New Testament Introduction and Survey

Class Description

A general and foundational study of the New Testament books. Introductory issues the New Testament will be covered and each New Testament book surveyed. The following will make up the content of this class:

✓ Basic issues of inspiration and canonicity
✓ How we got the NT
✓ Necessary historical and cultural background issues of NT times
✓ The Biblical background of the NT
✓ Basic geography of NT times
✓ What each NT book is about (its overall message)
✓ What each NT book says (its content)
✓ Who each NT book was written by and to (authorship and recipients)
✓ Why each NT book was written (occasion)

Goals for this Class

• God will be glorified and pleased by our consideration and study of His Word

• A key text for this teaching ministry is 2 Timothy 3:14-17; this should direct and control us during this class

2 Tim 3:14-17  “14You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, 15and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

• Equip believers with a firm understanding of the gospel message (Eph 4:11-16)

• You will have a good grasp of each NT book—its message, occasion, purpose, content, etc. The NT was specifically written to us and for us, so it is absolutely essential that you know what God has to say

• Gain a working knowledge and/or “grid” for correct interpretation and application

• By gaining a better grasp of what the NT says, you gain protection from false teachers, grow stronger in your faith, and be equipped to be able to minister God’s Word to others
Requirements

- In preparation for each class, please read the notes covered during the previous class.
- Additionally, before each class complete the worksheet handed out for that class.
- By preparing for each class in this manner you will have a better grasp and handle on the material. Remember, what you get out of this depends on what you put into it!

Notes and Class Instruction

- I have notes and blanks throughout – if at anytime you miss something, ask at anytime, call me, or check the church website (the full notes will be available in Adobe PDF format).
- Unless otherwise indicated I will use the New American Standard Bible (1995 edition). You are welcome to use the translation you currently use, but extra copies will be available if you so desire.
- If at any time you have a question or comment, please ask! The objective is to learn, not plow our way through the notes in a set amount of time.

Sources and Additional Reading for Further Study


In addition to the above-published works, I am indebted to the classes taught and syllabi written by two of my professors from Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, Dr. William Combs (New Testament Introduction; Acts and Pauline Epistles) and Dr. Robert Bruce Compton (Gospels; Non-Pauline Epistles).
PART ONE:
INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. The New Testament

A. The Origin and Meaning of the Name “New Testament”

1) “Testament” is from a Latin word, *testamentum*. The Greek word (diathēkē, *diaqhvkh*) can mean “last will and testament,” “covenant,” or “compact, contract.” “Testament” at one time referred to a covenant between God and man (compare the KJV with NASB in passages such as Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25).

2) “Covenant” refers to a relationship. “Old Testament” refers to the relationship that used to exist between men and God before Jesus Christ, whereas “New Testament” refers to the relationship God has with men now through Jesus Christ.

3) “New Testament” refers back to the “new covenant” of Jeremiah 31:31. All who trust in Jesus Christ have the ability to know and obey God, have forgiveness of sins, and the Holy Spirit indwells them, three essential aspects of the new covenant. (A fourth aspect will be fulfilled when Israel is restored to God and her land.)

4) The basis for referring to the two sections of the Bible as “testaments” is found in 2 Kings 23:2 and 2 Cor 3:14

   2 Kings 23:2 “The king went up to the house of the LORD and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests and the prophets and all the people, both small and great; and he read in their hearing all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD”

   2 Cor 3:14 “But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ”

5) After 250 A.D. when the Christian writings were definitely recognized as inspired they were called “the New Testament” and seen as equal in authority to the Old Testament.

6) Tertullian (A.D. 190-220) was the first to use the name *Novum Testamentum*.

B. How the New Testament Came To Us

The Bible isn’t put together as a textbook on religion. Instead, think of the Bible as a library, made up of many books, written by different authors, and under a variety of circumstances. God speaks in the Bible but He does so by means of men. This class will look at some of the circumstances that the Biblical books were written under and to. Who were the human authors? When did they write? Why did they write? The more you learn about these matters the more alive and real the Bible will be to you.
1) Inspiration

   a. **Definition:** Inspiration means God-**breathed**, and is the result of the Holy Spirit moving a human author to write divine revelation (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21). The Spirit’s work involved **protecting** the human authors from error and **guiding** them in the selection of words consistent with their individual personalities and stylistic differences.

   The result of the Spirit’s work was revelation written by **men** yet having **God’s** authority in them.

   When the Holy Spirit moved Peter to write a message to Christians, God **guided him to write exactly what God wanted him to write and protected him from making any errors.** God guided Peter the fisherman to write a message that used all of Peter’s personality and way of writing (grammar and syntax), yet protected Peter from making any errors. The result of this united authorship was a single message given to and understandable by human beings that is absolutely true because of God’s guidance and protection.

   The result of inspiration is a single message: What God said, the human author said; what the human author wrote, God wrote. The only way we can know what God meant is through the human author's words. Because of this, no one can say that Peter meant one thing, but God meant another. **What the human author meant is what God meant.**

   b. Aspects of Inspiration

      • The **words** are God-breathed, not merely thoughts or ideas (Matt 5:18). This is called verbal inspiration.

      • All the words are God-breathed not merely those referring to salvation (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 3:15-16). This is called **plenary** inspiration.

      • The original writings were without **error**, what the Scripture says is a correct statement of facts or principles. This is called **inerrancy**.

         Consider the following two affirmations in response to the charge of murder: (1) “I have never killed anyone,” and (2) “I ain’t never killed nobody no time.” Was one, both, or neither in error? Was one, both or neither inaccurate?

      • The result of inspiration was a written revelation from God to man that is divinely authoritative, inerrant in the **original** writings (Acts 1:16; 28:25; 1 Cor 2:13; 14:37)

         Inspiration took place when the Holy Spirit breathed out the Scriptures through a David or an Isaiah, not when the scribe made the copy or reproduction that Peter or Paul was using.
2) Canonicity

How did the church know what NT books were inspired and which ones weren’t? How were they able to say which ones should be considered as Scripture and others were not?

The 66 books of the Bible make up the complete canon of Scripture. Canonicity is the historical process by which the Spirit of God led Israel and the church to recognize those writings that were genuinely inspired (inspired at the time of writing, not canonization). This canon is closed (1 Cor 13:8-10; Rev 22:18, 19) as the apostles and prophets have passed off the scene (Eph 2:20).

a. Terms

- “Canon” means rule or standard, and refers to those books that are recognized as authoritative—the correct list of books that are God’s Word
- “Canonicity” refers to the historical process whereby God’s people recognized, collected, and organized the inspired writings

The process of canonization did not make the Scriptures inspired—they were inspired the moment they were written. Scripture was recognized to be inspired.

Believers have the assurance from the Holy Spirit that God’s Word is true as He removes our natural hostility toward it and replaces it with a certainty that the Bible is from God and is His truth.

b. Process—How were the inspired books recognized and collected into the correct list?

- Principles for the New Testament
  
  (1) Was it connected with an apostle (apostolicity)?
  (2) Is it relevant to the church as a whole (catholicity)?
  (3) Does it agree with the faith of the church (orthodoxy)?
  (4) Has it been welcomed and profitably used in local churches (traditional usage)?

- How long did it take for the NT books to be recognized as inspired and collected into the list? The purposes for this were spurious docs and persecution

  By the 4th century A.D., the current collection of NT books was recognized to be God’s inspired Word (Decrees of the Council of Nicea, 350; Athanasius’ Easter letter in 367; Council of Laodicea, 363)

c. What about the Apocrypha?

- What is the Apocrypha?
Meaning: Apocrypha means “hidden” or “concealed.” It refers to writings outside the Hebrew canon

Content:

1 Esdras                   Letter of Jeremiah  
2 Esdras                   Prayer of Azariah and Son of the Three Young Men  
Tobit                     Susanna  
Judith                    Bel and the Dragon  
Additions to Esther       Prayer of Manasseh  
Wisdom of Solomon         1 Maccabees  
Ecclesiasticus           2 Maccabees  
Baruch                    

- Why aren't they considered part of the canon?

  (1) The Jews never included them as part of the canon  
  (2) They are never cited in the New Testament  
  (3) They were never considered canonical until the Roman Catholic Church canonized them at the Council of Trent on April 8, 1546.  
  (4) Some of them have unbiblical or heretical teaching (prayers for the dead, salvation by works)  
  (5) Some have historical and chronological errors  

For more information on the Canon and Canonicity see Appendix A.

3) From Greek Manuscripts to English Translations

What are the issues? There are two issues facing us at this point: first, understanding that only the original writings were inspired, and second, the fact that those were written in Greek.

a. The first issue is this: For whatever reason, we don’t have the original writings available to us (they were either worn out, disintegrated, or possibly even destroyed). Additionally, there are over 5000 Greek copies (called manuscripts) of various parts of the NT and no two of them are exactly alike!

For 1,400 years the NT was copied by hand, and those who copied it made every possible kind of copying mistake.

At first, those who made copies were Christians who wanted a copy for their congregation. As Christianity spread there was a demand for more copies, and sometimes demand affected the accuracy of the copies made.

Later, as copies were made by commercial book manufacturers (called scriptoria) trained scribes would make a copy of a book as another would slowly read the text
that was being copied. It’s not hard to see how mistakes could be made by inattention, not hearing a word right, or hearing a word that could be spelled different ways. As an example of the last two, consider these examples:

“Death is swallowed up in victory (ni’ko”) 1 Cor 15:54
“Death is swallowed up in conflict (nei’ko”)”

“A rainbow (i\ri”) that looked like an emerald” Rev 4:3
“A priest (iJerei") that looked like an emerald”

Copying manuscripts was hard work. Scribes often finished a copy with these words: “Writing bows one’s back, thrusts the ribs into one’s stomach, and fosters a general debility of the body.” In an Armenian copy of the Gospels the scribe complained that as a heavy snowstorm raged outside his ink froze, his hand became numb, and the pen fell from his fingers!

If a scribe was copying a manuscript and the text he was making a copy from said, “Jesus Christ was the devil,” he knew that it was wrong and would naturally seek to make a correction: “Jesus Christ was against the devil.” Scribes rarely left anything out because they did not want to leave out anything that was inspired.

Thus, with no two manuscripts agreeing exactly, the first issue is how can we know what God’s Word is?

The answer is complex, but in a nutshell, each manuscript must be carefully examined and compared with others. As much as we’d like to have every copy be a perfect copy, that is not reality. The good news is that there are no textual differences that affect any Christian doctrine.

b. The second issue is this: We can’t read Koine Greek, yet as Christians we need God’s Word! How can we know what God’s Word says?

The answer is that it must be translated so that the meaning of the original Greek is understandable to the people needing the Scriptures. Language doesn’t stay the same, so from time to time translations must either be updated or entirely new ones made so that Christians are able to understand God’s Word. For example, consider the opening lines of Geoffrey Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales, written in the late 1300’s—

Whan that Aprill, with his shoures soote
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote
And bathed every veyne in swich licour,
Of which vertu engendred is the flour

• The first English translation was produced by John Wycliffe in the 1380’s. During that time the Roman Catholic Church threatened anyone possessing a non-Latin Bible with execution!
1 In the bigynnyng was the word, and the word was at God, and God was the word.
2 This was in the bigynnyng at God.
3 Alle thingis weren maad bi hym, and withouten hym was maad no thing, that thing that was maad.
4 In hym was lijf, and the lijf was the liyt of men; and the liyt schyneth in derknessis,
5 and derknessis comprehendid not it.

- **William Tyndale** produced his copy of the Bible in English in 1525-26
- **Myles Coverdale’s** edition was published in 1535
- **John Rogers** (aka Thomas Matthew), published in 1537
- **Myles Coverdale** produced the Great Bible (it was big) in 1539
- The **Geneva Bible** was produced in 1560; it first introduced verse numbers; it had notes in the margins throughout; it was the preferred Bible for over 100 years, and was the Bible the Pilgrims brought to America
- The **King James Bible** was first produced in 1611; the Church of England wanted a Bible without the controversial marginal notes of the Geneva Bible (proclaiming the pope as the anti-Christ!) and included the Apocrypha; it is ironic that the KJV is honored by Protestants today, as it was produced in opposition to Protestants! (The Church of England persecuted Protestants.) The KJV in print today is not the 1611 but the 1769 edition.
- The **English Revised Version** was published in England in 1880
- The **American Standard Version** was published in America in 1901, and later revised several times, the most recent in 1995
- The **New International Version** was published in 1973
- The **English Standard Version** was published in 2002

Keep in mind that the original intent of the Protestant Reformers was to get the Bible out of a language few could understand (Latin) and bring it into the language that people normally used. William Tyndale fought and died for the right to print the Bible in the common, spoken, modern English tongue of his day… as he boldly told one official who criticized his efforts, “If God spare my life, I will see to it that the boy who drives the plowshare knows more of the scripture than you, Sir!”

What is the difference between a translation and the original copy that the NT authors penned? One key and important difference is that the Holy Spirit
supernaturally protected the biblical author from error but the Holy Spirit does not do that for translators.

As a result, a translation can only be considered to have the authority of inspiration as it accurately gives the meaning of the original into a different language.
C. The Purpose of the New Testament

1) Identifying the purpose of the NT (why it was written) is challenging as the NT is made up of 27 books. Each book has its own unique set of characteristics, including a definite reason or purpose why it was written. Thus, setting forth the purpose of the NT must take into account each NT book’s purpose.

2) The purpose of the NT is to give the church God’s written revelation concerning Christian doctrine and practice

D. The Divisions of the New Testament

1) The Basis for and Growth of Christianity—the Gospels and Acts
   a. The Gospels provide the basis of Christianity—the person and work of Jesus Christ and Israel’s rejection of Him as their Messiah
   b. Acts provides the birth and growth of Christianity

2) The Doctrine and Practice of Christianity—the Epistles (Romans through Revelation)
   Doctrine and practice—what you believe and how you live—are never separate issues. The latter is based entirely on the former. In the NT, issues of lifestyle, church life, and even petty problems are dealt with in light of God’s principles.

“Christianity is a religion of a Book. That is sometimes regarded as a reproach. The reproach would be justified if the Bible were an ordinary book. But the Bible is not an ordinary book. It is a message from God” (Machen, The New Testament, p. 19).

2. The Roman Background of Christianity

These essential documents of Christianity must be understood in light of the times and circumstances in which they were written—the times in which the first Christians lived. Christianity had its beginnings under the Roman Empire, and so we need to give some time to understanding Roman rule.

A. Advantages of the Imperial Government

Throughout the Roman Empire most provinces appreciated the Roman government and its leader, Augustus

1) Peace

The Roman Empire brought about peace (Pax Romana) after a long civil war. This peace was essential not only for every-day life but also for good business.

2) Administration of Government
a. Local governments were enabled to function with greater protection of citizens
b. Before Rome took over the governors used their office to get more money
c. Roman rule established a central authority that local governments became responsible to
d. What was once a chaotic situation became more orderly
e. While there was oppression and injustice among Roman rulers, by ancient standards Roman law did do much good for the people
f. One of the good things that resulted from Roman law was a strong economy, and during NT times it was at its peak
g. In ancient times communication and travel was extremely dangerous and difficult. Under Roman rule an extensive system of paved roads (250,000 miles!) made land travel much easier and more common. This does not mean, however, that there were no dangers (cf. 2 Cor 11:26—“perils of robbers”). However, roads made the work of Christian missionaries much easier than it would have been otherwise.

B. Roman Administration under the Empire

1) Provinces (for examples see Acts 23:34; 25:1)

A Roman province was territory under Roman rule. There were two types of provinces:

a. Imperial

- Under the emperor’s immediate control
- Governed by “legates” who served as long as the emperor chose to keep them
- Often these areas were places of unrest and so soldiers occupied them
- The emperor thus had direct control over the army
- Syria (capital: Antioch) was an imperial province, and Palestine was basically supervised by the Syrian official
- Sometimes areas were under the emperor’s control but were governed by “procurators.” Judea is an example of this during most of the NT times.

b. Senatorial

- Governed by “proconsuls” chosen by the Senate
- Proconsuls served for only one year
- Senatorial provinces were found closer to Rome and were more settled
- Achaia (capital: Corinth) and Cyprus (capital: Paphos) are examples

2) Local Government

a. Cities had a certain amount of independence (this was in place before Roman rule, when Greece was in power)
b. Throughout the empire Roman colonies were established, often composed of veterans of Roman armies. One example is Philippi (Acts 16:12)
3) Roman Citizenship

a. Italian citizens automatically had citizenship, so outside of Italy it was extremely valuable.
b. If one was a Roman citizen he could not be **punished** in shameful ways, such as scourging with rods or whips, and especially crucifixion (see Acts 22:25-29)
c. Roman citizens could also appeal to the **emperor** if charged with a capital offense (see Acts 25:11-12)

C. The Empire and Christianity

1) How this Affected Christianity

a. Barriers of race and nationality were removed
b. **Travel** was easier than it had ever been
c. There was **peace** throughout the then known world
d. The mission of Christianity was to the **world**, and the effects of Roman rule opened the world to Christianity

2) Rome’s “Protection” of Christianity

a. With the exception of the Jews, those under Rome’s jurisdiction were polytheistic—they worshiped many **gods** and were very tolerant of “your god”
b. Despite the general loathing others had toward Jews they were tolerated as Rome sought to avoid dealing with differences of religion, especially with people as stubborn as the Jews were
c. At its beginning Christianity was viewed as a division or sect of Judaism and so it had all the privileges of Judaism. Early on when the Jews attacked Christianity Roman authorities viewed this as only a fight among themselves (cf. Acts 18:12-17), so that Rome actually **protected** Christianity!

“These things did not happen by chance. It was not by chance that Jesus was born in the golden age of the Roman Empire…God is the ruler of **history**. His times are well chosen. The Roman Empire was an instrument in his hand. And so are the nations of the modern world” (Machen, *The New Testament*, p. 25).

3. The Greek Background of Christianity

A. Greek Language

1) Greek culture and language was spread throughout the area of NT times as a result of Alexander the Great’s conquests in the 4th century B.C. This is known as Hellenization, which comes from what Greeks called themselves (**Hellen, Ellhn**).
2) Koine Greek (“common Greek”) became the common language among the Mediterranean and Ancient Near East countries. Each country would have their own particular language (for Judea it was Aramaic) but Greek was the language that almost everyone knew (called the *lingua franca*). This enabled communication with those from different regions and backgrounds.

*Example:* English is the “mother tongue” in the US but not in the Philippines where Filipino is their “mother tongue” but they also learn English to be able to communicate with non-Filipinos.

3) When the Roman Empire replaced the Greek Empire they did not try to change the shared, common language. Combined with the Romans’ improved travel and communication, Greek became the universal language. Other languages were used, such as Lycaonian (Acts 14:11) and Aramaic (Acts 21:40; 22:2), but Greek was the language understood by almost everyone.

4) This was a great help to the spread of Christianity. Christians were able to communicate the gospel to most people because they spoke Greek. This enabled the gospel to spread rapidly, much faster than having to learn a new language when entering a new area with a different language.

**B. Greek Culture and Christianity**

1) Remember, Christianity is a religion of a Book, the Bible. When it began it had a Bible, but it was not Greek but Hebrew! This could have been a huge problem, but in the providence of God it had been overcome.

2) While the OT was a Hebrew book, before the Christian era it had been translated into Greek, so that from its beginning Christians had a Bible they could read. Translation is difficult and time-consuming, but again God had met this need.

3) This Greek translation of the OT is called the Septuagint (abbreviated as LXX). Note the following:

   a. Early Christians had no interest in the Hebrew OT as they were content with their Greek Bible.
   b. The LXX was the Bible first century missionaries like Paul used as the basis for their teaching and work
   c. This was the Bible that NT authors—under the protection and guidance of the Holy Spirit—quoted from

**4. The Jewish Background of Christianity**

**A. Government**

1) Judea was governed by Roman procurators, but Jews were able to exercise a large amount of power (see for example Acts 5:17-18, 40)
2) A council called the Sanhedrin (“Council of the elders,” Luke 22:66; Acts 6:12; 22:5) administered this ruling power and also served as a court. The high priest was its president.

3) The Sanhedrin was made up of Pharisees and Sadducees. The Sadducees had higher authority but the Pharisees had more real power as they had the people on their side.

B. Parties

1) Pharisees
   a. Strict interpretation of the Mosaic law
   b. They hated foreign influence
   c. Most of the scribes (professional interpreters of the law) were Pharisees
   d. From a desire to make sure the Law was kept the Pharisees enforced observance of minute and endless traditions (called “oral law”)

2) Sadducees
   a. These men were from the wealthy upper class
   b. They held positions of worldly authority, and as a result didn’t mind either Roman government or Greek culture
   c. Accepted Mosaic Law but rejected the traditions of the scribes
   d. Rejected belief in the resurrection (Matt 22:23) and angels or spirits (Acts 23:8)

C. Religious Life

1) The Temple
   a. The temple had been rebuilt in 20-19 BC by Herod the Great (he killed boys under the age of two in Bethlehem and its vicinity, Matt 2:16)
   b. The OT regulations concerning its worship were carried out by the priests, most of which were worldly
   c. There were some godly priests and Israelites who worshipped there and looked for the consolation of Israel (see Luke 1:6-9; 2:25-38)

2) Synagogues
   a. Though we don’t know when synagogues began, they were everywhere Jews were (ten Jewish males were required to found one)
   b. Services in the synagogue were a lot like our church services today. There was prayer, Scripture reading, and a message. The two basic purposes of the synagogue service were to praise the Lord and educate the people.
   c. Any Jewish male could lead in prayer or give the sermon (for example see Matt 4:23; Acts 13:15)
   d. No sacrifices were made in synagogues—that only happened at the Temple in Jerusalem
e. Synagogues were open and used every day of the week, not just on the Sabbath

D. The Dispersion

“When a foreign missionary enters a new city, the first difficulty which confronts him is the difficulty of getting an audience. In the Gentile mission of the early Church this particular difficulty had been overcome. In practically every city of the Greco-Roman world, the Christian missionaries found an audience ready for them. The audience was provided by the synagogue of the Jews” (Machen, *The New Testament*, p. 39).

1) Causes and Extent of the Dispersion

a. By the first century AD Jews were scattered all over the civilized world
b. Jews were taken away from Israel by force
c. Jews moved from place to place because of famine or better business opportunities

2) Proselytes

a. Both Jews and Gentiles attended synagogue services. This is extremely important for understanding the spread of the gospel
b. Today only Jews attend synagogue, but in NT times Jews actively sought to convert Gentiles. Converts to Judaism were called proselytes (see Matt 23:15; Acts 2:10; 6:5; 13:43)
c. There were two classes of Gentiles who attended synagogue services:
   - Full converts were Gentiles who became fully identified with the people of Israel
   - Gentiles who attended synagogue—these were Gentiles who were interested in Judaism and believed some of its teachings but did not become full Jews (usually because of circumcision)

d. When the Christian missionaries spoke in the synagogues they spoke to both Jews and Gentiles

3) How the Dispersion Helped Christianity

There are four ways:

a. Many of the first Christian missionaries were Jews of the dispersion and so their background included a knowledge of the OT and speaking Greek. This equipped them to fulfill the Great Commission to most anyone they met
b. As Christianity was viewed as a branch of Judaism, Christianity at first had legal protection
c. Synagogues provided an audience for Christian missionaries to begin their work from (see for example Acts 9:20; 13:5, 14-15; 18:4; 19:8)
d. In the Septuagint Christians had a translation of the OT Bible in Greek
5. Basic Geography of the New Testament

A. Geographical Background of the Gospels

1) Water
   a. Sea of Galilee
   b. Jordan River
   c. Dead Sea

2) Cities
   a. Jerusalem
   b. Nazareth

3) Regions
   a. Galilee
   b. Samaria
   c. Judea
B. Geographical background of Acts and the Epistles

1) Regions
   a. Palestine
   b. Asia
   c. Macedonia
   d. Achaia
   e. Italy

2) Islands
   a. Cyprus
   b. Crete

3) Cities
   a. Antioch
   b. Rome
PART TWO:
SURVEY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Introduction to the Gospels

What does “Gospel” mean in this sense?

1) The English word Gospel comes from the Anglo-Saxon word godspell which is composed of god (God) and spell (a story). This may then mean either God-story or good story. The latter is in line with the meaning of the Greek noun euaggelion for which gospel is the common translation.

2) Euaggelion occurs over 70 times in the NT, and always refers to the message, the good news of what God has accomplished through Jesus Christ. With the exception of Mark 1:1, it is never used in connection with the record of that message (a book). The titles of each gospel are, for example, “According to Matthew,” distinguishing the particular account by its author. We should probably understand gospel as connected with these written records as referring to “the good news about Jesus Christ.”

