

Acts and the New Testament Church

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Introduction

- ▶ This lecture series will review the highlights of the New Testament Church – from its inception up to the third council of Carthage that convened in A.D. 397 to receive God's help in choosing the New Testament cannon
- ▶ The collection of the last 23 books of the New Testament (from the book of Acts to The Revelation) will be briefly reviewed.

This Lecture Series Will Cover...

- ▶ The lectures will cover three major areas:
 - ▶ The 1st century Church
 - ▶ The epistles
 - ▶ The Church in the 2nd through the 4th centuries
 - ▶ A commentary on the book of Acts
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The Book of Acts

- ▶ Authorship – Luke the physician
- ▶ Written most likely ~ A.D. 60–64 prior to the Gospel of Luke
- ▶ In my former book, *Theophilus*, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. Acts 1:1–3

The Crucifixion

- ▶ Jesus gave His life on the cross in ~ A.D. 30–32.
- ▶ He ascended to heaven forty days later...
- ▶ "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:4–8

The Ascension

- ▶ After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

Acts 1:9-11

Back to Jerusalem

- ▶ The disciples returned to Jerusalem to wait on the gift of the Holy Spirit and to choose another disciple to take the place of Judas.
- ▶ The Upper Room
- ▶ Matthias chosen over 'Joseph called Barsabbas' by the casting of lots

Mount of Olives



The Upper Room



The Day of Pentecost

- ▶ When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Acts 2:1-4

The Miracle of the Holy Spirit Speaking in Tongues

- ▶ There was an amazing miracle that day. The Holy Spirit came with power and indwelt those that gave their lives to Jesus.
- ▶ God made it so that everyone there was able to hear the gospel message preached in their own tongue!
- ▶ Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine. "
Acts 2:13
- ▶ Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. 15 These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning!
Acts 2:14-15

The First Sermon in Church History

- ▶ Peter then went on to preach the first recorded evangelistic sermon in history!
- ▶ Joel 2:28–32 (Peter begins by quoting the prophet Joel).
- ▶ Peter then continued on with a detailed explanation of the recent historical events of the crucifixion...
- ▶ Peter continued on...

Peter's First Sermon...

- ▶ David said about him:

"I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope, because *you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.* You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.' Acts 2:25–28

David's Descendant

- ▶ "Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. 30 But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. 31 Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. 32 God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. 33 Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. Acts 2:29-33

The Lord said to my Lord

- ▶ For *David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, "The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."* "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." Acts 2:34–36
- ▶ Many wanted to know what to do next. Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38
- ▶ about three thousand were added to their number that day. Acts 2:41

A Summary of the Sermon

- ▶ Jesus had recently been put to death on the cross (and those in the crowd were partly to blame)
- ▶ Jesus rose from the dead on the third day
- ▶ King David spoke of one of his heirs, the Messiah, who would not decay in the grave
- ▶ One of King David's descendents would one day sit on the throne... Jesus
- ▶ One in the line of David would ascend into heaven and sit at God's right hand

The Church – An Excellent Beginning

- ▶ They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts.
Acts 2:42–46
- ▶ They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.
Acts 2:46–47

A.D. 30–33: The Early Church Years

- ▶ Thus this nascent Church began in earnest. The believers gathered together for fellowship, instruction, receiving the Lord's Supper, and prayer. They shared what they had to help those less fortunate. Many supernatural miracles were in evidence as God blessed His Church.
- ▶ "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." Acts 3:6

Another of Peter's Sermons

- ▶ This miracle led to the opportunity to preach another sermon...
- ▶ "Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. Acts 3:12–13
- ▶ Peter continued with his message...

- ▶ He told them that they must repent...
- ▶ Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you--even Jesus. He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets. Acts 3:19-21
- ▶ He concluded with more on the gospel message.

Peter and John are arrested

- ▶ The Sadducees had Peter and John arrested and placed them behind bars for the night.
- ▶ They were really upset that Jesus still was a thorn in their sides!
- ▶ Now there were more than 5,000 Christians!
- ▶ Pharisees and Sadducees

Peter and John on trial

- ▶ The next day the rulers, elders and teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and the other men of the high priest's family. They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?" Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: Hebrews 4:5–8a
- ▶ Peter then preaches the gospel to his interrogators!

The Court's Decision

- ▶ They decided that since so many thousands of people had witnessed the events of the previous day, it would not be very acceptable to the masses if Peter and John remained in prison. Yet, they certainly did not want the message they were spreading to continue. The decision was to let them go but to warn them sternly to keep the name of Jesus out of their conversation in the future. They were not to preach any more of the gospel that they had been spreading around the city.
 - ▶ But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard." After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old.
- Acts 4:19-22

Peter and John are released

- ▶ Peter and John then returned to their friends.
- ▶ After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. Acts 4:31
- ▶ In those early days of the Church, the members shared their money and possessions. One example noted was of Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus.

A Terrible Lie

- ▶ A man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet. Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have **lied to the Holy Spirit** and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Acts 5:1–3
- ▶ Ananias and Sapphira both drop dead!

More Trouble Comes

- ▶ In the following weeks, Peter and his fellow apostles continued their powerful ministry of preaching the gospel and healing the sick. Many miraculous works in Christ's name were performed.
- ▶ Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. "Go, stand in the temple courts," he said, "and tell the people the full message of this new life." At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people.

Acts 5:17–21

Back on Trial

- ▶ Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men! The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead--whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him." Acts 5:29-32

A Pharisee named Gamaliel

- ▶ Most of the Sanhedrin were in favor of arresting the apostles and putting them to death. A highly respected priest, Gamaliel, said...
- ▶ I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God." His speech persuaded them. Acts 5:38–39
- ▶ They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. Acts 5:40
- ▶ The apostles never stopped preaching.

Stephen

- ▶ ~A.D. 34: Steven and Philip
- ▶ Stephen and several other men were chosen to be deacons. Stephen performed many miracles in the name of Jesus.
- ▶ "This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law. For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us." All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.
Acts 6:13–15

Stephen on Trial

- ▶ The High Priest turned to Steven and asked him if these charges were true. Steven's answer was interesting. He gave a fairly long speech that was a review of the Old Testament history of the Jewish people... God's "chosen people".
- ▶ "This is that Moses who told the Israelites, 'God will send you a prophet like me from your own people.' Acts 7:37

Stephen's Defense

- ▶ Stephen continued on to explain the reason for his actions...
- ▶ Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him-- you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it." Acts 7:48-53

Stephen is Stoned

- ▶ But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep. Acts 7:55–60
- ▶ Steven became the first documented Christian martyr. He stood up for his Master, even to the point of death. Jesus personally ushered him into His presence in heaven!

Saul and Philip

- ▶ A zealous Pharisee named Saul was at the stoning.
- ▶ Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison. Acts 8:3
- ▶ Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there. 6 When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said. Acts 8:5–6

Philip and Simon

- ▶ One of the newly selected “seven”, Philip, began his preaching career in earnest. He went initially to Samaria and proclaimed the gospel of Christ, authenticating it with signs and wonders. He cast out demons and healed many people, all in the name of Jesus. Interestingly, there was another man in that same area that performed sorcery. His name was Simon.
- ▶ Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw. Acts 8:10–13

Receiving the Holy Spirit

- ▶ When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. Acts 8:14–17
- ▶ In the very early days of spreading the gospel, it appears that there was a need for confirmation by the apostles when a new group of believers was brought into the Church.

Simon's Sin

- ▶ During this visit by Peter and John, Simon was impressed with the demonstration of the power of the one true God. He therefore, unfortunately, committed the sin of asking these two apostles if he could give them some money to *buy* this ability/power from them.
- ▶ Peter responds to Simon's request.

Ethiopian Eunuch

- ▶ Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road--the desert road--that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch. Acts 8:26
- ▶ This man was reading from the scriptures... "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth." Acts 8:32-33 Isaiah 53:7-8
- ▶ Peter was able to then lead him to Christ.
- ▶ Philip continued on and eventually came to Caesarea.

The Road to Damascus

- ▶ A.D. 34–35 – the story of Saul’s conversion.
- ▶ The most fervent Jewish enforcer, Saul of Tarsus, wanted to leave Jerusalem and go the 100 or so miles to the synagogues in Damascus where a large contingent of people belonging to “the Way” was apparently arising. His plan was to stop this nascent Christian uprising “in its tracks”.
- ▶ A little history about Saul...

Saul's Famous Encounter with Christ

- ▶ As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

Acts 9:3-4

Saul is brought to Damascus

- ▶ The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything. Acts 9:3–9
- ▶ In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered. Acts 9:10

Saul is on fire for Jesus!

- ▶ After his conversion, Saul cannot wait to spread the Word...
- ▶ Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. All those who heard him were astonished and asked, "Isn't he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? Acts 9:19–20
- ▶ After many days had gone by, the Jews conspired to kill him, but Saul learned of their plan. Day and night they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him. But his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall. Acts 9:22–25

Saul's "Seminary School"

- ▶ Saul left Damascus and, according to the epistle to Galatians, he spent approximately three years studying the scriptures in Arabia... with God as his teacher. Then he returned to Damascus and soon went up to Jerusalem to meet the other apostles.
- ▶ But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. Acts 9:27
- ▶ Back to Tarsus for a short while...

The Journeys of Peter

- ▶ ~A.D. 38 Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord. Acts 9:31
- ▶ Peter spent much of his time in Jerusalem, but would travel to other cities and territories frequently as well. On one occasion, Peter went to Lydda and met a paralytic man named Aeneas. Peter healed him and this miracle caused a stir in that city.

Peter's Amazing Miracle

- ▶ Turning toward the dead woman, he said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called the believers and the widows and presented her to them alive. This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord. Peter stayed in Joppa for some time with a tanner named Simon. Acts 9:36-43
- ▶ Peter was the instrument of the Holy Spirit in performing the greatest type of miracle... defeating death. Miracles helped to spread the gospel.

A Centurion Man Named Cornelius

- ▶ Cornelius had a strange vision from God. He saw an angel who told him... "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea." Acts 10:4–6
- ▶ The very next day, Cornelius sent two servants and a valued soldier down to Joppa to find Peter.

Peter's Amazing Vision on the Roof

- ▶ Peter went up on the roof to pray. He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. Acts 10:9
- ▶ Jesus teaches Peter... "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean." Acts 10:15
- ▶ The Holy Spirit tells Peter to go to the Centurion.
- ▶ A lesson is learned.

Gentiles are worthy of salvation

- ▶ As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. But Peter made him get up. **"Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself."** Talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But **God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean.** So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?" Acts 10:25–29
- ▶ Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right. You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through **Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.**" Acts 10:34–36
- ▶ Peter preaches the gospel once again...

Gentiles are welcomed “into” Christ

- ▶ While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out *even on the Gentiles*. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.
Acts 10:44–48
- ▶ Peter returns to Jerusalem and explains just what took place in Joppa to his Jewish brothers and sisters. They understand and accept “Gentile salvation” as God’s will.

Barnabas and Saul in Antioch

- ▶ Barnabas is sent to Antioch.
- ▶ The Church of Jesus Christ was growing very nicely in that city. Barnabas had a great idea. He thought of that dynamo Saul who had just about finished his preparation for full-time service for the Lord. Barnabas headed to Tarsus, found Saul and asked him to come back to Antioch and team up with him to lead the new growing local church in that city.

A Famine in the Land

- ▶ During this time (~ A.D. 42–43) some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28 One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) 29 The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea. 30 This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul. Acts 11:27–30

A.D. 44: King Herod's Persecution

- ▶ He arrested and killed James (the brother of John) with a sword.
- ▶ This despicable act seemed to please some of the Jewish leaders so Herod also arrested Peter. He did this during the Feast of Unleavened Bread.
- ▶ Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists. Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." And Peter did so. "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me," the angel told him. Acts 12:7-8
- ▶ Peter heads over to his friend's house... John Mark's. He gives them all quite a surprise!

God strikes down Herod

- ▶ On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. They shouted, "This is the voice of a god, not of a man." Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died. But the word of God continued to increase and spread. When Barnabas and Saul had finished their mission, they returned from Jerusalem, taking with them John, also called Mark. Acts 12:21–25

First Missionary Journey

- ▶ ~ A.D. 47–49 – On one of the occasions while they were fasting and worshipping, the Holy Spirit told the group to ready Saul and Barnabas for a missionary journey. After they had fasted and prayed, the leadership laid their hands on the two men, prayed for their success and sent them off on their journey.
Acts 13:2–3
- ▶ Saul and Barnabas decided to take Mark with them on this trip as their assistant.
- ▶ The route of this trip.

