPOSE:



GOSPEL	I JOHN
Written to arouse faith (20:31)	Written to establish certainty regarding that faith (5:13)
The Good News Historically	The Good News Experientially

THEME: How to have fellowship with God and others, and to know you have assurance of salvation.

Its 25 years since the persecution that killed Peter, Paul, Timothy and thousands of others. It's 90 AD. John is the only disciple not martyred. He still lives in Ephesus where he took care of Mary for so many years, as Jesus had asked him to do. He writes a letter to no one particular place, just to believers in general. He had something he wanted to say to everyone, so he wrote a letter that would be copied and spread everywhere

The Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) have been written to keep the record for future generations, after the eyewitnesses have died. They were circulated so all would know the truth and not be misled by false teachers. John wrote his gospel 2 or more years after the others. He wrote to show his readers how to have eternal life in Christ (20:31). Now he is writing again to tell them how they can know they have eternal life and enjoy it now. He tells them this takes belief in Christ, obedience and love. False teachers attacked these 3 so John defends and explains them. The key, John says, is fellowship with God and then with man. The false teachers were the Gnostics which Paul wrote against in Colossians. They made knowledge the greatest virtue, denied the Bible, said everything material is evil but we are spiritual, so our body can sin all we want and it won't affect our immaterial part which will be reincarnated one day anyway. Much of these false ideas have reemerged in 'New Age' belief.

I. CONDITIONS OF FELLOWSHIP (1:5 – 2:2) John starts by explaining the conditions of fellowship. We can't be close to God when we have sin in our lives (despite what the Gnostics say). Sin breaks relationships – man to man as well as man to God. The solution is not to be perfect and sinless, for that will never happen. The solution is to confess (admit, agree with God about the sin) the sin and accept His forgiveness.

II. CONDUCT IN FELLOWSHIP (2:3-27) John, the disciple of love whom Jesus loved so very much, said that they couldn't love God if they didn't love each other. If you truly love someone, you will love their children as well. If you aren't kind to their children, you really don't love them. The same is true

with God and His children. The love John is talking about is agape love – unconditional love, love in spite of. It's love that is the fruit of the Spirit, the love that comes only from God. It's not phileo love – conditional love, 'liking' someone because of what they do (or don't do). John also tells them they can't love God and love the world, for they are diametrically opposed world views with no common ground. It's one or the other. If you love God you will go against the world system. If you love the world system you will go against God. If you say you love God but live by the world's values and priorities, you don't really love God. Loving God will show itself in how you live. We can't have fellowship with God and the world; it's one or the other. When John says we can't love the world, he is not talking about nature, but about the Satan-inspired system of self-centered goals and motives, values and principles.

III. CHARACTERISTIC OF FELLOWSHIP (2:28 – 3:24) The condition for fellowship with God is no unconfessed sin in our life. The conduct of fellowship is to obey Him in love. The characteristic of that fellowship is living a holy, righteous life. That is what will happen when we obey Him in love. Our life will not be marked by continual habitual sin. We will reject the world's prideful, selfish, pleasure-first ways and the world will reject us. We will have a sincere love for God and fellow believers which will show itself in how we live and act.

IV. CAUTIONS OF FELLOWSHIP (4:1-21) John warns his readers to watch out for false, lying, deceiving teachers. These people they are to have no fellowship with.

V. CONSEQUENCES OF FELLOWSHIP (5:1-21) John concludes reminding them to have love for each other and trust Jesus to give them victory over the world. He reminds them that Jesus is God and man in one, something the false teachers strongly deny (as they do today, too). He also assures them of eternal life, that their salvation is secure and certain.

There are many practical truths in 1 John for us today. It is a book to read and apply. If you have accepted Jesus as your Savior, make sure there is no sin in your life. Make sure you obey Him in love, and show that love for God by loving your fellow believers.

Purpose 1:1-4

I. CONDITION FOR FELLOWSHIP (Fellowship) 1:5-2:2

- A. Conformity to a Standard 1:5-7
- B. Confession of Sin 1:8-2:2

II. CONDUCT IN FELLOWSHIP (Obedience) 2:3-27

- A. Character of our Conduct – Imitation 2:3-11
- B. Commandment of our Conduct – Separation 2:12-17
- C. Creed for our Conduct – Affirmation 2:18-27

III. CHARACTERISTIC OF FELLOWSHIP (Righteousness) 2:28-3:28

- A. In Relation to Our Prospect: Purity 2:28-3:3
- B. In Relation to Our Position: Righteousness 3:4-18
- C. In Relation to Our Prayers: Answers 3:19-28

IV. CAUTIONS OF FELLOWSHIP (Holy Spirit) 4:1-21

- A. Concerning False, Lying Spirits 4:1-6
- B. Concerning a True, Loving Spirit 4:7-21

V. CONSEQUENCES OF FELLOWSHIP (Faith) 5:1-21

- A. Love for Brethren 5:1-3
- B. Victory Over World 5:4-5
- C. Verification of Christ's Credentials 5:6-12
- D. Assurance of Eternal Life 5:13
- E. Guidance in prayer 5:14-17
- F. Freedom from Habitual Sin 5:18-21

2 JOHN: GO IN TRUTH

TITLE: Named for author

AUTHOR: John

DATE of WRITING: about 90 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Ephesus

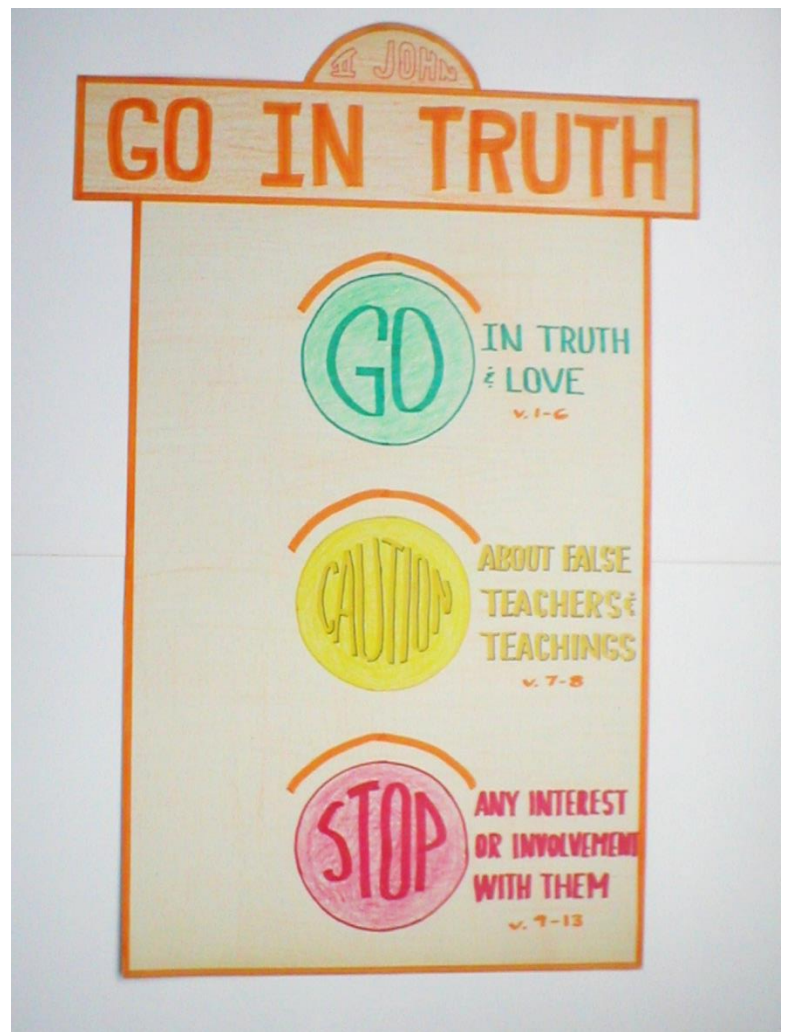
RECIPIENTS: Christian lady & her children

KEY VERSE: *Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him.* 9-10

KEY WORDS: "Truth" (5 times); "walk" (3 times)

PURPOSE: 1. To give a Christian lady a good report about her children. 2. To warn and instruct her with regard to compromising with false teachers. She is told how to avoid being deceived (v. 9) and how to treat deceivers (v. 10-11).

THEME: Warning against receiving deceivers and false teachers.



2 John is similar to 1 John, only shorter. It was written just after 1 John. John addresses it to a Christian lady, probably a church. In those days of persecution he was protecting them from danger. Immediately he gets to the point: stay faithful to God and avoid false teachings and teachers.

I. GO (4-6) He tells them to go and grow in truth. Their testimony of obedience to God has spread to John and he is encouraged by it. John also commends them for their love, which is their motive in obedience. If we love God we will obey Him. Love alone is weak and undisciplined. Obedience alone is cold and mechanical. Together there is a real balance of beauty. Do you have love and obedience? Which are you strongest in?

II. CAUTION (7-11) John warns them to avoid anyone who isn't obeying God in love. He specifically warns against anyone who does not see Christ as 100% God and 100% man in One. He is the God-man Who came to die for our sins and rise again.