Why where the Gospels written?

These are not biographies of Jesus, as biographies give a lot of information about someone’s life. The Gospel writers carefully chose what they wrote about Jesus. They had a goal or purpose in why they were writing and so with the Holy Spirit’s supernatural guidance chose what things to include in their account to accomplish that goal or purpose.

The gospel writers had at least three motives or goals why they wrote:

1) To help the missionary work of the church. The Gospels proclaim the good news of redemption in Jesus Christ. The gospel writers wanted to awaken and strengthen faith in Jesus. They wanted to set forth who Jesus was so that others would come to know Him.

2) To help the church defend their beliefs to unbelievers. Those who heard the gospel would have questions about who Jesus was and what He did. The Gospels provided answers to these questions.

3) To help the teaching work of the church. The church is responsible for teaching believers “to observe all that I [Jesus] commanded you” (Matt 28:20). These gospels help new believers learn about their Savior and strengthen them in their faith.

Why are there four gospels?

1) Each gospel writer had a specific reason why he was writing (purpose) and specific people he was writing to (audience). Each writer presents Christ in a way that is best suited to who they were writing to:
Gospel | Audience | Purpose
---|---|---
Matthew | Jews | Show Jesus as the promised Messiah, the Jewish King
Mark | Gentile, Roman | Portray Jesus as the tireless Servant of the Lord
Luke | Gentile, Greek | Portray Jesus as the Son of Man, restore fallen man
John | Mankind | Shows Jesus as the Son of God giving light and life

2) The ultimate reason there are four gospels is inspiration—the Holy Spirit moved these writers to produce written records of Jesus, guiding and protecting them so that they wrote exactly and accurately the truth concerning Jesus Christ.

*What are some important things to know when studying the Gospels?*

1) **The OT background of the Gospels**

   The NT must be read with the OT as its background—that is, the OT is what God has said, and the NT is built on top of it. Read and study the NT as if you had just finished reading the OT.

   For example, when the NT talks about the Christ or the Messiah (these two words mean the same thing), it does so from the standpoint of what the OT said about the coming Messiah—who He would be, what He would do, etc.

   The NT does not ignore or change the meaning of the OT; it builds on, continues, and fulfills it!

2) **Jesus’ earthly ministry was mainly to the Jews**

   Jesus was “born under the Law” (Gal 4:4), was “a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers” (Rom 15:8), and said “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt 15:24).

   With the OT as the background of the NT we should expect this—Jesus was the Jews’ Messiah! Sadly, they rejected Him, resulting in the revelation of something the OT gave no hint of—the church (see Eph 3:5-6).

   In the church (the body of Christ) Gentiles are “no longer strangers and aliens but fellow citizens” (Eph 2:19), are “fellow heirs, members, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel” (3:6), and with believing Jews are in “one body” (Eph 2:16).

   Remember that the Gospels give the basis of Christianity—the person and work of Jesus Christ and Israel’s rejection of Him as their Messiah. Though very little is said about the church the Gospels definitely show that the gospel is for everyone and at their end the Gospels command that disciples be made of all the nations.
3) The Kingdom of God/Heaven

The phrases “Kingdom of God” and “Kingdom of Heaven” mean the same thing (see Matt 19:23-24 and Mark 10:23-25). Matthew uses “Heaven” instead of “God” because he wrote to Jews. Jews had great reverence for the names of God and would use “heaven” instead.

What is this kingdom though? Some say it refers to Jesus’ spiritual rule right now over the Church. However, while Jesus is the Head of the Church (Col 1:18), He is never called the King of the Church.

The kingdom of heaven/God refers to the Messiah’s future literal rule on earth. Remember, the NT is written from the standpoint of the OT. When Jesus talked about the kingdom, His Jewish hearers knew exactly what He was talking about—a literal earthly kingdom with the Messiah ruling.

Additionally, Jesus never defines “kingdom of heaven/God” because He expected the Jews would know what He was talking about from the OT. If Jesus was thinking of a different kind of “kingdom,” He would have said what He meant, but He never does this.

4) Nature and purpose of miracles

A miracle is a supernatural act of God—something only God could do. Miracles were a special means by which God put His stamp of approval upon His messenger, showing without a doubt that the speaker was truly from God (Matt 11:2-6; Acts 2:22); they were the means by which God proved that the messenger was from Him.

Miracles also occurred in conjunction with a message from God (Acts 4:29-30) for the same purposes: miracles God demonstrated and proved that the message was from Him (attestation, authentication, accreditation). See Appendix B “Spiritual Gifts Today” for more information on this subject.

Jesus did miracles to prove to people that He was the promised Messiah (see Luke 7:18-22 for example).

5) Nature and purpose of parables

It is often thought that Jesus taught in parables to help people understand what He was saying, similar to an illustration. The fact, however, is the exact opposite! Jesus didn’t start teaching in parables until after the Jewish religious leaders rejected Him. His disciples noticed this and asked Him why He was doing this (Matt 13:10). Note Jesus’ answer in Matthew 13:11-17!

Jesus used parables in His public teaching as a form of judgment. Parables were designed to give revelation for His disciples and at the same time withhold it from those who were hardened in their unbelief.
1. Matthew

Trying to identify who wrote a gospel, whom it was written to, and why it was written can be challenging as these are not clearly stated. We can find satisfactory answers to these questions from information outside the Bible (called external evidence) and inside the Bible (called internal evidence).

A. Is Matthew the author?

1) External evidence

a. All existing and known Greek manuscripts of Matthew have the title, “According to Matthew.” Titles were added early in the history of the transmission of the text. They tell us who the author was and distinguishes it from other gospels. These were probably added in the second century AD.

b. A number of church fathers (early Christian teachers) say that Matthew the apostle was the author of the first gospel—Papias (c. A.D. 70-150), Irenaeus (c. A.D. 185), Origen (c. A.D. 185-254), and Eusebius (c. A.D. 325)

2) Internal evidence

a. Matthew is the only gospel writer who refers to himself as a tax collector (10:3).


c. After Jesus’ call of Matthew he gave a feast at his house. Mark 2:15 and Luke 5:29 call it “his house” but Matthew 9:10 calls it “the house.” Which would you probably say if you were referring to your house?

d. Matthew’s gospel uses technical financial terms (22:19), mentions Peter’s questioning by temple-tax collectors (17:24-27), and relays the large figures of the story of the unforgiving debtor (18:23-25). We would expect this from an author who was a tax-collector!

B. To whom did Matthew write?

1) Church history unanimously says that Matthew wrote to Jews who lived in Palestine.

2) Matthew’s gospel (the internal evidence) definitely points to a Jewish readership—

a. Matthew 5:17-19 emphasizes Jesus’ positive attitude toward the Mosaic Law
b. Only Matthew records the refutation of Jewish slander in 27:62-66; 28:11-15
c. Matthew has the most OT quotes of all the Gospels
d. Aramaic terms are not translated and Jewish customs are not explained (15:2; 23:5)
e. The genealogy begins with Abraham, the father of the Jews (1:1-2)
f. Matthew uses the phrase “kingdom of heaven” instead of “kingdom of God”
g. Only Matthew says that Jesus’ ministry was to the lost sheep of Israel (10:5-6; 15:24)

C. Why did Matthew write? What was his purpose?

1) Matthew’s purpose is nowhere clearly stated. By studying the content of his gospel we can learn what his purpose was. What are the basic themes of Matthew’s gospel?

a. Jesus’ qualifications as the Messiah
   • Origin and birth
   • Teaching
   • Works
   • Fulfillment of OT prophecies

b. Israel’s rejection of Jesus as the Messiah (12:24; 21:15)

c. Israel’s future in relation to Jesus the Messiah, 24-25

d. Jesus’ establishing the church as the body through whom He would work in-between Israel’s judgment and reestablishment (only Matthew mentions the church)

e. The death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah

Matthew demonstrates that—

a. Jesus was the promised Messiah (11:2-6, 23)

b. Salvation is only through Jesus the Messiah (11:28-30)

c. Israel rejected Jesus as their Messiah (12:23-24)

d. Jesus would establish the church (16:18; 18:15-17; 28:19-20)

e. Jesus will return to be Israel’s Messiah and establish the kingdom (25:31)

f. Jesus died for sinners and rose from the dead (26-28)

2) Matthew’s ultimate objective in writing was to prove that Jesus is the Christ, the King of the Jews. By proving this Matthew sought to see his fellow Jews believe in Jesus as the Messiah and ground them in the faith.

D. What are the “keys” to Matthew?

1) Theme: Jesus is the Christ, the King of the Jews

2) Word: “Kingdom”

3) Verses: 1:1, 21; 2:2

4) Pivotal Verse: 12:24
E. What did Matthew write? How did Matthew seek to accomplish his purpose?

Here’s a basic outline of the Gospel according to Matthew—

1) Jesus’ ministry proving He is the Messiah, 1:1-12:24

2) Jesus’ ministry after His rejection as the Messiah, 12:24-28:20

Here’s a more detailed outline of Matthew’s Gospel—

1) The origin and birth of Jesus the Christ, 1:1-2:23
   a. Genealogy, 1:1-17
   b. Birth, 1:18-25
   c. Visit of Magi, 2:1-12
   d. Flight to and return from Egypt, 2:13-23
2) The gospel of the Messiah’s Kingdom, 3:1-7:29
   a. John the Baptist’s ministry, 3:1-12
   b. Jesus’ baptism and testing by Satan, 3:13-4:1
   c. Jesus’ early ministry in Galilee, 4:12-25
   d. The sermon on the mount, 5:1-7:29
3) Jesus’ miracles proved He was the Messiah, 8:1-11:1
   a. Miracles showing Jesus authority over disease, 8:1-22
   b. Miracles showing Jesus’ authority over nature and demons, 8:23-9:17
   c. Miracles showing Jesus’ authority over death and the grave, 9:18-34
   d. The 12 sent throughout Israel to preach, 9:35-11:1
4) Israel's Opposition to Jesus, 11:2-13:52
   a. Jesus and John the Baptist, 11:2-19
   b. Jesus condemns unrepentant cities, 11:20-30
   c. Jesus’ activity on the Sabbath, 12:1-21
   d. Jesus’ confrontation with the Pharisees, 12:22-50
   e. Parables of the Kingdom, 13:1-52
5) Increasing divisions because of Jesus the Messiah, 13:53-18:35
   a. Jesus’ response to spiritual blindness and rejection, 13:53-14:12
   b. Series of miracles, 14:13-36
   c. Confrontation with elders over Jewish traditions, 15:1-20
   d. Series of miracles, 15:21-39
   e. Confrontation with elders over Jesus as Messiah, 16:1-28
   f. Jesus’ transfiguration, 17:1-13
   g. Series of miracles, 17:14-27
   h. Sermon, 18:1-35
6) Climax of opposition to Jesus as the Messiah, 19:1-23:39
   a. Jesus’ correction of Pharisees regarding marriage and divorce, 19:1-12
   c. Instruction concerning wealth and position, 19:16-20:16
   d. Jesus’ prediction of His death, 20:17-19
   e. A mother’s request, 20:20-28
   f. Jesus heals blind men, 20:29-34
g. Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem and beginning of the week of His suffering (Passion week), 21:1-23:39
   • Triumphal entry into Jerusalem, 21:1-11
   • Confrontation with religious leaders, 21:12-22:46
   • Denunciation of religious leaders, 23:1-39

7) The last message of the Messiah, 24:1-26:5
   a. Jesus’ conversation with disciples, 24:1-3
   b. Description of the first half of the Tribulation, 24:4-14
   c. Description of the second half of the Tribulation, 24:15-28
   d. Prophecy of Christ’s Second Coming, 24:39-31
   e. Illustrations of and exhortations to watchfulness, 24:32-25:13
   f. Instruction concerning judgments after the Tribulation, 25:14-46
   g. Concluding words to disciples and conspiracy of His enemies, 26:1-5

8) The death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah, 26:6-28:20
   a. Anointed for burial, 26:6-13
   b. Judas’ bargain to betray Jesus, 26:14-16
   c. Last Passover, 26:17-35
   d. Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, 26:36-46
   e. Jesus betrayed and arrested, 26:47-56
   f. Trials and denials, 26:57-27:26
   g. Crucifixion and burial of Jesus the Messiah, 27:27-66
   h. Resurrection of Jesus the Messiah, 28:1-20
      • Empty tomb, 28:1-7
      • Appearance to disciples, 28:8-10
      • Religious leaders’ cover-up, 28:11-15
      • Jesus the Messiah’s instructions to disciples until His return, 28:18-20
2. Mark

A. Is Mark the author?

1) External evidence

   a. All existing and known Greek manuscripts of Mark have the title, “According to Mark.” Titles were added early in the history of the transmission of the text. They tell us who the author was and distinguishes it from other gospels. These were probably added in the second century AD.

   b. A number of church fathers (early Christian teachers) say that Mark was the author of the first gospel (see sources under “Matthew” above), closely connected with the apostle Peter.

2) Internal evidence

   Nothing in this gospel clearly says “Mark wrote this,” but it is fully consistent with what the NT says about Peter and Mark. Here are some examples:

   a. Aramaic expressions thought to be Peter’s exact phrases of Jesus’ words (5:41; 7:11, 34; 14:36)
   b. The close details in this gospel reflect an eyewitness account
   c. This gospel has details about Peter’s life and ministry that are not found in the other gospels (see 1:36; 11:21; 13:3; 16:7)

B. To whom did Mark write?

   The early church unanimously understood that Mark wrote to Romans while he was in Rome. We can see this from the following:

   1) Mark has the fewest OT references of all the Gospels
   2) He says little about the OT Law, explains Jewish customs (see 7:3-4; 12:42; 14:12), and interprets Aramaic phrases (see 3:17; 5:41; 7:11, 34; 14:36)
   3) Mark clarifies obvious geographical references in Palestine and Jerusalem (see 13:3)
   5) Alexander and Rufus are named as the sons of Simon of Cyrene who carried Jesus’ cross (15:21; Rom 16:13)
   6) Mark was linked with Rome and the ministries of both Peter and Paul during their time there (see Col 4:10; 2 Tim 4:11; Philemon 24; 1 Pet 5:13)

C. Why did Mark write? What was his purpose?

   1) Like Matthew, Mark does not tell why he wrote his account, so we must look at what he wrote. We can see these things from Mark’s Gospel:

      a. It focuses more on what Jesus did than on what He taught
b. It emphasizes the **suffering** of Jesus

c. The **first half** of the gospel (1:1-8:26) focuses on Jesus’ **miracles** and leads up to Peter’s confession as to the true nature of who Jesus is

d. The **second half** of the gospel (8:27-16:20) focuses on Jesus’ **suffering and death**

2) Mark probably had two purposes in writing:

a. **Evangelism**—as the Son of Man Jesus laid His life down to redeem sinners (10:45). This is the essence of the “good news.” Mark’s record of who Jesus is and what He did is an evangelistic tool, striving to convince readers of Christ’s deity and sacrificial death.

b. **Discipleship**—as Mark showed Jesus’ suffering, his readers would understand that suffering for Christ is an essential mark of being His follower (see 8:34). Mark wants to edify (build up) believers by teaching them about the good news of salvation, Christ’s person and ministry.

“Mark gives a summary, not exactly of the most important things about Jesus, but rather of the things which unbelievers or recent converts could most easily understand. Hence the omission of the mystery of the birth, of the profound teaching of the early Judean ministry, of the intimate instructions to the disciples. These things are of fundamental importance. But they can best be understood only after one has first acquired a thorough grasp of the public ministry, and of the death and resurrection of the Lord” (Machen, *The New Testament*, p. 204).

Mark wants his readers to understand **who Jesus is** and **what real discipleship involves**.

D. What are the “keys” to Mark?

1) **Theme**: Jesus is the **Son** of God and **Suffering** Servant

Mark’s gospel graphically demonstrates the truth Paul taught in Philippians 2:6-7

> 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,
> 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

2) **Word**: “**immediately**”

3) **Verses**: 1:1; 10:45

4) **Pivotal Verses**: 8:27-29
E. *What did Mark write? How did Mark seek to accomplish his purpose?*

*Here’s a basic outline of the Gospel according to Mark—*

1) Jesus’ **miracles**, 1:1-8:26

2) Jesus’ **suffering and death**, 8:27-16:20

   Here Mark connects Jesus’ predictions of His coming suffering with teaching about *what it means to follow Him* (see 8:31-38; 9:30-37; 10:32-45).

Mark shows Jesus to be the Son of God by recording His actions, especially His miracles. When Jesus’ teaching is recorded it is in the setting of His works. Jesus’ teaching was part of His work as the servant of the Lord.

*Here’s a more detailed outline of Mark—*

1) The Coming of God’s Son, 1:1-13
   a. Ministry of John the Baptist, 1:1-8
   b. Baptism of Jesus, 1:9-11
   c. Temptation of Jesus, 1:12-13

2) Jesus’ Ministry Begins in Galilee, 1:14-3:6
   a. Introduction, 1:14-15
   b. Calling four disciples, 1:16-20
   c. Ministry in Capernaum, 1:21-34
   d. Ministry in Galilee, 1:35-45
   e. Healing of paralytic, 2:1-12
   f. Calling of Levi, 2:13-17
   g. Pharisees’ questioning, 2:18-22
   h. Disciples pick grain on the Sabbath, 2:23-28
   i. Jesus heals on the Sabbath, 3:1-6

3) Jesus’ Ministry Continues in Galilee, 3:7-5:43
   a. Increasing popularity among Jews and Gentiles, 3:7-12
   b. Commissioning of the twelve, 3:13-19
   c. Growing controversy with religious leaders, 3:20-30
   d. Teaching about Jesus’ true family, 3:31-35
   e. Teaching on the kingdom, 4:1-34
   f. Calming of the storm, 4:35-41
   g. Exorcising the Gerasene demoniac, 5:1-20
   h. Raising Jairus’ daughter, healing woman with hemorrhage, 5:21-43

4) Jesus’ Ministry Concludes in Galilee, 6:1-8:26
   a. Rejection by people of Nazareth, 6:1-6
   b. Mission and ministry of the twelve, 6:7-13
   c. Herod’s reaction to Jesus and John, 6:14-29
   d. Feeding of five thousand, 6:30-44
   e. Walking on water, 6:45-52
   f. Healing many in Gennesaret, 6:53-56
   g. Confrontation with Pharisees, 7:1-23
h. Healing the Syrophoenician woman, 7:24-30
i. Healing a deaf man, 7:31-37
j. Feeding four thousand, 8:1-10
k. Confrontation with Pharisees, 8:11-21
l. Healing a blind man, 8:22-26

5) Jesus’ Ministry on the Way to Jerusalem, 8:27-10:52
   a. Peter’s confession and Jesus’ teaching about self-denial, 8:27-38
   b. The transfiguration, 9:1-13
   c. Exorcising a demon possessed boy, 9:14-29
   d. Jesus’ instruction about His death and resurrection, 9:30-50
   e. Teaching about divorce, 10:1-12
   f. Teaching on faith, the kingdom of God, and eternal life, 10:13-31
   g. Jesus’ teaching about His death and resurrection, 10:32-45
   h. Healing of blind Bartimaeus, 10:46-52

   a. Triumphal entry, 11:1-11
   b. Cursing of fig tree, cleansing of the temple, 11:12-26
   c. First confrontation with Jewish leaders, 11:27-12:12
   d. Second confrontation with Jewish leaders, 12:13-34
   e. Warning of hypocrisy, commendation of widow’s offering, 12:35-44
   f. Olivet discourse, 13:1-37

7) Jesus’ Suffering and Resurrection, 14:1-16:8
   a. Plot to kill Jesus, anointing for burial, 14:1-11
   b. Passover observed, 14:12-25
   c. Betrayal and arrest, 14:26-52
   d. Trial, 14:53-15:15
   e. Suffering and crucifixion, 15:16-41
   f. Burial and resurrection, 15:42-16:8
   g. Post-resurrection ministry and instructions, 16:9-20
3. Luke

A. Is Luke the author?

1) External Evidence

a. Like Matthew and Mark, all existing and known manuscripts start the gospel with a superscription, “according to Luke.” There is also a parallel between Luke 10:7 and 1 Timothy 5:18.

b. The testimony from all parts of the Mediterranean world is that Luke was the author of the third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, and that he wrote primarily for a Gentile audience. Luke is identified as a close companion of Paul and Luke’s gospel is understood to reflect Paul’s influence.

2) Internal Evidence

a. From the introduction (1:1-4) we learn that while the author was not an eyewitness to the events he records, he knew others who were (1:2). He researched the events carefully and claimed accuracy (1:3-4). The writer had a keen intellect and literary ability.

b. The evidence from Acts suggests common authorship. Both works are dedicated to the same individual (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1). Acts refers to another “account,” and begins precisely where the third gospel ends. Both works show strong similarities in language, style, and perspective.

c. The “we” sections of Acts indicate that the author was a close companion of Paul (cf. Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-16; 21:1-8; 27:1-28:6).

d. Evidence from the Gospel and Acts suggest the author was a Gentile rather than a Jew, particularly where he refers to the Jews as though he were not a part of that group (cf. Luke 4:44; 23:51; Acts 10:39; 13:5; 14:1; 17:1; 21:11).

e. There is evidence that the author in both treatises was a physician. This is seen both in the interest the author shows in medical issues as well as in the language he employs in describing these issues (e.g., Luke 4:38; 5:12, 18, 24, 31; 6:18; 8:44; 10:34–35; 13:11, 32; Acts 3:7; 5:5, 10; 9:33; 12:23; 28:8).

Of Paul’s companions who were part of the apostle’s entourage in the “we” sections in Acts, only Luke fits all of the evidence to be the author of the Gospel and Acts. Paul distinguishes Luke from his Jewish colleagues in Colossians 4:10–14 and refers to him as a “beloved physician” (4:14). Luke’s value to the apostle is eloquently expressed in the last letter Paul wrote, 2 Timothy. There the apostle, languishing in a Roman prison with his life in the balance, states that of all his colleagues, “only Luke is with me” (2 Tim 4:11).
B. Who did Luke write to?

1) Luke specifically identifies Theophilus (“lover of God”) as the one to whom he writes (Luke 1:3). Theophilus is called “most excellent” which may point to great wealth or social prominence. Luke dedicated his writing to this person, a common occurrence in the first century when the honored person financially supported the work and was responsible for its publication for a wider audience.

2) Luke’s “wider audience” was intended primarily for Gentile readers. We can see this from:
   b. Explanation of Jewish customs and localities (cf. 1:26; 4:31; 8:26; 22:1; 23:51; 24:13)
   c. While Luke quotes numerous passages from the OT, his quotations show a decided preference for the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the OT used by believers throughout the Mediterranean world.
   d. Luke takes pains to locate the life and ministry of Jesus to the larger Roman world (e.g., 2:1; 3:1).

C. Why did Luke write? What was his purpose?

By looking at the very beginning of Luke’s gospel (1:1-4) we can see that his purpose in writing was to give a careful, orderly account of “the things accomplished among us,” in other words the basis of Christianity. Luke writes “so that you may known the exact truth about the things you have been taught,” in other words to have an authoritative basis for Christian faith and practice.

Keep in mind that Luke’s account of Christianity is in two parts, first his gospel, detailing the foundation of Christianity, and second the Acts, detailing the growth of Christianity.

The purpose of Luke’s gospel, then, is to provide a solid basis for Christianity, centered on the person and work of Jesus Christ.

What are some characteristics of Luke’s gospel?

2) Conversion and discipleship (5:32; 8:12; 9:23-24; 12:8-9)

5) **Women** have a prominent role (1:24–56; 2:36–38; 7:11–18; 7:36–50; 8:1–3; 10:38–42; 23:27–31; 24:1–11). This is significant, as at that time society had a low view of women.


**D. What are the “keys” to Luke?**

1) Theme: The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost

2) Verse: 19:10

3) Pivotal Verse: 9:51

Starting at 9:51 there are 10 chapters detailing Jesus’ final journey to Jerusalem. “This is the heart of Luke’s gospel, and it features a theme Luke stressed throughout: Jesus’ relentless progression toward the cross. This was the very purpose for which Christ had come to earth (cf. 9:22-23; 17:25; 18:31-33; 24:25-26, 46), and He would not be deterred. The saving of sinners was His whole mission (19:10)” (*MacArthur Study Bible*, p. 1472).