The Early Going...

- ▶ A sorcerer named Elymas
- ▶ The book of Acts states that Saul began to be addressed as Paul during this trip, his first missionary journey.
- ▶ John Mark asked to return to Jerusalem when the trio of missionaries arrived in Pamphylia. Paul was none too pleased at the time, but eventually got over the fact that young Mark was not up to the task of finishing this particular mission trip.

Pisidian Antioch

- ▶ On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue and sat down. After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the synagogue rulers sent word to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have a message of encouragement for the people, please speak." Acts 13:14–15
- ▶ Paul preached a fine message that day.
- ▶ "Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that **through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything** you could not be justified from by the law of Moses. Take care that what the prophets have said does not happen to you: "'Look, you scoffers, wonder and perish, for I am going to do something in your days that you would never believe, even if someone told you.' "
Acts 13:41

The Jews begin to reject the message

- ▶ On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. 45 When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and talked abusively against what Paul was saying. 46 Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: "We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. 47 For this is what the Lord has commanded us: "I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth." 48 When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed. Acts 13:44–48
- ▶ Tension mounts. Paul and Barnabas leave the city and head to Iconium.

A Typical City Mission Trip

- ▶ The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles. There was a plot afoot among the Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders, to mistreat them and stone them. But they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding country, where they continued to preach the good news. Acts 14:4–7

A Miracle in Lystra

- ▶ Paul healed a cripple in Lystra and the people were confused.
- ▶ When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in human form!"
12 Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes because he was the chief speaker.
13 The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates because he and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them. Acts 14:11-13
- ▶ Paul and Barnabas set the record straight.

Paul Gets Stoned

- ▶ Some Jews visited Lystra from Antioch and Iconium and found Paul and Barnabas there. They once again started big trouble for the two men. In fact, Paul was stoned nearly to the point of death and dropped outside the city.
- ▶ They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead. But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe. Acts 14:19–20

The Return Home

- ▶ Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said. Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, **with prayer and fasting**, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust. Acts 14:21–23
- ▶ From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. And they stayed there a long time with the disciples. Acts 14:26–28

Paul and Barnabas – First Mission Trip



What must one do to be saved?

- ▶ During one visit from some fellow saints from Judea, the topic of circumcision was broached. The visitors said that a person had to be circumcised to be saved. Trusting in Jesus was necessary, they felt, but not sufficient for salvation. Of course, this resulted in quite a debate between these visiting Judeans and the Christians in Antioch, in particular, Paul and Barnabas.
- ▶ A very important meeting is called.

Epistle to the Galatians written from Antioch

- ▶ A.D. 48–49 – Galatians was written by Paul to explain the gospel of Jesus Christ and to discredit the Judaizers and other false teachers. He warned the Galatian congregation not to turn to another gospel.
- ▶ Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the brothers very glad. Acts 15:2–3

Is Circumcision Required?

- ▶ When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them. 5 Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, "The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses." Acts 15:4–5
- ▶ Peter gave the answer... Why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? 11 No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are." Acts 15:10–11

Peter says no to works!

- ▶ After Peter had his say, Paul and Barnabas spoke at some length concerning all of their experiences with the Gentiles. In particular, they pointed out how God had performed many miracles among these people, just as much as with believing Jews. There was no difference to God whether a believer in Christ was Jew or Gentile.
- ▶ James, the brother of Jesus, summed up the conference...

James concludes the conference

- ▶ "It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood. For Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath."

Acts 15:19–21

Another Mission Trip

- ▶ Judas and Silas return with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch.
- ▶ Paul and Barnabas go on separate missionary journeys.
- ▶ A.D. 50–52 – Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches. Acts 15:39–41
- ▶ Paul had Silas come up from Jerusalem to accompany him on this, his second missionary journey. Barnabas took Mark and left for Cyprus, the island on which they had begun their first missionary journey.

Paul's Second Missionary Journey

- ▶ Paul and Silas began by ministering to nearby churches, then left for Tarsus, Paul's hometown.
- ▶ After spending some time with his old friends and family, Paul and Silas went west to the town of Derbe.
- ▶ He came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was a Jewess and a believer, but whose father was a Greek. ² The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. ³ Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.

Acts 16:1-3

Timothy

- ▶ In Lystra, Paul found a lifelong friend in the person of a young man named Timothy. Timothy's mother was a Christian Jewess. In many ways, their relationship was more like father to son.
- ▶ Timothy allowed himself to be circumcised, although he knew that this was not needed to be a true follower of Christ.
- ▶ Since Timothy had been raised a Jew, it made it easier have a ministry among the Jews with his racial position made clear... so he was circumcised. Later Paul would not allow the Gentile Titus to be circumcised as this might be perceived as having been necessary for his salvation... which, of course, it was not.

Paul continues his journey

- ▶ The Holy Spirit spoke to Paul in some manner to direct him to the various towns along the way. Paul had planned to go to Asia, but the Holy Spirit directed him on a westward course.
- ▶ When *they* came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. Acts 16:7
- ▶ From Troas *we* put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day on to Neapolis. From there *we* traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. Acts 16:11–12

Lydia's Conversion in Philippi

- ▶ Paul started many churches along the way. In the large city of Philippi, a Roman colony in Macedonia, Paul and Silas ministered one Sabbath outside the city gate to a group of women. Luke, the author of the book of Acts had apparently just recently joined the two missionaries as now he speaks using the term “we” when describing the action.
- ▶ One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message
- ▶ A slave girl that had a demon spirit

Back to Prison

- ▶ The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates carefully. Upon receiving such orders, he put them in the innordered them to be stripped and beaten. After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them er cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

Acts 16:20–24

- ▶ Paul and Silas were put into prison. That night, they were signing praises to God when an earthquake struck the area. The prison doors opened and the chains were loosed.
- ▶ The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved--you and your household." Acts 16:29–31

Paul demonstrates his courage

- ▶ The next morning, magistrates sent some officers to the jailers to tell them to let the prisoners go. The newly baptized jailer told Paul and Silas that they were free to go. Paul was not going to let it go that easily...
- ▶ But Paul said to the officers: "They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out." Acts 16:37

On to Thessalonica

- ▶ As was his custom, Paul went to the local synagogue each Sabbath (for three straight weeks) to preach the gospel message. He used the scriptures to show how Jesus was the Messiah. The bottom line of the sermon was always the same...
- ▶ "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ," he said. Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women. Acts 17:3-4
- ▶ A visit with Jason... another quick exit

Off to Berea

- ▶ Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and **examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.** Many of the Jews believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men. Acts 17:11–12
- ▶ Read the Bible. Study the Word of God. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you into truth. Remember, God promises to lead you to the truth. But, He does ask that you do study and spend the time necessary to find this truth.

Off to Athens

- ▶ When the Jews in Thessalonica heard that Paul was preaching the Gospel in Berea, they went there to cause trouble as usual. The Christian brothers immediately sent Paul to the coast, while Silas and Timothy stayed back in Berea. Paul was escorted to Athens; then his escorts returned to Berea with instructions to send Silas and Timothy there as soon as possible. Athens was quite a distance from Berea, so it would take a while before the three travelling companions would be back together again.
- ▶ A famous sermon on Mars Hill...





















Mars Hill

- ▶ Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus (Mars Hill) and said: "Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you. "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. Acts 17:22–24
- ▶ Although in times past, God had made allowances for ignorance of His nature, this was no longer going to be the case. Since God had just sent His Son, Jesus the Christ (Messiah), God expected people to recognize Jesus for who He is... God the Son.

Some reject Jesus; some accept Jesus

- ▶ When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, "We want to hear you again on this subject." At that, Paul left the Council. A few men became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others. Acts 17:32–34
- ▶ It is always the same. Some people accept Jesus; some people reject Jesus.

A.D. 51–52 – Latter Half of Paul's Second Missionary Journey

- ▶ 1st Thessalonians – A.D. 51 from Corinth
- ▶ 2nd Thessalonians – A.D. 51–52 from Corinth
- ▶ Possibly Galatians written during this time (or earlier as noted above) A.D.49 or 52
- ▶ After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. There he met a Jew named **Aquila**, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife **Priscilla**, because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them. Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.
Acts 18:1–4

Corinth

- ▶ A seaport town, fifty miles southwest of Athens
- ▶ The city was replete with temples. The most infamous was dedicated to Aphrodite, the goddess of love. The Temple to Apollo used young men in sexual acts as part of the worship activities of men and women. The city was known for its immorality.
- ▶ Timothy and Silas catch up with Paul.











ΒΗΜΑ

ΒΕΜΑ



ΠΕΡΙΣΤΕΡΙΑ

Struggles in Corinth

- ▶ Paul spent his time preaching almost exclusively. He was winning converts, as always, but also making enemies among the dogmatic Jews. When these Jews became abusive, Paul finally said to them...**"Your blood be on your own heads! I am clear of my responsibility. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."** Acts 18:6
- ▶ **One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city." So Paul stayed for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.** Acts 18:7–11
- ▶ He wrote two letters to the church at Thessalonica (1 and 2 Thessalonians) while in Corinth during that time.

Gallio's Decision

- ▶ While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him into court. "This man," they charged, "is persuading the people to worship God in ways contrary to the law." Just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to the Jews, "If you Jews were making a complaint about some misdemeanor or serious crime, it would be reasonable for me to listen to you. But since it involves questions about words and names and your own law--settle the matter yourselves. I will not be a judge of such things." So he had them ejected from the court. Acts 18:12-16
- ▶ Christianity in these early years was at times viewed by the Romans as a sect of the Jewish religion. By not ruling against Christianity at that time, Gallio created a legal precedent that stood for the next ten years - the Christian religion was looked at as one of the legal religions of the Roman Empire.
- ▶ They all turned on Sosthenes the synagogue ruler and beat him in front of the court. But Gallio showed no concern whatever. Acts 18:17

Paul returns home

- ▶ Paul decided to leave Corinth after 1 ½ years. He took with him Priscilla and Aquila.
- ▶ Paul left Priscilla and Aquila there to help in spreading the word as he was not ready to stay there at that time. The people in the synagogue wanted him to spend more time, as they were intrigued by his message. He answered that he certainly would be back if it was God's will. He then set sail on the 500 mile trip to Caesarea. After landing there, he went straight over to Jerusalem to report on his trip. After a little while there, he was off to his base of operations in Antioch.

Paul's Second Mission Trip



Paul's Third Missionary Journey

- ▶ ~A.D. 53–57 – Paul spent much of the next year in Antioch. Then, he felt called by the Holy Spirit to embark on his third missionary trip to the West. He retraced his steps of his second trip and visited the churches in the various cities of Galatia and Phrygia. Some of his epistles suggest that he may have begun this journey when he did in an effort to mitigate the damage that was being done to the true gospel by certain Gnostic opponents that had arisen.
- ▶ There was a Jew named Apollos, from Alexandria, who came to Ephesus. He was quite an intelligent and learned man, well versed in the scriptures. Apollos was aware of Jesus, but was not aware of the gospel. He knew of the baptism of John, but not the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
- ▶ Aquila and Priscilla invited him into their home and taught him all about Jesus. Later, he was to go on to Achaia (Greece) where he proved himself to be a great preacher and defender of the faith.

Ephesus

- ▶ At about the time Apollos was in Corinth, Paul had arrived in Ephesus as he just continued across the land westward from Iconium. Paul taught about the Holy Spirit baptism...
- ▶ They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. There were about twelve men in all.
Acts 19:2–7











Ephesus continued

- ▶ Ephesus – an important city
- ▶ Paul stayed in Ephesus for approximately three years. While there, he would write:
- ▶ **1st Corinthians to the church at Corinth from Ephesus (A.D. 55)**
- ▶ **2nd Corinthians to the church at Corinth (A.D. 55–56) from Ephesus or Macedonia**
- ▶ **The book of Romans from Corinth (late winter A.D. 56/57)**

Teaching and Preaching in Ephesus

- ▶ Paul found a nice place to lecture and preach.
- ▶ He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. 10 This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord. 11 God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, 12 so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.