Notice how virtually all of the later New Testament books warn against false teachings? Why does God allow so many false teachers and teachings – then and now? For one thing, that motivated the disciples to write down the truth to keep it true and clear (so we have the New Testament). Another reason is to weed out the professors from the true possessors. It gave people a choice, and those who didn't want to accept Jesus as the God-man and live for Him had plenty of alternatives to turn to. God always gives man a free will choice. He never forces anyone. Another reason is that

God allows the false teachers time to discover the error of their beliefs and repent. He doesn't force their free will, either, but does give them time to turn to Him for mercy and forgiveness.

John warns his readers that if they turn from the truth in Jesus to false teachings they won't lose their salvation but will lose reward. They can't lose the rewards they already have laid ahead, but can fail to earn any more and thus not get their full potential of reward.

III. STOP (9-11) John in effect says the same thing here that he said years before in John 15 – abide/remain in Christ. The message has not changed. Abiding and obeying are inseparable. Abiding in Christ calls for a firm response against those who don't abide. If someone doesn't have that, John says we aren't to do anything to in any way encourage them, including letting them into our home (9-11).

In those days teachers and preachers traveled by foot and relied on local people for lodging and hospitality. There were no hotels or inns to stay in. It was the duty of believers to provide hospitality to these people (3 John is about this very thing). However if someone isn't totally committed in belief and actions to Jesus as God and man in One, the only way of salvation, John says to have NOTHING to do with them. Don't even invite them in to debate them. Why? That is enough to encourage them in their wrong ways. Others will see you invite them in and could take it for acceptance. It is bad stewardship of one's own time. Also, the chances of them planting seeds of doubt in you are much greater than the chances of you straightening them out. It's often our pride that says we are too strong to be swayed and we are smart enough to show them their wrongs. Today we are too tolerant of religious differences. As long as someone appears 'sincere' we back off. "Who are we to 'judge' someone else?" we think. Paul, Peter, John and Jesus Himself would be very stern with us. They'd call it compromise and sin!

Always find out clearly where someone stands on the deity of Jesus and salvation by the shed blood of Jesus only. If they dance around it or are vague, watch out! Also have them define their terms. Roman Catholics and Mormons alike talk about 'salvation through faith by grace' but define their terms differently than we do. Watch out!!!

OUTLINE OF 2 JOHN

Greetings 1-3

I. GO 4-6

- A. In Truth 4
- B. In Love 5

II. CAUTION 7-8

- A. About False Teachers 7
- B. About False Teaching 8

III. STOP 9-11

- A. Any Interest in Them 9
- B. Any Involvement With Them 10-11

Closing 12-13



3 JOHN: HOSPITALITY

TITLE: Named for author

AUTHOR: John

DATE of WRITING: about 90 AD

PLACE of WRITING: Ephesus

RECIPIENTS: Gaius, a faithful convert of John's

KEY VERSE: *We ought therefore to show hospitality to such men so that we may work together for the truth.* 8

KEY WORD: "Truth: (7 times)

PURPOSE: John had sent some faithful servants of God

to minister to his church. Diotrephes, a leader, refused to be hospitable to them and he threatened to cast out of the church anyone who showed them hospitality. John warns against this and says he will come straighten it out. In the meantime, Gaius is to show hospitality to Demetrius, a visiting minister.

THEME: The importance of showing hospitality to true believers.



1 JOHN	2 JOHN	3 JOHN
FELLOWSHIP	WALK IN TRUTH	HOSPITALITY
Jesus The LIFE	Jesus The TRUTH	Jesus The WAY
Fellowship with God (is crucial)	Fellowship with enemies (is forbidden)	Fellowship with Believers (is important)
FAITH	HERESY	HOSPITALITY
These "went out" (2:19)	These want to get in (10)	These want to cast out those who should be in (10)

Do you have a guest room in your house? If you do, then you have turned your home into a 'hospital'. 'Hospital' in Latin means 'guest room'. Every time you extend hospitality to someone, technically that person has been 'hospitalized.' Now the word is used of medical centers, but really it should be something all of us do. Often it is a lost art today. We send people to hotels or motels and we take them to restaurants instead.

To the Jews it was considered a sacred duty to receive, feed, lodge and protect any traveler who might stop at your door. Strangers were treated as honored guests. Men who thus ate together were bonded to each other by the strongest ties of friendship, which descended to their heirs. Hospitality was a religious duty, even commanded by the law of Moses (Leviticus 19:33-34). No one was to consider their house as theirs alone. It was always to be open to whomever may need a place to stay as they passed by.

THE CAST **Diotrephes** dominated the church but wasn't hospitable. He was a jealous, controlling person who threatened to excommunicate any in his church who were hospitable to traveling preachers or teachers. **Demetrius** carried this letter of 3 John. He was a traveling preacher in need of a place to stay. **Gaius** was a believer in Asia Minor and was urged to show hospitality to

Demetrius no matter what Diotrephes said or did. Thus 3 John is the only New Testament book that was private and personal. It was a letter addressed from John to Gaius, never intended for anyone else to read, much less be part of the Bible. The themes of love and truth again dominate, as they did in John's other letters, 1 and 2 John. 3 John is very short, more like a post card than a letter!

I. PROSPERITY SHOULDERS HOSPITALITY (GAIUS) 2-8 John, who probably enjoyed Gaius' hospitality himself, encouraged him to show the same consideration to Demetrius. He complements and encourages him in his spiritual growth. He says that all this love shown in hospitality brings honor and glory to God. Also, the one helping someone else do God's work shares in the reward that one gets. This is true if we give of our time, talents or treasure to help someone in God's work. It includes missionaries and pastors, but also anyone we help.

II. PRIDE SHUNS HOSPITALITY (DIOTREPHES) 9-10 It seems John had already contacted Diotrephes about his control and self-centeredness, but there was no change. Pride and control can be a temptation for anyone in leadership. John says he will come and deal with the problem of Diotrephes personally when he can, but that now he wants to make sure Gaius is cared for.

III. PRAISE SHOWS HOSPITALITY (DEMETRIUS) 11-12 One's conduct clearly reflects one's relationship with God. Demetrius is a godly man that John can highly recommend. He assures him that Gaius isn't a false teacher – probably that is the excuse Diotrephes used in denying traveling pastors hospitality. John says that isn't so.

So why is this short private letter in the Bible with books like Romans and Revelation? Because God wants us to know that showing hospitality is still very important. Do you do it?

OUTLINE OF 3 JOHN

Opening 1

I. PROSPERITY SHOULDERS HOSPITALITY 2-8

A. Prosperity Declared 2-4

B. Prosperity Demonstrated 5-8

II. PRIDE SHUNS HOSPITALITY 9-10

A. Pride Revealed 9

B. Pride Rebuked 10

III. PRAISE SHOWS HOSPITALITY 11-12

A. Praise Lacking 11

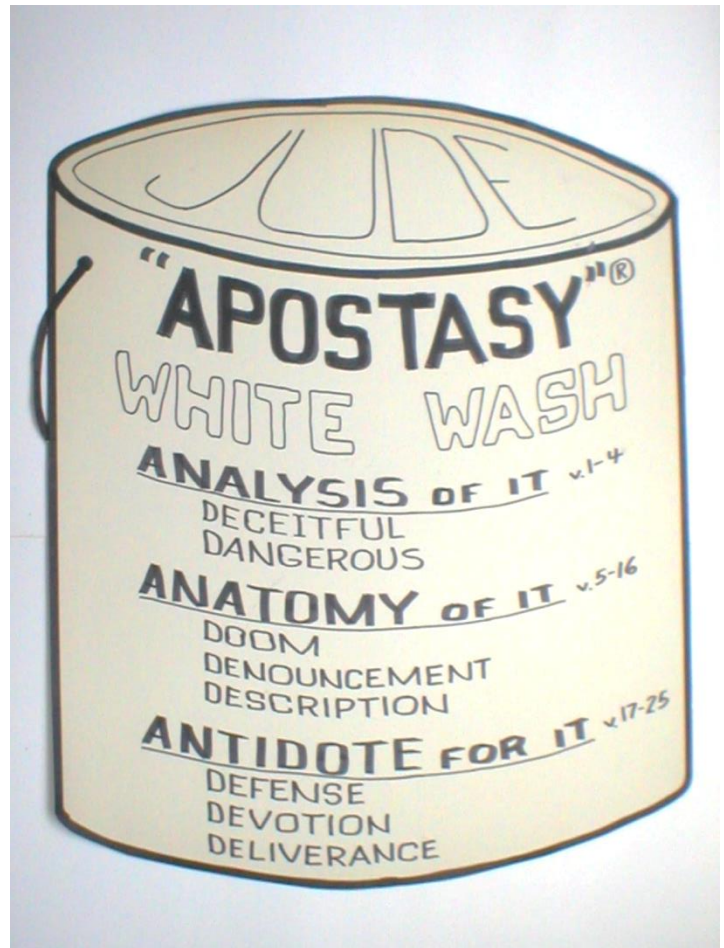
B. Praise Lasting 12

Closing 13-14



JUDE: APOSTASY

TITLE: Named for author
 AUTHOR: Jude, half-brother of Jesus
 DATE of WRITING: 70 AD
 PLACE of WRITING: Unknown
 RECIPIENTS: All believers everywhere
 KEY VERSE: *Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.* 3
 KEY WORD: “Ungodly” (6 times)
 PURPOSE: Jude wanted to write about their “common salvation” but the Holy Spirit led him to write about the false teachers who were creeping in. They are clearly described, and so is their doom. Jude comforts and encourages the true believers
 THEME: All about apostates and apostasy.