Here’s a basic outline of the Gospel according to Luke—

1) Jesus’ background, 1:1-4:13
2) Jesus’ ministry in Galilee, 4:14-9:50
3) Jesus’ ministry leading to His ascension, 9:51-24:53

Here’s a more detailed outline of Luke—

1) Prelude to Jesus’ Ministry, 1:1-4:13
   a. Preamble, 1:1-4
   b. Jesus’ birth, 1:5-2:38
   c. Jesus’ boyhood, 2:39-52
2) Jesus’ Ministry in Galilee, 4:14-9:50
   a. The beginning of His ministry, 4:14-44
   b. Calling of His disciples, 5:1-6:16
   c. Continuation of His ministry, 6:17-9:50
• Sermon on the Mount, 6:17-49
• Ministering in the cities, 7:1-8:25
• Traveling in Galilee, 8:26-9:50
3) Jesus’ Journey to Jerusalem, 9:51-19:27
   a. Samaria, 9:51-10:37
   b. Bethany and Judea, 10:38-13:35
   c. Perea, 14:1-19:27
4) The Passion Week, 19:28-23:56
   a. Monday, 19:28-44
   b. Tuesday, 19:45-48
   d. Thursday, 22:7-53
   e. Friday, 22:54-23:55
   f. The Sabbath, 23:56
5) The Consummation of Jesus’ Ministry, 24:1-53
   a. Resurrection, 24:1-12
   b. Road to Emmaus, 24:13-45
   c. Ascension, 24:46-53
4. John

A. Is John the author?

1) External Evidence

a. As with the other three gospels, the author of the fourth gospel is not specifically named. The unanimous tradition of church history identifies the apostle John, the disciple “whom Jesus loved” (13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20, 24) as its author.

b. Irenaeus (c. A.D. 140-203), Tertullian (c. 155-222) and Origen (c. 185-253) say that John wrote this gospel. Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-215) testified that John wrote his gospel to supplement the Synoptic Gospels (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, 6.14.7).

2) Internal Evidence

a. The author knew Jewish life well: references to Messianic speculations (1:20-21; 7:40-42), hostility between Jews and Samaritans (4:9), and Jewish customs (7:22).

b. The author knew the geography of Palestine: locating Bethany’s proximity to Jerusalem (11:18) and being the sole identifier of Cana (2:1; 21:2).

c. The fourth gospel has aspects that point to an eyewitness, such as the fragrance from broken perfume jar filling house at Bethany (12:3).

d. The apostle John is never mentioned by name in the fourth gospel, while at least 20 times the other gospel writers mention him. Instead, he is mentioned as the disciple “whom Jesus loved” (13:23), pointing to his humility and thankfulness for his close relationship to Christ.

e. The author gives three direct statements of himself in 1:14; 19:35; and 21:24. In the context of the last passage (21:24)—“the disciple who is testifying to these things and wrote these things”—he identifies himself in v. 20 as “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” The argument notes that there were three disciples particularly intimate with Christ (Peter, James, and John); that Peter is excluded from being this disciple in 21:20; that as James was beheaded early on, the report in 21:23 could not have referred to him; therefore, this must refer to John.

B. Who did John write to?

John does not address a particular cultural or sociological readership. Jesus will save whoever believes on him (3:16-17; 6:40; 10:16; 12:32).
C. Why did John write? What was his purpose?

1) John clearly states his main purpose in 20:31—“these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.” The author’s primary purpose in writing was evangelistic.

This evangelistic goal is seen by people’s divided response to the message: they either through repentant faith commit themselves to Christ thus receiving life or they reject Christ and remain in darkness.

2) The overall, central theme of John’s gospel is the person of Jesus. True biblical faith necessarily has a doctrinal core that must be positively responded to. Both doctrine (3:10) and experience (3:3) are essential for a biblical presentation of the Christian faith.

3) This purpose can be compared with 1 John, whose purpose statement in 5:13 is clearly directed toward Christians. No true believer would genuinely ask the question, “Who is Jesus?” that the gospel of John addresses. First John’s stated purpose is clearly focused on edification; on the other hand, the gospel of John’s stated purpose has an evangelistic focus.

4) John probably has a secondary purpose in writing that is apologetic in nature, that is, his account contains information useful for defending the faith. Since he wrote to prove Jesus as the Son of God, this necessarily involved the deity of Christ. The gospel revolves around various proofs that demonstrate Jesus’ identity as the God-man, and these proofs would be useful in defending the faith.

What are some characteristics of John’s gospel?

1) There is a large amount of material that is found only in John’s gospel.

2) John has a simple style of writing and vocabulary. He uses words such as truth, light, darkness, life, and love. His style of writing is clear, short, and plain.

3) This gospel stresses the uniqueness of Jesus as “the Son of God” more heavily than the other gospels. From the prologue (1:1-18) to his claims of deity in the face of angry Jewish leaders (5:16-18; 8:57-59; 10:30-33; 19:7) John emphasizes that Jesus is God.

4) John is the most theological of the Gospels, providing data on the pre-incarnate Christ (1:1-4), the incarnation (1:14-18), the new birth (3:1-21), and a large amount of material on the Holy Spirit (e.g., 14:16, 17, 26; 16:7-14).

5) John does not include several key events and discourses that the other gospel writers do. Key events that the fourth gospel does not include are Christ’s birth, baptism, temptation, transfiguration, the Lord’s Supper, and prayer in Gethsemane. While John relates more of Jesus’ words than any other synoptic, he does not relate a single parable.
D. What are the “keys” to John?

1) Theme: Jesus is God, the Savior

2) Word: believe (about 100 times—Matt, Mark, and Luke use it half as much!)

3) Verse: 20:31

E. What did John write? How did John seek to accomplish his purpose?

To accomplish his stated purpose in 20:31, John relates eight miracles Jesus performed—

1) Turning water to wine, 2:1-11
2) Healing the nobleman’s son, 4:46-54
3) Healing the impotent man, 5:2-18
4) Feeding of the 5000, 6:1-14
5) Walking on water, 6:15-21
6) Healing the man born blind, 9:1-11
7) Raising of Lazarus from the dead, 11:38-44
8) Miraculous catch of fish, 21:4-8

By these “signs,” as John called them (cf. 2:23; 3:2; 4:54; 6:2, 14, 26, 30; 7:31; 9:16; 10:41; 11:47; 12:18, 37; 20:30) Jesus’ person and authority are clearly demonstrated so that the reader is encouraged to believe in him (3:16).

Here’s a basic outline of the Gospel according to John—

1) Jesus’ public ministry, chapters 1-12
2) Jesus’ private ministry, chapters 13-17
3) Jesus’ passion victory, chapters 18-21

Here’s a more detailed outline of John—

1) Prologue, 1:1-18
   a. The Word and God, 1:1-2
   b. The Word and Creation, 1:3
   c. The Word and Mankind, 1:4-13
   d. The Word and the OT System, 1:14-18
2) Jesus’ Public Ministry, 1:19-12:50
   a. Early belief in Judea and Jerusalem, 1:19-2:25
   b. Nicodemus and the New Birth, 3
   c. Early belief in Samaria and Galilee, 4:1-54
   d. The growth of unbelief, 5
   e. The feeding of the five thousand, 6
   f. At the feast of the tabernacles, 7-8
   g. A blind man and the Shepherd, 9-10
   h. The raising of Lazarus and the close of the public ministry, 11-12
3) Jesus’ Private Instruction, 13-17
   a. Christ’s final discourse—in the upper room, 13-14
   b. Christ’s final discourse—en route to the garden, 15-17
4) Jesus’ Passion Victory, 18-21
   a. The crucifixion, 18-19
   b. The resurrection, 20
5) Epilogue, 21
   a. The miraculous catch of fish, 21:1-14
   b. Jesus’ conversation with Peter, 21:15-23
   c. The author’s concluding testimony, 21:24-25
5. Acts

A. Authorship of Acts

The universal testimony of the early church says Acts was written by Luke (see Authorship under Gospel of Luke for more information).

The title, “Acts,” points to the movement of the gospel. “Of the Apostles” is a little misleading (remember, these titles weren’t inspired!) as the work deals almost entirely with Peter and Paul and the persons and events associated with their ministries.

B. Purpose of Acts

1) Luke states the main reason he wrote (Luke 1:4; Acts 1:1-2)—to write an accurate history of Christian beginnings so Theophilus and other Christians would have certainty about what they had been taught.

2) In carrying out this purpose, Luke doesn’t tell everything that happened in history of the church—he is selective, showing how Christianity, which began as a small Jewish sect, moved from Jerusalem to Rome where it became a worldwide religion.

C. Characteristics of Acts

1) This book bridges the gap between the Gospels and the epistles (letters). It gives the background needed for understanding the epistles. It answers questions such as:

   a. How did the Gentiles receive the gospel?
   b. How did Christianity move from a small sect in Palestine to a worldwide religion?

Though Acts was written after Luke and most of Paul’s letters (62-64 A.D.), because it fills the gap between the two and gives necessary background to the epistles it was later put between the Gospels and the epistles.

2) The Holy Spirit

   a. Spirit Baptism and Filling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spirit Baptism</th>
<th>Spirit Filling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refers to one’s position in Christ—it places all true believers into the church which is the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13)</td>
<td>Refers to one’s experience in Christ—being controlled by the Spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occurs once in believer’s life, at regeneration (except 2:1; 8:14-17)</td>
<td>Occurs throughout believers’ lives (Acts 2:4; 6:3; 9:17; 11:24; 13:52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results in membership in the body of Christ, union with Christ, and union with other Christians</td>
<td>Results in strength in temptation, boldness in testimony, equipping for service, courage, thanksgiving, Spirit’s fruit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Acts 8:14-17** – These were genuinely saved individuals who had the Spirit (no one at any time in history can be saved apart from the Spirit, John 3:5; Rom 8:9), but the external manifestations of the Spirit had not been manifested, v. 18. The reason this didn’t happen at the moment of salvation was to tie the two groups (the believers/churches of Jerusalem and Samaria) together—they had the same Spirit. The Holy Spirit came upon them in the same way as on the Jews at Pentecost.

**Acts 10:44-48** – These Gentiles experienced the same effects of having received the Holy Spirit as the Jews (2:2-4; cf. 11:15) and the Samaritan believers (8:14-17) did.

b. **Miracles and Tongues**—See Appendix B, “Spiritual Gifts Today”

3) **Fulfilling the Great Commission**

a. How the Great Commission was fulfilled—

- **Preach** the gospel (testify, witness, speak, the Word of God spread, proclaim, preach, prove, teach)

  (1) When the gospel was proclaimed to Jews Christians showed that Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Messiah and all must believe in Him for salvation (see 13:14-41 as an example)

  (2) When the gospel was proclaimed to Gentiles, in addition to proclaiming Jesus as the promised Messiah, Christians confronted idolatry by pointing them to the true God as their Creator and requiring repentance and faith in Jesus Christ (see 17:22-31 as an example)

- **Baptize** believers

- **Establish** them in the faith

- **Formation of a church** (including elders/overseers and deacons; cf. Acts 16:11-40—we read of conversions and baptisms [16:14-15], but no mention of a “church” and “officers”—yet note Phil 1:1; 4:15!)

b. **Results** – indigenous local churches

- **Indigenous** means local or native
- Indigenous church means that a church is composed of baptized believers from that populace, they do the work of the Lord, and they are self-governing and self-sustaining
- Note Acts 14:21-23; 20:32
- This does not mean local churches have no connection with other local churches, see Acts 11:29-30
4) Local Churches

a. Indigenous (see previous point)

b. Composition

- Baptized believers (Acts 2:41)
- Jew or Gentile (Acts 15:11)
- Shared beliefs and moral lives (Acts 15:29)
- Officers—elders and deacons (Acts 6:1-6; 14:23; see also Phil 1:1)

c. Characteristics

- Apostolic doctrine, 2:42
- Fellowship, 2:42
- Worship (including the Lord’s table), 2:42
- Ministry to each other, 2:44-45; 6:1; 9:36
- Personal holiness, 5:1-11; 15:28-29
- Congregational government, 6:2-6

5) Connection with Israel and the kingdom of God—Jesus Christ

a. At first there was a close connection between the church and Israel, mainly in their attendance at the temple (for example, 3:1).

b. Later—especially as the gospel was spread throughout the world—the church became clearly distinct from Israel (the gospel would first be given in synagogues, but later believers would leave). It took some time (in Jerusalem, at least) for this transition to be completed.

c. The kingdom of God is seen as something future and anticipated (1:3, 6; 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31)

6) Two responses to preaching of the gospel, 13:44-52

a. Belief

b. Rejection

7) Results of Witnessing for Christ

a. Belief, baptism, church formed, established in the faith

b. Rejection by Jews and Gentiles

8) Conversion and Ministry of Paul

a. Paul was a Pharisee violently opposed to Christianity, 9:1-2

b. Saved by Jesus Christ on the way to Damascus, 9:3-19
c. Immediately in Damascus began preaching Jesus to be Christ and God, 9:20-22

d. After this initial ministry in Damascus—

- Spent three years in Arabia, see Gal 1:17-18; 2 Cor 11:32-33
- Returned to Jerusalem for 15 days, Acts 9:23-29; Gal 1:18
- Then to Tarsus for several years, Acts 9:30
- Barnabas found Paul and brought him to Antioch to minister for a year to the new church there, Acts 11:25-26
- Paul and Barnabas brought a financial gift to Jerusalem church from Antioch (11:30) and then returned to Antioch (12:25)

e. Paul’s Missionary Journeys

- The Holy Spirit and the church at Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas out to spread the gospel, 13:1-3
- We call these “Paul’s missionary journeys,” though the word missionary is never used (first used in 1625 of those involved in a mission, especially a religious one).
- Each journey involved preaching the gospel and establishing new believers as local churches (see above), and then returning to Antioch to report their ministry (this forms the basis for our “missionary” practices). Acts records three of these journeys:
  
  (1) Acts 13-14 (see map on p. 41)
  (2) Acts 15:36-18:22 (see map on p. 42)
  (3) Acts 18:23-21:16 (see map on p. 43)

- After these journeys Paul went to Jerusalem, was seized in the temple, and then taken into custody by Roman soldiers (21:17-36). The rest of Acts details his trials in Jerusalem and Caesarea, culminating in his voyage to Rome, where Luke’s account ends, with Paul under house arrest but preaching the gospel! (28:30-31)

9) The Jerusalem Council, Acts 15

a. Occurring in between Paul’s first and second missionary journeys
b. Issue: Jews from Jerusalem came to the church at Antioch maintaining that Gentile Christians had to observe the Mosaic Law, 15:1-2a
c. The church sent Paul and Barnabas to the Jerusalem church to inform them of and deal with the situation, 15:2b-5
d. The Jerusalem church recognized that in light of the gospel—
   - All “are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus” (15:11)
   - Christians should abstain from idolatry and live morally pure lives (15:28-29)
D. Keys

1) Theme: The Church Witnessing for Christ

2) Verse: 1:8

E. Outline

Here’s a basic outline of the Acts—

The Church witnessing for Christ in:

1) Jerusalem, 1-7
2) Judea and Samaria, 8-12
3) The Ends of the Earth, 13-28

Here’s a more detailed outline of Acts—

1) Introduction, 1:1-8
2) The Witness to Jerusalem, 1:9-8:3
   a. Anticipation of the church, 1:9-26
   b. Founding of the church, 2:1-47
   c. Growth of the church, 3:1-8:3
      • Apostles: Preaching, healing, and enduring persecution, 3:1-5:42
      • Deacons: Praying, teaching, and enduring persecution, 6:1-8:3
3) The Witness to Judea, Samaria, and Syria, 8:4-12:25
   a. The gospel to the Samaritans, 8:4-25
   b. Conversion of a Gentile, 8:26-40
   c. Conversion of Saul, 9:1-31
   d. The gospel to Judea, 9:32-43
   e. The gospel to the Gentiles, 10:1-11:30
   f. Persecution by Herod, 12:1-25
   b. The Jerusalem council, 15:1-35
   c. Paul’s second missionary journey, 15:36-18:22
   d. Paul’s third missionary journey, 18:23-21:16
   e. Paul’s trials in Jerusalem and Caesarea, 21:17-26:32
Introduction to the Epistles

Characteristics

1) They explain and interpret what the Gospels report about Jesus’ death and resurrection.

2) They give the full and complete teaching about the church that the Gospels only mention (twice—Matt 16:18; 18:15-17). This teaching is both doctrinal and practical.

3) They connect the current church age (unanticipated in the OT) with the anticipated Davidic kingdom and the eternal state.

Paul used the basic model of letter writing of his time and adapted it for Christian purposes. There are three characteristics of Paul’s epistles:

1) Length—most private letters in Paul’s day were about 90 words in length. The average length of Paul’s letters is 1,300 words!

2) Doctrinally oriented

3) Usually written to a church – truth is given through personal correspondence rather than a formal manual of instruction

“Paul’s epistles arose out of actual life situations and were intended to meet real needs and answer vital questions. They were not composed as abstract studies in theology, nor were they doctrinal treatises produced by an erudite, cloistered scholar; rather, the ready outpourings of an alert, compassionate pastoral heart. Again and again troublesome questions arose in the churches that called for Paul’s help. Frequently believers failed to understand the implications of Christianity for their lives and engaged in practices that demanded the rebuke and correction of apostolic authority. Current heresies threatened inroads upon the young churches and called forth Paul’s instruction and counsel. These churches looked to him for help and cherished his assistance, which was often given in the form of letters. At other times Paul heard good news or received tokens of affection from these churches; this caused him to write or express his joy and to give encouragement and exhortation” (Hiebert, General Introduction to the Pauline Epistles, p. 18).

Themes of the Epistles (including Revelation)

1) Salvation by Christ alone, through grace alone, by faith alone

2) The church is Christ’s body, distinct from the saved before and after the church age

3) The Holy Spirit’s roles and relationship to the church and Christians

4) How the church age fits in with the OT promises to Israel

5) The walk, service, and future destiny of Christians
6) **Prophecy**, covering the course and end of this age and the age to come

**General style—how most of Paul’s letters are written**

1) Opening – sender, recipient, and greeting

2) Thanksgiving or blessing – sometimes including prayer for the recipients (except Galatians!)

3) Body – doctrinal teaching and practical issues

4) Closing – personal greeting

**Order**

*Canonical Order* – usually according to length, from Romans (longest) to Philemon (shortest)

*Chronological Order*

1) Galatians (A.D. 49)  
2) 1 Thessalonians (A.D. 51)  
3) 2 Thessalonians (A.D. 51)  
4) 1 Corinthians (A.D. 55)  
5) 2 Corinthians (A.D. 56)  
6) Romans (A.D. 56)  
7) Colossians (around A.D. 61-63)  
8) Philemon (around A.D. 61-63)  
9) Ephesians (around A.D. 61-63)  
10) Philippians (around A.D. 61-63)  
11) 1 Timothy (around A.D. 63)  
12) Titus (around A.D. 63)  
13) 2 Timothy (around A.D. 64-68)

**How to Study the Epistles**

1) Read the whole epistle in one sitting, as if it were a letter written to you personally or if you’re hearing it in your local church for the first time. You will never have a firm grasp of an epistle apart from continually reading it.

2) Note important points of the letter, such as why it was written, to whom it was written, it’s basic theme, and etc.

3) Follow the outlines provided here to help you see and grasp the author’s flow of thought.

4) Continue reading it, listing the different subjects and topics the writer addresses. Study individual paragraphs, looking at the main “point” each paragraph has. Interpret verses in light of the context of the paragraph and the epistle.

5) Pray, meditate, and digest the results of your study. Your aim in Bible study is a more Christ-like life!
6. Galatians

A. Authorship

The letter clearly says that Paul the apostle is the author (1:1; 5:2).

B. Recipients

This epistle was written to churches in the region of Galatia (1:2) that were started during Paul’s first missionary journey. Paul most likely wrote this before the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15). If Galatians was written after that Council he would have undoubtedly referred to the decisions reached there.

C. Occasion and Purpose

1) The Problem (Occasion) – false teachers from outside the churches required Gentile believers to observe the OT Law. They taught that being right with God (justification) was based on good works. These false teachers are often called Judaizers (those who demand obedience to the Law).

2) The Solution (Purpose) – Paul defends his apostleship, attacks false teaching, and gives instruction about what should govern and control Christians’ lives

“Naturally the Epistle to the Galatians is a polemic from beginning to end—and a powerful, sharp polemic, too. It has just one purpose—to prevent the Galatian Christians from yielding to the demands of the Judaizers” (Machen, p. 125).

D. Keys

1) Theme – Salvation is by faith alone in Jesus Christ

2) Word – faith

3) Verse – 2:16

E. Outline

Here’s a basic outline of Galatians—

1) Personal Testimony, chapters 1-2
2) Polemical Treatise, chapters 3-4
3) Practical Teaching, chapters 5-6
Here’s a more detailed outline of Galatians—

1) **Introduction, 1:1-9**
   
   a. Greeting, 1:1-5
   
   b. Occasion and theme, 1:6-9

   Galatians are deserting the true gospel for a false gospel

2) **Defense of Paul’s Authority, 1:10-2:21**

   a. The source of Paul’s authority, 1:10-17

   Paul takes the time to do this because the Judaizers have directly challenged it. Paul shows that he received his authority from Christ alone, and he is dogmatic about these things because it is from direct revelation.

   b. Paul’s first trip to Jerusalem, 1:18-24

   In this and the next section Paul shows his contacts with Jerusalem

   c. Paul’s second trip to Jerusalem, 2:1-10

   Note 2:2-5

   d. Paul's encounter with Peter at Antioch, 2:11-21

3) **True Doctrine Explained, 3:1-4:31**

   Here Paul sets forth justification by faith apart from the Law and circumcision

   a. The Galatians’ previous Christian experience, 3:1-14

   The Galatians were saved and sanctified by faith alone in Christ alone without any mixture of works whatsoever

   b. The relation of the Law to the Abrahamic Covenant, 3:15-22

   The Law came later than the AC and can’t change it.


   The Law served as a custodian ("tutor") until Christ came and the individuals “grew up” to become full adults.

   d. The folly of returning to the Law, 4:8-20
e. The allegory of Abraham’s sons, 4:21-31

4) **Christian Practice Exhorted, 5:1-6:10**

   a. Exhortation to stand firm in freedom, 5:1-12
   
   b. Exhortation to walk by the Spirit, 5:13-26
   
   c. Exhortation to fulfill responsibilities to others, 6:1-10

5) **Concluding Summary, 6:11-18**

7. **Romans**

   A. **Authorship**

      The letter clearly says that Paul the apostle is the author (1:1).

   B. **Recipients**

      This epistle was written to “all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints” (1:7). This church was not founded by Paul (cf. 1:8-15 and 15:23ff). It was established sometime before Paul wrote his epistle. The church at Rome was probably founded either by converts from the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:10) or converts from elsewhere in the Empire.

   C. **Occasion and Purpose**

      1) Paul was planning to visit Rome (15:22-25) and Phoebe was available to send a letter to them (16:1-2). He wanted their help in his missionary trip to Spain (15:24), including their prayer support (15:30-32).

      2) Nowhere does Paul specifically state his purpose, so we must discern such from the content of the letter and his personal situation at the time of writing. So,

      3) anticipating using Rome as a base for missionary work in Spain and the battles with Judaizers in his missionary travels so far, Paul writes this letter to carefully present his understanding of the gospel so he and the Romans would be unified around that.

      “Romans is primarily an exposition of the gospel of God’s grace, with special reference to the claims of the law and of the Jewish people, written in view of Paul’s approaching visit to Rome” (Machen, p. 149).
D. Keys

1) **Theme** – The gospel of God

2) **Word** – gospel

3) **Verses** – 1:16-17

E. Outline

*Here’s a basic outline of Romans—*

1) Introduction and Theme, 1:1-17
2) Condemnation—The Wrath of God Revealed, 1:18-3:20
3) Salvation—The Righteousness of God Revealed, 3:21-8:39
4) Vindication—The Wisdom of God Revealed, chapters 9-11
5) Exhortation—The Will of God Revealed, chapters 12-16

*Here’s a more detailed outline of Romans—*

1) **Introduction, 1:1-15**
   a. Address, 1:1-7
   b. Explanation of Paul’s interest in the Roman church, 1:8-15

2) **Statement of the Theme, 1:16-17**

3) **The Revelation of the Righteousness which is from God by Faith alone, 1:18-4:25**
   a. The need of the righteousness which is from God, 1:18-3:20
      - Gentiles are condemned, 1:18-32
      - Jews are condemned, 2:1-3:8
      - All mankind is condemned, 3:9-20
   b. The manifestation of the righteousness which is from God in the gospel, 3:21-31
   c. The example of Abraham as proof that the righteousness which comes from God is by faith, 4:1-25

4) **The Life Promised for those who are Righteous by Faith, 5:1-8:39**
   a. A life characterized by the hope of glory, 5:1-21
   b. A life characterized by sanctification, 6:1-23
      - Dead to the principle of sin, 6:1-14
      - Dead to the practice of sin, 6:15-23
   c. A life characterized by freedom from the Law, 7:1-25
      - The believer’s freedom from the Law, 7:1-6
      - The character of the Law, 7:7-25
d. A life characterized by the indwelling Holy Spirit, 8:1-39

5) The Vindication of God’s Righteousness in His Dealings with Israel, 9:1-11:36

   a. Lament for Israel, 9:1-5
   b. The saving purpose of God in election, 9:6-29
   c. A righteousness of God for all who believe in Christ, 9:30-10:21
   d. The mystery of Israel’s future restoration, 11:1-32
      • Her present rejection is not complete, 11:1-10
      • Her rejection is not final, 11:11-32
   e. A hymn of praise to God, 11:33-36

6) The Obedience to which those who are Righteous by Faith are Called, 12:1-15:13

   a. In relation to God, 12:1-2
   b. In relation to other believers, 12:3-13
   c. In relation to the state, 13:1-14
   d. In relation to the weak brother, 14:1-15:17

7) Conclusion, 15:15-16:27

   a. Paul’s account of his mission, 15:14-33
   b. Personal greetings to Roman Christians, 16:1-27
   c. Final praise to God, 16:24-27
8. 1 Thessalonians

A. Authorship

The letter clearly says that Paul the apostle is the author (1:1; 2:18).