Acts 19:9–12

- ▶ A problem with charlatans
- ▶ They learn their lesson.

Moving On

- ▶ After all this had happened, Paul decided to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. "After I have been there," he said, "I must visit Rome also." He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer. Acts 19:21–22
- ▶ A silversmith named Demetrius and the goddess Artemis
- ▶ After the uproar had quieted down, Paul sent for his friends to say good-bye as he set out for Macedonia. He travelled all throughout the area speaking words of encouragement to the people. He eventually ended up in Corinth where he spent three months.

Goddess Artemis





Paul heads home

- ▶ Paul originally planned to sail from the port there, but he heard about a plot against him if he should leave from that port. Therefore, he went back by land basically the way he came. He was accompanied by several friends, such as Luke, Timothy, Gaius (from Derbe) and a few others. The men, with the exception of Luke, went on ahead and waited for Paul and Luke at Troas. Paul and Luke decided to sail from Philippi and reunited with the others in Troas five days later.

A Young Man Named Eutychus

- ▶ On the next Sunday, Paul and his brothers came together to 'break bread'. Paul was going to leave the next morning, so he talked well into the night. Around midnight, with the lanterns all lit, Paul was still talking. Some of the men were having a bit of trouble staying awake. Unfortunately, a young man named Eutychus fell into a deep sleep. As he was seated in a window sill, he fell three stories to the ground! Luke, a physician, noted that he was dead
- ▶ Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. "Don't be alarmed," he said. "He's alive!" Acts 20:10

Paul continues his journey

- ▶ Paul next travelled by foot to Assos where he boarded a ship to Mitylene. Luke was with him on that portion of his travels. The ship continued on to Kios, Samos and to Miletus. Paul sailed by Ephesus as he was trying hard to arrive in Jerusalem by Pentecost.
- ▶ Although Paul did not go to his friends in Ephesus, he did send for the elders of the church to come see him at Miletus. He wanted to see them and leave them with some parting comments. He figured that he would not be seeing most of them again.
- ▶ Some beautiful parting words...

Paul's Parting Words

- ▶ "And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me--the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace. "Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again. Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God. Acts 20:22-27
- ▶ After these words, Paul and the elders knelt and prayed. They were in tears as they all embraced him. What bothered them most was his comment that he probably would not be seeing them again. After this sad farewell, they accompanied Paul to his ship.

The Trip Home

- ▶ After we had torn ourselves away from them, we put out to sea and sailed straight to **Cos**. The next day we went to **Rhodes** and from there to **Patara**. We found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, went on board and set sail. After sighting Cyprus and passing to the south of it, we sailed on to Syria. We landed at **Tyre**, where our ship was to unload its cargo. Acts 21:1–3
- ▶ Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to **Jerusalem** (they were worried about his safety). Acts 21:4

A Stop at Philip's House

- ▶ A prophet named *Agabus* came down from Judea. He warns Paul about going into Jerusalem.
- ▶ Then Paul answered, "Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." 14 When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, "The Lord's will be done." Acts 21:13–14

Paul's Third Missionary Journey



Paul arrives in Jerusalem

- ▶ ~ A.D. 57 – Paul arrives in Jerusalem
- ▶ Paul and Luke had now made it to Jerusalem. There was a lot of reason to fear for the safety of Paul. Several of the brothers along the way had been made aware of the likelihood for trouble when Paul arrived in Jerusalem. Paul was certainly aware of the danger. On the other hand, Paul was following what he perceived to be the leading of the Holy Spirit. He knew that as long as he did this, God would honor his actions. Even if he ended up in prison... or dead, if God was behind his action, he would be blessed because of his faithfulness!
- ▶ On the morning after his arrival, Paul met with James and the church elders to tell them of his recent missionary journey.

A misunderstanding worked out

- ▶ James told Paul about an issue with new Jewish converts there in Jerusalem. They had been convinced that Paul had turned his back on all the Jewish customs. Paul then set out to show these people that he was still a Jew and proud of it.
- ▶ However, Paul did insist on the fact that all Christians realize **that these ceremonial rites and festivals did not add one iota to one's salvation.**
- ▶ James and the elders also pointed out that they had no issue at all with the Gentiles' current practices... they did not need to adopt any of the Jewish customs except the few that they had written to them about in the past... the letter that Paul had delivered years ago.

Paul wrote about this issue

- ▶ To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings. 1 Cor 9:20–23
- ▶ Certainly there is a lesson here for all Christians. If we sometimes need to “bend” a little in order to win people to Christ, as long as it does not pervert the message of Jesus, we should “bend”.

Paul is in deep trouble

- ▶ Mob justice begins.
- ▶ The whole city was aroused, and the people came running from all directions. Seizing Paul, they dragged him from the temple, and immediately the gates were shut. 31 While they were trying to kill him, news reached the commander of the Roman troops that the whole city of Jerusalem was in an uproar. 32 He at once took some officers and soldiers and ran down to the crowd. When the rioters saw the commander and his soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. Acts 21:30–32
- ▶ Paul is arrested.
- ▶ Commander Claudius Lysias then gave Paul a nice platform to communicate with the people.

Paul's Defense

- ▶ When they were all silent, he said to them in Aramaic: "Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defense." When they heard him speak to them in Aramaic, they became very quiet. Then Paul said: "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today. I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, as also the high priest and all the Council can testify. I even obtained letters from them to their brothers in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished. Acts 22:1-5

Paul's Testimony continues

- ▶ "When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance and saw the Lord speaking. 'Quick!' he said to me. 'Leave Jerusalem immediately, because they will not accept your testimony about me.' "Lord,' I replied, 'these men know that I went from one synagogue to another to imprison and beat those who believe in you. And when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.' "Then the Lord said to me, 'Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'"

Acts 22:17-21

- ▶ This does not quiet the crowd.
- ▶ However, the fact that Paul was a Roman citizen kept him from a flogging.

Paul Stands before the Sanhedrin

- ▶ The next day, since the commander wanted to find out exactly why Paul was being accused by the Jews, he released him and ordered the chief priests and all the Sanhedrin to assemble. Then he brought Paul and had him stand before them.
Acts 22:22–30
- ▶ Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, "My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day." At this the high priest Ananias ordered those standing near Paul to strike him on the mouth. Then Paul said to him, "God will strike you, you whitewashed wall!"
Acts 23:1–3

The Debate Continues

- ▶ Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, "My brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. I stand on trial because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead." When he said this, a dispute broke out between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. Acts 23:6
- ▶ There was a great uproar, and some of the teachers of the law who were Pharisees stood up and argued vigorously. "We find nothing wrong with this man," they said. "What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?" The dispute became so violent that the commander was afraid Paul would be torn to pieces by them. He ordered the troops to go down and take him away from them by force and bring him into the barracks. Acts 23:9-10

Jesus Speaks to Paul

- ▶ The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, "Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome."
Acts 23:6–11
- ▶ The following morning, forty Jews formed a pact that they would not eat or drink until they had killed Paul. They hatched a plan whereby the elders, chief priest and Sanhedrin would ask the commander to allow them to question Paul once again to gather some additional information about his case. When Paul was brought to them, these other men would see to it that he was ambushed and killed!
- ▶ God's providential care saves Paul.
- ▶ The Roman commander helps Paul.

Paul's Caesarean Imprisonment

- ▶ ~A.D. 57–59 – Paul awaited his trial in Caesarea in Herod's palace. As a Roman citizen, Paul would be tried in a Roman court. Caesarea was the Roman headquarters for this region.
- ▶ Ananias, the high priest from Jerusalem, along with certain select elders and the prosecuting attorney, Tertullus, had arrived in the city and were ready to present their case in front of the Roman governor, Felix.

The Trial Begins

- ▶ "We have found this man to be a troublemaker, stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world. He is a ringleader of the Nazarene sect and even tried to desecrate the temple; so we seized him. By examining him yourself you will be able to learn the truth about all these charges we are bringing against him." The Jews joined in the accusation, asserting that these things were true. Acts 24:5–9
- ▶ Paul responds. (Acts 24:10–21)

The Trial is Postponed

- ▶ But there are some Jews from the province of Asia, who ought to be here before you and bring charges if they have anything against me. Or these who are here should state what crime they found in me when I stood before the Sanhedrin-- unless it was this one thing I shouted as I stood in their presence: 'It is concerning the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today.'" Acts 24:20-21
- ▶ Then Felix, who was well acquainted with the Way, adjourned the proceedings. "When Lysias the commander comes," he said, "I will decide your case." Acts 24:22

Felix hears the gospel message

- ▶ Felix was reasonable and allowed Paul some freedom of movement while he waited and allowed some of his friends the opportunity to see to a few of his needs. Interestingly, a few days later, he sent for Paul and asked him to share with him concerning the Lord Jesus. He was accompanied by his Jewish wife, Drusilla.
- ▶ Felix was afraid and said, "That's enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you." At the same time he was hoping that Paul would offer him a bribe, so he sent for him frequently and talked with him.
Acts 24:25-26

Porcius Festus comes to Caesarea

- ▶ Incredibly, Felix kept Paul in prison for the next two years! During that time, he often talked with Paul about spiritual things. Apparently, however, he never converted to Christianity.
- ▶ Felix was called back to Rome in A.D. 59 and was succeeded by Porcius Festus in Caesarea. Festus was a more reasonable man than Felix. Just three days after he was appointed governor, Festus went to Jerusalem.
- ▶ The trial resumes after two years.

Paul appeals to Caesar

- ▶ Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, said to Paul, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and stand trial before me there on these charges?" Acts 25:9
- ▶ Paul answered: "I am now standing before Caesar's court, where I ought to be tried. I have not done any wrong to the Jews, as you yourself know very well. 11 If, however, I am guilty of doing anything deserving death, I do not refuse to die. But if the charges brought against me by these Jews are not true, no one has the right to hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!" Acts 25:10–11
- ▶ After Festus had conferred with his council, he declared: "You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you will go!" Acts 25:6–12

Paul appears before King Agrippa

- ▶ A few days later King Agrippa and Bernice arrived at Caesarea to pay their respects to Festus. Since they were spending many days there, Festus discussed Paul's case with the king. Acts 25:13–14
- ▶ "I would like to hear this man myself." He replied, "Tomorrow you will hear him." Acts 25:22

- ▶ At the command of Festus, Paul was brought in. 24 Festus said: "King Agrippa, and all who are present with us, you see this man! The whole Jewish community has petitioned me about him in Jerusalem and here in Caesarea, shouting that he ought not to live any longer. 25 I found he had done nothing deserving of death, but because he made his appeal to the Emperor I decided to send him to Rome.

Acts 25:23–25

- ▶ Paul gives his testimony once again.

An interesting interchange

- ▶ At this point Festus interrupted Paul's defense. "You are out of your mind, Paul!" he shouted. "Your great learning is driving you insane." 25 "I am not insane, most excellent Festus," Paul replied. "What I am saying is true and reasonable. 26 The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner. 27 King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do." Acts 26:24–27
- ▶ Then Agrippa said to Paul, "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?" 29 Paul replied, "Short time or long—I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains." Acts 26:28–29

An Interesting Conclusion

- ▶ The king rose, and with him the governor and Bernice and those sitting with them. They left the room, and while talking with one another, they said, "This man is not doing anything that deserves death or imprisonment." Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar." Acts 26:24–32
- ▶ Paul sails for Rome.

Voyage to Rome and Shipwreck

- ▶ ~A.D. 59–60 – An interesting trip to Rome
- ▶ Not long after this meeting with Agrippa, Paul and a few other prisoners set sail for Rome. Interestingly, Luke was able to accompany him. A centurion named Julius was in charge. They left from the coastal port of Adramyttium and made the very long voyage to Rome.
- ▶ Paul, having experienced ship wrecks on more than one occasion in the past, was very wary of continuing on and voiced his opinion. He said, "Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also." Acts 27:10

A Northeaster Comes Up

- ▶ The pilot and owner of the ship had other ideas and convinced the centurion that they could go on. Since the harbor at Fair Havens was not very suitable for wintering the ship, they pressed on hoping to make it to Phoenix and winter there. This was on the southwestern tip of Crete.
- ▶ A hurricane force wind, called a “northeaster” (similar to those kind of storms with the same name in New England), came up suddenly.