2 PETER	JUDE
Warning against false teachings & teachers	Warning against false teachings & teachers
False teachers WILL come	False teachers HAVE come
Dark picture painted of false teachers	Darker picture painted of false teachers

Attacks from without are obvious, clearly seen attempts to defeat us and turn us from faithfulness to Jesus. Attacks from within are not as black and white. They are more subtle and deceptive. Guess which are most effective? Guess which Satan uses more? Persecution makes the church stronger and it grows in quality and quantity. False teaching within weakens it bit by bit, until it is diluted and ineffective.

We are not immune from this effective tactic of Satan's today. Some forms include adding works of any kind to salvation. It can be legalism or anything based on fear. The other extreme is the teaching that God is love so everyone will go to heaven, no one will be condemned. Then there are those who say you can lose your salvation unless you do certain things, or that Satan has no influence on us today, or that man doesn't sin after salvation. Other false teachings make certain spiritual gifts more 'spiritual' than others, or base healing and prosperity on our having enough 'faith' to 'claim' it. The list goes on and on.

In the opening to his short book (v. 1-2), Jude assured the readers that their spiritual position was eternally secure and that God's abundant provision for daily living was available to them. Then he talks about apostasy (turning from the faith).

I. ANALYSIS OF APOSTASY (3-4) Jude encourages his readers to contend (literally “agonize”) for the true faith and avoid any and all counterfeits. He says they sneak in the back door, they don’t parade in with the label of false teachings on them. They sneak in, like a little arsenic in food or a little spark in a gas tank.

II. ANATOMY OF APOSTASY (5-16) Jude refers to many Old Testament events. He talks about the Israelites (v. 5 – Numbers 13-14); fallen angels (v. 6 – 2 Peter 2:4); Sodom and Gomorrah (v. 7 – Genesis 18-19); Cain (v. 11 – Genesis 4); Balaam (v. 11 – Numbers 22-24); Korah (v. 11 – Numbers 16); Enoch (v. 14 – Genesis 5:18-24). He uses many of these as examples of past apostates whom God did judge. Let this be a warning! Jude says they are spiritually blind but speak about spiritual things as if they have the only and final answer to everything.

Jude also uses illustrations from nature to picture apostasy. He says it is like hidden reefs under the water’s surface which a ship doesn’t see but which sinks it. He says it is like clouds who look promising but don’t hold any water. Also it is like autumn trees that have leaves but no fruit. He equates them to wild waves of the sea which make lots of motion but don’t accomplish anything. Finally he says they are like wandering stars: brief, aimless and then darkness. Contrast this with Jesus who is the Rock of our Salvation instead of hidden rocks which shipwreck our faith. Jesus comes with clouds to refresh forever, He is the Tree of Life producing eternal fruit, He leads beside still waters, not wild seas. He is the Bright and Morning Star heralding the day.

III. ANTIDOTE FOR APOSTASY (17-23) Jude wants them to remember the warnings about apostasy being a sign of the last days and to watch out for it. He encourages them to keep their eyes on the truth and keep growing spiritually. That is the best antidote to false teaching. He says that they are to try to rescue those who fall into false teaching, but in such a way that they are very careful they don’t get hurt. It’s like treating a hamburger patty that falls into the coals. You rescue it quickly, gently and carefully so you don’t get burnt.

OUTLINE OF JUDE

Opening 1-2

I. ANNOUNCEMENT OF APOSTASY (Warning of Apostasy) 3-4

- A. Their Deceit 3
- B. Their Danger 4

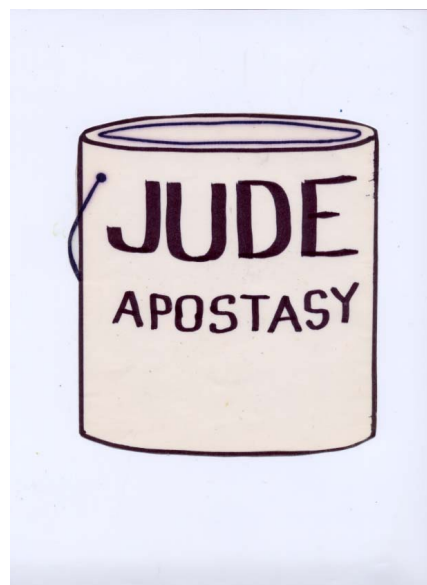
II. ANATOMY OF APOSTASY (Description of Apostates) 5-16

- A. Their Doom 5-7
- B. Their Denouncement 8-10
- C. Their Description 11-16

III. ANTIDOTE FOR APOSTASY (Duties of Believers) 17-23

- A. Your Defense 17-19
- B. Your Devotion 20-21
- C. Your Deliverance 22-23

Close 24-25



REVELATION: PROPHECY

TITLE: Start of book, "revelation of Jesus Christ"

AUTHOR: John

DATE of WRITING: 96 AD

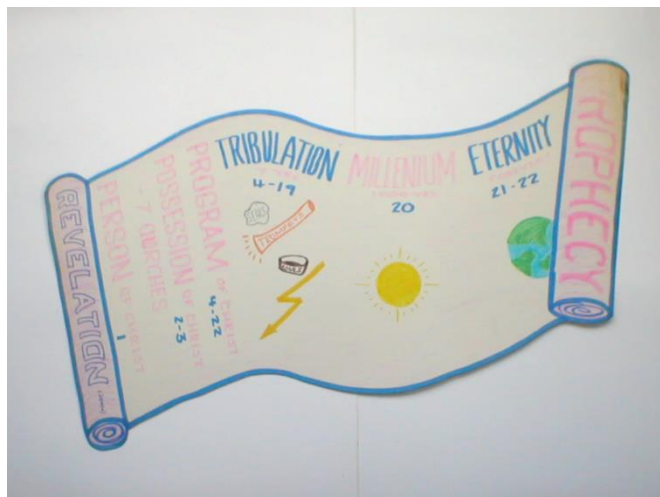
PLACE of WRITING: Isle of Patmos

RECIPIENTS: 7 churches in Asia Minor and all believers

KEY VERSE: *Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later. 1:19*

KEY WORDS: "I saw" (49 times); "angel" (70); "seven" (59); "lamb" (29)

PURPOSE:



GOSPELS	ACTS & EPISTLES	REVELATION
PAST	PRESENT	FUTURE
Christ as PROPHET	Christ as PRIEST	Christ as KING
Setting: ISRAEL	Setting: CHURCH	Setting: UNIVERSE
Founder of Christianity	Fundamentals of Christianity	Fulfillment of Christianity
Introduction	Application	Realization

THEME: Reveal the future tribulation and related events to mankind.

GENESIS	REVELATION
Creation of heaven and earth	New heavens and earth
Paradise Lost	Paradise of God regained
Sorrow, pain enter	Sorrow, pain gone forever
First Adam and his wife	Last Adam and His Bride (church)

I. PERSON OF CHRIST (PAST) 1:3-20 John is imprisoned on Patmos. He is old, for its 60+ years since the crucifixion. An angel comes to reveal these things to him.

II. POSSESSION OF CHRIST (PRESENT) 2 – 3 God first reveals messages for seven churches in Asia Minor that John was familiar with. They are listed in the order they would receive the letter as it traveled the circular mail route in Asia Minor. The carrier would read the letter in one city then move on to the next. The cities were Ephesus (John's home town), Smyrna, Pergamus, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. Only Smyrna and Philadelphia didn't receive any condemnation. All received some commendation from the Lord except Laodicea.

III. PROGRAM OF CHRIST (FUTURE) 4 – 22 The majority of the book of Revelation is about the coming 7-year tribulation. First the tribulation is seen from the view of heaven (judgment), chapters 4-11. Then it is gone through from beginning to end again from the earth's perspective (warfare), chapters 12-19.

First, 7 seal judgments are unleashed on the earth. These start with the Antichrist bringing peace, but soon turn to war, family, death to ¼ of the world population, and tremendous changes to nature. Many believers are martyred during this time. God sets aside 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes (144,000) as special witnesses and evangelists. They come to salvation at the start of the tribulation (for all true believers are raptured before the tribulation).

Following this are 7 trumpet judgments which affect the earth's vegetation, the sea and fresh water and the sun, moon and stars. Locust-like demons torture all who haven't turned to God for salvation. In the middle of this tribulation God raises up 2 special witnesses who will even do miracles and who cannot be killed. God always has His witness for man.

Satan will have his counterfeit trinity to oppose God and rule the world, as he has always wanted to do. Satan counterfeits God, the power behind it all. The Antichrist will counterfeit Christ. He'll bring peace and set himself up to be worshipped, then by Satan's power counterfeit his own death and resurrection and kill all the believers he possibly can. The False Prophet, Antichrist's assistant, while head up the apostate church until it is destroyed. He will kill any who do not wear the 666 in recognition of the Antichrist as God.

Seven bowl judgments complete God's judgment on man for rejecting Jesus. This culminates with the battle of Armageddon, when Jesus returns with the armies of heaven (us) and totally and instantly destroys all of feeble man's resistance to His authority. Following this tribulation comes a thousand year period called the Millennium (Revelation 20). Jesus will rule on earth on David's throne as prophesied and all will return to Garden of Eden conditions. Following a final revolt by Satan, who is consigned to hell forever along with his demons and those who haven't accepted God's free gift of salvation, God will create a new heaven and new earth (Revelation 21-22). There we will dwell with Him for all eternity. Are you ready? I hope so!