B. Recipients

1) The Thessalonian church was founded by Paul on his second missionary journey (see Acts 17:1-9).

2) Paul was not in Thessalonica very long—maybe only one month! This was a very intensive ministry for Paul.

   a. Paul had just come from a brutal ministry experience in Philippi (about 100 miles east of Thessalonica)
   b. He worked night and day to supply his own needs (1 Thess 2:9; 2 Thess 3:7-9)
   c. He preached in the synagogues for three Sabbaths and taught young converts (Acts 17:2-4) and probably ministered to Gentiles throughout the week
   d. Unbelieving Jews were envious and caused local politicians to become worried and take action against Paul and his co-workers (Acts 17:5-8)
3) Many pagan idol worshipers were saved during Paul’s short ministry (1 Thess 1:9-10).
   a. These Gentiles lived degraded, godless lives
   b. Their entire lives (way of thinking, habits, etc) were permeated with and controlled by superstition and idolatry
   c. The idea of only one God would have been radical and new to them
   d. They would not have been used to linking living a moral life with religion

C. Occasion and Purpose

1) **Occasion** – Paul received a **report** from Timothy about the Thessalonian church (1 Thess 3:6)
   a. The Thessalonians were being told wrong things about himself and his coworkers (2:1-3:13), probably by Jews
   b. The Thessalonians needed instruction about several matters of the Christian life (4:1-5:24)

2) **Purpose** – Paul **defends** his apostleship and gives **instruction** about Christian living in light of Christ’s return.
   a. Express thanksgiving and joy of the Thessalonians faith, chapter 1
   b. Defend his apostleship and teaching against false charges, chapters 2-3
   c. Practical instruction for faithful Christian living while waiting for Christ, chapters 4-5

D. Characteristics

1) The major theme of this letter is the **return** of Jesus Christ. Every chapter has at least one reference to this great truth (1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:13-18; 5:23).

2) The classic passage on the **rapture** of the church is found in this letter (4:13-18). “Rapture” is from a Latin word that translates “caught up” in 4:17.

3) The fact that Christ’s return and other end time events are so dominant in the Thessalonian letters shows that these were basic, fundamental doctrines that were taught to **new** believers (Acts 17:7; 1 Thess 5:1-2; 2 Thess 2:5).

   “To serve the living God and to wait for his Son—that is the sum and substance of the Christian life” (Machen, *The New Testament*, p. 119).

   See Appendix D, “The Importance of Christ’s Imminent Return to Living a Godly Life.”
E. Keys

1) Theme – Living for Christ while Waiting for Christ
2) Word – coming
3) Verses – 1:9-10

F. Outline

Here’s a basic outline of 1 Thessalonians —

1) Praise God, 1
2) Persevere in the Faith, 2-3
3) Be Pure and Patient, 4-5

Here’s a more detailed outline of 1 Thessalonians —

Greeting, 1:1

1) The Nature of the Church, 1:2-10
   a. The character of the church, 1:2-3
   b. The example of the church, 1:4-7
   c. The reputation of the church, 1:8-10

2) Paul’s Relationship to the Church, 2:1-3:13
   a. His behavior in the church, 2:1-12
   b. His reception by the church, 2:13-16
   c. His concern for the church, 2:17-3:10
   d. His prayer for the church, 3:11-13

3) The Problems of the Church, 4:1-5:22
   a. Sexual purity, 4:1-8
   b. Social conduct, 4:9-12
   d. Times and seasons, 5:1-11
   e. Church officers, 5:12-13
   f. Church responsibilities, 5:14-22

Conclusion, 5:23-28
9. 2 Thessalonians

A. Authorship

The letter clearly says that Paul the apostle is the author (1:1; 3:17).

B. Recipients – see 1 Thessalonians

Paul wrote this second letter to the Thessalonians maybe a month or two after the first.

C. Occasion and Purpose

1) **Occasion** – Paul received another report about the Thessalonians that caused concern:

   a. The Thessalonians were experiencing severe persecution (1:1-12)
   b. The Thessalonians received a letter falsely said to be written by Paul saying that the Day of the Lord had come (2:1-17)
   c. Some of the Thessalonians weren’t working (3:6-18)

2) **Purpose** – Paul *encourages* the Thessalonians and *corrects* some problems they had

   a. Encouragement in the midst of persecution, chapter 1
   b. Clarification of events surrounding the Day of the Lord, chapter 2
   c. Exhortation concerning proper Christian conduct, chapter 3

D. Characteristics & Clarifications

1) Note what the Thessalonians were having difficulty with in 2:1-15

   a. They were afraid that the persecutions they were experiencing were evidence that the Day of the Lord had *come* (God’s judgment and blessing on the world [including the Tribulation and Millennial Kingdom])

   b. They had been taught that they would be delivered from this judgment—

      * They would meet Christ in the *air* and be forever with Him, 1 Thess 4:16-18
      * *Then* the Day of the Lord would come, 1 Thess 5:2-3
      * They had the promise of being *delivered* from this great judgment, 1 Thess 5:9

   c. Here Paul teaches the Thessalonians that—

      * **Before** the Day of the Lord they would be gathered together to Christ, 2:1 (cf. 1 Thess 4:16-18).
      * See Appendix E, “Biblical Basis for the Pretribulational Rapture of the Church.”

      * The “Restrainer” (the Holy Spirit in the church) of the “mystery of lawlessness” (the Antichrist) would be removed when they were gathered to Christ, 2:6-7
• Then **Antichrist** would be revealed, beginning the Day of the Lord, 2:3-4, 8-10. See Appendix F, “The Antichrist”

• God’s judgment would fall upon all who follow the Antichrist, 2:11-12

• The Thessalonians are to remember that their salvation through the gospel enables them to look **forward** to Christ’s return, not **dreading** it, 2:13-15 (cf. 1:9-10)

2) “Traditions” (2:15; 3:6) refers to Paul’s teachings, whether oral or written. They were not man-made but authoritative truths from God (1 Thess 2:13; 4:2, 8; 5:27; 2 Thess 3:14). Therefore, to disobey Paul’s teaching was to disobey God.

E. Keys

1) **Theme** – The Christian and the Day of the Lord

2) **Phrase**– **Day of the Lord**

3) **Verses** – **2:1-2**

F. Outline

*Here’s a basic outline of 2 Thessalonians* —

1) Comfort, 1
2) Correction, 2
3) Confrontation, 3

*Here’s a more detailed outline of 2 Thessalonians* —

Greeting, 1:1-2
1) The Thessalonians and Persecution, 1:3-12
   a. Paul’s thanksgiving, 1:3-5
   b. Paul’s encouragement, 1:6-12
2) The Thessalonians and Christ’s Return, 2:1-3:5
   a. He quiets their anxieties, 2:1-2
   b. He explains the apostasy, 2:3-12
   c. He encourages them to steadfastness, 2:13-17
   d. He exhorts them to prayer, 3:1-5
3) The Thessalonians and Discipline, 3:6-15
   a. His example, 3:6-9
   b. His command, 3:10-15
Conclusion, 3:16-18
10. Revelation

A. Why Study Revelation?

1) It is a revelation from Jesus Christ (1:1)—truth is given to us by Christ!

2) Studying Revelation has God’s blessing, 1:3; 22:7

3) Learning Jesus’ message in Revelation gives encouragement to persevere in the faith

4) Revelation is necessary to understand how God’s plan for the world will work out. Just as we need Genesis to understand where everything came from, we need Revelation to understand where everything is going. Without Revelation our understanding of the future is dark.

B. Authorship

The apostle John is said to be the author in 1:1. This was the belief of most of the early teachers in the church age, and the content of Revelation is consistent with the apostle John being the author.

C. Recipients

The specific readers are identified in 1:4 as the “seven churches which are in Asia” and then named individually in 1:11 and elsewhere.

On the basis of the generic statements in 1:3, 2:7, etc. referring to those hearing what the Spirit is saying to the churches, it is apparent that John intended Revelation to have a wider audience than simply the seven churches addressed in the opening chapters.

(Map from the New American Standard Study Bible, p. 1851).
D. Occasion and Purpose

1) **Occasion**—John was told to record the visions given to him and send them to the seven churches in Asia (1:10-11). The churches were being persecuted by the Jews and Roman authorities.

2) **Purpose**—John told his readers about events in the imminent future, particularly those events surrounding Christ’s Second Coming (1:1, 19). By telling his readers about these events, they would be encouraged to be faithful to God in the midst of difficult trials and testing. Thus, *Revelation’s purpose is to encourage believers to be faithful to God in difficult times.*

Revelation accomplishes this purpose by showing that *Jesus Christ, not evil* will prevail.

E. Characteristics

1) Revelation is an **epistle**, a letter to churches. It has the normal introduction (1:4a) and conclusion (22:21) that epistles have. Also, the references to John *writing* (1:19; 2:1; etc) support this.

2) Most of the content of Revelation is **prophecy** (see 1:3; 19:10; 22:7, 10, 18–19). The viewpoint of this letter is primarily on the **future**.

3) Revelation should be interpreted as it was written, a description of end-time events surrounding the Second Coming of Christ.

Many try to make Revelation say something other than what it normally says (for example—that it describes the history of the church). The only way that can be done, however, is to make it say something that Jesus and John did not originally mean!

a. Revelation should be **consistently** interpreted in a literal, normal way, just like we interpret the rest of Scripture (and all other literature, for that matter).

b. Revelation does have figurative expressions and symbols, but those always convey a **plain** meaning (example: Jesus said “I am the door”—this is a figurative expression using a symbol to convey a plain meaning, namely, that the way to eternal life is only through Jesus).

c. The purpose of Revelation is to **reveal** truth, and that can only be learned by sticking to the plain meaning of the text. Once readers leave the plain meaning of the text they are left to their own imagination and Revelation’s truths are lost. Example: “It’s going to rain tomorrow”

d. You won’t learn the truths Revelation provides if you are lazy, dabble in it, or are just curious. You have to work at it!
F. Keys

1) Theme – The revelation of Jesus Christ
2) Phrase – The time is near (1:3; 22:10)
3) Verses – 1:19

G. Outlines

*Here are two basic outlines of Revelation* —

**Following 1:19**—

1) The things John saw, chapter 1
2) The things which are, chapters 2-3
3) The things which shall occur after these things, chapters 4-22

**Following the Content of the Book**—

1) Christ’s Message to Local Churches, chapters 1-3
2) God’s Judgment of the World, chapters 4-18
3) Christ’s Return in Glory to Rule, chapters 19-22

*Here’s a more detailed outline of Revelation*—

1. Prologue, 1:1-8

2. The Revelation of Jesus Christ concerning the Things Which Are, 1:9-3:22
   a. The vision of Christ, 1:9-20
   b. The Letters to the Seven Churches, 2:1-3:22

3. The Revelation of Jesus Christ concerning the Things Which Shall Take Place after These Things, 4:1-22:5
   a. The Tribulation Judgments, 4:1-18:24
      (1) The Background for the Tribulation Judgments, 4:1-5:14
      (2) The Seven Seal Judgments, 6:1-8:5
      (3) The Seven Trumpet Judgments, 8:6-14:20
      (4) The Seven Bowl Judgments, 15:1-18:24
   b. The Return of Christ, 19:1-20:15
      (1) The Events Surrounding the Return of Christ, 19:1-10
      (2) The Battle of Armageddon, 19:11-21
      (3) The Millennial Kingdom, 20:1-10
      (4) The Great White Throne Judgment, 20:11-15
      (1) The New Heaven and Earth, 21:1-8

4. The Epilogue, 22:6-21
Let’s take this more detailed outline and note some important items—

1. **Prologue, 1:1-8**

2. **The Revelation of Jesus Christ concerning the Things Which Are, 1:9-3:22**

   Revelation is divided into two main sections, the first dealing with John’s **own** time (1:9-3:22) and the second dealing with the **end** times (4-22). Here the historical circumstances and spiritual needs of the seven churches are addressed.

   1) **The Vision of Christ, 1:9-20**

      a. The setting for the vision, 1:9-11
      b. The description of Christ, 1:12-16
      c. Commands given to John, 1:17-20

   2) **The Letters to the Seven Churches, 2:1-3:22**

      a. Ephesus, 2:1-7
      b. Smyrna, 2:8-11
      c. Pergamum, 2:12-17
      d. Thyatira, 2:18-29
      e. Sardis, 3:1-6
      f. Philadelphia, 3:7-13
      g. Laodicea, 3:14-22

   Note—

   - The word for church (*ekklesia*) is **never** used in the main body of the book where the great events of the end time are described (4:1-22:5).
   - Revelation always uses *ekklesia* in connection with churches on *earth*, never with any body of the saved in heaven.
   - All the churches of Revelation 2-3 are pictured as living under the sign, until He comes (2:5, 16, 25; 3:3, 11). In addition, our Lord speaks **encouragingly** to the churches about things associated with His Second Coming (2:10, 23, 26-27; 3:10, 21). This is consistent with revelation given in other epistles that deal with the relation of the church to Christ’s Second Coming (especially 2 Thess—see Appendix G, “The Church and the Day of the Lord”).

3. **The Revelation of Jesus Christ concerning the Things Which Shall Take Place after These Things, 4:1-22:5**

   This section records visions that relate to the end times. Having addressed the historical circumstances and spiritual needs of the churches of his own day, John turns to unfold for his readers the events surrounding the end times and the Second Advent.
1) **The Tribulation Judgments, 4:1-18:24**

These chapters focus on what is referred to elsewhere in Scripture as the Tribulation period (Matt 24:7, 9, 21), the time of Jacob’s trouble (Jer 30:7), Daniel’s seventieth week (Dan 9:24–27), and the judgment aspect of the Day of the Lord (Joel 2:1; Obad 15; Zeph 1:7 et al).

The Tribulation represents an unprecedented period of God’s judgments against sinful humanity, an unmitigated outpouring of God’s wrath. The Tribulation begins with the signing of the treaty between Israel and the antichrist (cf. Dan 9:27; 2 Thess 2:3) and concludes with the battle of Armageddon (Har-Magedon) and the return of Christ to the earth to vanquish His enemies and establish His kingdom.

a. **The Background for the Tribulation Judgments, 4:1-5:14**

Before the judgments of the Tribulation period are described, John sees two visions. The first shows God as the sovereign creator and ruler of the universe who has absolute authority over His creation. The second vision shows Jesus as the sacrificial Lamb of God who alone is worthy to “open the scroll” which involves carrying out the judgments recorded in it.

The Tribulation judgments (chapters 6-19) consist of three sets of judgments—seals, trumpets, and bowls—each having seven judgments. John presents these three sets as occurring in order, with the seventh seal judgment encompassing the seven trumpet judgments and the seventh trumpet judgment encompassing the seven bowl judgments.

The other chapters (7, 10-15, 17-19) reveal important information about the Tribulation period but are not arranged in chronological order. They either cover the entire period, spotlight an event within the period, or survey the first or last half of the period. Consider these chapters as parentheses, giving more information to help you understand what’s going on.

*It may be helpful to review the outline of Revelation:*

1. Prologue, 1:1-9
2. The Revelation of Jesus Christ concerning the things which are, 1:10-3:22
3. The Revelation of Jesus Christ concerning the things which shall take place after these things, 4-22

**Prologue, 4:1-5:14**

A. The Tribulation, 6-19
   1. Seal Judgments, 6
      *Interlude, 7*
   2. Trumpet Judgments, 8-9
      *Interlude, 10-15*
   3. Bowl Judgments, 16
      *Interlude, 17-19*

B. The Millennium, 20

C. The Eternal State, 21-22
One more thing—the various judgments increase in severity as they are revealed. That is, the judgments get much worse. While the entire Tribulation period is a time of judgment, the end will be far worse than the beginning.

Back to the main outline…

b. The Seven Seal Judgments, 6:1-8:5

(1) The six seal judgments, 6:1-17
(2) The first interlude—tribulation saints and the 144,000, 7:1-17
(3) The seventh seal judgment, 8:1-5

c. The Seven Trumpet Judgments, 8:6-14:20

(1) The six trumpet judgments, 8:5-9:21
(2) The second interlude—the two witnesses, 10:1-11:14
(3) The seventh trumpet judgment, 11:15-19
(4) The third interlude—Israel, the Beast, and the 144,000, 12:1-14:20

d. The Seven Bowl Judgments, 15:1-18:24

(1) The introduction to the bowl judgments, 15:1-16:1
(2) The seven bowl judgments, 16:2-21
(3) The fourth interlude—Babylon, 17-18

2) The Return of Christ, 19:1-20:15

Christ’s return is in connection with the seventh bowl judgment, which includes the great earthquake and giant hailstones (16:17–21), the destruction of Babylon (18:8), and the defeat of the Antichrist and his armies at the conclusion of the battle of Armageddon (cf. 19:11–19).

Christ’s return to the earth marks the transition from the Tribulation period to the kingdom age. With the return of Christ, the armies of the Antichrist are destroyed—bringing to a conclusion the Tribulation judgments—the beast and the false prophet are thrown into the lake of fire, Satan is bound and placed into the abyss, the nations are judged, and the millennial kingdom is inaugurated.

a. The Events Surrounding the Return of Christ, 19:1-10

b. The Battle of Armageddon, 19:11-21

c. The Millennial Kingdom, 20:1-10

d. The Great White Throne Judgment, 20:11-15

The “eternal state” describes everything that follows the great white throne of judgment and the destruction of the present heavens and earth. After these events the kingdom age on earth in human history ends and merges into the eternal kingdom.

a. The New Heaven and Earth, 21:1-8


4. The Epilogue, 22:6-21

**REVIEW—**

- Why Revelation was written—
  
  (1) Provide encouragement
  (2) Show how God will bring everything to His planned end—evil will not prevail, Jesus Christ will!

- How to interpret it—in a consistently literal (normal) manner

- What is said—
  
  (1) To local churches
  (2) Concerning the future
11. Hebrews

A. Authorship

Nowhere in Hebrews is the author identified, but the readers seem to have known him well (see 5:11-6:12; 10:32-34; 12:4-5; 13:7, 18-24). Paul is the most popular suggestion as to who wrote Hebrews. There are some good reasons why he might have been the author, but there are also good arguments against him as the author as well.

As the text does not say who wrote Hebrews, we must have the same opinion as the early church teacher, Origen—“who the author of the epistle is God truly [only] knows…”

Because we do not know who the author of Hebrews was, in these notes I will abbreviate the “author of Hebrews” as “AH.”

B. Recipients

This letter was written to Jewish Christians. This is seen from the following:

1) The superscription “to the Hebrews” from very early has been part of the letter’s transmission, and there is no evidence of any other superscription.

2) The OT is used a lot, which would be expected of readers who are familiar with the Bible of the Jews.

3) The AH wrote to prove the superiority of Christ to OT Judaism, which we should expect if the readers were Jewish rather than Gentiles.

C. Occasion and Purpose

1) Occasion – the readers were in danger of falling away from Christ and the Christian faith and returning to Judaism because of persecution.

2) Purpose – the AH demonstrates to his readers the superiority of the person and work of Christ to the OT religion.

   a. Jesus Christ is the perfect priest and sacrifice

   b. Jesus is the “better” hope, testament, promise, sacrifice, substance, country, and resurrection

   c. Jesus is the Fulfiller and Finisher of what the OT began and looked forward to

   d. The AH therefore exhorts his readers to persevere in the faith, grow in Christ, and warns them of the terrible consequences of falling away from the faith
D. Characteristics

1) The occasion of this letter shows the danger of being immature in the Christian faith (5:11-14). They should have been teachers (5:12), able to discern between good and evil (5:14), and should have had strong enough faith to persevere (10:36-39).

2) Warning passages
   a. There are five passages where the AH warns his readers of the danger of falling away (apostasy) from Christ and the Christian faith:
      - 2:1-4
      - 3:7-4:13
      - 5:11-6:8
      - 10:26-31
      - 12:14-29
   b. We must interpret these warning passages consistent with this letter and the rest of Scripture.
      - These are genuine warnings, and so they should not be weakened
      - Genuine salvation cannot be lost, so these passages cannot teach that (see John 6:39; Rom 5:9-10; 8:30, 38-39 and Appendix H)
      - Those warning passages describing one who falls away from Christ describe individuals who had professed to be believers but were really not genuine believers (see Luke 8:4-15 [parable of the sower and soil] and Judas [professed to follow Christ but was not a genuine believer]).
   c. God uses means to accomplish His ends—in this case, exhortations to persevere in the faith

E. Keys

1) Theme – The superiority of Christ
3) Verses – 1:1-2

F. Outline

Here’s a basic outline of Hebrews—

1) Argument: Christ is Superior to Judaism, 1:1-10:18
2) Application: Marks of Persevering in Christ, 10:19-13:25
Here's a more detailed outline of Hebrews —

1. **Argument: Christ is Superior to Judaism, 1:1-10:18**

   A. **Christ is Superior to the Prophets, 1:1-3**
      1) God's revelation through the prophets, 1:1
      2) God's revelation through His Son, 2:2-3

   B. **Christ is Superior to the Angels, 1:4-2:18**
      1) In his divine nature, 1:4-14
      2) In his human nature, 2:5-9
      3) In his redemptive nature, 2:10-18

   C. **Christ is Superior to Moses, 3:1-4:13**
      1) The argument for Christ's superiority, 3:1-6
      2) Application to the readers, 3:7-4:13
         a. Do not abandon truth faith, 3:7-19
         b. Beware of the consequences of unbelief—missing God's rest, 4:1-13

   D. **Christ is Superior to the Levitical Priesthood, 4:14-10:18**
      1) A Better Position, 4:14-7:28
         a. Initial exhortation in light of Christ's position, 4:14-16
         b. Initial support comparing Christ with the OT priesthood, 5:1-10
         c. Application to the readers, 5:11-6:8
         d. Exhortation in light of God's faithfulness, 6:9-20
         e. Christ is shown to be superior to the Aaronic priesthood by comparing Christ with Melchizedek, 7:1-28
            • The priesthood of Melchizedek, 7:1-10
            • The priesthood of Christ, 7:11-28
      2) A Better Ministry, 8:1-10:18
         a. His ministry is in the true sanctuary, 8:1-5
         b. His ministry is based on a better covenant (the new covenant), 8:6-13
         c. His ministry is a better sacrifice, 9:1-10:18

2. **Application: Marks of Persevering in Christ, 10:19-13:25**

   A. Be faithful to God, 10:19-25
   B. Endure and believe God, 10:26-39
   C. Illustrations of those who believed and endured, 11:1-12:2
   D. Understand God's discipline, 12:3-29
   E. Concluding exhortations, 13:1-25
      1) Social obligations, 13:1-6
      2) Church obligations, 13:7-17
      3) Personal obligations, 13:18-25
1. Argument: Christ is Superior to Judaism, 1:1-10:18

The AH here proves to his readers that Jesus Christ is superior to the prophets, angels, Moses, and the Levitical priesthood—all essential aspects of Judaism.

A. Christ is Superior to the Prophets, 1:1-3

1) God’s revelation through the prophets, 1:1
2) God’s revelation through His Son, 2:2-3

B. Christ is Superior to the Angels, 1:4-2:18

This was important to Jews, as the angels were the mediators through whom God gave the Law to Moses (Deut 33:2; Ps 68:17; Acts 7:53; Gal 3:19)

1) In his divine nature, 1:4-14

_**First warning passage, 2:1-4**_ The readers should not reject God’s new revelation through Christ by going back to the OT.