The Shipwreck

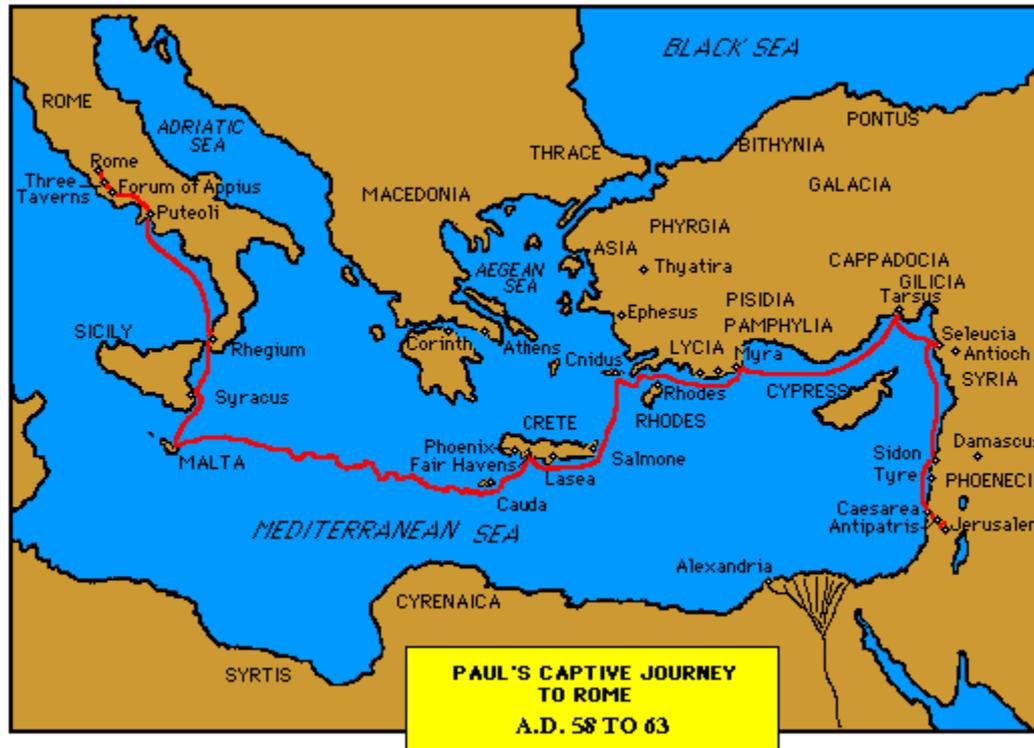
- ▶ Fearing that they would run aground on the sandbars of Syrtis, they lowered the sea anchor and let the ship be driven along. We took such a violent battering from the storm that the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard. On the third day, they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved. Acts 27:13–20
- ▶ I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. Last night an angel of the God whose I am and whom I serve stood beside me and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.' So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me. Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island." Acts 27:22–26

- ▶ A mutiny attempt
- ▶ Paul continues to help with words of encouragement.
- ▶ The ship strikes a sandbar and breaks up.
- ▶ The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to prevent any of them from swimming away and escaping. 43 But the centurion wanted to spare Paul's life and kept them from carrying out their plan. Acts 27:42–43
- ▶ Everyone reached land safely.

Ashore on Malta Acts

- ▶ Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta. 2 The islanders showed us unusual kindness. Acts 28:1–2
- ▶ Paul survives a snakebite.
- ▶ The people believe Paul to be a god.
- ▶ There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and for three days entertained us hospitably. 8 His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him. 9 When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured. Acts 28:7–9

Paul's Trip to Rome



Finally... Rome

- ▶ Three months after their arrival via the shipwreck, another ship was ready to head out for Rome. The winter weather had now passed. They were able to gain passage on an Alexandrian ship that had wintered in the island. After stops in Syracuse and Rhegium, a nice southerly wind helped them sail on to Puteoli. There they found some Christian brothers who invited the whole crew to spend some time with them... a very pleasant week, in fact. Their next stop was the great city of Rome.
- ▶ Many Christian brothers went to meet Paul and Luke as they came down the Appian Way. His friends met up with him at Three Taverns, an inn along this famous route, about thirty miles south of Rome. When Paul saw these men coming to greet him, he gave thanks to God and he was very encouraged.

Paul spends time in “prison” in Rome

- ▶ ~A.D. 60–62: When Paul got to Rome, the authorities allowed him to live by himself, in a rented house, with only a soldier to guard him. It was a very loose arrangement. Just three days later, when Paul had gotten situated, he called together the leaders of the Jews.
- ▶ When they had assembled, Paul said to them: "My brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. They examined me and wanted to release me, because I was not guilty of any crime deserving death.
Acts 28:17–18

Meeting with those in Rome

- ▶ They replied, "We have not received any letters from Judea concerning you, and none of the brothers who have come from there has reported or said anything bad about you. But we want to hear what your views are, for we know that people everywhere are talking against this sect. (i.e. Christianity)." Acts 28:21–22
- ▶ From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe. Acts 28:23–24

Hearing but not understanding

- ▶ Paul had made this final statement (to those who did not believe): "The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your forefathers when he said through Isaiah the prophet: "Go to this people and say, "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving." For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.'
"Therefore I want you to know that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!" For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 28:7-31

Epistles written in Rome

- ▶ During Paul's house arrest in Rome, he wrote several more epistles to the following churches:
- ▶ **Ephesians (A.D. 60–61)**
- ▶ **Colossians (A.D. 60–61)**
- ▶ **Philemon (A.D. 60–61)**
- ▶ **Philippians (A.D. 61–62)**
- ▶ After Paul was released from his Roman incarceration he wrote three additional letters. The first two were written while he was on what some refer to as his 4th missionary journey. There is not enough information to be absolutely sure when he visited the various cities that he travelled to during this time.

Paul is released

- ▶ Paul was finally released after serving his house arrest in Rome in A.D. 62–63. Some believe that he finally had the opportunity to visit and evangelize Spain at this time. No one knows for sure. Clement of Rome noted in his writings that Paul had gone to the extreme west during his missionary journeys.
- ▶ Paul travelled east, probably to Crete in approximately A.D. 63. While there, he worked with Titus to build up the fledgling church located on that island. He left Titus there to continue that work while he moved on. (The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you)
Titus 1:5

Paul's post-Rome travels

- ▶ Paul then headed north toward Asia-Minor. His first stop was likely Miletus. (I left Trophimus sick in Miletus) 2 Tim 4:20
- ▶ After leaving Miletus, Paul headed inland to visit the church at Colossae.
- ▶ The next stop was probably Ephesus (although some scholars believe that he went directly on to Troas and bypassed Ephesus at this time).
- ▶ After spending some time there, he travelled west to Macedonia. He had the opportunity to visit his friends in Philippi.

- ▶ Most believe Paul next headed down to Corinth where he spent some time before heading to Nicopolis. Some think he went straight to Nicopolis after Philippi. The epistle to Titus was therefore written from either Corinth or Nicopolis in approximately A.D. 63–64.
- ▶ Paul wanted Titus to leave Crete as soon as he made sure that everything was in good order. Either Artemas or Tychicus would take over for him as soon as Paul decided which one would go to Crete.
- ▶ Paul was now nearing the end of his time as a free man.

Rome Burns

- ▶ 18 July, A.D. 64 – Nero
- ▶ Nero accused the Christians in the city of having set the fires.
- ▶ Sometime soon after his letter to Titus, probably in only a matter of months, he was arrested. He may even have been taken prisoner while in Nicopolis or he may have been arrested a couple months later after he left that city and was in Troas. Many theologians think he was arrested while in Troas.
- ▶ Paul was placed in an underground prison

Paul's Final Epistles

- ▶ Paul wrote the following two letters between his two Roman arrests:
- ▶ **1st Timothy (A.D. 63–64)**
- ▶ **Titus (A.D. 63–64)**
- ▶ Paul wrote **2nd Timothy** while in prison.

Peter's Final Years

- ▶ Tradition says the Peter spent the latter portion of his life in Rome. At some point after the fire in July, A.D. 64, Peter, along with thousands of other Christians, was arrested and placed in prison.
- ▶ Sometime between A.D. 64 and A.D. 68, probably closer to A.D. 68, Peter was martyred for his faith in Jesus.

Peter's Epistles

- ▶ Peter wrote his epistles while in Rome during these years:
- ▶ **1 Peter (A.D. 64)**
- ▶ **2 Peter (A.D. 67)**

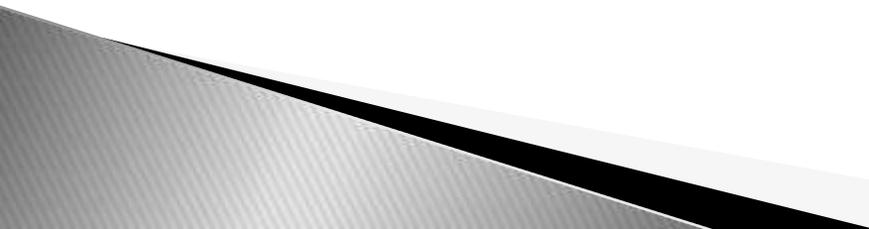
James, the brother of Jesus

- ▶ James the Just
- ▶ James came to a saving knowledge of Jesus soon after the resurrection of Jesus.
- ▶ For many years he was the acknowledged leader of the church at Jerusalem. He probably wrote the earliest epistle of the New Testament.
- ▶ James was martyred in Jerusalem probably in ~A.D. 62.
- ▶ Hebrews and Jude were also written in this decade, most believe.

The Fall of Jerusalem

- ▶ In the year A.D. 66, the Roman Emperor, Nero, needed more money. Recall that just two years earlier a significant portion of Rome had burned down. The way to raise this money was the same as it is today... via taxes. Nero also ordered his representative in Judea, Gessius Florusto, to collect some of the money from the Jewish Temple treasury. The increasing taxes, and especially the raiding of the Temple treasures, really caused marked dissension among many of the Jerusalem community.
- ▶ Certain elements of the Jews, primarily the Zealots, erupted in rebellion against their Roman oppressors.

The Rebellion

- ▶ Rome came after the Jews.
 - ▶ Nero had appointed a new general, Titus Flavius Vespasianus. Titus, one of the general's sons, was one of his officers. A younger son, Domitian, stayed behind in Rome as insurance that his father would carry out Nero's orders.
 - ▶ An interesting series of events followed. Nero committed suicide before the Romans took Jerusalem.
 - ▶ The political intrigue that followed...
- 

A.D. 70

- ▶ By A.D. 70 there had been quite a change in the Jewish and Christian communities. The Jewish uprising had been squashed in Judea. Hundreds of thousands of Jews had either been killed or had escaped from Jerusalem. Most of the Jerusalem Christians also had relocated to surrounding areas.
- ▶ The story of Masada...

The Next Era of Christianity

- ▶ The Jews and Jerusalem were handed a terrible defeat as the eighth decade began of the first century. As already mentioned, the Christian community of the Roman Empire was experiencing its worst period since its inception as well. Several of its most prominent leaders and evangelists had been martyred in the space of just a few years. The Roman leaders were using them as a scapegoat for many of their own shortcomings. The next era of Christian history was about to begin.
- ▶ Before proceeding with the next period of Christian history, let me discuss the lives of the apostles.

Great Christian leaders – 1st century

- ▶ **Thomas:** Thomas was one of the few apostles who headed east. He began by going to Babylon, followed by Persia and then India. The tradition among Christians in India is that Thomas was speared to death near Madras, and is now buried at Edessa.

Andrew

- ▶ Andrew: He evangelized the Scythians in what is present day Georgia. He also was considered the first to preach the gospel in Constantinople (aka Byzantium). This is present day Istanbul in Turkey. Tradition says that he then made his way to Greece where he eventually arrived in Patros. That was the city where he was martyred for his belief in and witness for Christ. It is said that he was crucified on an X-shaped cross where he lay dying for three days.

James (son of Alphaeus) and James (son of Zebedee)

- ▶ **James (Alphaeus):** known as James the Less by the first century Christians. Remarkably little is known about this James. One tradition has it that he was martyred by crucifixion while preaching in Ostrakine, Egypt. His body was supposedly sawn into pieces.
- ▶ **James (Zebedee):** brother of John the apostle. He was the first of the apostles to be martyred. By order of Herod Agrippa I, James was beheaded in Jerusalem around the time of the feast of Passover, A.D. 44.