OUTLINE OF REVELATION

Opening 1:1-3

I. PERSON OF CHRIST (Past) 1

- A. Circumstances of the Vision 1:4-11
- B. Content of the Vision 1:12-16
- C. Consequences of the Vision 1:17-20

II. POSSESSION OF CHRIST (Present) 2-3

- A. Letter to Ephesus 2:1-7
- B. Letter to Smyrna 2:8-11
- C. Letter to Pergamum 2:12-17
- D. Letter to Thyatira 2:18-19
- E. Letter to Sardis 3:1-6
- F. Letter to Philadelphia 3:7-13
- G. Letter to Laodicea 3:14-22

III. PROGRAM OF CHRIST (Future) 4-22

- A. Tribulation 4-19
 - 1. As Judgment (Heaven) 4-11
 - a. Scene in Heaven 4-5
 - b. Seal Judgments, 144,000 6-7
 - c. Trumpet Judgments, Two Witnesses 8-11
 - 2. As Warfare (Earth) 12-19
 - a. Personages Involved 12-14
 - b. Bowl Judgment 15-16
 - c. Babylon Falls 17-18
 - d. Armageddon
- B. Millennium 20
 - 1. Christ Reigns 20:1-10
 - 2. Christ Rules 20:11-15
- C. Eternity 21-22
 - 1. New Heavens and Earth 21:1
 - 2. New Jerusalem 21:2-22:5

Final Message 22:6-21



BIBLE OVERVIEW

25 . CHURCH AGE

MAIN EVENTS: Worldwide spread of the Church despite all efforts to destroy it

MAIN PEOPLE: Too many to name

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: none

BIBLE VERSE: *Matthew 16:18-19 I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.*

TIME: Resurrection to Today

WORLD EVENTS AT THIS TIME: All history in the last 2,000 years

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Worldwide



Our present time period in the Bible overview is called the Church Age. It started with Jesus' resurrection ending the law and the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost (Acts 2). It will end with the Rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). This time falls between the 69th and 70th weeks of Daniel (Daniel 9:24-27; Romans 11). It is the time when Jesus is building "His Church" as He promised (Matthew 16:18) and has been going on for almost 2,000 years.

THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH The Greek word translated 'church' (ekklesia) means "a called out group." It was used of a local assembly or gathering of people. In the New Testament it refers to those who have accepted Jesus as Savior during the time period starting with the resurrection and ending with the Rapture. The Church, as used in this way, includes all who have come to faith in Jesus as their Savior (John 1:12; Acts 9:31). It is also called the Body of Christ of which He is the head (Ephesians 1:22-23; 1 Corinthians 12:13-14). Another term is the Bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:25-26; Revelation 21:9; John 3:29) because of His love for and commitment to us for all eternity. This term speaks of our eternal love relationship with Jesus in heaven. All believers during this time, whatever their age, sex, nationality, culture or background are One in Jesus and equal to each other in Him (Galatians 3:28; Acts 15:14-18). Entrance is only by salvation in Jesus, there is no other way to heaven (John 14:6 Acts 4:12).

This time period is also called the Age of Grace because Jesus came to fulfill the law (Matthew 5:17) and replace it with grace (John 1:17; Ephesians 2:8-10). We are not under the law but grace. God permanently indwells every believer with His Holy Spirit during this time (John 14:16) whereas in the Old Testament the Holy Spirit only came upon some for a short time as needed (1 Samuel 16:14).

Jews who come to Jesus for salvation during the Church Age are also part of the Body of Christ (Galatians 3:28). There are three groups of people: Church Age believers, Gentiles and Jews. The nation Israel is different than the church, the Church has not replaced God's chosen people, Israel (1 Corinthians 10:32). God's promises to the nation Israel have not been fulfilled but one day will be (Ezekiel 34; 37; 45; Jeremiah 30; 33; Matthew 19:28; Revelation 19).

Jesus' relationship to us in the church is described in the Bible in the following ways: (1) the Shepherd and the Sheep (John 10); (2) the Vine and the Branches (John 15); (3) the Cornerstone and the Stones of the Building (1 Corinthians 3:9; Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:5); (4) High Priest and the Kingdom of Priests (Hebrews 5:1-10; 6:13-8:6; 1 Peter 2:5-9; Revelation 1:6); (5) the Head and the Many-Membered Body (1 Corinthians 12:12-13,27; Ephesians 4:4); (6) the Last Adam and the New Creation (1 Corinthians 15:22,45; 2 Corinthians 5:17); (7) the Bridegroom and the Bride (John 3:29; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:25-33; Revelation 19:7-8).

THE LOCAL CHURCH Still, the Bible does talk about the local church ("assembling, gathering") as well as the universal church. Local churches all are part of the universal church. While there seem to be many more factions and divisions among the church than is necessary, one can understand that a variety of local church groups is necessary to meet all the individual needs, backgrounds and commitments people bring with them.

What is the local church? Basically it is a group of believers, only secondarily is it a building or denomination. Someone has said the church is a hospital for sinners, not a display case for saints. The church is not an ark for the saving of just a select few or a ferryboat to take effortless passengers to the shores of heaven. It is not an eternal life insurance company, nor is it a social set which welcomes certain people and excludes all others. Rather, the church is a lifeboat for the rescue of sin-wrecked and perishing souls. It is a family, in which love and service are expected from each person to each person. It is the representative, the 'body,' of Jesus Christ on earth, reflecting His spirit and controlled by His will. The purpose of the local church is two-fold. It is to go to those without and share the plan of salvation with them. It is to take the good news of Jesus to a lost and dying world. It is one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread. During this time period Christians are to gather in local groups called "churches" for worship, teaching, fellowship, mutual support and evangelism (Acts 2:42; Galatians 6:2; Matthew 28:18-20).

The church also exists to meet the needs of its members. Any Body needs to meet the needs of its parts for each part to function in a healthy manner. This takes balance between teaching (God communicating to man), worship (man communicating to God) and fellowship (man communicating to man). They must all be present. Teaching & learning God's Word (hearing from God) must come first, though (Acts 2:42).

Following the analogy of the human body, each person in the church is gifted at the moment of salvation with a particular gift mix to be used for the sake of others in the Body (1 Corinthians 12). These gifts are to be used together for each other (1 Corinthians 12, 14), encouraging, helping and building each other up in Jesus. This is how the church is to function.

The Holy Spirit is the power source for the church, Whom Jesus sent after ascending to heaven. He gives the wisdom, power, strength, gifts, guidance, direction and grace needed to function for God.