2) In his human nature, 2:5-9

3) In his redemptive nature, 2:10-18

C. Christ is Superior to Moses, 3:1-4:13

Moses is the lawgiver and the “architect” of the OT way of life and worship. Moses is not depreciated but his position compared with Christ is shown to be “inferior.”

1) The argument for Christ’s superiority, 3:1-6

2) Application to the readers, 3:7-4:13

This is the _**second warning passage**, warning against abandoning Christ and going back to the Law and the OT system of worship. The AH warns against two things:

a. Do not abandon truth faith, 3:7-19
b. Beware of the consequences of unbelief—missing God’s rest, 4:1-13

D. Christ is Superior to the Levitical Priesthood, 4:14-10:18

1) A Better Position, 4:14-7:28

   a. Initial exhortation in light of Christ’s position, 4:14-16
   b. Initial support comparing Christ with the OT priesthood, 5:1-10
The OT priesthood had the necessary qualifications to be priests but they had limitations (**sin**). Christ also has the necessary qualifications to be a priest, but does not have the limitations that the OT priests did.

c. **Application to the readers, 5:11-6:8**

This is the **third warning passage**, warning against abandoning Christ and His priesthood and going back to the Aaronic priesthood (5:11-14). The AH exhorts them to persevere (6:1-3) and warns them of the consequences if any of them were not to persevere in the faith (6:4-8).

d. **Exhortation in light of God’s faithfulness, 6:9-20**

e. **Christ is shown to be superior to the Aaronic priesthood by comparing Christ with Melchizedek, 7:1-28**

Melchizedek’s priesthood is superior to Aaron’s as the patriarch Abraham (from whom Aaron descended) **yielded** out of respect to Melchizedek.

- **The priesthood of Melchizedek, 7:1-10**

  Melchizedek (Gen 14) was a king-priest (Heb 7:1-3) to whom Abraham paid tithes (showing deference, 7:2, 4-5, 8-10), who has no record of ancestry (the Levites had to prove theirs, 7:3), and who blessed Abraham (7:6-7). “The lesser is blessed by the greater” (7:7).

- **The priesthood of Christ, 7:11-28**

  Christ’s priesthood is superior to Aaron’s as Christ—after the pattern of Melchizedek—has an indestructible life (7:15-19), a priesthood based on God’s oath (7:20-22), an unending ministry as He lives forever (7:23-25), and offers Himself as the perfect sacrifice (7:26-28).

2) **A Better Ministry, 8:1-10:18**

Christ’s superior ministry ultimately involves a superior **sacrifice**. Christ’s ministry is superior as…

a. **His ministry is in the true sanctuary, 8:1-5**

b. **His ministry is based on a better covenant (the new covenant), 8:6-13**

c. **His ministry is a better sacrifice, 9:1-10:18**

  Christ’s sacrifice is superior as it provides true, complete, final forgiveness, whereas everything involved in the OT sacrifices (sanctuary, priesthood, sacrifice, etc) were only shadows and copies.

A. Be faithful to God, 10:19-25

B. Endure and believe God, 10:26-39

This is the *fourth warning passage*, warning that to leave Christ is to reject God’s Word, and to turn away and reject God’s Word is to fall into the hands of the living God, which is a terrifying thing (10:31). Instead of rejecting God’s Word the readers should believe God’s Word and “live by faith” (10:38).

C. Illustrations of those who believed and endured, 11:1-12:2

Here the AH shows what true faith and faithfulness looks like through the lives of OT believers. These believers faced trials yet never stopped trusting in God. In like manner, Christians must persevere in their faith and follow Christ.

D. Understand God’s discipline, 12:3-29

This (12:14-29) is the *fifth and last warning passage*, warning against the danger of letting trials and persecution cause one to leave Christ.

E. Concluding exhortations, 13:1-25

1) Social obligations, 13:1-6
2) Church obligations, 13:7-17
3) Personal obligations, 13:18-25
Re-Introduction to the New Testament

The Bible isn’t put together as a textbook on religion. Instead, think of the Bible as a library, made up of many books, written by different authors, and under a variety of circumstances. God speaks in the Bible but He does so by means of men.

This class will provide information needed to properly understand, interpret, and apply the New Testament. Who were the human authors? When did they write? Why did they write? The more you learn about these matters the more alive and real the Bible will be to you.

1. What is the New Testament?


   B. In what ways is the NT like other literature?

      1) The documents that make up the NT were written in human language, using the normal “laws” of language. Language is a God-given ability to communicate. Communication uses sentences and statements to express truth.

      2) Because the NT uses normal human language we must understand the Bible the same way we understand anything other written literature—it has one meaning. “A text cannot mean what it never meant.”

   C. What makes the New Testament different from other literature?

      1) Because humans are sinful they can make errors, and so what they write can have errors. If the Bible is human literature, does it therefore have errors?

      2) While the Bible was written by human beings, God was the one who moved and directed the human authors to write (2 Pet 1:21). Because of this, the Bible is described as being inspired, meaning God-breathed. Here’s a definition of inspiration—

         Inspiration means God-breathed, and is the result of the Holy Spirit moving a human author to write God’s revelation (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21). The Spirit’s work involved protecting the human authors from error and guiding them in the selection of words consistent with their individual personalities and different styles of writing.

      3) Because God protected and guided the human authors, everything they wrote was exactly what God wanted written and therefore without error.

So, when you read your Bible, who is speaking? How serious is that? If God spoke audibly, would that be more important? If you have a problem believing or obeying something in the Bible, how should the fact that it is inspired affect and control that?
2. How Did We Get the New Testament?

A. Inspiration—God gave His word in written form through men

B. Canonization—God's people recognized the character of the Scriptures and welcomed them as God’s Word

C. Transmission—God’s people needed God’s Word and so they copied and translated it

3. What are the Divisions of the New Testament

A. The Basis for and Growth of Christianity—the Gospels and Acts
   1) The Gospels provide the basis of Christianity—the person and work of Jesus Christ and Israel's rejection of Him as their Messiah
   2) Acts provides the birth and growth of Christianity

B. The Doctrine and Practice of Christianity—the Epistles (Romans through Revelation)
   Doctrine and practice—what you believe and how you live—are never separate issues. The latter is based entirely on the former. In the NT, issues of lifestyle, church life, and even petty problems are dealt with in light of God’s principles.

4. What is the Purpose of the New Testament?

The purpose of the NT is to give the church God’s written revelation of Christian doctrine and practice.

5. Why Study the New Testament?

A. Learn about God’s character and will

B. What Christians should believe

C. How Christians should live

D. Grow more like Christ (maturity)

E. How churches should conduct themselves

F. Gain help and encouragement

G. Protection from false teaching

A. **Matthew** – Jesus is the Christ, the King of the Jews

B. **Mark** – Jesus is the Son of God and Suffering Servant

C. **Luke** – The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost

D. **John** – Jesus is God, the Savior

E. **Acts** – The church witnessing for Christ

F. **Galatians** – Salvation is by faith alone in Jesus Christ

G. **Romans** – The gospel of God

H. **1 Thessalonians** – Living for Christ while waiting for Christ

I. **2 Thessalonians** – The Christian and the Day of the Lord

J. **Revelation** – The revelation of Jesus Christ

K. **Hebrews** – The superiority of Christ

7. What is an Epistle?

A. **Characteristics**

1) They *explain* and *interpret* what the Gospels *report* about Jesus’ death and resurrection.

2) They give the full and complete teaching about the *church* that the Gospels only mention (twice—Matt 16:18; 18:15-17). This teaching is both doctrinal and practical.

3) They connect the current church age (unanticipated in the OT) with the anticipated Davidic kingdom and the eternal state.

B. **Themes of the Epistles**

1) **Salvation** by Christ alone, through grace alone, by faith alone

2) The church is Christ’s *body*, distinct from the saved *before* and *after* the church age

3) The Holy Spirit’s roles (what He does) and relationship to the church and Christians

4) How the church age fits in with the OT promises to **Israel**

5) The walk, service, and future destiny of **Christians**
6) **Prophecy**, covering the course and end of this age and the age to come

C. **Historical Context of the Epistles**

1) Christ ascended into heaven

2) The gospel was proclaimed and believed, Christians were baptized and assembled and organized into bodies of believers (called *churches*).

3) False teachers and sin issues affected the churches

D. **General Style of the Epistles** – how most of Paul's letters are written

1) Opening – sender, recipient, and greeting

2) Thanksgiving or blessing – sometimes including prayer for the recipients

3) Body – doctrinal teaching and practical issues

4) Closing – personal greeting

E. **How to Study the Epistles**

1) Read the whole epistle in **one** sitting, as if it were a letter written to you personally or if you’re hearing it in your local church for the first time. You will never have a firm grasp of an epistle apart from continually reading it.

2) Note important **points** of the letter, such as *why* it was written, *to whom* it was written, it’s basic *theme*, and etc.

3) Follow the **outlines** provided here to help you see and grasp the author’s flow of thought.

4) Continue reading it, listing the different subjects and topics the writer addresses. Study individual paragraphs, looking at the main “point” each paragraph has. Interpret verses in light of the *context* of the paragraph and the epistle.

5) Pray, meditate, and digest the results of your study. Your **aim** in Bible study is a more Christ-like life!
8. What to Look Forward to in This Class

In addition to learning things about each book such as authorship, occasion, purpose, recipients, characteristics, “keys,” and outlines, here is a list of the books we will cover during the course of this class and some special things we will learn from them—

A. 1 Corinthians – Spiritual gifts, especially tongues

B. 2 Corinthians – Marks of an apostle

C. Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians – the significance of the church; the Person of Christ

D. 1 Timothy, Titus – church order

E. 2 Timothy, Philemon – slavery in NT times

F. James, 1 Peter – relation of faith and works; 1 Peter 3:18–22

G. 2 Peter, Jude – the Christian’s response to false teachers

H. 1-3 John – fellowship with God; 1 John 5:16–17
12. 1 Corinthians

*Every NT book is important for both the individual Christian and the church, but this letter is especially helpful. The principles taught and issues covered are just as relevant for us today as they were in the first century.*

**A. Authorship**

The letter clearly says that Paul the apostle is the author (1:1), and that he was in Ephesus when he wrote it (16:8).

**B. Recipients**

1) The Corinthian church was founded by Paul on his second missionary journey (see Acts 18:1-18).

2) What was the city of Corinth like?

   a. A large and important city, many were slaves; number of different nationalities.

   b. Many Corinthians prided themselves in their knowledge, but it was especially a city dedicated to wealth and **pleasure**. People went there to spend their money to live it up and “have a good time.”
c. Corinth had a reputation as one of the most wicked cities of the Roman Empire. In Greek plays Corinthians were usually represented as drunkards. Corinth was devoted to idolatry and immorality. Paul wrote Romans 1:18-32 from Corinth.

d. One Bible scholar wrote, “Corinth was at once the New York, Los Angeles, and Las Vegas of the ancient world” (Gordon Fee, Corinthians, p. 3). In fact, a playwright (Aristophanes) made up a word—Corinthianize—meaning “practice immorality”!

3) What was the church like?

a. Made up of many different backgrounds—Greeks, Romans, Jews, and maybe others

b. Some were of the lower classes (1 Cor 1:26-31), slaves (7:21-24), former idolaters (6:9; 8:7; 12:2), and had indulged in gross immorality (6:9-11)

“As former pagans they brought to the Christian faith a Hellenistic worldview and attitude toward ethical behavior [they were thoroughly of the world]. Although they were the Christian church in Corinth, an inordinate amount of Corinth was yet in them, emerging in a number of attitudes and behaviors that required radical surgery without killing the patient. This is what 1 Corinthians attempts to do” (Fee, p. 4).

C. Occasion and Purpose

1) Occasion

Paul’s first letter was misunderstood (5:9), he had received reports from different people about problems at Corinth (1:11; 5:1), and had received a letter from the church (7:1) and so had to respond. In short, the church had problems, and Paul needed to help them.

2) Purpose

By seeking to correct their problems and address important issues, Paul wrote to encourage the Corinthians to live Christian lives in an ungodly culture. Specifically…

a. Paul wanted to correct problems he had heard about in different reports he had heard, such as divisions (1:10-4:21), immorality (5:1-13; 6:12-20), litigation in pagan courts (6:1-8), and abuse of the Lord’s Supper (11:17-34)

b. Paul also addressed issues that were raised in a letter (“now concerning…” 7:1, 25; 8:1; 12:1; 15:1; 16:1).

c. Correct false teaching concerning the resurrection (chapter 15)

d. Give instruction concerning the offering for poverty-stricken believers in Jerusalem (16:1-4)
D. Characteristics

1) Its easy to be hard on the Corinthian church for all their problems, but let’s not forget something—it is a good thing to turn from idols to serve the living and true God, but when all of life revolves around idolatry, it is very challenging to get idolatry out of you, keep it out, and live more like Christ.

2) This letter illustrates that while at the moment of saving faith one is justified (removal of all guilt and condemnation and given a right standing before God through Christ), sanctification is just beginning.

At conversion “the work of grace begins in him by the Holy Spirit, in distinction from the work of grace wrought for him by Christ on the cross, and in the measure in which he comes to know the will of God through His Word, and yields himself thereto, he becomes more and more conformed to the image of Christ. These Corinthians may have been in Christ, but they were walking inconsistently, and the purpose of this epistle is to set them right, and to set us right through them” (James M. Gray, *Christian Worker’s Commentary*, pp. 366-367).

E. Keys

1) Theme – *Christian Conduct*

2) Phrase– “the glory of God”

3) Verses – 6:20; 10:31

F. Outline

*Here’s a basic outline of 1 Corinthians—*

1) Problems Corrected, 1-6
2) Issues Addressed, 7-16

*Here’s a more detailed outline of 1 Corinthians—*

1) Problems Corrected, 1:1-6:20

Greeting, 1:1-9

a. Church divisions, 1:10-4:21

The church was divided because of a misunderstanding the gospel message (1:18-3:4) and a misunderstanding the church and the gospel ministry (3:5-4:21). They wrongly emphasized people, when it was Jesus Christ who was to be the rallying point.

b. Immorality, 5:1-13
Not only was there incest (5:1), but the church had the wrong response (5:2)! Paul corrects the situation by calling for the individual’s “excommunication” or removal from church membership (5:3-5), thus removing contaminating sin from the church (5:6-8).

c. Lawsuits, 6:1-11

Some of the Corinthians were taking each other to court rather than settling the matter in the church (6:1-6). With such petty disputes, it is better to just take a loss rather than divide the body and affect the church’s testimony (6:7-8).

d. Abuse of Christian liberty (immorality), 6:12-20

Evidently some of the Corinthians believed that since “everything is lawful” (6:12a) and “food is meant for the stomach and the stomach is meant for food” (6:13a), they could therefore engage in physically intimate relations with whomever they wanted, as “that is what the body is for.”

However, this is sin, for such union is reserved only for marriage (6:15-16) and the body is sacred (6:17-20).

2) Issues Addressed, 7:1-16:24

Paul is not simply answering questions (7:1); the Corinthians were probably saying what they felt was right, and Paul rebukes this.


Some of the Corinthians had a “divorce for any reason” position. However, Paul says that believers should not be divorced, but if they do, they cannot remarry (7:10-11). He also says that if a believer is married to an unbeliever, the believer must stay married (7:12-14), but if the unbeliever leaves, the believer has no choice—“let him leave” (7:15). Believers must marry only believers (7:39).

b. Christian liberty (food sacrificed to idols), 8:1-11:1

- The basis of Christian conduct is love, not knowledge, 8:1-13

  While you may know that it really doesn’t matter if food sacrificed to idols, other Christians might “stumble”—sin—because of your example. Love and concern must control your actions, not the fact that “you’re right.”

- Illustration, 9:1-27

  While Paul knows he could be paid for his work, he declines it for the greater good of the spread of the gospel. Some unbeliever might be offended by his
taking money for religious work, so Paul exercised his liberty to refuse such, even though it was his “right.”

- Application, 10:1-11:1

Don’t have anything to do with idolatry, remembering Israel’s example (10:1-22), so don’t go to the temples to eat. When you do that, you participate in idolatry.

Feel free to eat meat that has been sacrificed to idols that you buy in the market or eat in private, but don’t do it if it needlessly offends someone (10:23-30). You must be controlled by glorifying God in every aspect of life (10:31-11:1).

c. Problems of worship, 11:2-34

- Women’s proper head covering, 11:2-16

Women were not wearing their head coverings, a sign in their culture of submission and subordination. Paul’s main argument is the subordination of women (vv. 3, 10). Head coverings today do not indicate subordination, as they did in NT times.

- Proper conduct at the Lord’s Supper, 11:17-34

The Lord’s Supper was observed in conjunction with a regular church meal. Evidently the poorer believers were being left out of this (maybe they met in a rich person’s home). The Lord’s Supper is to be observed by all the body, not just part of it.

d. Spiritual gifts, 12:1-14:40

*Here Paul deals with the Corinthians’ fascination with the gift of tongues.*

- The test of the Spirit, 12:1-3

- The diversity of gifts, 12:4-11 – two different kinds…

  (1) Supernatural/miraculous (not available today) – prophecy, tongues, healing
  (2) Natural – gifts/talents used by the Holy Spirit for service – administration, helps

- The illustration of the body, 12:12-31a

- The superiority of love, 12:31b-13:13

- The superiority of prophecy over tongues, 14:1-25 – *it benefits believers and unbelievers more than tongues*
• The regulation of spiritual gifts, 14:26-40

e. The resurrection, 15:1-58

Some denied physical resurrection, but it is essential to the gospel, fundamental to salvation, and motivating for Christian living and service.

f. Collection for saints, 16:1-4

Closing remarks and greetings, 16:5-24
13. 2 Corinthians

A. Authorship

Paul is clearly identified as the apostle of this letter (1:1; 10:1).

B. Recipients

See the notes under 1 Corinthians.

C. Occasion and Purpose

1) Occasion

Titus told Paul that the Corinthians finally came around to see things as Paul wanted them to. Paul also heard that trouble still was brewing in the church, as it had been infiltrated by false teachers, who got the Corinthians to doubt Paul’s personal integrity and his authority as an apostle.

In-between 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians Paul had made a painful visit and written a severe letter that Titus brought to the Corinthians. Impatient for Titus’ return, Paul left Ephesus for Troas and then went to Macedonia where he finally received good news from Titus. From Macedonia Paul wrote 2 Corinthians.

Paul’s visits and correspondence with the Corinthian church looks like this—

(1) The Corinthian church is established (Acts 18:1-18)
(2) Paul’s first letter, which we do not have (cf. 1 Cor 5:9)
(3) 1 Corinthians written from Ephesus (1 Cor 16:8)
(4) Painful visit to Corinth (2:1; cf. 12:14, 21; 13:1-2)
(5) Sever letter, which we do not have (2:4, 9; 7:8-12)
(6) 2 Corinthians written from Macedonia (8:1; 9:2-4)
(7) Third visit to Corinth (Acts 20:3)

2) Purpose

Paul wants the Corinthians to remember that when he was with them he always conducted himself with integrity, and that his message of salvation was true. He also wants the Corinthians to have the collection ready when he visits them. Paul deals with the troublemakers by warning them that he means what he writes.

Paul defends his apostleship and his message.

Paul didn’t defend himself to promote himself or protect his image; he did so because he knew that their spiritual well-being depended on their acceptance of his ministry and message.
D. Characteristics

1) This is one of the more challenging books of the NT to interpret, as it falls in the shadow of 1 Corinthians and involves a complicated series of visits and correspondence between the Corinthians and Paul and his associates. Though challenging, if you take the time to work through the notes and outline, you will understand the flow of thought.

2) Has a number of familiar verses and passages—

1:3-7 blessings of Christian comfort
3:18 transformation of believers
4:4 the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving
4:7-12 we have this treasure in earthen vessels
4:16 though our outer man is decaying, our inner man is renewed
4:17-18 momentary, light affliction...we look not at the things which are seen...
5:7 we walk by faith, not by sight
5:10 we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ
5:14 the love of Christ controls us
5:17 if anyone is in Christ he is a new creature
5:20 we are ambassadors for Christ
5:21 he made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf
6:14 do not be bound together with unbelievers
8:6 he who sows sparingly shall reap sparingly
8:7 God loves a cheerful giver
10:5 we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ
11:14 Satan disguises himself as an angel of light
12:7 Paul’s thorn in the flesh
12:9 My grace is sufficient for you
12:10 when I am weak, then I am strong
13:12 greet one another with a holy kiss

3) The most autobiographical of Paul’s letters, giving us the closest view of his personal life and ministry. Second Corinthians shows us the warm, human side of Paul. It is full of tears and grief, the most personal and least doctrinal of Paul’s letters (with the exception of Philemon).

4) Careful examination of the character and tactics of false teachers. They are false apostles, deceitful workers, and Satan’s servants (11:13-15).

5) The person and ministry of Satan. He is identified as Satan (2:11), the god of this world (4:4), the serpent (11:3), and an angel of light (11:14). Satan blinds the minds of unbelievers so they reject the gospel (4:4) and uses religious leaders to distort and deceive others (11:15). Satan tries to keep Christians from forgiving one another (2:10-11), through false teachers seeks to deceive and corrupt believers’ minds (11:3), and is allowed by God to physically afflict them (12:7-9).

6) Christians will someday stand before judgment seat of Christ to give an account of their life and ministry while Christians (5:10).
7) Principles of Christian giving are clearly outlined (8:1-9:15).

8) The necessity of churches being separate from entangling alliances with unbelief (6:14-18).

E. Keys

1) Theme – The Servant of Christ

2) Verse – 4:5

F. Outline

Here’s a basic outline of 2 Corinthians—

1) An Apostle’s Ministry, 1-7
2) Gracious Giving, 8-9
3) Defense and Denunciation, 10-13
Here’s a more detailed outline of 2 Corinthians—

Introduction, 1:1–11

1) Greeting, 1:1–2
2) Thanksgiving, 1:3–11

1. An Apostle’s Ministry, 1:12–7:16 – the Corinthians doubted Paul’s apostleship

1) Changed plans defended, 1:12–2:13
   a. The original plan, 1:12–22
   b. Postponement of the plan, 1:23–2:4
   c. Forgive the offender, 2:5–11
   d. A new plan, 2:12–13

2) Ministry described, 2:14–7:16
   a. Triumphant in Christ, 2:14–3:3
   b. Ministers of the New Covenant, 3:4–18
   c. Tremendous responsibilities, 4:1–15
   d. Anticipating the judgment seat of Christ, 4:16–5:21
   e. Involves hardship and suffering, 6:1–10
   f. Demands exclusive devotion, 6:11–7:4
   g. Encouraged by results, 7:5–16

2. Gracious Giving, 8–9 – the Corinthians were distracted from their commitment

1) An example of giving, 8:1–5
2) Abound in giving, 8:6–15
3) Be ready to give, 8:16–9:5
4) Results of gracious giving, 9:6–15
   a. Increased blessing to the giver, 9:6–11
   b. Increased thanksgiving to the Lord, 9:12–15

3. Defense and Denunciation, 10–13 – the Corinthians were deceived by false teachers

1) Defense of ministry, 10:1–18
2) Denunciation of false teachers, 11:1–12:13
3) Paul’s third visit, 12:14–13:10
   a. His desire and concerns, 12:14–21
   b. A warning of discipline, 13:1–4
   c. Call to self-examination, 13:5–10

Conclusion, 13:11–14
Now let's take a closer look at 2 Corinthians—

**Introduction, 1:1–11**

1) Greeting, 1:1–2
2) Thanksgiving, 1:3–11

1. An Apostle’s Ministry, 1:12–7:16

As the Corinthians doubted Paul’s apostleship, he explains what happened and describes his ministry.

Paul was evidently accused of being fickle because he had changed his plans to visit the Corinthians. Paul defends himself by explaining that the reason for the change was the Corinthians themselves (1:15–2:1). While their relationship had been greatly strained because of this change, it gave time for the one who caused trouble to repent and now needed sympathy (2:2–17). The Corinthians should recognize the nature of Paul’s ministry (3:1–6:10) and separate themselves from what hinders their fellowship with Christ’s ambassador (6:11–7:16).