Philip

- ▶ Philip was a friend of Nathaniel and led him to Christ. Later, after the ascension of Jesus, they both left for Asia–Minor to evangelize that territory. Philip's sister, Miriam, also went with and helped the two apostles with their work. Tradition also notes that the three of them went to preach in Athens for a time.
- ▶ Philip died from crucifixion

Bartholomew

- ▶ Bartholomew was also known as Nathaniel. It is believed that Bartholomew/Nathanael was a missionary with Philip in Asia–Minor not long after the ascension of Christ. Later, while in Hieropolis, both Philip and Bartholomew were crucified (possibly upside down).
- ▶ An earthquake occurred just prior to the death of Bartholomew and he was freed – the people took the earthquake as a sign that God was judging them. After this incident, tradition tells us that Bartholomew went east to India and Armenia. He translated the gospel of Matthew into their language. While in Armenia, he was martyred for his faith.

Simon (the Zealot)

- ▶ **Simon:** A Zealot was a person who was assiduous in his opposition to Roman control of Palestine. Tradition suggests that he evangelized in Egypt, Persia and Armenia. There are literally over five suggestions as to where he was martyred.

Matthew

- ▶ **Matthew:** Tradition says that he preached and taught in Jerusalem for approximately fifteen years after the ascension. About A.D. 45, he left to preach the gospel in Persia. Some say that he also preached in Ethiopia, Africa. Those that say he went to Africa, say that he was martyred in Egypt upon his return from Ethiopia. Others say he was martyred in Parthia.

Jude and Matthias

- ▶ **Jude:** Tradition has it that he ministered and spread the gospel in several different areas, including: Judea, Samaria, Idumaea, Syria, Mesopotamia, and Libya. He died a martyr (as did all of the apostles except John). Tradition says that he died together with his partner in the ministry, Simon the Zealot, while in Persia (or possibly Lebanon), likely around A.D. 65.
- ▶ **Matthias:** He ministered in Ethiopia. It is reported by some that he also was martyred there.

John

- ▶ **John the Apostle:** wrote the Gospel of John plus 1st, 2nd, and 3rd John and The Revelation of Jesus Christ. He wrote them all in a period of a few years in approximately A.D. 90. More about him later.

Other Great First Century Christian Fathers

- ▶ **Timothy:** Timothy grew from a protégé to a close friend of Paul. Paul looked at Timothy more like a son than anything else.
- ▶ Timothy was the head of the church in Ephesus in the mid-60's A.D. Later, he and the apostle John were both involved in the leadership of that church. There is debate as to when he died. He was martyred for opposing the worship of Dionysius.

Titus

- ▶ **Titus:** Paul placed Titus on the isle of Crete to organize that early church in the mid-60's A.D. Titus is said to have been made permanent bishop of the island, and to have died there at an advanced age. The modern capital, *Candia*, claims the honor of being his burial-place.

Barnabas

- ▶ **Barnabas:** Barnabas was a Levite from the island of Cyprus. He was an apostle, although not one of the original twelve... which suggests that he must have been quite the impressive man to be given this honor. His cousin was John Mark. Tradition says that he was martyred. Details are not known.

Silas

- ▶ **Silas:** joined Barnabas and Paul in Antioch as they left the Jerusalem Council in ~A.D. 49. He later joined Paul on his second missionary trip. Nothing is known of his later life.

Philip

- ▶ **Philip** was one of the seven deacons appointed by the twelve apostles in the early months of the church. The Bible notes that he was one of the first to preach to the Gentiles... he did so in Samaria. He also preached and converted the Ethiopian eunuch in Gaza leading to the beginning of the Ethiopian Church. Years later, he lived in Caesarea Maritima where he and his four daughters were visited by the apostle Paul. “One tradition places the scene of his death at Hierapolis in Phrygia. According to another, he died bishop of Tralles.”—Smith's Bible Dictionary

Luke

- ▶ **Luke** was born in Antioch and became a physician. He was apparently a Gentile. In secular history books, he also was noted to be a fine painter. Luke joined Paul during that great evangelist's 2nd missionary journey... apparently at Troas. He stayed at Philippi during that trip, later to be picked up there when Paul passed through again. There is little information on his later life. He was the author of the **Gospel of Luke (~A.D.59–60)** and the **Acts of the Apostles**. Tradition says that he died a martyr's death at the age of 84 in Boeotia, Greece.

Mark

- ▶ Younger cousin of Barnabas. Mark was a great comfort to Paul when that great apostle was held prisoner in Rome in the A.D. 60's. He spent much of his later life in Rome and in Alexandria.
- ▶ Church tradition states that St. Mark visited Egypt, founded the church of Alexandria, and died by martyrdom.
- ▶ Mark wrote the **Gospel of Mark** (probably around ~A.D. 55).

The New Testament Church after the fall of Jerusalem

- ▶ The persecution of the Church by Roman authorities
- ▶ The effects of false religions attempting to pervert the true gospel message
- ▶ The various Christian creeds and practices (ex. baptism and Lord's Supper) and the codification of the New Testament all helping to define Christianity
- ▶ The influences of the early Christian "Fathers" on the Church
- ▶ The many positive reasons for the advancement of Christianity including the brotherhood, miracles, God's Holy Spirit, etc.











The Writings of John

- ▶ In addition to his gospel (written approximately in A.D. 90), John contributed four other important books to the New Testament. In fact, they are the last four books of the Bible:
- ▶ **1 John** (~A.D. 92) written while in Ephesus
- ▶ **2 John** (~A.D. 92) also written in Ephesus
- ▶ **3 John** (~A.D. 92) also written in Ephesus
- ▶ **The Revelation of Jesus Christ** written while exiled at the Isle of Patmos (~A.D. 95)

Christianity at the close of the first century

- ▶ As the first century drew to a close, the Christian community continued to grow. However, Christians still faced significant persecution at the hands of the Roman Empire. This came on at least two fronts... the government and many of the non-Christian population.
- ▶ Beliefs were ridiculed
- ▶ Questions concerning their worship activities
- ▶ Refusal to recognize Roman “gods”
- ▶ Refusal to call Caesar “god”

Second Century Christianity

- ▶ For most of the second century, the problems for Christians came from various provincial rulers. Intermittently in the various scattered Roman provinces, Christians were arrested for a variety of bogus reasons... generally simply because they were Christians. One big reason for these arrests was the failure of the Christians to worship the Emperor as god.
- ▶ The letters of Pliny the Younger point this out.

- ▶ During this time period, there was no general policy enacted by the Roman Emperor himself that led to the arrest and execution of Christians simply for their faith. That would come later, however.
- ▶ With the death of Marcus Aurelius (reign–A.D. 161–180), the continuous reign of reasonable and good rulers had passed. Commodus, the son of Aurelius began a long string of typically selfish and generally ineffective emperors.

Third Century Persecution

- ▶ Emperor Decius – beginning in A.D. 249, he attempted to eliminate all Christians.
- ▶ He was killed in battle against the Goths two years later.
- ▶ People such as the great Origen were tortured, but resisted for the cause of Christ. He eventually died as a result of that torture. That time period was well known for the number of martyrs for the faith.
- ▶ The bishops of Rome and Jerusalem withstood the torture but eventually died while in prison. Although many Christians had been killed, those who had somehow remained alive were strengthened in their faith by what they had witnessed.

Continued Persecution

- ▶ There was one more period of terrible persecution of the Christians before a major change was to come to the Roman Empire. This persecution occurred between the years A.D. 303–311. The emperors Diocletian (A.D. 284–305) and Galerius (A.D. 305–311) issued the following decrees against Christians:
 - ▶ All scriptures were banned
 - ▶ All clergy would be arrested
 - ▶ All Christians would sacrifice to the pagan gods or be executed

A new period in Christianity is coming

- ▶ Historians say that enormous numbers of Christians died during these eight years. This horrible period of persecution ended when Galerius, on his deathbed, asked all Christians to pray to their God for his health. God did not grant his healing. This ended this terrible period of persecution. Then, a tremendous change occurred in the Roman Empire.
- ▶ Constantius Chlorus comes on the scene.

Early Fourth Century

- ▶ One of the Roman co-regents was named Constantius Chlorus. He ruled a significant portion of the western Empire, including Britain. He did not really have any desire to enforce the edicts against the Christians... therefore, Christians were fairly safe in that region (incl. Spain, Gaul and Britain). Upon his death, his son, Constantine, was declared Caesar by his troops.
- ▶ Constantine vs. Maxentius.
- ▶ An intriguing story of a vision from God.

Constantine

- ▶ A.D. 313, Constantine met with the Caesar on the eastern empire, Licinius in Milan. The result of the meeting was that Christianity was now going to be tolerated. It is true that Constantine also allowed pagan religions to continue. There was simply going to be freedom of religion in the Empire. Eventually, later emperors would make Christianity the sole state religion. That was not the case under Constantine.
- ▶ In A.D. 324, Constantine became the sole Emperor of Rome.

Constantine's Sons

- ▶ Upon his death, his three Christian sons assumed command. They continued to turn Rome into a Christian empire. They stopped the practice of pagan sacrifices, they ordered certain idols removed from the Senate, and supported the ideals and concepts of Christianity during their reigns. For these reasons, Christianity grew rapidly during the mid-late 4th century.
- ▶ Millions of people were turning to Jesus. Estimates vary from about 10–50% of the population as becoming Christians by the end of the 4th century.
- ▶ Pagan religions still existed to some degree.
- ▶ The “Glory of Rome” was about to come to and end.

False religions and doctrines

- ▶ Christian brothers and sisters were strong enough to withstand over two hundred and fifty years of Roman persecution. During that time, many thousands of Christians were martyred for their belief in Jesus and His message... i.e. the gospel.
- ▶ Many others perverted this gospel.

Judaizers

- ▶ They were most problematic in the days of Paul's missionary journeys. As you may recall, this was a group of Jews who had recognized Jesus as being a very special individual, including noting that He had died and been resurrected... most of their message was synonymous to the Christian gospel. Unfortunately, they perverted the gospel when they insisted that the Christian convert must also follow the Law of Moses in order to be truly saved.
- ▶ With the realization of the fact that Christianity was not a subset of Judaism and the sad fact that as the first century came to a close, fewer Jews were converting to Christianity, the problems presented by the Judaizers dissipated markedly.

Platonism

- ▶ New Christian converts that had previously been adherents of the Hellenistic philosophy of Plato, sometimes had a difficult time trusting in the pure gospel message.
- ▶ They also spoke of a “World Soul” which was a sort of divine being. The fact was that this philosophical idea was extremely esoteric. Unfortunately, there were some great Christian apologists that were influenced by their Hellenistic heritage (ex. Augustine, Origen).
- ▶ It is not appropriate to try to synchronize Hellenistic philosophy with Christian truth; it does not work.

Gnosticism

- ▶ This religious belief system was probably the most problematic of all of the non-Christian religions in the first few centuries of the Church. Proponents of this religion attempted to usurp the actual gospel and define Christianity in terms of Gnosticism.
- ▶ Simon Magus, mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, was a Gnostic. The Gnostics were not just one group of believers, but a variety of several movements, all with a similar concept of religion.

Gnosticism

- ▶ Gnostics held that general Hellenistic concept of dualism... the spiritual world was good and the physical world was evil. Obviously, they were influenced by Platonism. The Gnostics then took this basic concept of the world and universe to another level as follows:
 - ▶ The Good God lived as a spirit – that had to be as only a spirit could be good
 - ▶ A lesser God, a Demiurge must have created the physical world – as the world is evil.

- ▶ Since we all now lived in a fallen, evil world, eventually we all needed to escape back into the spiritual world somehow
- ▶ Only some people had a “spiritual spark’ and the chance of salvation. Gnostics were a secret society of believers that supposedly had secret knowledge that would help them eventually gain their salvation.
- ▶ Jesus was looked upon by the Gnostics who were perverting the gospel as the individual who gave the secret knowledge required for salvation

Gnostics concept of Jesus

- ▶ The Good God could not be associated with matter. Therefore, since Jesus was good, He could not actually have been a material being while on earth. There were two possibilities:
 - The **Docetics** stated that He really only appeared to be a material being but was actually completely spiritual.
 - Another school of Gnostic thought said that the ‘man’ Jesus was sent by the Demiurge, whereas the ‘spiritual’ Jesus who lived somehow within this material Jesus was sent by the Good God. When the baby Jesus was born, this spiritual Jesus came to live in him. Just *before* Jesus died on the cross, the spiritual Jesus left to return to the spiritual world.