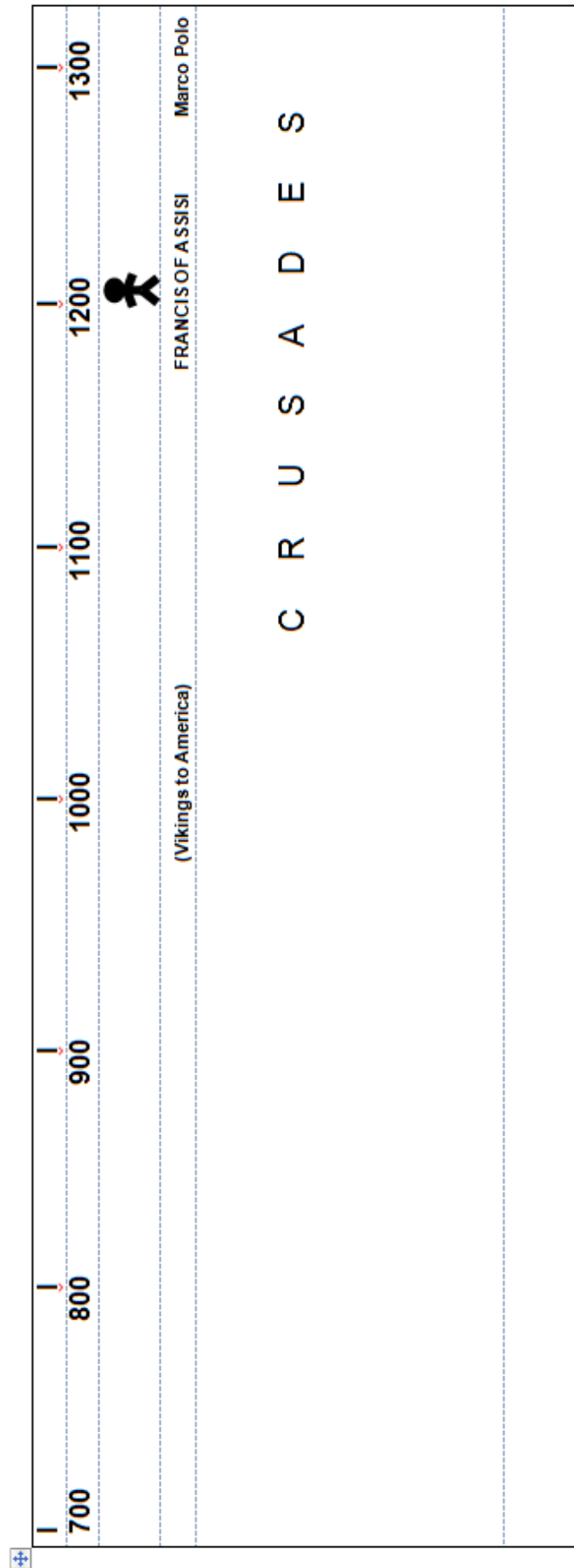
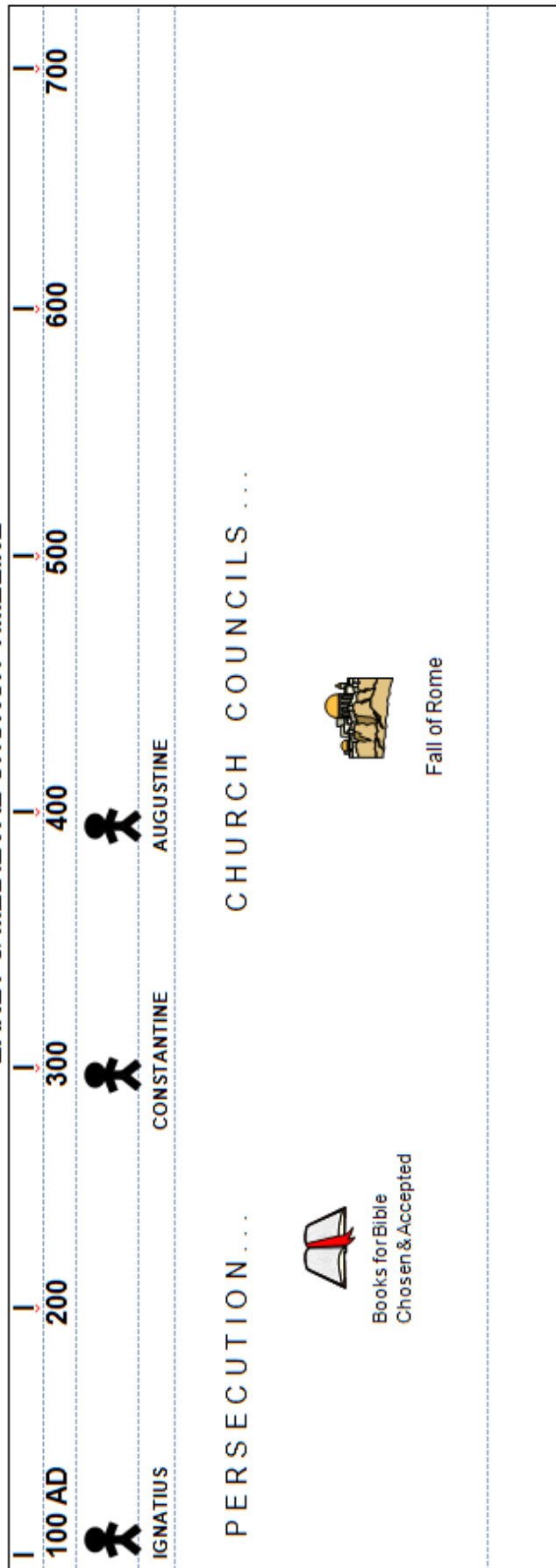
The Bible doesn't give any strict commands about church government. There were spiritual leaders (elder/pastor/bishop) and physical leaders (deacon) who divided the responsibility. As to more than that, if one bishop ruled many churches, each person in the local church had an equal say, or if it was somewhere in between, we don't know. History records all types of church governments. That isn't a Biblical absolute. Meeting spiritual and then physical needs is required, though.

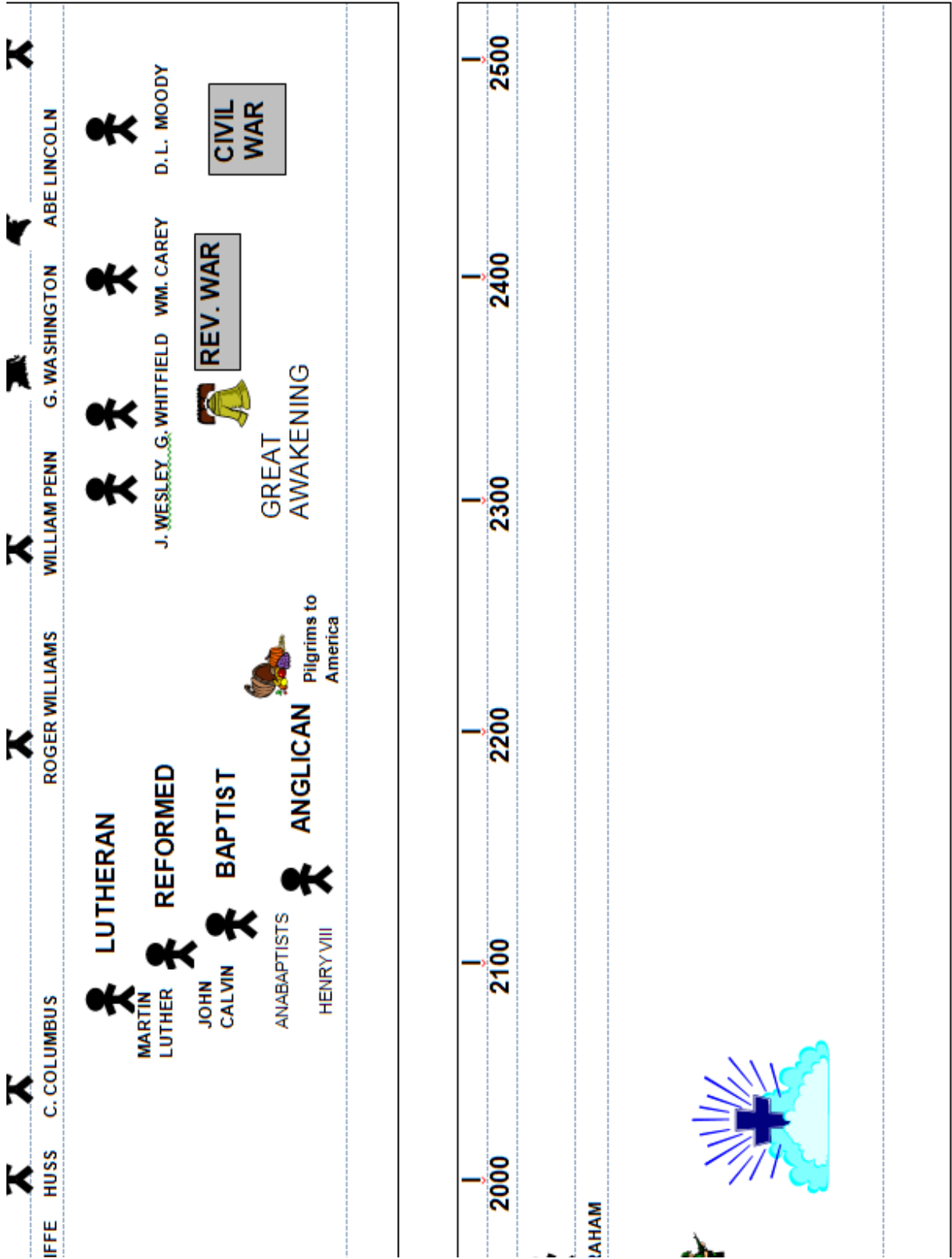
Jesus is very active with His Church, which is His Body. As the Head He directs and guides all that happens (Ephesians 1:22-23; 1 Corinthians 12:13-14). He bestows spiritual gifts on believers so they can minister to each other in their local churches (1 Corinthians 12:4-11; Romans 12:3-8; Ephesians 4:8-11). In addition, He intercedes for us with the Father (John 17:1-26; Hebrews 7:25; Romans 8:34). He is also our Advocate, which means when we sin He is our defense attorney

stating that our sins have been paid for (1 John 2:1-2; Hebrews 9:24; Revelation 12:10). He is also occupied with building our heavenly home (John 14:1-3).

As a groom looks forward with expectation to receive his bride, so does Christ anticipate the coming day when He will return on the clouds to receive His bride (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). Every foe will be defeated at this time (Psalm 2:7-9; Isaiah 63:1-6; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 19:15; Hebrews 10:13). This will end the Church Age or Age of Grace. God's people will be raptured out of the world and taken to be with the Lord in heaven (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-57; 2 Thessalonians 2:1; Revelation 3:10). Until then God urges us to stay faithful in our love for and service to Him (1 Corinthians 15:58).

EARLY & MEDIEVAL CHURCH TIMELINE





BIBLE OVERVIEW

26. THE

RAPTURE



MAIN EVENTS: All believers caught up to heaven to be with Jesus

MAIN PEOPLE: Believers

BIBLE VERSE: *1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.*

TIME: Sometime unknown in the future.

WORLD EVENTS AT THIS TIME: Unknown

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Worldwide

The next event on God's prophetic program is the Rapture – the trumpet will sound, Jesus will appear in the sky, and every person from the cross to the present who has accepted Jesus as Savior will be taken to heaven. If they have already died, their bodies will be taken to heaven to join their soul/spirit which went there immediately at death (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). The current Church Age, the parenthesis between the 69th and 70th weeks of Daniel 9, will end when Jesus returns to take His people to heaven with Him. This event is called the Rapture, and it is the next event in God's prophetic calendar. This event pertains only to those who are in the Church, the Body of Christ, which is composed of all believers (Jew or Gentile) from the time of Jesus until the Rapture occurs. Passages which foretell this are John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 1 Corinthians 15:54.