1) Changed plans defended, 1:12–2:13

Paul originally planned on visiting the Corinthians, then going up into Macedonia, returning back to Corinth, and then going off to Judea (1:16). However, due to the Corinthians’ unrepentant attitude (1:23–2:1) and an open door for the gospel in Troas (2:12–13), he changed his plans. Having heard of the repentance of the offender (2:5–9), Paul encourages them to forgive the offender so Satan does not further divide them (2:10–11).

a. The original plan, 1:12–22
b. Postponement of the plan, 1:23–2:4
c. Forgive the offender, 2:5–11
d. A new plan, 2:12–13

2) Ministry described, 2:14–7:16

a. Triumphant in Christ, 2:14–3:3

Paul does not need a “letter of commendation” to establish his credentials, for the Corinthians are his letter, which is far better than any human letter written with ink for they were the work of the Spirit of the living God. Therefore they should not separate themselves from him.

b. Ministers of the New Covenant, 3:4–18

The old covenant was so glorious that its minister, Moses, had to veil his face. The new covenant is far more glorious. Note the contrasts between the two covenants—
### Old Covenant
- The letter, v. 6
- Kills, v. 6
- Ministry of death, v. 7
- Ministry of condemnation, v. 9
- Fades away, v. 11
- Israel’s heart is “veiled,” v. 15

### New Covenant
- The Spirit, v. 6
- Gives life, v. 6
- Ministry of the Spirit, v. 8
- Ministry of righteousness, v. 9
- Remains, v. 11
- Christian’s hearts are “unveiled,” v. 18

Paul’s point is this: I am a minister of the new covenant that is superior in every way to the old covenant. Because of this, the Corinthians should welcome him.

c. **Tremendous responsibilities, 4:1–5:5**

   The Corinthians may have wondered, “If Paul is a minister of Christ the King, why is he suffering like a criminal?” Paul responds by maintaining that he faithfully gives the gospel, but opposition and rejection are ultimately because of Satan (4:1–6). He experiences terrible circumstances so that God is glorified (4:1–12). He does not lose heart but in faith continues on, refusing to conduct his life based on bad experiences (4:13–5:5).

   Therefore, the Corinthians should not be hesitant to fellowship with Paul though his life and ministry are so difficult.

d. **Controlled by fear and love of Christ, 5:6–21**

   So that the Corinthians will be able to answer those who make evaluations on how things are going now (5:12), Paul makes clear that he does not conduct his ministry based on outward appearances but rather on the fact that someday he will answer to Christ (5:6-10). Paul is controlled not by pride but by the fear of the Lord and the love of Christ (5:11–21).

e. **Involves hardship and suffering, 6:1–10**

   As a servant of God, Paul’s only concern is to have a ministry that does not bring offense or results in being discredited. This he does, regardless of the circumstances or cost and depending on God’s Word alone.

f. **Demands exclusive devotion, 6:11–7:4**

   The Corinthians’ fellowship with the apostle is hindered because they are “bound together” in an unbiblical alliance. This affected their affections toward Paul (6:12; 7:2) and as a result toward the true gospel. They must separate themselves from such and strive for personal holiness. By doing so the things that take Paul’s place in their hearts are removed, enabling them to love Paul as they should.

g. **Encouraged by results, 7:5–16**
Paul rejoices as he thinks back to his meeting with Titus in Macedonia, as Titus told him of the Corinthians’ response of repentance.

2. **Gracious Giving, 8–9**

The Corinthians got distracted from their commitment to give to poverty-stricken Christians in Jerusalem. Paul therefore encourages them to renew their commitment by challenging them with the Macedonians’ and Jesus’ examples (8:1–9). If the Macedonians and Jesus, being poor, could give what they had for the benefit of others, the Corinthians, being rich, should have no problem doing the same (8:10–15).

1) An example of giving, 8:1–5
2) Abound in giving, 8:6–15
3) Be ready to give, 8:16–9:5
4) Results of gracious giving, 9:6–15

   a. Increased blessing to the giver, 9:6–11
   b. Increased thanksgiving to the Lord, 9:12–15

**Note these principles of Christian giving—**

1. Attitude of joy, not with resentment or reluctance, 8:2; 9:7
2. Possible to do regardless of circumstances, 8:2
3. Done according to and beyond ability, 8:3
4. Seen as a ministry, 8:4; 9:1
5. Preceded by giving of self to the Lord, 8:5
6. A work of grace, not law, 8:7–10
7. Should be proportionate to income, 8:12–15
8. Motivated by love, not compulsion, 9:7
9. Trust God for needs, 9:8–11
10. Results in thanksgiving to God, 9:12–15

The principle of 9:6 is “If you don’t abound in gracious giving, you will experience little blessing from God and cause little thanksgiving to God.”

3. **Defense and Denunciation, 10–13**

The Corinthians were deceived by false teachers to think that Paul was not a true apostle.

1) Defense of ministry, 10:1–18

Here Paul defends himself against those who questioned whether he really had the qualifications to be an apostle. Though his accusers put stock in externals, Paul does not “war according to the flesh” (10:3–6). The Corinthians should therefore not evaluate based on externals (10:7). One should boast in the Lord, not himself, and in the end, only the one whom the Lord approves is commended. The true servant of the Lord desires to please Christ (5:9) and gain His approval (10:18).
2) Denunciation of false teachers, 11:1–12:13

Paul here says basically, “Tell you what, I’ll play the same way that my opponents do. If they want to brag about themselves, I’ll do the same.” By doing so, Paul demonstrates that his apostleship is not inferior, for no one can produce more impressive credentials than he can. Paul calls this game “foolishness” (11:1, 16–17, 21; 12:11), but does so because of his jealousness for them (11:2).

3) Paul’s third visit, 12:14–13:10

Paul will visit Corinth a third time (12:14; 13:1), and if necessary will administer discipline (13:1–4). Therefore Paul calls on the Corinthians to examine themselves as to whether they are truly in the faith so that when he comes he will not have to administer discipline (13:5–10).

a. His desire and concerns, 12:14–21
b. A warning of discipline, 13:1–4
c. Call to self-examination, 13:5–10

Conclusion, 13:11–14
14. Ephesians

A. Authorship

Paul is identified as the author (1:1; 3:1).

B. Recipients

1) The City of Ephesus

Ephesus was the capital of Asia, a leading commercial center, population 250,000. Noted for its worship of Artemis (the Latin form of Diana), one of the seven wonders of the world. Artemis was a goddess worshiped as the one responsible for good crops, business, health, family, etc. See Acts 19:23-41 for the importance of Artemis to the Ephesian citizens.

2) The Church at Ephesus

a. While we don’t know how Christianity first came to Ephesus, Paul had visited it for a few days at the end of his second missionary journey (Acts 18:19-21). Aquila and Priscilla stayed there and helped Apollos (Acts 18:24-28).

b. During his third missionary journey Paul returned to Ephesus and “found some disciples” (19:1). He not only helped the church gain firm footing in his three year ministry there (20:31), but was also influential in the spread of the gospel throughout the whole region (19:10, 26)

C. Occasion and Purpose

1) There is no evidence in this letter of anything going on in the church that occasioned Paul’s writing. This makes identifying the exact occasion and purpose of Ephesians challenging.

2) Paul wrote this letter (as well as Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon) as a prisoner (3:1; 4:1; 6:20). This was his first imprisonment at Rome (Acts 28:16ff).

D. Characteristics

1) There are three lines of truth in Ephesians—

a. The believer’s position in Christ, 1:3-14; 2:1-10

b. The Body of Christ, 2:11-3:13

• This is the main subject of this letter—the universal church of Christ
• Ephesians tells about the organism of the body of Christ, the universal church; it doesn’t tell about the organization of the local church
• Any and every attempt to try to find the doctrine of the church in the OT is vain—it’s not there. While the OT prophets did anticipate the salvation of Gentiles, they did not anticipate Jews and Gentiles having equal standing in one spiritual body, the body of Christ, the church.

• The church is called a mystery. This doesn’t refer to a “whodunit” kind of thing; instead, mystery here refers to truth previously hidden but now presently revealed.

• The church is unlike any other spiritual entity that ever existed—it is not Israel nor the coming kingdom, though it will have a role in the kingdom and Christians are citizens of the kingdom.

• See Appendix K, “The Church” for more information on this doctrine

c. The believer’s life in Christ, 4:1-6:24

2) Classic passages

a. The purpose of God in salvation, 1:3-14
b. The lost condition of the unsaved, 2:1-3
c. Salvation by grace alone, 2:4-10
d. The church as a mystery, 3:1-12
e. The love relationship between Christ and the church, 5:22-33
f. The spiritual armor of the Christian, 6:10-18

E. Keys

1) Theme – The glory of God in the Church

2) Word – grace

3) Verse – 3:21

F. Outline

As is the case with most of Paul’s letters, the doctrinal section is followed by a practical section. The two necessarily go together. Doctrine is essential to life, and life is the necessary result of doctrine.

Here’s a basic outline of Ephesians—

1) The Doctrine of the Church, 1-3

2) The Duty of the Church, 4-6
Here’s a more detailed outline of Ephesians —

Introduction, 1:1-2

1. The Doctrine of the Church, 1:3-3:21

   1) The Glory of God in the Salvation of the Church, 1:3-14
      a. The Father’s work, 1:3-6
      b. The Son’s work, 1:7-12
      c. The Spirit’s work, 1:13-14

   2) Thanksgiving and Prayer to God, 1:15-23
      a. Thanksgiving to God, 1:15-16
      b. Prayer for Enlightenment, 1:17-23

      a. Regeneration of the Spiritually Dead, 2:1-10
      b. Reconciliation of Jew and Gentile in One Body, 2:11-22

   4) The Glory of God and the Revelation of the Church, 3:1-21
      a. Revealed through Paul, 3:1-13
      b. Response of Praise, 3:14-21

2. The Duty of the Church, 4:1-6:20

   1) The Church must be Unified, 4:1-16
      a. Necessity of Unity Exhorted, 4:1-6
      b. Means of Unity Provided for, 4:7-16

   2) The Church must be Holy, 4:17-6:9
      a. A life of Purity, 4:17-5:2
      b. A life of Love, 5:2
      c. A life of Light, 5:3-14
      d. A life of the Spirit, 5:15-21
      e. A life of Submissiveness in Personal Relationships, 5:21-6:9

   3) The Church Must Fight, 6:10-20
      God is glorified by believers standing firm against the forces of evil. Such forces
      would destroy the unity of the church, godly living, and its ability to glorify God.

Conclusion, 6:21-24
15. Philippians

A. Authorship

Paul is identified as the author (1:1; cf. 3:4-6).

B. Recipients

1) Philippi was an important city (Acts 16:12). Many of its citizens were veterans of the Roman army. Latin was spoken as well as Greek, and they dressed like Romans. They obviously prided themselves on being Roman citizens. Its Jewish population was very small, as they didn’t have enough men to form a synagogue (at least ten male heads of households were needed).

2) The Philippian church was founded on Paul’s second missionary journey (Acts 16:12-40). Paul went to Macedonia, where Philippi is located, in response to what is called the Macedonian vision (Acts 16:9-12). Converts included Lydia (16:14-15), a demon-possessed girl (16:16-18), and the Philippian jailer (16:30-34).

3) Paul kept in close contact with the Philippian church, and they had twice sent gifts to him (Phil 4:14-16). During his third missionary journey he undoubtedly stopped at Philippi (Acts 20:1), and he swung through again at the end of his journey on his way to Jerusalem (Acts 20:3-6).

C. Occasion and Purpose

1) Express thanksgiving for their generous gift (1:5; 4:10-20). The Philippian church resumed supporting Paul financially, and so Paul wrote to thank them for their gift—an inspired “thank-you note.”

2) Epaphroditus. Sent by the Philippians to help Paul (2:25), he became very sick and almost died. When the Philippians heard this, they were very concerned, and so Paul wrote to tell them that he got better.

3) Update on Paul’s situation (1:12-26). The Philippians were praying for him (1:19) and were concerned about him.

   a. It would have been easy to see how Paul’s imprisonment would have been troubling to the Philippians—“the spread of the gospel has stopped!”

   b. However, these events actually resulted in the furtherance, rather than the hindrance, of the gospel (1:12)

   c. This enabled the wide spread of the gospel – while constantly chained to a soldier (1:16, 20) and as soldiers were relieved of their duty, Paul would speak the gospel to them and they would hear his ministry to those who came to visit him (cf. Acts 28:16-31)

   d. Furthermore, there were those who were preaching the gospel so that it would make things harder for Paul (1:15-18). Note that while the content of their preaching was
right, their *motives* were wrong. No approval is given to this, but thanksgiving is given that the gospel is spreading.

4) Warning about false teachers (chapter 3).

5) Exhortation to stand firm and be **united** (1:27-28; 4:2-5).

Thus, Philippians was not written because of a crisis in the Philippian church. It is rather a letter of love, inspired by *friendship*.

D. Characteristics

1) Philippians is a very personal letter, with over 100 uses of “I,” “me,” and “my.” This wasn’t pride, but evidence of a very close, personal relationship that he had with this body of believers.

2) A strong emphasis on the word “**gospel**,” used 9 different times (1:5, 7, 12, 16, 27a, 27b; 2:22; 4:3; 4:15).

3) Philippians also has the reputation of being the epistle of **joy**. Different forms of “joy” and “rejoice” are found at least 12 times in the book (1:4, 18, 25; 2:2, 17, 18, 28, 29; 3:1; 4:1, 4, 10)—“rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!” (4:4)

4) This letter has no OT quotations!

5) The Doctrine of Christ, Philippians 2:6-8

   a. This is one of the greatest passages about the doctrine of Christ, but we must not forget *why* it was given—to illustrate the humility and obedience we as Christians should show toward one another (2:3-4).
   b. Christ not only existed in the form of God (having all the attributes of God) but also lived in glory, in a way appropriate of God
   c. Instead of keeping a greedy grasp on this equality with God, He gave it up freely
   d. He humbled himself, not by setting aside His divine attributes, but willingly humbling himself by setting aside the enjoyment of his divine glory by becoming a man
   e. He who was Lord of all took the position of a servant, like other men
   f. More than this, his obedience was even to the point of death, the shameful death of the cross

E. Keys

1) **Theme** – A Christian Letter of **Friendship** and **Exhortation**

2) **Word/“Mood”** – **Joy**

3) **Verse** – 1:27
F. Outline

Here’s a basic outline of Philippians—

1) Praise, Appeals, and Plans, 1-2
2) Warnings, Exhortations, and Thanksgivings, 3-4

Here’s a more detailed outline of Philippians—

Greeting, 1:1-2

1. Prayer of Thanksgiving, 1:3-11

2. The Spread of the Gospel, 1:12-26
   1) Praise for the Spread of the Gospel, 1:12-20
      a. His imprisonment has furthered the gospel, 1:12-14
      b. His response to gospel preaching from wrong motivation, 1:15-20
   2) Prayer for Life, 1:21-26

3. Practical Appeals, 1:27-2:18
   1) Be Steadfast, 1:27-30
   2) Be Unified and Humble, 2:1-11
   3) Be Persevering, 2:12-13
   4) Be a Good Testimony, 2:14-18

4. Plans, 2:19-30
   1) Plans for Timothy, 2:19-24
   2) Plans for Epaphroditus, 2:25-30

5. Warning Against Errors, 3:1-4:1
   1) Warning against Legalism, 3:1-16
   2) Warning against False Brethren (Antinomianism), 3:17-4:1

6. Exhortations and Thanksgiving, 4:2-21
   1) Exhortations, 4:2-9
      a. Be Unified, 4:2-3
      b. Be Gentle and Prayerful, 4:5-7
      c. Be Holy, 4:8-9
   2) Thanksgiving, 4:10-21

Conclusion, 4:21-23
16. 1 Timothy

A. Authorship

Paul is identified as the author (1:1).

B. Recipient

1) Timothy, his mom and grandmother became converts to Christianity during Paul’s first missionary endeavor in the area (Acts 13:49-14:25; 2 Tim:3:11)

2) His father was Greek and his mother a Jewish Christian (Acts 16:1)

3) He had been taught the OT from childhood (2 Tim:1:5; 3:15)

4) Paul led him to Christ (1 Tim:1:2, 18; 1 Cor 4:17; 2 Tim:1:2)

5) He helped Paul on many of his missionary activities (Acts 16:3-4; 17:14-15; 18:5; 19:22; 20:1-6) and was with Paul during his first imprisonment (Phil:1:1; Col 1:1; Phil:1)

6) Paul was very close to Timothy, as especially evidenced by asking that he come to visit him at the end of his life (2 Tim:4:9, 21).

7) Timothy was neither an apostle nor a pastor (he was given instructions about overseers, 1 Tim:3:1-7; 5:17-22). It’s best to think of him as the apostle Paul’s representative. This isn’t the first time Timothy has done this (see 1 Cor:4:17; 16:10; Phil:2:19; 1 Thess:3:2)

C. Occasion and Purpose

1) Historical setting

   a. 1, 2 Timothy and Titus are known as the Pastoral letters. In these Paul gives instruction concerning the care and conduct of churches. They were written not long after Paul’s first Roman imprisonment (Acts 28).

   b. After Paul was released from his first imprisonment, church history tells us that he began his fourth missionary journey, putting Titus in charge of the work in Crete and Timothy in Ephesus.

2) Occasion

   a. Paul left for Macedonia and instructed Timothy to stay in Ephesus (1:3)

   b. False teaching in the Ephesian church, 1:3

   • Who were the false teachers? They were from among the churches’ pastors, sadly fulfilling Paul’s prophecy in Acts 20:30.
• **What was being taught?** Speculations and disputes over words, arguments and quarrels of various kinds. The bottom line was greed—they came to believe that godliness was a means of financial gain. Their false teaching was based primarily on the OT.

3) **Purpose**

   a. Two main concerns—

      (1) **Warning** about false teaching and exhortation to stand against it

      (2) **Instruction** concerning Christian conduct and church life

b. 1 Timothy sets forth Christ’s will concerning the proper ordering of His churches

D. **Characteristics**

1) The contents of 1 Timothy may be summarized under **three chief topics**: a pure Gospel, a worthy worship, and a faithful ministry. 1 Timothy doesn’t give detailed instruction of doctrine as much as it exhorts godly living based on right doctrine.

2) Again, we see that doctrine and living go hand-in-hand. Doctrine is preeminently important; it provides the basis for living. What we believe affects and controls how we live and directs the orientation of our lives. Likewise, it is essential that our lives give a good reflection of our doctrine. How we live sends a message about what we believe.

E. **Keys**

1) **Theme** – **Church order**

2) **Words** – “**teach/ing**” and “**doctrine**” (1:3, 5; 4:1, 6; 6:1, 3, 17, 18)

3) **Verses** – **3:15**

F. **Outline**

   *Here’s a basic outline of 1 Timothy—*

   1) Rebucre False Teachers, 1
   2) Conduct the Church, 2:1-3:13
   3) Guard the Truth, 3:14-4:16
   4) Minister to People, 5:1-6:2
   5) Fight the Good Fight, 6:3-21
Here’s a more detailed outline of 1 Timothy—

Greeting, 1:1-2

1. **Rebuke False Teachers, 1:3-20**
   1) Preserve the Purity of the Gospel, 1:3-11
   2) Thanksgiving for the Gospel, 1:12-17
   3) Keep the Faith, 1:18-20

2. **Conduct the Church, 2:1-3:13**
   1) Public Worship, 2:1-15
      a. Public Prayer, 2:1-7
      b. Necessary Character and Conduct, 2:8-10
      c. Position of Women, 2:11-15
   2) Church Officers, 3:1-13
      a. Qualifications of Overseers, 3:1-7
      b. Qualifications of Deacons, 3:8-13

3. **Guard the Truth, 3:14-4:16**
   1) The Church and the Truth, 3:14-16
   2) Predictions of Apostasy, 4:1-5
   3) Personal Responsibilities, 4:6-16

4. **Minister to People, 5:1-6:2**
   a. Rebuke Believers Accordingly, 5:1-2
   b. Widows, 5:3-16
   c. Elders, 5:17-25
   d. Slaves, 6:1-2

5. **Fight the Good Fight, 6:3-21**
   1) Description of False Teachers, 6:3-10
   2) Live in Light of Christ’s Return, 6:11-16
   3) Instructions for Wealthy Christians, 6:17-19
   4) Guard the Truth and Resist False Teaching, 6:20-21
Here’s an annotated outline of 1 Timothy—

Greeting, 1:1-2

1. Rebut False Teachers, 1:3-20
   
   1) Preserve the Purity of the Gospel, 1:3-11
      *Certain men were mishandling God’s Word*
   
   2) Thanksgiving for the Gospel, 1:12-17
      *The gospel is powerful, and Paul’s life is proof of that*
   
   3) Keep the Faith, 1:18-20
      *Ministers/servants of the gospel must fight for the gospel*

2. Conduct the Church, 2:1-3:13
   
   1) Public Worship, 2:1-15
      *“Paul insists upon gravity and order in the public worship of the church” (Machen, p. 184)*.
      
      a. Public prayer, 2:1-7
         *Churches’ public services should be given to prayer*
      
      b. Necessary character and conduct, 2:8-10
         *The men and women of a church should be ready for prayer and worship*
      
      c. Position of women, 2:11-15
         *In public worship women do not have a leadership or teaching role*
   
   2) Church Officers, 3:1-13
      
      a. Qualifications of Overseers, 3:1-7
         *“Overseer” is synonymous with “elder” and those who “feed the flock” (i.e. pastors). See Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Pet 5:1-2.*
         
         *Overseers must be godly men who can teach and care for the church*
      
      b. Qualifications of Deacons, 3:8-13
         *Deacons must be godly men and good managers*
3. Guard the Truth, 3:14-4:16

1) The church and the truth, 3:14-16
   
   Given the character and activity of the church, one must know how to properly conduct himself in it

2) Predictions of apostasy, 4:1-5
   
   There will be those who pervert the faith because they have denied the faith

3) Personal responsibilities, 4:6-16
   
   A faithful ministry protects and preserves both the pastor and the flock

4. Minister to People, 5:1-6:2

   a. Rebuke believers accordingly, 5:1-2
      
      In God’s household, treat others as family

   b. Widows, 5:3-16
      
      Widows without family support should receive care from the church if she is of godly character and sufficient age

   c. Elders, 5:17-25
      
      Pastors should work hard, fear sin, and be impartial

   d. Slaves, 6:1-2
      
      Slaves must be taught to honor God’s Word and therefore honor their masters

5. Fight the Good Fight, 6:3-21

   1) Description of False Teachers, 6:3-10
      
      False teachers twist God’s truth, divide God’s people, and are religious mercenaries who are materially minded

   2) Live in Light of Christ’s Return, 6:11-16
      
      Flee everything associated with false teaching, follow after Christian character, fight for truth, and look for Christ

   3) Instructions for Wealthy Christians, 6:17-19
      
      Wealthy Christians should use their wealth for ministry

   4) Guard the truth and resist false teaching, 6:20-21
17. Titus

A. Authorship

Paul is identified as the author (1:1).

B. Recipients

1) Titus

a. Unlike Timothy, we don’t know a whole lot about Titus
b. He was a Gentile, one of Paul’s converts (Gal 2:3)
c. Helped Paul in ministry, such as at Corinth (2 Cor 7:13-14; 8:6, 16-19, 23; 12:18)
d. A close co-worker with Paul (2 Cor 2:13; 8:23)
e. Like Timothy, Titus was not the pastor of the Cretan church, but was Paul’s representative there. Paul had other plans for Titus (3:12).

2) The Church at Crete

a. The fourth largest island of the Mediterranean
b. In NT times Cretans had a notoriously and proverbially low moral character (1:12—“Liars ever, men of Crete, nasty brutes that love to eat”). The Greek verb kretizein means “to act as a Cretan” meaning the same thing as “to play the liar.” This was the heritage of the Christians whom Titus ministered to.
C. Occasion and Purpose

1) Occasion

a. After bringing the gospel to Crete, Paul later returned and left Titus there as his representative to organize the converts into a local church

b. The church at Crete evidently—
   - Suffered a lack of qualified spiritual leadership (1:5-9)
   - Had false teachers in their midst (1:10-16; 3:9-11)
   - Struggled with laziness and other unchristian behavior which was not consistent with nor promote godliness or the testimony of Christ (2:1-3:8, 14)

c. Titus was to go to Paul at Nicopolis (on the west coast of Greece, 3:12)

d. Titus needed to help Zenas and Apollos (3:13)

2) Purpose

Paul wrote this letter to help Titus finish the organization of the church at Crete—

a. Appointing elders, 1:5
b. Rebuking false teaching, 1:10-16
c. Encouraging godly living, 2:1-3:8, 14

D. Characteristics

1) Titus was written before 2 Timothy (compare Titus 3:12 and 2 Tim 4:6)

2) 1 Timothy’s emphasis is on sound doctrine, but Titus’s emphasis is on worthy conduct. This difference is because of the different situations in the churches they served.