Marcionites

- ▶ Marcion came to Rome in A.D. 139 from his hometown of Sinope.
- ▶ Marcion had some beliefs in common with the Christian Church... just as the Mormons of today. Yet, he maintained that the God of the Old Testament (and of the Jews) was an evil God!
- ▶ Marcion's concept of Jesus and God.
- ▶ Marcion took the gospel of Luke and Paul's epistles, edited out the parts that did not suit his ideas, and used the remainder of these writings as scripture.

Montanism

- ▶ A man named Montanus, from Phrygia, Asia–Minor, began to teach that the Holy Spirit had revealed to him that the world was just about to come to an end. He also had two women prophets, Prisca and Maximilla, who also claimed to have received this message. They stated that this event would be accompanied by the “New Jerusalem” coming down from heaven... and this would land and be centered in his hometown, Phrygia.
- ▶ They had many beliefs consistent with the Bible.

Montanism

- ▶ They typically had ecstatic demonstrations in their services, especially involving the prophetesses.
- ▶ Women had a prominent role
- ▶ They taught a very strict way of living
- ▶ They taught that post-baptismal sin could not be forgiven – this, of course, is not biblical
- ▶ Even though the world did not end when they predicted, the movement continued for a couple of centuries. It was particularly popular in Africa.

Ebionism

- ▶ This group of believers taught that Jesus was a only a *man... not God*. They were Jews who believed that the Law now had to be followed in the light of the teachings of Jesus. They were really a later iteration of the Judaizers.
- ▶ They existed mainly in Jerusalem and in portions of Persia. They revered James and rejected the teachings of Paul.
- ▶ Irenaeus, in A.D. 180, was probably the first to use the term "Ebionites" to describe a heretical judaizing sect

Arian conflict

- ▶ Arius (A.D. 250–336) was a priest in Alexandria who had a set of beliefs that were ruled as heretical in the First Council of Nicea (A.D. 325). His largest doctrinal error was that he did not give Jesus His proper position in the Triune Godhead. Arius taught that there had been a time in the distant past when Jesus came into existence. Jesus was not at the same level as the God the Father.
- ▶ He taught that Jesus was not divine. Jesus, he taught, was a great creature, a mighty archangel... but not God. For this belief, he was exiled to Palestine.

First Council of Nicea

- ▶ Constantine convened the First Council of Nicea to settle the issue of doctrine. At that council meeting of all the bishops in the world, Arius was again stated to be preaching and teaching heresy. Importantly, a clear statement of the appropriate doctrine of the Christian Church was adopted as well.
- ▶ There were, of course, many other religions during those early years of the New Testament Church. Examples include Buddhism, Hinduism and Zoroastrianism. However, these other religions were generally quite separate from Christianity and really did not serve to confuse the potential convert to Christianity with a perversion of the gospel.

Two Major Problems

- ▶ The Christian Church had two major problems to deal with during its early years. As we have shown, many of the believers were persecuted even onto death for their belief. Thousands died martyrs' deaths. Second, partly because Jesus and the apostles did not leave a totally clear-cut doctrinal statement, there were several individuals who attempted to convert men and women to their ideas on what it meant to be a Christian.

Christian creeds and practices and the codification of the New Testament

- ▶ In order for Christianity to flourish, and not be “poisoned” by false teaching and teachers, certain things had to be accomplished. In particular:
- ▶ The apostles had to pass on their knowledge of Jesus and the teachings of Holy Spirit to those Christian leaders that would follow – in an accurate manner
- ▶ An accurate and clear description of a Christian had to be agreed upon. There had to be a system that would allow for a universal brotherhood of believers. Every Christian would be a brother (or sister) because they all would put their faith in the same gospel
- ▶ Holy Scriptures had to be agreed upon and used for instruction and inspiration

The Early Guardians of the Gospel

- ▶ In the early years of the Church, most of the Word was spread by the apostles themselves.
- ▶ The apostles were very able to get the Church of Jesus Christ off to a great start as they were passionate in their love of Christ and their mission to evangelize the world.
- ▶ All of the apostles and early church leaders took care to leave their churches with appropriate leadership. The church leaders were called “bishops”.

Church Organization

- ▶ Irenaeus was upset by the heresies that were threatening the Church. Therefore, he wrote that everyone should understand that there was an unbroken chain from Jesus to the apostles to the early Church fathers (such as Polycarp) and on down. This entire chain was ordained by the apostles... they were guardians and guarantors of the gospel.
- ▶ Over time, an organizational system developed that was effective in running the church.
- ▶ There were intermittent meetings that brought the bishops together to coordinate the activities and make sure that the gospel was being preached without perversion.

Christian Creeds – What is a Christian?

- ▶ This was going to require some mechanism to make sure that everyone knew what a Christian was **plus** a way to pass down the teachings of Christ and the Holy Spirit of God... there was a need of a New Testament to add to the Old Testament.
- ▶ There are no historical documents to describe the exact steps to becoming a Christian until the second century.

The Early Years

- ▶ As we see in Acts and the epistles, it would seem that in the first century church it was primarily a matter of hearing the word, accepting Jesus as Lord and Savior, followed by the baptism with the Holy Spirit, baptism with water, followed by obeying Jesus, including regular participation in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. The Christian Church also settled on Sunday as being the "Lord's Day" as it was the day of His resurrection. Many still observed the Sabbath as well.

An early attempt to define a Christian

- ▶ Justin Martyr wrote the method by which people were admitted into the Church at Rome in the mid-first century.
- ▶ “As many are persuaded and believe that what we teach and say is true, and **undertake to be able to live accordingly**, are instructed to **pray and entreat God with fasting**, for the remission of their sins that are past, we praying and fasting with them. Then they are brought by us where there is water, and are **regenerated in the same manner in which we ourselves regenerated**. For, in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water.”

Other attempts to “define” Christianity

- ▶ In A.D. 215, Hippolytus described an elaborate process that was required to become a member of the Church in Rome at that time.
- ▶ In Alexandria, Clement had a very structured school to learn what it meant to become a Christian.
- ▶ Due to the difficulties with the false religions and their teachings, eventually certain creeds were used to “spell out” the exact belief system of the Christian Church with respect to certain major doctrinal points.

Apostle's Creed

- ▶ I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Nicene Creed (A.D. 381)

- ▶ We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
- ▶ maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.
- ▶ We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
- ▶ eternally begotten from the Father, God from God, Light from Light,
- ▶ true God from true God, begotten, not made, of the same substance as the Father.
- ▶ Through him all things were made.
- ▶ For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven:
- ▶ by the power of the Holy Spirit
- ▶ he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man.
- ▶ For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
- ▶ he suffered, died, and was buried.
- ▶ On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
- ▶ he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

Nicene Creed cont.

- ▶ He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
- ▶ and his kingdom will have no end.
- ▶ We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
- ▶ who proceeds from the Father (*and the Son*).
- ▶ With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified.
- ▶ He has spoken through the Prophets.
- ▶ We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
- ▶ We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
- ▶ We look for the resurrection of the dead,
- ▶ and the life of the world to come. *Amen.*

Athanasian Creed

- ▶ “We worship one God in the Trinity and the Trinity in unity. We distinguish between the persons, but we do not divide the substance. For the Father is a distinct person; the Son is a distinct person; the Holy Spirit is a distinct person. Still the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit have one divinity, equal glory, and coeternal majesty. What the Father is, the Son is, and the Holy Spirit is. The Father is uncreated, the Son is uncreated and the Holy Spirit is uncreated.....Nevertheless, there are not three eternal beings, but one eternal being.” Actually, this creed is very long (longer than the portion noted here) as it goes into great detail discussing the Trinity. I believe one can see how this is very effective in telling the world the manner in which orthodox Christianity looked at the Trinity.

Chalcedonian Creed

- ▶ Therefore, following the holy fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man, consisting also of a reasonable soul and body; of one substance with the Father as regards his Godhead, and at the same time of one substance with us as regards his manhood; like us in all respects, apart from sin; as regards his Godhead, begotten of the Father before the ages, but yet as regards his manhood begotten, for us men and for our salvation, of Mary the Virgin, the God-bearer; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, recognized in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation;

Chalcedonian Creed cont.

- ▶ the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person and subsistence, not as parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and Only-begotten God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ; even as the prophets from earliest times spoke of him, and our Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us, and the creed of the fathers has handed down to us.

Creeds and Scriptures

- ▶ With the use of one of these four creeds, it was much easier to gain a universal understanding of what the Christian Church believed in. The first two tell the world what it means to be a Christian. The next two define the concept of the Trinity and tell about the Savior, Jesus. Those people who wanted to become members of the Church were required to recite and then live by one or more of the creeds.
- ▶ The only thing left on the agenda was to codify the scriptures so that the words of Jesus and the teachings of the Holy Spirit (through the words of the New Testament writers) could be passed down through the ages.

The Holy Scriptures – The New Testament

- ▶ It was important for orthodox Christianity to delineate the true New Testament for use by the Church in the centuries to come.
- ▶ When St. John, the apostle, finished writing The Revelation of Jesus Christ, no one knew that all the books that would eventually make their way into the New Testament had been written. The Holy Scriptures at the turn of the century only consisted of the Old Testament.
- ▶ Documents available at the end of the 1st century

The New Testament comes together

- ▶ Polycarp and Clement of Rome wrote that they used some of the epistles and gospels as their “New Testament”. They did not define the specific books however. Irenaeus in the late 2nd century, was using all of our current New Testament books as Scripture except for 2nd and 3rd John, James, 2nd Peter and Hebrews. Many others had been using the four gospels as canon even before this time. The four gospels were generally all accepted before the end of the 2nd century. The gospel of John was the last one to gain universal acceptance.

- ▶ Most of the epistles were almost immediately accepted by the various churches in the Empire. The books that took longer to gain acceptance were as follows:
- ▶ Hebrews – took a little longer as its writer was not known for sure... likely Paul
- ▶ James – because there was some debate over his emphasis on works
- ▶ 2nd Peter – not too much doubt here
- ▶ 2nd and 3rd John – they seemed a little too personal for some

- ▶ Jude – he quotes from the book of Enoch; some were bothered by this as Enoch is not in the Old Testament itself. Yet, there is no reason that a secular source cannot be used. People such as Clement of Rome, Origen, Athanasius, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria and others accepted it without problem.
- ▶ The Revelation – the abstract and mysterious language bothered some and its authorship remained in question for some time

The Canon

- ▶ The tests that were finally used to determine whether to accept a book for the canon.
- ▶ Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, was the first to specify, in writing, the twenty-seven books he felt should make up the New Testament. He wrote a letter to his congregation in A.D. 367 concerning the New Testament Canon. He chose those books that currently make up our Bible.
- ▶ His list was approved at both the Council of Hippo (A.D. 393) and the Council of Carthage (A.D. 397).

Process of Canonization

- ▶ The process of canonization was very complex and lengthy. It began by bishops choosing to use certain epistles or gospels to preach and teach their messages. Over the years there eventually came to be a compilation of the books that were used throughout the churches in the Roman Empire. These books chosen were written by an apostle or a close associate of an apostle. As time passed, a particular grouping of books came together as they passed certain other tests: they had to be accurate historically, consistent with the other scriptures and the actual words of Jesus, and valuable to the reader.

A comment about this process...