THE TIME OF THE RAPTURE is BEFORE the Tribulation, not during it or after it! Christians will not have to go through the Tribulation because it is a time of judgment, and believers are not under God's judgment (Romans 8:1; Revelation 3:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:9). God kept Lot from judgment in Sodom and Gomorrah, Noah from judgment by the flood, Rahab from the destruction of Jericho and the Jews from plagues number four through ten in Egypt. We will be rescued from the coming wrath (1 Thessalonians 1:10).

Also, the Bible says the Rapture is "imminent" – there is nothing that needs to happen before it. It is the very next event in the future (2 Peter 3:10; James 5:8; Philippians 3:20). The Rapture is called the "blessed hope" (Titus 2:13). That's not true if we have to go through even part of the tribulation. In addition, the Holy Spirit will be gone when the Antichrist begins his work at the start of the Tribulation (2 Thessalonians 2:3, 5-9). The Holy Spirit indwells all God's people, so if He is gone, we will be gone as well. Finally, there is no mention of the Church on earth during the Tribulation.

The Church is referred to 17 times in Revelation 1-3, but from chapters 4-18 which speak of the Tribulation on earth, there is not one mention.

The question we always ask is when the Rapture will occur. Unfortunately, no one knows, but many signs let us know the general time. There were hundreds of prophecies about the first coming. Jesus rebuked Israel's rulers for not recognizing the signs of His first coming (Simeon and Anna knew - Luke 2). Just as many prophecies of the Second Coming are recorded. God wanted His people to know when Jesus came the first time, and He wants us to know when He is coming back (Matthew 16:3).

The exact date of Jesus' return is unknown (1 Thessalonians 5:1-3; Daniel 12:4) so we should always be ready (Matthew 24:42-44). We don't know the day or hour (Acts 1:7; Matthew 24:36) but do know 'season' – the general time. While there are no events that have to come to pass before the Rapture, if we look at conditions on earth at the start of the Tribulation, which follows the Rapture and compare them to conditions today, we can see that the time could be very near.

Jesus Himself gave several 'signs' of what would be happening when the Tribulation was near. These he likened to labor pains (Matthew 24:8). They start small and gradually grow until culminating in birth. In His analogy, the 'birth' is His return to earth at the end of the Tribulation. These prophecies are given by Jesus in the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24 – 25). The general, starting signs He gives (Matthew 24:4-14) include deception, wars, famines, epidemics, earthquakes, martyrdom for believers, false prophets, lawlessness, loss of love and world evangelism.

The seven main sins of the tribulation show how close we are to them today (Revelation 9:20-21). These are rebellion against God, worship of demons, idolatry, murder, sorceries (including drug usage), sexual immorality and theft.

Paul's list of signs of the last days also shows how close we are (2 Timothy 3:1-7). He says people will be selfish ("lovers of themselves"), covetous and greedy ("lovers of money"), boasters, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, rebellious, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers and false accusers, without self control, fierce, despisers, traitors, reckless, proud, lovers of pleasure and they will not have God's power.

Jesus describes the last days as being like "the days of Noah" when He returns (Luke 17:26-30; Genesis 6:1-9). People will be continuing in their daily life of sin not realizing the soon coming of judgment. There will be sexual perversion, their thoughts will be constantly turned to evil, and they will disregard the consequences of coming judgment.

Peter's sign of the last days is that men will scoff about Jesus coming back (1 Peter 3:3-7). They will also mock God as Creator. They will deny the fall of man, the flood in Noah's day, Jesus' life and His return.

If God had told us the exact time of His return, people would put off getting right with Him until the last minute, and Satan would do all he could to counterfeit it and bring confusion. So God keeps it a secret, but lets us know enough to realize it could be any time, and it could be very soon! So what are we to do until He comes? Live as if it could be today.

THE PATTERN FOR THE RAPTURE is the pattern of a groom coming for his bride in Israel during those times. The people in Jesus' day would have clearly understood the Rapture, for they lived it out whenever someone got married. The whole event started with the groom going to the bride's home, making a promise and commitment to the bride and paying the bride price so she could be his. That pictures Jesus leaving heaven to come to earth, promising to be our Savior and paying the price for our sins on the cross so we could be His. The father would accept the bride price if he thought it was sufficient, like God accepted the work of Jesus on the cross for us by bringing Him back to life.

Then it is up to the bride to show her acceptance of the groom's offer by taking and drinking a cup of wine he offered her. It is up to each one of us to accept Jesus' gift of salvation and partake of it personally. By doing so the Jewish marriage was sealed and legally binding. When we accept Jesus' gift of salvation, we are His, and our salvation cannot be lost. It, too, is legally binding in the heavens.

Even though the couple is legally married, the groom then returns home alone to work on building a home for his bride while the bride stays at her father's home and prepares herself for the groom's coming. Jesus ascended to heaven and left His Bride, the Church, here on earth where we are to prepare ourselves for His return. When the father knows the time right, he will tell his son to go get his bride. The son will gather his friends and, with trumpet blasts announcing their coming, proceed to the bride's house. Just the same way, one day God the Father will tell His Son Jesus the time is right for Him to get His Bride. Jesus and the angels will come for us with trumpets blasting. This is the Rapture.

The bride in Palestine was then taken to the groom's home where a seven-day marriage celebration occurred. They will then spend the rest of their lives together in the groom's home. So, too, we will have a seven-year celebration called the Marriage Supper of the Lamb right after Jesus comes for us. Then we, too, will spend eternity with Him in heaven as His Bride.

THE PROMISE OF THE RAPTURE is given in John 14:1-3. Jesus said these words the night before His arrest and crucifixion. He is comforting and encouraging His disciples. Instead of looking at present problems, they are to look to their glorious future.

In those days when a young man became legally married to his bride, he would leave her where she lived and go to His home to build the rooms where they would live. These would be part of his family's house. Each family would have their own room and all would share the common living space in the central courtyard. This place, called the New Jerusalem, will be a cube 1,500 miles or 2,500 kilometers on each side. It will be large enough to hold 100 billion people. We can only imagine how glorious it will be! It took Jesus six days to create this beautiful universe. Imagine what He will create with 2,000 years of preparation!

Jesus says He is now preparing a place for us to dwell with Him, and He promises to come back for us – He absolutely guarantees it (John 14:3). The angels who spoke to the disciples when Jesus ascended to heaven promised the same thing. *"This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven"* (Acts 1:11). He will come back, and it will be the same as when He went. It will be visible, actual and physical. This is the Rapture, the next event in God's program.

The early Christians treasured these promises and looked forward to the day Jesus would return for them, but He didn't come right away. Time passed. Some believers died from persecution, age or illness. Those who were alive started wondering what would happen to them when Jesus returned. Paul answered that question.

THE PLAN OF THE RAPTURE is presented by Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. The word Rapture' is never mentioned in the Bible. It is a Latin word meaning 'to catch', or 'to snatch away.' This passage clearly describes that event. Paul says when Jesus returns to rapture us He will bring with Him those who have "fallen asleep." That refers to the sleep of the body, for the soul goes immediately to heaven at death (Luke 23:43; Philippians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:8). God gives believers who die a temporary body until He returns. Then their earthly body will be brought back to life and changed into an eternal body like Jesus' body after His resurrection. At this same time, believers who are still alive will be changed into their eternal bodies without dying, and both groups will be taken up to meet Jesus in the sky.

There will be three loud sounds during this event. There will be a loud military type command, like when Jesus called Lazarus out of the tomb (John 11:43). This will be the Groom calling for his Bride when the Father finally says He can go bring her to the home He has been preparing. Second, there will be trumpets announcing His coming, in such a way as the friends of the groom would sound to let the bride know they were on the way. Third, there will be the voice of Michael and the angels shouting in joy and victory as they bring us to heaven and begin the final great battle to destroy Satan and his demons.

THE SPEED OF THE RAPTURE is quicker than we can blink our eyes (1 Corinthians 15:51-53). These Rapture events will happen quicker than a blink. There will be no warning, no time after the trumpet sounds to get ready, to confess sin, to accept Jesus as Savior. It will be over before we even realize it is happening. Instantly our bodies, whether alive or dead, will be changed to be an eternal body like Jesus' resurrection body. This is similar to what happened to Elijah and Elisha (Genesis 5:24; Hebrews 11:5; 2 Kings 2:1, 11).

THE RAPTURE AND THE SECOND COMING are different events. This Rapture is NOT the same as Jesus' glorious Second Coming. The Rapture is the next event in God's program that we should be looking for. Jesus will appear in the air to take all true believers to heaven to be with Him. The Second Coming will happen seven years after the Rapture when Jesus returns to earth to end sin and establish His Kingdom. (For more information about this see "Biblical Prophecy" by Jerry Schroyer.)

BIBLE OVERVIEW

27. THE

TRIBULATION &

MILLENNIUM

MAIN EVENTS: Tribulation (7 years), Millennial Kingdom (1,000 years) and then eternity forever

MAIN PEOPLE: God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, angels, all believers

BIBLE VERSE: *Revelation 21:1-4 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."*

TIME: Immediately after the rapture.