3) This epistle revolves around 2:11-14—the grace of God must be seen in one’s entire life.

   a. This passage also shows three aspects of God’s grace—
      - Past—“the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men”
      - Present—“instructing us to deny…and to live…”
      - Future—“looking for the blessed hope…”

   b. This passage also pictures the Christian life—
      - Positively—“instructing us…to live sensibly, righteously, and godly in the present age…zealous for good deeds”
      - Negatively—“instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires”
E. Keys

1) Theme – Church Order
2) Phrase – “good deeds” (1:16; 2:7, 14; 3:1, 8, 14)
3) Verse – 2:11-14

F. Outline

Here’s an outline of Titus—

Greeting, 1:1-4

What is involved in organizing a local church?

1. Ordain Elders, 1:5-9

2. Refute False Teachers, 1:10-16

3. Encourage Godly Living, 2:1-3:7

   1) Different groups, 2:1-10
   2) Foundation of Christian living, 2:11-14
   3) Titus’ duty, 2:15
   4) Obligations as citizens, 3:1-7

4. Be Faithful, 3:8-11

Conclusion, 3:12-15
18. **Colossians**

A. **Authorship**

Paul is the author (1:1, 23; 4:18). This is another of Paul’s prison epistles, letters written during his first imprisonment in Rome.

B. **Recipients**

1) The City – not an important city, lesser in significance than neighboring Laodicea and Hierapolis

2) The Church

   a. There is no mention of the start of this church in Acts, but Paul may have passed through it on his way to Ephesus on his third missionary journey (Acts 19:1).

   b. Though Paul did not start the church (1:4-7; 2:1), he did know several people from there (Philemon [one of Paul’s converts, Phil 19], Apphia, Archippus, Onesimus, and Epaphras).

   c. Evidently started as a result of the ministry of Epaphras (cf. 1:7-8, Acts 19:10). It was probably during Paul’s three-year ministry at Ephesus that the churches at Colossae, Laodicia, and Hieropolis were founded. It is important to note that the fulfillment of the Great Commission in these areas resulted in the formation local churches (cf. Matt 28:19-20; Titus 1:5).
C. Occasion and Purpose

1) Occasion: False teaching threatened the Colossian church (elaborated under “characteristics”). Paul heard about this from Epaphras (1:7-8).

2) Purposes:
   
a. To refute the Colossian false teaching by demonstrating the supremacy of Jesus Christ, chapters 1-2

   \textit{Jesus is…}

   - the very image of God, 1:15
   - the Creator, 1:16
   - the preexistent sustainer of all things, 1:17
   - the head of the church, 1:18
   - the first to be resurrected, 1:18
   - the fullness of deity in bodily form, 1:19; 2:9
   - the one who reconciles sinners to God, 1:20-22
   - the one in whom believers are made complete, 2:10

b. To give practical instruction on how a Christian should live, chapters 3-4.

\begin{center}
\textbf{Note}
\end{center}

\textit{Error must be met with clear teaching of the truth and definite refutation of error.}

D. Characteristics

1) The False Teaching Threatening the Colossian Church

\textit{Note these aspects of the false teaching—}

a. Legalism – strict rules about what could/could not be consumed, religious festivals and days to observe (2:16-17, 20-23)

b. Angel worship (2:18)

   “Probably the Colossian errorists did not \textit{directly} attack the supremacy of Christ. Neither did those who afterwards introduced saint-worship into the Catholic Church. But in both cases the effect was to rob Christ of his rightful place in Christian devotion” (Machen, \textit{Introduction to the New Testament}, p. 161).
c. **Asceticism** (2:18 “self-abasement”). One who believes he can get “closer to God” by denying himself of things like food, sleep, etc.

d. **Devaluing Jesus Christ** – we can see this from Paul’s stress on Christ’s supremacy (1:15-20; 2:2-3, 9) and the emphasis the false teachers put on personal effort rather than relying on Christ

e. **Secret knowledge** (2:2-3, 18)

f. **Reliance on human wisdom and tradition** (2:4, 8)

As a result of Paul’s emphasis on the supremacy of Jesus Christ, the false teaching is shown to be mere philosophy, an “empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ” (2:8).

**The false teaching the Colossians faced had three basic elements—**

1. A **Jewish** element – legalism, ritualism, observance of holy days
2. A **pagan** element – asceticism, worship of angels, supremacy of knowledge
3. A **Christian** element – it wore the mask of Christianity, having a place for Christ but not the place of supremacy

2) **Relationship to Ephesians**

a. There are many similarities between Colossians and Ephesians, both in **what** Paul says (content) and **how** he says it (the words used).

b. There are some contrasts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colossians</th>
<th>Ephesians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completeness in Christ</td>
<td>Oneness in Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ in the body of the believer is a mystery</td>
<td>Jew and Gentile as one in the body of Christ is a mystery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ as the <em>Head</em> of the body is emphasized</td>
<td>The church as the <em>Body</em> of Christ is emphasized</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3) Colossians has the classic passage on the preeminence of Jesus Christ (1:14-22)

**E. Keys**

1) **Theme** – The **supremacy** of Christ
2) **Word** – “first place” or “preeminence”
3) **Verse** – 1:18
F. Outline

Here’s a basic outline of Colossians—

1) Believe in Christ, 1
2) Beware of Error, 2
3) Behave as a Christian, 3-4

Here’s a more detailed outline of Colossians —

Introduction, 1:1–8

1. Believe in The Person and Work of Christ, 1:9-29

   Redemption through Christ is the basis of the Christian’s salvation

   1) Prayer based on Christ, 1:9-14
   2) Preeminence of Christ, 1:15-20
   3) Work of Christ, 1:21-29

2. Don’t be Fooled – Warning Against Error, 2:1-23

   Identification with Christ is the basis for the Christian’s position

   1) Personal concern, 2:1-5
   2) The true doctrine of Christ, 2:6-15
   3) The false doctrines of men, 2:16-23


   Union with Christ is the basis for Christian living

   1) The basic principle for Christian living, 3:1-4
   2) The proper method of Christian living, 3:5-17
   3) Christian living in human relationships, 3:18-4:1
   4) Exhortations to prayer and conduct, 4:2-6

   An important point to note — asceticism emphasizes the “negative,” but living based on union with Christ stresses both the “positive” and the “negative.”

Conclusion, 4:7-18
19. **Philemon**

A. **Authorship**

Paul is the author (vv. 1, 9, 19).

B. **Recipients**

1) Written to primarily Philemon, a believer in Colossae (v. 1)

2) It was also addressed to Apphia, Archippus, and “the church in your house” (v. 2). Some think Apphia was Philemon’s wife and Archippus was their son and the church’s pastor.

C. **Occasion and Purpose**

1) **Occasion**

   a. Onesimus, one of Philemon’s slaves, had run away and stolen from him (vv. 15-16, 18). Under Roman law, runaway slaves could face the death penalty.

   b. Onesimus (meaning “profitable,” note v. 11), fled to Rome, where he came in contact with Paul and then trusted Christ (v. 10)

   c. Though Onesimus had repented of his sin, he had not made restitution

   d. So Onesimus now returned to Philemon, his earthly master, and Paul appealed to Philemon to accept Onesimus as a brother in Christ (v. 16)

2) Purpose – to urge Philemon to **forgive** and **receive** Onesimus back as a brother in Christ

D. **Characteristics**

1) Philemon is an excellent example and illustration of **forgiveness**.

   As God has forgiven us, we must forgive one another (Eph 4:32). Philemon should forgive Onesimus, even though he didn’t deserve such, just like God forgave Philemon, even though he didn’t deserve such.

2) Philemon is an excellent example and illustration of **imputation**. Note verses 17-18.

   Just as Paul took on the debt Onesimus owed to Philemon, so Christ took on the debt sinners owed to God. In Philemon’s ledger book, what Onesimus owed was transferred to Paul’s account. In like manner, in God’s ledger book, what we owed was transferred to Christ’s account.
Once this “transaction” was completed, Onesimus should be received as if it were Paul himself (v. 17). Likewise, the believer is received by God as if it were Christ Himself, as He took our sin and gave us His righteousness (cf. 2 Cor 5:21).

3) The Role of the Church

Ultimately, Philemon has the final decision concerning this matter. However, note the greeting that this letter begins with in verse 2 “…and to the church in your house” and the closing words in verse 25 “the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your (plural) spirit.” Philemon’s decision is done as a member of the church, who also cares about the outcome. **Your decisions are not made in isolation!**

4) Christianity and **Slavery**

Nowhere does the Bible attack the institution of slavery, but it does give principles by which Christian slaves and masters should guide and conduct themselves (Eph 6:5-9; Col 3:22-4:1; 1 Tim 6:1-2; 1 Pet 2:18-25). The principles, however, when consistently and thoroughly applied would eventually result in the end of slavery.

E. **Keys**

1) **Theme** – Christian **Love**

2) **Phrase** – “**beloved** brother”

3) **Verse** – 16

F. **Outline**

1. Greeting, vv. 1-3

2. Thanksgiving and Prayer, vv. 4-7

3. Plea for Onesimus, vv. 8-21

4. Closing, vv. 22-25
20. 2 Timothy

A. Authorship

Paul is the author (1:1).

B. Recipient

1) Timothy, see discussion under 1 Timothy (p. 95).

2) Though written primarily to Timothy, it closes with a plural “you” (4:22), so that what he says is important for the church as well.

C. Occasion and Purpose

1) Occasion

a. Paul is again in prison under Nero’s persecution of Christians, except this time he is chained like a criminal in a cold dungeon (1:16; 2:9; 4:13) instead of under house-arrest, as he was in his first Roman imprisonment.

A great fire ravaged Rome (rumored to have been ordered by Nero). To remove suspicion, Nero blamed Christians, resulting in a terrible persecution. Paul, as the champion of the spread of Christianity among the non-Jewish nations, became public enemy number one.

b. Paul does not expect to be released but instead expects to die (4:6-8).

c. He is lonely, having been abandoned by Phygelus, Hermogenes (1:15) and Demas (4:10), and his other co-workers were away (4:10-12). Only Luke was with him (4:11).

d. Timothy needed encouragement to stay faithful to God and His Word, despite the fact that Paul was suffering for these very things.

2) Purpose

Paul urges Timothy to…

a. Be ready to suffer, 1:8; 2:3
b. Guard the faith, 1:14
c. Persevere in the faith, 3:14
d. Keep on preaching the Word, 4:2
D. Characteristics

1) This is Paul’s last letter, and a very personal one at that.

2) It is interesting to note that Paul’s “last words” exhorting faithfulness to God and His Word necessarily involves proclaiming God’s Word and refuting error.

3) Prophecies (3:1-6; 4:3-4)

4) Important passages
   a. 2:2 – the necessity of passing on the faith to others
   b. 2:15 – the admonition to handle God’s Word accurately
   c. 2:19 – the firm foundation of God with its two-fold seal
   d. 3:1-4 – the reference to different “lovers”
   e. 1:5; 3:14-15 – Timothy’s godly upbringing
   f. 3:16-17 – the character, function, and purpose of Scripture
   g. 4:1-5 – the command to preach the Word regardless of circumstances

E. Keys

1) Theme – Faithfulness to God and His Word

2) Phrase – “preach the word”

3) Verse – 3:16-17

F. Outline

Here’s a basic outline of 2 Timothy—

1) Be Faithful to God, 1-2

2) Be Faithful to God’s Word, 3-4
Here’s a more detailed outline of 2 Timothy—

Greeting, 1:1-2

1. Be Faithful to God, 1-2

   1) Faithfulness in Opposition and Suffering, 1:3-18
      “Do not be ashamed…” (1:8)

   2) Faithfulness in Personal Life and Ministry, 2:1-26
      “Be strong…” (2:1)

2. Be Faithful to God’s Word, 3-4

   1) Challenges to a Faithful Ministry, 3:1-9
      “Avoid such men as these” (3:5)

   2) Components of a Faithful Ministry, 3:10-4:8
      “Continue in the things you have learned…preach the Word…fulfill your ministry” (3:14; 4:2, 5)

      a. Follow Godly Examples, 3:1-13
      b. Continue in God’s Word, 3:14-17
      c. Preach God’s Word, 4:1-4
      d. Persevere Until the End, 4:5-8

Conclusion, 4:9-22
The epistles of James, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, and Jude are usually called general epistles. They have this classification because they don’t address a specific individual or church—they are more general as to who they address.

21. James

A. Authorship

1) “James” is said to be the author in 1:1

2) The NT tells of four James’s though!

   a. James the apostle, the son of Zebedee and the brother of John (Matt 10:2)
   b. The other apostle James—called James the less—son of Alphaeus and Mary and the brother of Joses (Matt 10:3; 27:56; Mark 15:40)
   c. The father of the apostle Judas (not Iscariot) (Luke 6:16; John 14:22)
   d. James the brother of Jude (Jude 1) and half-brother of Jesus (Gal 1:19).

3) The author of this epistle is James the half-brother of Jesus—

   a. He was well known (Jude 1), and the letter is written without any further description of the author
   b. He was a leader in the early church (Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; Gal 2:9, 12), and the letter is written in an authoritative tone
   c. He was an eye-witness of the risen Lord (1 Cor 15:7)
   d. As a half-brother, he would have had close access to the life and ministry of Jesus (Matt 13:55; Mark 6:3); the letter has parallels with Jesus’ teachings
   e. There are a number of similarities between this letter and the speech of James in Acts 15:13-21 and the letter sent out by the Jerusalem Church (15:23-29)

B. Recipients

1) Identified in 1:1 as “to the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad”

2) This letter is thus written to Jewish Christians who lived outside of Palestine

   a. Whenever “twelve tribes” is used in Scripture it always refers to Jews, never figuratively for the church
   b. “Dispersed abroad” is commonly used for Jews living outside of Palestine
   c. “Hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ” (2:1) clearly points to Christian believers, as does the reference to “elders of the church” (5:14). See also 1:1, 18; 2:7; 5:7
   d. References to the synagogue as a meeting place (2:2), to monotheism (2:19), and to the Jewish wording for oaths (5:12) also supports understanding Jews as the readers
C. Occasion and Purpose

1) This letter does not specifically state its purpose, so we must identify James’s purpose from what he wrote.

2) The vast majority of the letter consists of exhortations rather than teaching about doctrine or dealing with error. This means that James’s purpose or reason for writing revolves around issues of practical significance.

3) From 2:14-26 it is clear that James writes to counter a superficial faith, a hollow, dead orthodoxy. He argues that fruit is the necessary evidence of genuine faith, of true salvation. Truly believing right doctrine involves the intellect, emotions, and will, not just the intellect.

4) Thus, James’ purpose in writing is to exhort and encourage his readers to show the reality of their faith by conforming to the pattern of godliness in all areas of life. His emphasis is on godly behavior.

5) In this letter, James’ purpose is to point out for the readers how a living faith should respond to various areas of life. Your profession is tested by your practice; your life should support your lips.

D. Characteristics

1) It is clearly Jewish in tone and “flavor” (cf. 5:4). James has over 40 allusions to the OT.

2) James uses many illustrations from nature and the ordinary activities of mankind:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature</th>
<th>Human Life</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sea waves (1:6)</td>
<td>Conception and birth (1:15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grass and flowers (1:10-11)</td>
<td>Firstfruits (1:18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sun’s heat (1:11)</td>
<td>Looking into a mirror (1:23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadows from sun’s position (1:17)</td>
<td>Begging (2:15-16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water fountain (3:11)</td>
<td>Breath (2:26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figs and olives (3:12)</td>
<td>Horse bits (3:3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vapors (4:14)</td>
<td>Ship’s helm (3:4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early and latter rains (5:7)</td>
<td>Fire (3:5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drought (5:17)</td>
<td>Taming of creatures (3:7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poison (3:8)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sowing and harvesting (3:18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moth-eaten garments (5:2)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rust (5:3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Labor and wages (5:4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Farming (5:7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anointing with oil (5:14)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3) It has a heavy emphasis on essential characteristics of genuine Christianity—good deeds and a faith that “works.”
4) It is simply organized.

5) There are many similarities with Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount (there are more than 20)

   1:2    Joy in the midst of trials (Matt 5:10-12)
   1:4    Exhortation to perfection (Matt 5:48)
   1:5    Asking for good gifts (Matt 7:7ff)
   1:20   Against anger (Matt 5:22)
   1:22   Hearers and doers of the Word (Matt 7:24ff)
   2:10   The whole law to be kept (Matt 5:19)
   2:13   Blessings of mercifulness (Matt 5:7)
   2:14-26 Mere profession insufficient (Matt 7:21-23)
   3:11-12 Character is evident in actions (Matt 7:16-20)
   3:18   Blessings of peacemakers (Matt 5:9)
   4:4    Friendship of the world as enmity against god (Matt 6:24)
   4:10   Blessing of the humble (Matt 5:5)
   4:11-12 Against judging others (Matt 7:1-5)
   5:2ff  Moth and rust spoiling riches (Matt 6:19)
   5:10   The prophets as examples (Matt 5:12)
   5:12   Against oaths (Matt 5:33-37)

6) James is sometimes called “the NT book of Proverbs.”

7) Because it has little doctrinal content, we have to understand it within the context of the whole NT.

E. Keys

1) Theme – The Tests of a Living Faith

2) Words – “faith” and “works”

3) Verse – 2:17

F. Outline

Here’s a basic outline of James—

1) Stand with Confidence, 1
2) Serve with Compassion, 2
3) Speak with Care, 3
4) Submit with Contrition, 4
5) Share with Concern, 5
Here’s a more detailed outline of James—

1. Stand with Confidence, 1
   1) Rejoice in diverse trials, 1:2-12
   2) Resist in deadly temptation, 1:13-18
   3) Rest in divine truth, 1:19-27

2. Serve with Compassion, 2
   1) Accept others, 2:1-13
   2) Assist others, 2:14-26

3. Speak with Care, 3
   1) Control talk, 3:1-12
   2) Cultivate thought, 3:13-18

4. Submit with Contrition, 4
   1) Turn hatred into humility, 4:1-6
   2) Turn judgment into justice, 4:7-12
   3) Turn boasting into belief, 4:13-17

5. Share with Concern, 5
   1) Share in possessions, 5:1-6
   2) Share in patience, 5:7-12
   3) Share in prayer, 5:13-20

James can also be outlined by listing the various “tests” of genuine, living faith—

1. The Test of Perseverance in Suffering, 1:2-12
2. The Test of Blame in Temptation, 1:13-18
3. The Test of Response to the Word, 1:19-27
4. The Test of Impartial Love, 2:1-13
5. The Test of Righteous Works, 2:14-26
6. The Test of the Tongue, 3:1-12
7. The Test of Humble Wisdom, 3:13-18
8. The Test of Worldly Indulgence, 4:1-12
9. The Test of Dependence, 4:13-17
10. The Test of Patient Endurance, 5:1-11
11. The Test of Truthfulness, 5:12
12. The Test of Prayerfulness, 5:13-18
13. The Test of True Faith, 5:19-20
Explanation of 2:14-20—

The solution for harmonizing Paul and James does not lie in different meanings for “works,” “faith,” or even “justification.” Rather, the solution lies in their respective contexts—their purposes and occasions for writing. Each addresses a different problem and so we must distinguish their perspectives regarding justification and works.

**The Problem Paul Addresses**: some form of Jewish legalism, confidence in human works as the basis for a right standing before God. Thus, Paul asserts the necessity of faith.

**The Problem James Addresses**: some form of dead orthodoxy, which sees no importance in works at all. Thus, James asserts the necessity of works as the evidence of true saving faith.

Thus, James and Paul aren’t crossing swords—they stand back to back, confronting different foes of the gospel. They do not have different definitions, they have different perspectives—that is, they are looking at justification and works from different angles.

**Paul’s Viewpoint**: when Paul claims a person is justified by faith and not by works, he is referring to works that precede salvation (conversion). Paul’s view of justification sees God declaring the sinner righteous, thus gaining a right standing before God. In Romans 4:5 Paul says that God is “the one who justifies the ungodly.” Abraham’s status before justification was such that he was incapable of doing any good work that would be acceptable to God. Thus since it is the sinner who is justified, works have no role in justification. This declaration resulted in Abraham gaining a right standing before God, and was the result of his faith, not his works.

**James’ Viewpoint**: when James claims a person is justified by works and not by faith alone, he has in view works that are produced by faith, works that follow salvation. James’ view of justification sees God affirming the believer’s status as a righteous individual, thus demonstrating a right standing before God. This declaration occurred after his gaining a right standing before God and consisted of God affirming Abraham as righteous, and was the result of his faith and his works.

While works are ruled out as a condition for salvation, they are insisted upon as the evidence of salvation. These are not the same, and so Paul and James do not contradict each other.

In effect, James and Paul were answering two different questions:

**Paul answers the question**, How can a sinner be justified before a holy God? Paul’s answer is by faith alone.

**James answers the question**, What kind of faith saves—what kind of faith justifies? James’ answer is a faith that produces works.

A living faith is a working faith. “Works” are the active exercise of Christian character in practical ways. This does not contradict Paul’s teaching of justification but complements it.
22. 1 Peter

A. Authorship

Pete is identified as the author (1:1).

B. Recipients

1) Identified in 1:1 as “those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia”

2) The recipients are most likely Gentile Christians—
   a. No reference to “twelve tribes” as in James
   b. The regions to which the epistle was sent were primarily Gentile in population, as were the churches located there.
   c. The readers are described in terms used almost exclusively for Gentiles but not for Jews (1:14; 2:9-10: 3:6; 4:1-4).

C. Occasion and Purpose

1) Occasion

   a. The readers were experiencing great suffering and persecution because they were believers. This was during the time following the burning of Rome, and Nero, whom the people suspected of initiating the fires, sought to redirect blame from him to the Christians. Thus, a vicious persecution against Christians spread through the Roman Empire.
   b. They may have been concerned how such suffering was consistent with God’s grace.

2) Purpose

The purpose is clearly stated in 5:12. Peter wants his readers to be steadfast, and he does so based on the facts of the gospel. Thus, Peter instructs and encourages his readers that—

   a. Christians must be faithful to Christ in the fire of suffering
   b. God’s grace is sufficient for persevering through persecution

   “From the separateness of the Church two results, according to Peter, should follow—in the first place purity, and in the second place courage. Members of a holy race, purchased by the precious blood of Christ, elect from before the foundation of the world, cannot engage in those evil practices which were natural to them in their former state. And citizens of a heavenly commonwealth, members of a holy family, with Christ as their supreme example of courage and self-denial, can never fear anything that men can do” (Machen, p. 255).
D. Characteristics

1) 1 Peter is distinctively the epistle of Christian suffering/persecution (1:6; 2:19-21, 23; 3:14, 16-17; 4:13-16, 19; 5:10).

2) Peter gives a NT commentary upon the OT prophets’ understanding of what they wrote (1:10-11). While they enjoyed the Spirit’s ministry in their lives and wrote about both the cross and the Kingdom, they did not recognize that two comings were involved in fulfilling this. They evidently wondered, “If the Messiah will reign, why must He die? How can He reign if He dies?”

3) 1 Peter teaches the doctrine of Christ – His incarnation (1:20), sinless life (1:19; 2:22), suffering and death (2:24), resurrection (3:21-22), ascension (3:22), presence at the right hand of the Father (3:22), and Second Coming (1:7, 13; 4:13; 5:1, 4).

4) One of the most difficult passages in the Bible—3:18-22.
   a. Context
      • In this section (3:13-22) Peter makes a transition from the believer’s response to mistreatment (3:8-12) to the necessity of doing good even if Christians are mistreated for it (4:1ff—“Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh…”).
      • Believers are to suffer for righteousness, 3:13-14a
      • Believers must submit to Christ, 3:14b-16
      • 3:17-22 gives the support for the exhortation to submit to Christ in 3:14b-16. That support is the example of Christ.
   b. The purpose of Christ’s death, 3:18—to bring the unjust to God that they might become servants of righteousness; believers are delivered from sin to be God’s servants, and that purpose is fulfilled by submitting to Christ
   c. The consequences of Christ’s death, 3:19-22—here Peter reinforces our need to obey Christ and maintain a good conscience
      • In His descent, 3:19-21—vvs. 19ff describe Christ’s activity after his death…His descent into Hades (called Sheol in the OT; see diagram on the next page) in connection with His death, proclaiming doom to disobedient who are contrasted with the obedient who were delivered. Similarly, Peter’s readers were to follow Christ’s pattern of obedience as expressed in their baptism—to experience a like deliverance from divine chastisement
      • In His ascent, 3:22—Christ gained dominion over all, therefore believers must submit to His authority, even if the consequence of that is suffering
We can summarize Christ’s work in Sheol/Hades thus:

1) **Christ descended into Hades but was not abandoned there** (Acts 2:27-32; Rom 10:7; Eph 4:9). Christ did not go to Hades/Sheol to finish His punishment or complete His atoning work for mankind. So, what did Christ do there, then?