- ▶ “One thing must be emphatically stated. The New Testament books did not become authoritative for the Church because they were formally included in a canonical list; on the contrary, the Church included them in her canon because she already regarded them as divinely inspired, recognizing their innate worth and general apostolic authority, direct or indirect. The first ecclesiastical councils to classify the canonical books were both held in North Africa — at Hippo Regius in 393 and at Carthage in 397 — but what these councils did was not to impose something new upon the Christian communities but to codify what was already the general practice of those communities.” F.F. Bruce

Importance of the New Testament

- ▶ To allow proper church doctrine to be determined
 - ▶ To use this doctrine to stand against heresy
 - ▶ To be able to use these scriptures in church services
 - ▶ To give people the appropriate scripture material to study and learn as they worshipped God and worked toward sanctification
- 

The Post–Apostolic Times

- ▶ The passing of St. John brought the church into the post–apostolic times. Until John had died and went to his just reward in heaven, there had been a direct link with our Lord and Savior. From this time onward, it would become increasingly important to protect the words of the Lord as written in the gospel accounts and the words of the Holy Spirit as He directed the writing of the remainder of the New Testament.

Post-Apostolic Christian Fathers

- ▶ **Polycarp:**(A.D. 69–155), bishop of Smyrna is one of the more celebrated of all early New Testament Church Fathers.
- ▶ According to one of his pupils, Irenaeus, Polycarp was a pupil of the apostles. He spent much time with John, who consecrated him as the bishop of Smyrna.
- ▶ The amazing story of his martyrdom.

Clement of Rome

- ▶ Pope Saint Clement 1, was either the 2nd or 3rd bishop of Rome, following Peter. He was an important early Father of the Church who knew intimately Peter and Paul according to several early Christian sources.
- ▶ He was a link from the apostles to the early second century Church. For example, note this pronouncement by Clement, “The apostles received for us the gospel from our Lord Jesus Christ, and our Lord Jesus Christ received it from God...”

Clement of Rome cont.

- ▶ Clement wrote an epistle to the Church at Corinth asserting the authority of the elders as rulers of the Church on the grounds that they had been appointed by the apostles. This epistle was used as a guideline for other churches as well in the latter part of the first century.
- ▶ Historian Eusebius wrote that Clement wrote of the early post-ascension Church as follows: “Peter, and James, and John after the ascension of our Savior, though they had been preferred by our Lord, did not contend for the honor, but chose James the Just as bishop of Jerusalem. The Lord imparted the gift of knowledge to James the Just, to John and Peter after His resurrection, these delivered it to the rest of the apostles, and they to the seventy of whom Barnabas was one.”

Ignatius

- ▶ Ignatius served as the second bishop of Antioch.
- ▶ He wrote letters to many Christian churches and communities to outline his proposals.
- ▶ Emperor Trajan had him arrested for failure to worship the pagan gods. He was to be brought to Rome from Antioch.
- ▶ It is also interesting to notice how much emphasis he placed on martyrdom. Since, unfortunately, dying for the cause of Christ was not uncommon in those days, Christians actually thought about the possibility of this happening to them.

Ignatius on Martyrdom

- ▶ As his martyrdom approached, Ignatius pointed out that through this type of death a person could truly imitate Christ and proclaim the gospel. He believed that it was, in a sense, like a baptism. One would actually die and rise with Christ... and then go to be with Him in heaven. Martyrdom was also a way to live out the Eucharist, he thought.
- ▶ Ignatius appeared before Trajan and was bold in his comments. He valiantly spoke of his faith in Christ. He was courageous and obviously not afraid of the sentence awaiting him. He was ordered to be placed in chains and taken to Rome, there to become a spectacle for the people as he was to become food for the lions.

Irenaeus

- ▶ Irenaeus was born in Smyrna, Asia–Minor. He was a disciple of Polycarp. He at one point went to Rome and studied under Justin Martyr. Eventually, he went to preach the gospel in Lyons, France.
- ▶ He believed that the truth of the Bible rested on “revelation, tradition, and on the power of the Holy Spirit.”
- ▶ His “Against Heresies” was a defense of the Christian faith against the Gnostics. He hated what they were teaching.

- ▶ He emphatically defended apostolic succession and stated that Christ himself was responsible for the unbroken line of bishops that had followed.
- ▶ Irenaeus began to collect what he believed to be the inspired writings that would eventually become the New Testament. He was the earliest witness to the fact that there were four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. He also noted that 'The Gospel of John' was written by John the apostle and 'The Gospel of Luke' was written by the doctor, Luke. He also began the collating of the epistles that he felt were appropriate for inclusion and excluded many of the Gnostic books.

The Trinity

- ▶ Whereas Justin Martyr held that the 'Logos', who had become flesh in Jesus Christ, was a second God, Irenaeus had another idea. He held that the 'Logos' became incarnate in Jesus, but that Jesus was the Son of God, the Mind of God, and God, the Father, Himself! He stressed that Jesus was both man and God and did not rate Jesus subservient to God, the Father. He stressed the unity of the Godhead, not their differences. His conception of the Trinity was very similar to that of the orthodox Christian today.

Justin Martyr

- ▶ Justin Martyr (A.D. 100–165) was an early Christian apologist. He called himself a Samaritan and he was brought up a pagan. Early in his life, he studied Hellenistic philosophy. After hearing the Christian evangelical message, he came to faith in Jesus Christ. Yet, he never was able to eliminate the impact of his Greek philosophical roots as he developed his own Christian philosophy.
- ▶ He was one of the earliest to write on what it meant to be a Christian.

Justin Martyr wrote...

- ▶ “As many are persuaded and believe that what we teach and say is true, and undertake to be able to live accordingly, are instructed to pray and to entreat God with fasting, for the remission of sins that are past, we praying and fasting with them. Then they are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated. For, in the name of God, the Father and the Lord of the universe, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water.”

His Hellenistic background...

- ▶ Martyr continued to wear his distinctive cloak of the philosopher after his conversion to Christ as he wanted to show the world that he had found the “Truth” – which is the search of the philosopher.
- ▶ His intellect and writing style gave Christianity much more respect among the upper class and intellectuals of Roman Empire society. On the other hand, this Hellenistic influence got him off track with respect to the orthodox teachings of the Bible at times. He was unable to excise some of these ideas from his mind. For example, he inherited the idea of the ‘Logos’ or World Soul from his earlier training. Certainly, this is not anywhere to be found in the Bible.

A little more on Justin Martyr

- ▶ He did have faith in Christ as the Son of God the Creator. He believed that Christ was made manifest in the flesh, crucified, rose from the dead, and was the propitiation for the sins of mankind for those who believed. Therefore, certainly most modern theologians consider him to be a Christian.
- ▶ As we will see later, Origen and Augustine also have some non-orthodox ideas in their theology. However, all three of these men were attempting to understand God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit as well as they could, given the times in which they lived and the limited resources from which to learn and study. All these men were blazing a trail that would eventually lead to our Christian doctrines of today.

Origen

- ▶ Origen Adamantius (A.D. 185–254) was one of the more brilliant early Christian scholars. He apparently was Egyptian and studied at Alexandria. At the age of 17, his father was killed due to the breakout of another Christian persecution. He then taught in the same school in Alexandria as Clement (of Alexandria) taught.
- ▶ Origen was a tireless worker for Christ. Once he had decided to devote his life to Christianity and the study of the scriptures, he lived an ascetic lifestyle. Tradition also states that he made himself a eunuch. Once he began his writing, he did not stop.
- ▶ He enjoyed digging deeply into scripture to find hidden meanings. He believed that God had written the Word in such a way that there were many layers of truth within the text, including an allegorical layer.

Origen is tortured

- ▶ In A.D. 249, Emperor Decius began yet another persecution against Christians. He ordered Origen arrested and tortured... to just short of death. Decius desperately wanted him to renounce his faith in Christ. Origen had to endure the “rack” which permanently crippled him. He would not yield. Within a couple of years he succumbed to his torturous injuries and died at the age of 69 years old... another martyr for Christ. He was buried in Tyre.

Origen is called a heretic

- ▶ It is worth pointing out that Origen did have many atypical conceptions of Christianity. Among these were the *preexistence of souls*, *universal salvation* and *a hierarchical concept of the Trinity*. He believed that at some point all mankind would be saved. God may have to punish them at some point, but all would end up one day in heaven. Another unorthodox teaching was that all human souls had existed from eternity past. These teachings, and some of his followers' more extreme views, were declared anathema by a local council in Constantinople 545, and then an ecumenical council (Fifth Ecumenical Council) pronounced "15 anathemas" against Origen in A.D. 553.

Tertullian

- ▶ Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus (aka Tertullian; A.D. 160–220) was an early Christian apologist. He came from Carthage in North Africa. Most believe that he was a lawyer before becoming a Christian.
- ▶ He coined the term *Trinity* and explained how he viewed the definition. He also coined the terms of Old Testament and New Testament. Although he had much in common with orthodox Christianity, later in his life he split with mainstream Christianity and became a member of the Montanist movement.

- ▶ He wrote against the Roman persecutions of Christians and wrote many papers on Christian theology (ex. the Trinity). His *Apologeticus* was a treatise sent to the Roman magistrates in defense of freedom of religion. In it he boldly asked for fair trials for the Christians before they were convicted of heresy.
- ▶ His abilities as a lawyer and writer allowed him to effectively convince much of the Roman hierarchy and most of the Roman people that Christians were not the barbarians that they had been portrayed to be since the time of Nero.

Augustine

- ▶ Augustine of Hippo (A.D. 354–430) had the greatest influence on western Christian thought of all of the early Church Fathers.
- ▶ Early life
- ▶ *"Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires."* Romans 13:13–14

Augustine's Hellenistic Background

- ▶ He also had the opportunity to study under Bishop Ambrose at that time. Ambrose baptized both Augustine and his son in the year A.D. 387. It was at this time, in his thirties that Augustine learned of the Neo-Platonist synthesis of Christianity and Greek philosophy. This is what had intrigued Origen so much seventy-five years earlier.

Augustine the author

- ▶ He was an excellent and prolific author and made Hippo a center of Christian thought. Over the next 34 years, Augustine wrote on many subjects.
- ▶ *Confessions, City of God, On the Trinity*
- ▶ The *allegorical method* of interpretation
- ▶ Augustine had many different views on a variety of theological topics. Let me mention a few...

Augustine cont.

- ▶ A major Church Father of Roman Catholicism
- ▶ Augustine died on August 28, 430 A.D. during the siege on Hippo by the Vandals. He was one of the few Christian Fathers who was spared a martyr's death.
- ▶ This concludes a short biography on eight of the more important post-apostolic Christian Fathers. These men were very important to the spread and growth of Christianity in the first few centuries after Christ.

A summary of the post-apostolic Church Fathers

- ▶ Many of these great leaders were martyred and their courage and faithfulness was a strong impetus for Christians to stay united and for non-Christians to consider converting to faith in their powerful God – their God must be someone special and real for these great and intelligent men to die for
- ▶ Together they worked to define church protocol, hierarchy and doctrine
- ▶ They were tireless in spreading the gospel through their writing and evangelization

- ▶ They effectively stopped the spread of Gnosticism in the Roman Empire
- ▶ Their efforts resulted in the eventual conversion of an emperor which led to freedom of Christian religious worship in the Roman Empire
- ▶ They continued the unending search for truth in the study of God's Word – writing on topics such as the Trinity, Original Sin, Salvation, Heaven, Eschatology, etc.

The Growth of Christianity

- ▶ Christianity grew against significant odds until it had spread throughout the entire Roman Empire and far beyond. It became the largest and the most significant religion in the entire world within just a few hundred years. No religion before or since has been its equal.
- ▶ Why did it grow so fast?
- ▶ There were many reasons...

Dedicated Missionaries

- ▶ One important requirement for any religion to grow is to have individuals spread the message of that religion across the land. Christianity surely had the people with the skills and desire to do this.
- ▶ Via the famously effective Roman road system, people were able to travel better, faster and farther than at any previous time in history.

The veracity of the Gospel Message

- ▶ The gospel was and is the product being “sold” by missionaries and evangelists. Jesus is what the Christian message is all about. Every single thing taught about Jesus Christ was glorious and was verifiable by the apostles and those they appointed to follow them.
- ▶ His resurrection and its significance was known to thousands and taught to tens of thousands more. If Jesus had not risen from the dead, the Christian religion would not have even begun... let alone grown at its incredible rate.
- ▶ The apostles and the early Church Fathers

Miracles and healings

- ▶ During the years of Jesus' ministry, and for many decades after His ascension, God demonstrated His power and glory often by having Jesus or His apostles heal the sick, raise the dead and perform other supernatural miracles. Certainly, these events are *attention getters*.