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: Worldwide

Immediately following the Rapture, the Church will celebrate their marriage to their Groom, Jesus, at the **MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB** (Revelation 4:4; 5:6, 8, 14; 19:9). Here we will be given rewards for faithful service on earth and assignments for future service will be made (1 Corinthians 3:12-15; Matthew 27:19; John 19:13; Romans 14:10)

While believers have been raptured and are in heaven celebrating with our Groom, Jesus, the **TRIBULATION** will be taking place on Earth. This is the 70th week of Daniel (Daniel 9:24-27). It is the prophesied time of destruction worldwide (Ezekiel 38:19-23; 39:9, 25-29; Revelation 6 - 19). The time of grace will be over, and the Law will be back in effect, like in Old Testament times. This is the day of God's vengeance on sin and unbelievers. When He quoted Isaiah 61:1-3, Jesus stopped before "the day of vengeance of our God" because this was not a part of why He came the first time (Luke 4:16-21), but it will be what happens on earth after we are raptured.



SATAN will rule the world. When the Church is raptured, Satan will know his time is short. He won't have God's people, the Church (Bride of Christ) to attack, so He will turn his attention to attacking God's people, the Jews. Jews and Gentiles who become believers during this time will be attacked especially hard (Revelation 12:7-9). Satan will do all he can to destroy Israel (Revelation 12:13-17).

He will rule the world, something he has been trying to do since he was cast out of heaven. He will indwell the Antichrist and through him rule the world.

THE ANTICHRIST will be a Gentile (Revelation 13:1) and will come from 'Rome' (Daniel 7:7-8; 9:25). This refers to the land area and countries that have been influenced by Rome (like Europe and the United States).

THE FALSE PROPHET is the third person of Satan's counterfeit trinity (Revelation 16:13). Satan counterfeits God the father, The Antichrist counterfeits God the Son (Christ) and the False Prophet counterfeits God the Holy Spirit. He will be a Jew (Revelation 13:11) who is the head of apostate church which forms after Rapture of true Church. Those who are 'religious' but never accepted Jesus as their Savior will be left behind, forming this 'church' (1 Timothy 4:1-2).

THE EVANGELISTS who will share God's message of salvation with everyone will be new believers, saved after (or perhaps because of) the Rapture. All true believers will be taken at the Rapture, along with the Holy Spirit and His restraining influence (2 Thessalonians 2:5-9). Therefore God will set aside others to carry his word throughout the world. There will be 144,000 Jewish evangelists, like Elijah, Elisha or John the Baptizer. They will turn to Jesus for salvation after the Rapture and be set apart for God. They will preach throughout the whole earth (Revelation 7:1-8; 14:1-5). They will be sealed with the Holy Spirit, so they cannot be killed (Joel 2:28-32). This is the ultimate fulfillment of that which was only pictured at Pentecost (Acts 2) ¹¹. Many Jews and Gentiles will come to God for salvation because of the pressures of the tribulation. This is one of the main purposes of the Tribulation - to turn Israel to God (Zechariah 12:10; Hosea 3:4-5; Romans 11:25-39; Revelation 7:9). These Evangelists will go throughout the whole earth and preach God's Word.

THE TRIBULATION WILL START with the Antichrist making a seven-year covenant with Israel, assuring them of peace and protection for their disarming (Daniel 9:27). This will make them vulnerable to attack. This happens very shortly after the Rapture, after the Antichrist first comes to power. Remember, he won't be known until after the Rapture (II Thessalonians 2:3). He will be alive but not seen in the position and power he will have as the Antichrist until after the Rapture.

The Antichrist will come to power by deceiving the world. There is a 'lie' of his that those left behind will believe (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12). No one knows what this lie will be, but it could be his explanation of what happened to everyone just raptured. He could state that evil people were taken and good people left (as in Noah's day). He could say they were taken by space invaders (UFO's) or provide some 'scientific' explanation for the Rapture. Despite all that happens, God is still in sovereign control over everything, as in Job 1, 2 where Satan had to get permission from God before he could do anything to man (Revelation 13:7; 6:11; Daniel 7:25).

THE FIRST HALF OF THE TRIBULATION will be characterized by the Antichrist trying to bring peace and stability to the world. But it will really be a time for God to bring judgment on unbelief. All these coming judgments are wrapped up in a scroll, and only Jesus Himself can open it and bring about God's judgment (Revelation 5:1-14). His opening the scroll releases the first series of judgments - the seal judgments (Revelation 6:1-17; 8:1-2).

During this time, the Antichrist will make Babylon the new world capital to unite all people everywhere. This can be likened to the tower of Babel which Nimrod used to try to unite the world in his day. It will be the center of the false religious system (Revelation 17) as well as world political center (Revelation 18).

The North and allies (Russia and Arab nations) will move in to take control of Palestine, despite the Antichrist's promise of peace. They will do so to control the riches in Palestine (Ezekiel 38:1-11, 15-23; Joel 2:2-21; Isaiah 10:12; 30:31-33; 31:8-9). The South (Egypt) will lead an attack against Israel (Daniel 11:40). Being disarmed made Israel very vulnerable. The Arabs will have

gotten all the concessions they can through treaties and peace summits, thus weakening Israel. When they get no more through peaceful means, they will use warfare. The West, under the Antichrist, will protest but won't be able to stop them (Ezekiel 38:1-23). God will immediately and supernaturally destroy the North and allies as He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. It will take seven years to burn all the weapons (Ezekiel 39:1-4, 9-12). This will throw off the balance of powers in the world and leave the Antichrist as undisputed world ruler.

By the middle of the Tribulation, the third Temple will be rebuilt and functioning in Jerusalem on the site of the Dome of the Rock (Matthew 24:15; Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4; Revelation 11:1-2). It could be built before the Rapture or after, but it will be fully functioning by the middle of the Tribulation. What about the Dome of the Rock, which is a holy spot to the Arabs? How will the Jews get control of it? Perhaps settling this issue will cause Israel to trust the Antichrist. The Arabs will be weakened greatly after the North (Russia) is destroyed. The Antichrist may relocate the Dome of the Rock to the new Babylon as a special privilege for the Arabs. However he will do it, this will cause the Jews to further trust him, a mistake they will soon regret.

The first half of the Tribulation will be full of war and its results: famine and death. Great earthquakes will shake the earth and move every mountain and island. Still, the first 3 ½ years will be relatively peaceful and prosperous compared to what is to come. Literally all hell will break loose starting in the middle of the tribulation and continuing to the end.

THE MIDDLE OF THE TRIBULATION will bring many changes as things get much worse for everyone on earth, believers and unbelievers (Matthew 24:20-22; Revelation 6:17; 7:14; 11:1-3). It will be especially bad for the Jews. That is why it is also called "the time of Jacob's troubles" (Jeremiah 30:7). It will be FAR worse than the Spanish Inquisition or the Holocaust of Adolph Hitler (Deuteronomy 32:35; Obadiah 1:12-14).

This time is referred to as the "Day of the Lord" in the Old Testament. It also includes the time Jesus comes back and restores the Kingdom to Israel (1 Thessalonians 5:2-3; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14; Amos 5:18-20; Obadiah 15; Zephaniah 1:7-8, 14, 18; 2:2-3; 14:1; Malachi 4:5).

Jesus gave some specific signs to know when this time will come. The labor pains He equates them to will have reached this point: the desecration of God's temple, the Jews regathering and worldwide deception (Matthew 24:15-26). During this time, the worst demons, now bound in chains, will be released to torment people on the earth (2 Peter 2:4; Revelation 12:7-9). Satan himself will be go wild, knowing his end is near. The Antichrist will break his treaty with Israel and forbid them to worship God (Daniel 9:27; 12:11). He will set his image up in the temple to be worshipped and require everyone to worship him and him only (Daniel 11:36-39; Revelation 13:14-15; 2 Thessalonians 2:4). All who aren't believers will worship him as god (2 Thessalonians 2:11). Anyone who doesn't worship him and show it by taking the mark of 666 will be killed (Revelation 13:7, 18).

Despite how terrible these days will be, God will still offer forgiveness to those who turn to Him. He will show His power through two special witnesses who are set apart BY God 3½ days before the middle of the Tribulation. These will be men very similar to Moses and Elijah. They can't be harmed and will kill all who try to harm them. They will perform miracles and bring terrible drought and plagues (Revelation 11:1-13).

THE SECOND HALF OF THE TRIBULATION will be much, much worse than the first half.

Trumpet Judgments will flow from the scroll Jesus unrolls following the Seal judgments. These will be spread out through the final 3 ½ years (Revelation 8:7-9:19; 11:15-9). The Bowl Judgments will occur right on the heels of the trumpet judgments during the final year of the tribulation (Revelation 16:2-21), culminating with the Battle of Armageddon

With the North defeated by God and the balance of powers thrown off, the West with the Antichrist (Daniel 7:7-8) will move in and take over Palestine (Daniel 11:36-42). The Antichrist will set up a coalition of nations (Revelation 13:7; 17:13; Psalm 2:1-3). They will fortify the mountains in anticipation of an attack by the East (Zechariah 12:2-3; 14:1-3). Because the North is out of the way, the East (with a 200-million man army) wants Palestine for herself (Revelation 9:14-16). This sets the stage for the Battle of Armageddon.