2) **Christ confirmed the doom of certain sinners** (1 Pet 3:19). Christ’s “preaching” was not the good news; rather, He confirmed the justness of their condemnation. This was no offer of salvation or a message of hope.

3) **Christ brought good tidings to the righteous** (1 Pet 4:6). The gospel that was “preached” was that the work of redemption was accomplished, that the guilt and condemnation of sin was finally taken away (cf. Heb 9:15). These were OT saints who did trust God for salvation, but whose sins ultimately required Christ’s death for full payment. They were not being punished (cf. Lazarus, Luke 16:25).

4) **Christ led the righteous out of Hades** (Eph 4:8). When Christ rose from the dead the spirits of righteous men were made perfect (Heb 12:23) and they were taken to the third heaven where God dwells.

To summarize: Because of Christ’s resurrection and ascension, a significant change took place in the intermediate state. All the righteous in the “comfort” side were taken to heaven. From that point on every saved person will go to be with Christ in heaven at the moment of physical death.
E. Keys

1) Theme – The **True Grace** of God

2) Word – “suffering” (16x)

3) Verse – 5:12

F. Outline

*Here’s a basic outline of 1 Peter*—

1) The Destiny of the Christian, 1:2-2:10
2) The Duty of the Christian, 2:11-3:12

*Here’s a more detailed outline of 1 Peter*—

**Greeting, 1:1**

1. **The Destiny of the Christian, 1:2-2:10**

   1) Plan of Salvation, 1:2-12
      a. Its program, 1:2-5
      b. Its problem, 1:6-9
      c. Its prophecy, 1:10-12

   2) Products of Salvation, 1:13-25
      a. Holiness, 1:13-16
      b. Reverence, 1:17-21
      c. Love, 1:22-25

   3) Purpose of Salvation, 2:1-10

2. **The Duty of the Christian, 2:11-3:12**

   1) Subjection in the State, 2:11-17
   2) Subjection in the Household, 2:18-25
   3) Subjection in the Family, 3:1-12


   1) Suffering as a Citizen, 3:13-4:6
   2) Suffering as a Christian, 4:7-19
   3) Suffering as a Shepherd, 5:1-4
   4) Suffering as Saints, 5:5-11

**Conclusion, 5:12-14**
23. 2 Peter

A. Authorship

1) The writer identifies himself in 1:1 as “Simon Peter.”

2) The writer speaks of his death as being right around the corner (1:14), which the Lord had previously revealed to him (see John 21:18-19).

3) In 1:16-18 the writer describes himself as being present at Jesus’ Transfiguration (see Matt 17:1-8).

4) In 3:1 the writer refers to this as his “second letter.” The best assumption is that the “first letter” refers to 1 Peter.

B. Recipients

Unlike 1 Peter 1:1, 2 Peter has no reference as to the location of the recipients. However, as Peter’s reference to a previous letter (2 Pet 3:1) refers to 1 Peter, this points to the same individuals being addressed in 2 Peter. Thus, the recipients are those addressed in 1 Peter, primarily Gentile Christians living in Asia Minor.

C. Occasion and Purpose

1) Occasion

a. Peter had evidently received a report that the readers were being threatened by false teachers trying to wriggle into their churches and lead them astray (2:1-2).

b. In his first letter Peter wrote to strengthen the readers so they could endure persecution and suffering they experienced from outside their churches. Now Peter exhorts the readers to be faithful in the face of a greater danger, false teaching that was erupting inside their churches.

2) Purpose

a. Peter states his purpose in writing in 1:12 and again in 3:1-2, but the last two verses (3:17-18) clearly and especially summarize the entire letter.

b. In light of the false teaching arising in their churches, Peter reminds the readers of essential truths from God’s Word that they had already been taught.

c. The specific truths that Peter reminds the readers of involve exhortations to guard against false doctrine (3:17) and to grow more like Christ (3:18).
D. Characteristics

1) False teachers

a. They misrepresent themselves as teachers of truth (2:1)
b. They secretly introduce heresies that malign the truth and bring judgment (2:1, 2–3)
c. They deny the Lord by lifestyle and doctrine (2:1)
d. They are motivated by greed (2:3, 14)
e. They openly indulge in sexual immorality (2:10, 14)
f. They revile heavenly authorities (2:10–11)
g. They entice others by appealing to sensual desires (2:18)
h. They promise their followers freedom (2:19)
i. They are enslaved to their own sinful practices (2:19)
j. They have turned away from the truth (2:20)
k. They deny the coming of the Lord to judge the world (3:4)
l. They deny that God has intervened in the past to judge the world (3:4)
m. They distort and twist the Scriptures (3:16)

2) Response to false teaching

a. It can be easy for us and others to think that denunciations of false teaching and teachers are harsh or ungracious. However, keep in mind that “the Spirit of God sees the end of false teaching, and so warns us against its beginnings” (Scofield, Bible Correspondence Course, p. 326).

b. False teaching consists of both content and practice. In other words, ungodly living and ungodly teaching go hand-in-hand.

c. False teachers, then, must be exposed, thwarted, and defeated. Christians must defend the faith and themselves, and do so by combating false teaching and growing in Christ-likeness.

d. Peter’s emphasis on true knowledge is essential for protection against false teaching. **You cannot see what is wrong unless you know what is right and live right.** There must also be right living otherwise you can be tempted to fall into what James addressed (a dead faith) and/or become susceptible to false teaching

E. Keys

1) Theme – Remember God’s Truth

2) Word – “knowledge” (16 times)

3) Verses – 3:17-18
F. Outline

Here’s a basic outline of 2 Peter—

1) Grow in Christian Truth and Maturity, 1
2) Beware of False Teachers, 2
3) Recognize God’s Coming Judgment, 3

Here’s a more detailed outline of 2 Peter—

Greeting, 1:1-2

1. Grow in Christian Truth and Maturity, 1:3-21
   1) Pursue Christian Growth and Maturity, 1:3-11
   2) Peter’s Reasons for Exhorting this Pursuit, 1:12-21
      a. It is the Right Thing to Do, 1:12-15
      b. Peter’s Message is True, 1:16-21

2. Beware of False Teachers, 2:1-22
   1) False Teachers are Coming and are Dangerous, 2:1-3
   2) God will Judge False Teachers, 2:4-10a
   3) False Teachers are Ungodly Sinners, 2:10b-22

3. Recognize God’s Coming Judgment, 3:1-18a
   1) Remember the Scriptures, 3:1-2
   2) False Teachers Deny God’s Coming Judgment, 3:3-7
   3) God’s Judgment Is Coming, 3:8-18a
      a. The “Delay” Explained, 3:8-10
      b. Christian Living in Light of God’s Coming Judgment, 3:11-18a

Conclusion, 3:18b
Greeting, 1:1-2

1. Grow in Christian Truth and Maturity, 1:3-21

In this first section Peter reminds the readers of their responsibility to grow in the truth taught by the apostles and to grow more spiritually mature. The best defense against the threat of false teaching is to be grounded in the Christian faith.

1) Pursue Christian Growth and Maturity, 1:3-11

Given the great value and provisions of salvation (1:2-4), Christians should diligently strive to grow more like Jesus Christ (1:5-11).

2) Peter’s Reasons for Exhorting this Pursuit, 1:12-21

Peter gives two reasons for writing and exhorting the readers—

a. It is the Right Thing to Do, 1:12-15

Being reminded of right doctrine is necessary for Christian growth and protection from false teaching.

b. Peter’s Message is True, 1:16-21

Christ’s return is a key doctrine that the false teachers denied (cf. 3:4) and so Peter defends this teaching as something that has great implications—if one denies Christ’s return one also denies Christ’s judgment on the wicked.

Here (1:16-18) Peter testifies that what he says is true by focusing on the Transfiguration (which God allowed him to see—the Transfiguration was a “peek” at Christ’s return, Matt 17:1-8). Peter also points out that what he says agrees with the OT prophets (1:19-21).

2. Beware of False Teachers, 2:1-22

1) False Teachers are Coming and are Dangerous, 2:1-3

While we may wonder how such a situation could happen, Paul prophesied such would happen in Acts 20:29—“I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.”

2) God will Judge False Teachers, 2:4-10a

Peter reminds the readers that God will judge false teachers by giving three examples of such judgment in the OT—fallen angels (2:4), the ungodly of Noah’s day (2:5), and Sodom and Gomorrah (2:6-8).
The “if” in 2:4 is followed by an understood/implied “then” in 2:9. If God judged in the past (vv. 4-8) He will definitely judge in the future (vv. 9-10).

3) False Teachers are Ungodly Sinners, 2:10b-22

Peter gives a detailed description of the character and influence of false teachers, marking them as worthy of God’s judgment and also warning the readers to stay away from everything associated with the false teachers.

3. Recognize God’s Coming Judgment, 3:1-18a

Having described what the false teachers are like Peter now directs his attention to what the false teachers are saying.

1) Remember the Scriptures, 3:1-2

The readers should neither be fearful nor surprised by the presence of false teachers, as Jesus and His apostles foretold the coming of such.

2) False Teachers Deny God’s Coming Judgment, 3:3-7

Here Peter identifies the basic error of the false teachers—they denied Christ’s Second Coming.

3) God’s Judgment Is Coming, 3:8-18a

Having identified and refuted the false teachers’ error, he now considers the truth of Christ’s Second Coming and why there seems to be a “delay.”

a. The “Delay” Explained, 3:8-10
b. Christian Living in Light of God’s Coming Judgment, 3:11-18a

Conclusion, 3:18b
24. Jude

“Perhaps more than another New Testament book, the Epistle of Jude is assumed to have little or no permanent value and is, therefore, virtually excluded from the practical, as distinct from the formal, canon of the many sections of the church…But to deny a permanent spiritual value to the letter is to miss its main message, which is relevant to any period of history…As long as men need stern rebukes for their practices, the Epistle of Jude will remain relevant. Its neglect reflects more the superficiality of the generation that neglects it than the irrelevance of its burning message” (Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, p. 926).

A. Authorship

Jude, brother of James and the half-brother of Jesus, identifies himself in verse one as the author of this letter.

B. Recipients

No information is given as to where the readers lived, what church they were a part of, or what their cultural background was (Jew or Gentile).

C. Occasion and Purpose

1) Occasion

a. Jude originally was going to write his readers about the salvation they shared. However, somehow Jude learned of the alarming presence of false teachers who threatened that very salvation (vv. 3-4).

b. From verse 4 we see that false teachers were present who believed that grace gave a license to sin.

c. The situation is worse than in 2 Peter. In 2 Peter, the threat of false teachers was expected and real (cf. 2 Pet 3:1), but in Jude the false teachers were already present, unnoticed, and destroying the church (Jude 3-4, 19). The situation Jude addresses is definitely a serious one.

2) Purpose

a. Jude originally (most likely) in this letter was going to teach about the doctrine of salvation (v. 3a), but given the change in occasion there came a change in purpose in writing (v. 3b). Jude instead wrote to exhort the readers to action.

b. Given the presence of false teachers who threaten the very core of the Christian church, Jude exhorts his readers to vigorously fight for the faith they received (v. 3).
D. Keys

1) Theme – Contend for the Faith
2) Word – “ungodly”
3) Verse – 3

E. Outline

Here’s a basic outline of Jude—

1) Contend for the Faith, 3-4
2) Condemnation of False Teachers, 5-16
3) Continue in the Faith, 17-25

Here’s a more detailed outline of Jude—

Greeting, 1-2

1. Contend for the Faith, 3-4

2. The Condemnation of False Teachers, 5-16
   1) God’s Judgment on the Ungodly of the Past, 5-7
   2) The Present Pattern of the Ungodly, 8-13
   3) Judgment of the Ungodly at Christ’s Return, 14-16

3. Continue in the Faith, 17-23
   1) The Character and Activities of False Teachers, 17-19
   2) The Character and Activities of Believers, 20-23
      a. Believers must Persevere in the Faith, 20-21
         (1) Mutual Edification—“building yourselves up on your most holy faith,” 20
         (2) Spirit-Led Prayer—“praying in the Holy Spirit,” 20
         (3) Anxious Anticipation—“waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life,” 21
      b. Believers Must Rescue those Departing the Faith, 22-23

Closing Benediction, 24-25
Greeting, 1-2

1. Contend for the Faith, 3-4

“The faith” is the body of truth that has been “handed down,” delivered, committed, and entrusted to believers. Paul exhorts us to “hold fast” the truth, but Jude exhorts us to “contend earnestly” for it. Whenever God’s truth is attacked, obedient Christians cannot stand neutral in the conflict.

2. The Condemnation of False Teachers, 5-16

1) God’s Judgment on the Ungodly of the Past, 5-7

Jude gives three examples from the OT of God’s judging the ungodly to show that such is nothing new. This establishes a historical basis for God’s future judgment.

2) The Present Pattern of the Ungodly, 8-13

Here Jude turns and attacks the false teachers who had infiltrated the local churches of his readers. His purpose is to show that these were ungodly individuals, thus worthy of the same judgment that the OT examples received.

3) Judgment of the Ungodly at Christ’s Return, 14-16

Jude’s purpose in the body of the letter is to excite the readers to defend the faith by showing them the judgment of those who pervert the faith. The three essential commands of the readers must be read in light of the body of the letter—

• Contend for the faith (v. 3)—they are on the “winning” side
• Persevere in the faith (vv. 20-21)—they won’t enter into judgment
• Rescue those heeding the false teachers (vv. 22-23)—they save them from the judgment the false teachers will face

3. Continue in the Faith, 17-23

1) The Character and Activities of False Teachers, 17-19

Apostolic teaching clearly foretold the danger of false teachers. The readers should recognize their presence by the divisions they cause and their ungodly lifestyles.

2) The Character and Activities of Believers, 20-23

Jude’s readers must respond to false teaching by staying faithful to Christ and helping those who fall prey to false teachers.

a. Believers must Persevere in the Faith, 20-21
The main command is “Keep yourselves in the love of God” (v. 21). The readers are to fulfill this command though…

(1) Mutual Edification—“building yourselves up on your most holy faith,”
20
(2) Spirit-Led Prayer—“praying in the Holy Spirit,” 20
(3) Anxious Anticipation—“waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life,” 21

b. Believers Must Rescue those Departing the Faith, 22-23

Closing Benediction, 24-25
25. 1 John

A. Authorship

1) There is no specific identification of the writer.

2) External evidence (from church history) is very strong that the apostle John wrote 1–3 John.

3) There are many similarities between 1–3 John and the Gospel of John in the words and phrases used. See the introduction to the Gospel of John (p. 32) for evidence of the Apostle John’s authorship of the fourth gospel.

4) The author is identified as being an eyewitness of Christ both before and after his death and resurrection (1:1–3; 4:14).

5) Why didn’t the author identify himself? It is assumed that he didn’t need to do that because he was so well known to the readers—they knew who was writing to them.

B. Recipients

1) They were probably Gentile converts from idolatry, as there are no OT quotations and the letter closes with a command to “guard yourselves from idols” (5:21). However, this is the only evidence we have.

2) From the epistle, some of the recipients had been Christians for a long time (2:7, 18, 20–21, 24, 27; 3:11).

3) The letter does not give the location of the recipients; however, from church history we know that the Apostle John ministered in Asia. So it seems safe to say that this letter was probably written to a group of churches in that area that John knew intimately.

C. Occasion and Purpose

1) Occasion – 2:26

   a. From 2:18–26 and 4:1–6 false teachers threatened the readers’ faith. They are described as “antichrists” (1 John 2:18), “false prophets” (4:1), and “deceivers” (2 John 7). There were two aspects of their heresy that John wrote to deal with—

      • Wrong **belief** about Jesus Christ – they denied that Jesus was the Christ, the eternal Son of God. While they did not deny *either* Jesus or Christ, they denied that they were one and the same (2:23; 4:2).

      • Wrong **behavior** – they lived a life characterized by sin and disobedience, all the while insisting that they didn’t sin or have a sin nature (2:4; 3:4–10).
b. The false teachers had left the church (2:19), but the danger remained that the readers might leave apostolic truth for the false teachers (2:26; 4:1). The false teachers were successful in shaking the faith of believers, and so the readers needed reassurance and strengthening.

2) Purpose

a. John states his purpose for writing three times—

- 1:4 “These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete”
- 2:1 “I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin”
- 5:13 “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

b. John wrote to help the readers resist the pressures of the false teachers. John warns them of false teachers by pointing out their characteristics.

- They had unchristian theology—they denied the incarnation of Jesus Christ (1 John 2:22–23, 26; 4:2, 15; 2 John 7, 9).

- They had unchristian lifestyles—they say they did not sin (1 John 1:6, 8, 10) but they disobeyed God (1 John 2:4, 6), and they didn’t show Christ-like love (1 John 2:9; 4:20). The false teachers claimed to “know God” but lived unrighteous lives, and John clearly says that such cannot be (1 John 3:4–10).

c. John gives a series of tests by which they would be able to distinguish the false from the true.

- The first test is right belief about Jesus Christ
- The second test is right living

d. Thus, John’s purpose in writing was to equip believers to resist false teachers by contrasting true from false Christianity. John tells how one can know he is a Christian and how one can know who is not a Christian. As the readers believe and live right they can have the assurance that they “have eternal life”—they are genuine Christians. This would help them resist the doubts the false teachers created by wrong doctrine and practice.

John “desires to encourage and stimulate their spiritual growth so that the joys of the Christian life may not be dimmed by the allurements of the world or the seductions of doctrinal error. They must firmly realize that their Christian faith is based on positive, demonstrable, proven facts and that the reception of eternal life in Christ Jesus lays upon them the responsibility of a conduct consistent with their position as children of God. This mode of conduct calls for a life motivated by the indwelling power of Christian love” (D. Edmond Hiebert, The Epistles of John, p. 19).
D. Characteristics

1) John does not write in a normal, point–by–point progression—he does not move in a straight line, from one subject to another. Instead, he moves in a spiral in several cycles, repeating and developing subjects and themes.

   Concl.
   5:13–21

   Cycle 3
   4:7–5:12

   Cycle 2
   2:29–4:6

   Cycle 1
   1:5–2:28

   Intro.
   1:1–4

2) As 1 John aims at assurance of salvation, Christians should carefully read and study this letter, asking these questions—

   a. Am I sensitive to sin? 1:5–8
   b. Do I respond to sin with confession and repentance? 1:9
   c. Do I keep His commandments? 2:3, 5
   d. Am I doing God’s will? 2:17
   e. Am I doing righteousness? 2:29
   f. Do I look forward to Christ’s coming? 3:1–3
   g. Does sin characterize my life? 3:9
   h. Do I love other Christians? 3:14
   i. Am I free from moral guilt? 3:21
   j. Are my prayers answered? 3:22
   k. Does the Holy Spirit convince me that I am saved? 3:24
   l. Do I love God? 4:19
   m. Do I believe that Jesus is the Christ? 5:1

E. Keys

1) Theme – **Genuine** Christianity
2) Words – “life” and “fellowship”
3) Verse – **5:13**
Here’s a basic outline of 1 John—

Genuine Christianity involves:
1) The Incarnation, 1:1–4
2) Fellowship with God, 1:5–2:28
3) A Relationship with God, 2:29–4:6
4) Closely Woven Belief and Practice, 4:7–5:12
5) Great Certainties, 5:13–21

Here’s a more detailed outline of 1 John—

1. Christianity Involves the Incarnation, 1:1–4

2. Christianity Involves Fellowship with God, 1:5–2:28
   1) Fellowship Tested by Christian Living, 1:5–2:17
      a. Holiness of character, 1:5–7
      b. Confession of sin, 1:8–2:2
      c. Obedience, 2:3–6
      d. Love of believers, 2:7–11
      e. Separation, 2:12–17
   2) Fellowship Tested by Christian Doctrine, 2:18–28
      a. Heretics and believers contrasted, 2:18–21
      b. Genuine Christian faith, 2:22–23
      c. Encouragement to persevere in Christian doctrine, 2:24–28

3. Christianity Involves a Relationship with God, 2:29–4:6
   1) Sonship Tested by Christian Living, 2:29–3:24
      a. Sonship demands practicing righteousness, 2:29–3:10a
      b. Sonship demands love of fellow believers, 3:10b–24
   2) Sonship Tested by Christian Doctrine, 4:1–6

4. Christianity Involves Closely Woven Belief and Practice, 4:7–5:12
   1) Christianity Tested by Christian Living, 4:7–5:4
      *Genuine is faith seen in love for fellow Christians.*
   2) Christianity Tested by Christian Doctrine, 5:5–12
      *Eternal life is only through genuine faith in Jesus, the Son of God.*

5. Christianity Involves Great Certainties, 5:13–21
   1) Eternal Life, 5:13
   2) Answered Prayer, 5:14–17
   3) The Believer’s Relations, 5:18–21
26. 2 John

A. Authorship

1) The author is simply identified as “the elder” in verse 1. While this most often in the NT refers to the office of overseer, it can also refer to seniority or age, which is mostly likely the case here. So, “elder” points out the author’s age and authority.

2) Church history has clearly viewed the apostle John as the author (see 1 John)

B. Recipients

1) The letter is written to “the chosen lady and her children.” There are two options in identifying the recipients:

   a. A Christian lady and her children
   b. A church, taking the terms in verse one figuratively.

2) There has been much debate on this, nearly since the time the letter was written. If one must express a preference, it seems best to take a literal view and see the letter written to a Christian lady and her children. The message, point, and application of the letter stands regardless of which interpretation is adopted—Christians should not give “aid and comfort” to false teachers.

C. Occasion and Purpose

1) Occasion

   a. There were false teachers (perhaps even the same addressed in 1 John; compare 2 John 7 with 1 John 4:2) whose doctrine seriously threatened the church.

   b. These false teachers were traveling among the churches, being supported by Christian people’s hospitality.

   c. Christians thus needed to be on their guard against this danger and have nothing to do with such itinerating apostates.

   d. While refusing hospitality may seem harsh and ungracious, remember that such teaching results in the destruction of the Christian faith. Strong action is thus necessary. Hospitality was essential for spreading the gospel (as will be seen in 3 John 8), and doing so results in being “fellow workers with the truth.” Thus, with regard to false teachers, no hospitality should be shown to them

2) Purpose

John warns Christians not to help false teachers. He details their unbelief and character (vv. 7, 9) and the danger of fellowship with such (vv. 8, 10–11).
**D. Characteristics**

1) 2 John sets forth how a Christian should conduct himself when “many deceivers have gone out into the world” (v. 7). They should have no fellowship with apostasy.

2) This and 3 John show the place and importance Christian hospitality had in the early church. Such hospitality was urged upon Christians for decades (Rom 12:13; Heb 13:2).

**E. Keys**

1) **Theme** – Obey Christ’s Commands

2) **Word** – “truth”

3) **Verses** – 10–11

**F. Outline**

1. Greeting, vv. 1–4

2. Exhortation and Warning, vv. 5–11
   - 1) Show Christian Love, vv. 5–6
   - 2) Beware of Antichrists, vv. 7–11

3. Conclusion, vv. 12–13
27. 3 John

A. **Authorship** – See “authorship” under 2 John. The author is the apostle John.

B. **Recipient**

John wrote to “Gaius” (v. 1). Nothing is known about this man outside of this letter. This was such a common name during that time that in Roman law–books it served as a “John Doe” title! Gaius was evidently a convert of the apostle John’s (v. 4).

C. **Occasion and Purpose**

1) **Occasion**

   a. Diotrephes, a member of Gaius’s church, refused to heed apostolic authority. He evidently was in some sort of leadership position. When the apostle John sent men to deal with the situation Diotrephes would not listen to or accept them (v. 10).

   b. Unlike 2 John where the problem was from outside, in this letter the problem is something inside the church.

2) **Purpose**

   a. John encourages Gaius to help missionaries who go out “for the sake of the Name” (v. 7).

   b. John encourages Gaius not to worry about Diotrephes as the apostle will deal with him himself (v. 10).

   c. John commends Demetrius (v. 12), who was probably the one who carried this letter and perhaps was a “missionary” himself.

D. **Characteristics**

1) As 2 John shows that Christians should have no fellowship with apostates, 3 John shows that Christians should fellowship with “missionaries.” Fellowship involves sharing and participation.

2) 2 John condemns apostasy; 3 John condemns schism.

E. **Keys**

1) Theme – **Walk** in the Truth

2) Phrase – “walking in the truth”

3) Verse – 4
F. Outline

1. Greeting, vv. 1–4

2. Message, vv. 5–12
   1) Encouragement to Help Missionaries, vv. 5–8
   2) Condemnation of Diotrephes, vv. 9–11
   3) Commendation of Demetrius, v. 12

3. Conclusion, vv. 13–15