THE END OF THE TRIBULATION is the culmination of the labor pains predicted by Jesus, His Second Coming. Signs indicating this is near will include the sun and moon turning dark, stars falling, the heavens being shaken and the glory of Christ being seen (Matthew 24:27-31).

At this time, everything will get as bad as it will ever get – the final end is near. Thus, this is called the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord (Joel 2:31; Malachi 4:5). The two witnesses will be killed and lie dead in the streets of Jerusalem for 3 ½ days where all will see them, then be miraculously brought back to life and taken to heaven (Revelation 11:7-12). The last Trumpet and Bowl Judgments are taking place during this time (Revelation 11:15-19; 16:17-21).

Then comes the **Battle of Armageddon**. This is when all the armies of the world are gathered ready to fight each other. Jesus will appear with His people who have been in heaven with Him and His angels. He will instantly and totally destroy all who oppose Him (Joel 3:2; 3:11-16; Daniel 11:40-45; Zechariah 12:1-9; 14:1-5; Isaiah 33:10; 34:2-4; Jeremiah 25:27-33). The nations will gather from the town of Megiddo (Ezekiel 38:9; Revelation 16:16), south through the Valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:2), and into Jerusalem itself (Zechariah 12:2; 14:1-3), then down to Edom (Isaiah 34:1-6; 63:1) – an area 200 miles long. These armies will be completely destroyed by Jesus when He returns (Revelation 11:5; 19:11-20; Psalm 2:2; Zechariah 12:1-9; 14:1-4; Isaiah 33:1 to 34:17; 63:1-6; 66:1-6; Jeremiah 25:27-33; Daniel 11:45). With this defeat, the 'Times of the Gentiles' comes to a close. It started with the Babylonian Captivity and marked the time when Gentiles ruled in Jerusalem (Luke 21:24). Now Jesus will take His rightful throne, and the Jews will be restored. This is His Second Coming.

The **SECOND COMING**, also called the Glorious Appearing, is prophesied 318 times in the Bible (Titus 2:13; etc.). Jesus Himself will return from heaven, and we will be with Him (Daniel 7:13-15; Matthew 26:62-65). A single word from His mouth will destroy all the gathered armies of the world, ending the Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 19:11-20). Every eye will see Jesus' return (Zechariah 14:3-5; Acts 1:9-11; Daniel 7:13-15). The Jews will mourn when they realize they have rejected their Messiah (Zechariah 12:10-14).

Jesus will come down on the Mt. of Olives (Zechariah 14:5; Revelation 14:1) where the 144,000 will be gathered awaiting His return (Revelation 14:1). He will then enter Jerusalem through the Eastern Gate (Ezekiel 43:1-4). This is the same place God's Glory departed earth in Ezekiel's day (Ezekiel 10:18-19; 11:22-24). During Jesus' time on earth, God's Glory indwelt Him (John 1:1-14; Matthew 17:1-3; Mark 9:2). Now God's Glory indwells Christians, for His Spirit indwells us (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16).



The thousand-year **MILLENNIUM**, also called the Kingdom, is the culmination of all that has happened since Creation. It is what would have happened 2,000 years ago if the Jews had accepted Jesus as their Messiah when He came the first time. The earth will return to Garden of Eden conditions (Matthew 13:31-33).

Many Scriptures tell about the conditions during this time. Christ will reign on His throne (Zechariah 14:9). He is Prophet (Old Testament - past); Priest (New Testament - present) and King (Millennium - future). Jerusalem will be the center of the world

(Zechariah 8:3; 3:14-17). The temple will be rebuilt and the land settled (Ezekiel 40 – 48). Israel will be exalted (Isaiah 62:1-12) and will have a new heart (Jeremiah 31:33-37; 32:37-41; Ezekiel 36:24-28). Everyone will worship Christ (Isaiah 12:1-6; 26:1-19; 35:10; Amos 9:11-12).

Believers will rule with Christ (Revelation 3:21; 5:9-10; 11:15-18; 15:3-4; 19:16; 20:4-6). The Jews will finally be safe in the land (Ezekiel 20:33-38). Jew and Gentile believers who weren't martyred will live on into the Millennium in physical bodies on earth (Matthew 25:31-46). This will fulfill the promises to Abraham and his descendants (2 Samuel 7:8-17). They will marry and have children in perfect conditions, like Adam and Eve would have had if they hadn't sinned.

The code of conduct for those alive on earth during the Millennium will be the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). Righteousness will prevail everywhere (Isaiah 11:1-5; Jeremiah 33:15-16; Ezekiel 34:23-24). There will be rest, peace and joy everywhere (Isaiah 11:10; 25:1-12; 54:11-14; Jeremiah 23:5-6; 31:10-14; Ezekiel 34:11-15; Zechariah 8:3-6). The land will be blessed and made fruitful (Psalm 72:16; Isaiah 27:6; 35:1-2, 7-9; 55:12-13; Ezekiel 34:11-15, 26-27; 36:30-38; Joel 3:17-21; Amos 9:13-15; Zechariah 8:12). Animals will not be afraid of men (Isaiah 11:6-8; Ezekiel 34:25). Pain & death will be gone (Isaiah 65:20, 22; 11:9; 60:18; Jeremiah 23:5-6). The main passages about conditions during the Millennial Kingdom are Ezekiel 40:1-4; Joel 3:17-21; Isaiah 11:7; 65:25).

With some minor alterations, things will transition into the **ETERNAL STATE** (2 Peter 3:13). Time will be no more. It's not that eternity is unending time; it's that there is no such thing as time anymore, so there can be no end to it. Believers alive on earth at the end of the Kingdom will receive resurrection bodies, as will kingdom age believers who died during the kingdom (Revelation 21:24). There will be an eternal city, the New Jerusalem (John 14:1-3; Revelation 21:1-2, 9-27). It will be about the size of the moon.

The end of the book of Revelation shows that all had been lost in Eden had been regained. There is a close connection between the start of the Bible and the end of the Bible. The results of the fall (sin and the curse) are gone. (

Life from here on, of course, will be perfect (Revelation 21:1 to 22:20). There are some things that won't be in heaven for eternity (Revelation 21 - 22). There will be no more sea (21:1), no more tears, death, sorrow, crying or pain (21:4), no more sinners (21:8), no more fear (21:12), no more sun or moon (21:23), no more night (21:25), no more sin or evil (21:27), no more disease or injuries (22:2) and no more curse (22:3),

There are other things that will be in heaven for eternity (Revelation 21 - 22). These include unending fellowship with God (21:3, 7, 22), unending newness (21:5), unending water of life (21:6; 22:1), unimaginable beauty (21:11, 21), uncompromised security (21:12), unbroken unity between believers (21:12, 14), unlimited holiness (21:16), unparalleled size (21:16), untold wealth (21:18-21), unending light (21:23; 22:5), unrestricted access (21:25), unending fruit from the tree of life (22:2), unceasing service to God (22:3) and unending reign of Jesus on His throne (22:5).

Heaven will be a place of rest (Hebrews 4:1-11; Revelation 14:13), full knowledge (1 Corinthians 13:12), holiness (Hebrews 12:14; Ephesians 2:21), joy (1 Thessalonians 2:19; Jude 24), glory (2 Corinthians 4:17) and worship (Revelation 7:9-12; 19:10). This will continue for all eternity (John 6:51, 58; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 3:18; 2 John 2; Hebrews 13:8; Revelation 1:8; 22:13).

(For more information about this see "Biblical Prophecy" by Jerry Schmoeyer.)

AFFECT ON DAILY LIFE NOW Seeing these things about to come, we should be motivated to make sure we have accepted Jesus as our Savior and make sure He is the Lord of our life. We can find comfort and encouragement in these things as we remember that this life and everything in it is temporary. It should help us to live for Jesus each moment of our lives.

What a wonderful practical tie there is between this truth of the coming of the Lord and our appearing before Him, and the living of our daily life! "Everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure."

CONCLUSION

We have seen the framework for history from eternity past to eternity future, as revealed to us in the Bible. By breaking all history down into time periods we can better understand each one and see how it relates to those before and after it.

We looked at the foundation of the Old Testament, the events up to the time of Jesus. Then we looked at the structure, or framework, of the life of Jesus and finally at the rest of the New Testament which builds on and fleshes out what Jesus came to accomplish.

I hope this book motivates you to read God's Word and to better understand it as you study it daily. The Bible is more than a framework of history, it is our spiritual nourishment as well. What you learn will not only feed you now but will be something that you will take with you for all eternity (Isaiah 40:8; 1 Peter 1:25). May God richly bless you as you continue to study His Word.



CLOSING COMMENTS

I have enjoyed the privilege of writing this book. Thank you for reading it. I would love to hear from you. If you have any suggestions to improve this book, questions for me or requests for prayer, please write to me. I can be reached at jerry@ChristianTrainingOrganization.org Thank you and may God bless you as you serve Him. Keep looking for His return. It could be any moment!

Jerry Schmoyer

END OF BOOK REFLECTION QUESTIONS

To help you get more out of this book, think about the following questions and how you would answer them. You can write down your answers if you want, or just meditate on them. The answers don't get turned in; they are for your benefit.

What can you learn about ministry from the life of Peter?

What can you learn about serving God in tough times from Paul?

Which New Testament book is your favorite? Why?

Which is your favorite Bible verse? Why?

How does the truth of Jesus' coming back for us impact how you live today?