The Holy Scriptures: (prophecy, high morals, etc.) vs. other religions

- ▶ The Holy Scriptures definitely had a role to play in the spreading of the Christian religion. In the first century, the apostles and other evangelists used the Old Testament to demonstrate that Jesus had been prophesized to come all throughout those scriptures... even scriptures written almost 1500 years earlier! Dozens of verses could be referenced to show that the coming of the Messiah, in the person of Jesus, was clearly predicted... and that no one other than Jesus fulfilled these prophecies.

The Holy Scriptures

- ▶ A little later on in New Testament Church history, the gospels and the epistles were used to teach the message of Christ. This “New Testament” had great power and influence as it was written by people who actually witnessed Jesus or were intimate friends of those who had. Great moral truths were taught in these “new” scriptures.

Impressive Scriptures

- ▶ No other religions of that time (nor of our time) had the equal of these Christian scriptures.
- ▶ No other religious scriptures had scores of prophetic messages... that were verifiable and proven to be true.
- ▶ No other religious scriptures taught such great moral truths.
- ▶ No other religion had scriptures written by over forty different men over 1500 years that all had a consistent message and taught the same truths.
- ▶ No other religion had scriptures that taught that the path to salvation would be provided by the sacrificial death of God Himself...

The Unique God of Christianity

- ▶ Jesus Christ is a totally unique God in the world's religions. He has so many characteristics that are unique.
- ▶ He is all human and all God
- ▶ He led a perfect life on this earth – for all to witness
- ▶ He performed many documented miracles, including healing the sick and raising the dead
- ▶ His message (teaching) was revolutionary in its beauty and scope

Jesus is Unique

- ▶ He was a God of love, forgiving to all peoples, man and woman alike
- ▶ He gave His life as a living sacrifice for all mankind... He shed His blood for our sins
- ▶ He rose from the dead as was prophesied in the Old Testament (and Himself)
- ▶ He is still alive and now lives in heaven at the right hand of His Father, God
- ▶ He intercedes continuously for those who put their faith in Him
- ▶ He is coming back someday for His faithful followers... His Church

- ▶ Due to all of those characteristics, many people wanted to give over their lives to the loving care of the Lord. Life is very difficult. Certainly most people will agree. Since Jesus gave so much evidence that He was who He said He was... Lord and Savior, it is not that hard to understand why so many people would want to give their lives to Him. He tells people that His “yoke is easy, and my burden is light” Matthew 11:30”

The Christian message of faith, hope and love

- ▶ The Christian God, Jesus, brought to this earth a gospel message that was unique.
- ▶ **Death was defeated!** The manner in which this was accomplished was certainly unique. God Himself, in the person of Jesus Christ, came down to this earth and demonstrated the perfect way to live. People now had actually seen God! People now had someone to emulate. Jesus then sacrificed Himself for all mankind – He paid the penalty for our sins by dying on the cross. God poured out the punishment for our sins onto His only Son... instead of us. People now had the amazing gift of salvation... and it was free.

The Gospel

- ▶ The gift has to be “opened.”
- ▶ A person is asked to turn to Jesus *in faith*.
- ▶ All any individual is asked to do is to turn to Jesus, *with the faith that they are given*, and ask Him into their life, trusting in Him for salvation and for help to live this life on earth.
- ▶ "For God so **loved** the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16
- ▶ "You have heard that it was said, '**Love** your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. Matt. 5:43–44
- ▶ '**Love** your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." Mark 12:31

A Message of Hope

- ▶ Jesus certainly has given the world a message of *hope* as well. He will help all of His brothers and sisters as they struggle through the difficult times of their lives. He will never forsake those who turn to Him... never.
- ▶ We wait for the blessed hope--the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness. Titus 2:13-14

Whosoever believeth will be saved

- ▶ No longer was there the impossible task of keeping the Law perfectly.
- ▶ Any person had the opportunity to turn to Jesus and receive eternal life. The offer was there... who would take it? Many people would turn to Christ in those early years of the church.

The Christian lifestyle and brotherhood

- ▶ When a person became a Christian, especially in those early years, they became a part of a very real new family... the family of God. For most Christians, this family was more important than the “blood” family that they had been born into. Interestingly, even this new family was created by blood... the blood of Jesus Christ. Everyone that is a Christian has received a new life due to the shedding of the blood of their Savior, Jesus.

A Huge Commitment

- ▶ When a person joined this Christian family in the days of the Roman Empire, they obviously were making a huge commitment. As noted earlier, people who converted were instructed in the beliefs and practices of Christianity. A believer would spend a lot of time in study, prayer, fasting and worship. Fellowship time was also important.
- ▶ The life of the typical Christian was much different than the average Roman citizen. For these reasons, there was quite a brotherhood (and sisterhood) among the believers. They simply did not fit in any longer with the pagan world. Instead, they were a group of people who had found the wonderful answer to life's perplexing questions... Jesus Christ.

A very family environment

- ▶ For the first century or so, Christians typically met in homes.
- ▶ The significance of the catacomb
- ▶ The “Christian brotherhood” was certainly one very important reason for the growth of the Church in those early centuries.

Christian Martyrs

- ▶ Reportedly tens of thousands (some say up to one hundred thousand) of great and courageous Christian men and women died martyrs' deaths because of the Romans.
- ▶ Christian martyrdom resulted in the spread of the gospel.
- ▶ Why?

Christian Martyrs

- ▶ As a group they were very peaceful people and good citizens – creating sympathy in the general populace
- ▶ They were so fervent in their allegiance to their God, Jesus – this was felt to be a noble characteristic in a person
- ▶ *All Christians that remained became more determined to live for Jesus and spread the message... not less so*
- ▶ *The martyrs were celebrated as heroes of the faith and stories of their courageous death experiences were spread throughout the Roman Empire (Polycarp's death is one example of this)*

Christian Martyrs

- ▶ The majority of non-Christians recognized these persecutions as terribly inappropriate
- ▶ Using simple logic, *thinking people recognized that if there were so many reasonable-minded people willing to be tortured and die for a cause... in this case, their belief that Jesus Christ was their Lord and Savior – it made sense to an open minded person to at least consider this religion for their own.*
- ▶ It did become a “badge of honor” to suffer in this way for Christ.
- ▶ They were all convinced that they would be with Jesus immediately after their death... and He would give them a wonderful welcome as they entered into heaven.

God's supernatural intervention – The Power of the Trinity

- ▶ The major factor in the development of the early church was the omnipotent God of Christianity. There is no doubt that wanted His church to thrive. God, in all three persons of the Holy Trinity, contributed to the tremendous growth directly.
- ▶ Jesus
- ▶ The Holy Spirit
- ▶ God the Father

Conclusion

- ▶ This concludes our historical look at the New Testament Church from the time of its inception at Pentecost until the appearance of Augustine as the fifth century began.
- ▶ We have seen how once the apostles were given the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, they were able to evangelize much of the known world of the first century. After their death, Christianity continued its rise into prominence for the many reasons outlined. Over the next 350 years, Christianity became the most prominent religion in the Roman Empire.

- ▶ Because of God and the truth of the gospel message, there would be no stopping of the spread of Christianity throughout the entire world. In fact, that is what has happened.
- ▶ Today, the gospel continues to spread throughout each and every nation in which it is preached. In fact, many say that the word of our Lord has now been preached into every nation in the world (considering the reach of radio, television and the Internet). It is certainly getting close to the time that our Lord will return! As the Bible says, “**Look up, for your redemption is nigh**”. (Luke 21:28)

Introduction

- ▶ In the **next portion of this treatise**, I will summarize every epistle in the New Testament plus “The Revelation”. I will discuss them in the order of their appearance in the Bible. The author, date and place of writing, purpose, key facts and synopsis of each will be covered.

Romans

- ▶ **Author, Date, Key Facts:** The book of Romans may well be the most important epistle in the Bible. This appears to be the consensus of opinion among theologians. Some believe that it was written by the apostle Paul in the winter of A.D. 57; others say that he wrote it one year earlier. Paul was in Corinth nearing the end of his 3rd missionary journey when he wrote this lengthy letter.

- ▶ **Purpose:** The main purpose of this letter to the Roman Christians was to describe in detail the doctrine of salvation under the New Covenant.
- ▶ **Synopsis:** Paul began this great epistle by introducing himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ set apart by God to bring the gospel to the Gentiles.

Paul teaches the gospel

- ▶ I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith." Romans 1:16–17
- ▶ Paul pointed out that all mankind is without excuse when it comes to sin.

No one is righteous under the Law

- ▶ All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.) Romans 2:12–15
- ▶ Paul pointed out that no one was righteous. He also pointed out the value of the Law... even though it could save no one.

How can one be saved then?

- ▶ Now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished-- he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

Romans 3:21-26

- ▶ God is the God of all mankind, the Jew and the Gentile.
- ▶ Faith is what saves everyone... even Abraham and the Old Testament saints.
- ▶ Therefore, since we **have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ**, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. Romans 5:1-4

- ▶ Adam brought sin and death into the world.
- ▶ Jesus, the new Adam, brought salvation and eternal life.
- ▶ For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin-- Romans 6:6
- ▶ Do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Romans 6:12

The Wages of Sin

- ▶ Now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. **For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.** Romans 6:22–23
- ▶ For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. Romans 7:15
- ▶ How can one solve this dilemma?
- ▶ The Holy Spirit must gain control over a Christian's life.

Romans 8

- ▶ Romans 8 is considered by many to be the most important chapter in the Bible.
- ▶ There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. Romans 8:1–2
- ▶ Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. Romans 8:5
- ▶ Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. Romans 8:14
- ▶ How can we live by the Spirit?

Co-heirs with Christ

- ▶ Now if we are children, then we are heirs-- heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.
Romans 8:17
- ▶ I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. Romans 8:18
- ▶ Given what Christians have to look forward to, the sufferings of this world should be placed in their proper perspective.

God has all things under His control

- ▶ **And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.**

Romans 8:28–30

How can a Christian lose?

- ▶ **If God is for us, who can be against us?**
Romans 8:31
- ▶ **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." Romans 8:35–36**
(Psalms 44:22)
- ▶ These, of course, are rhetorical questions.

More than conquerors

- ▶ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:35–39

Reflections on the “Chosen People”

- ▶ After Paul presents the total superiority of the New Covenant over the Old Covenant and how to live life in the power of the Holy Spirit, he spends a little time writing about his countrymen, the Jews.
- ▶ I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised!
Romans 9:2–5

Stumbling on the Stone

- ▶ Why doesn't God have mercy on certain of those people who do not believe in Him?
- ▶ For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." Romans 9:15
- ▶ But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? Romans 9:20
- ▶ Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the "stumbling stone." As it is written: "See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." Romans 9:30–33
- ▶ Jesus is the "stone."

The Jews lacked knowledge

- ▶ Paul continued his discussion about his fellow Jews noting that they had the heart for God but were not recognizing the facts that would have led them to salvation. Unfortunately, like so many others, the Jews of that time did not come to the study of the scriptures seeking the truth.
- ▶ For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. Romans 10:2–3
- ▶ This situation will not last forever.

The Return to the Messiah

- ▶ Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The deliverer (Jesus) will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins."

Romans 11:25-27

How should we live the Christian life?

- ▶ Paul used the latter portion of his letter to the Romans to teach them how to live the Christian life. He did this in several of his letters. Of course, the primary purpose of this great epistle was to outline the New Covenant of salvation by the sacrificial death of Christ. However, Paul wanted to give some instruction on how Christians should conduct themselves.

Paul bids them farewell

- ▶ But now that there is no more place for me to work in these regions, and since I have been longing for many years to see you, I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to visit you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there, after I have enjoyed your company for a while. Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the saints there. Romans 15:23–25
- ▶ Unfortunately, Paul would not be able to go to Rome in the manner that he would have preferred. A few years later, he did get escorted there, however. He then spent two years on house arrest. He had been arrested secondary to his brilliant service for Jesus Christ.
- ▶ Conclusion

1 Corinthians

- ▶ **Author, Date, Key Facts:** The Apostle Paul wrote this epistle to the church in Corinth while in Ephesus on his third missionary journey. Paul lived and ministered to the people in Ephesus for three years. He most likely wrote this letter to the Corinthians in A.D. 55. Although this is referred to as 1 Corinthians, this was not Paul's first letter to the people in Corinth.
- ▶ Corinth is situated in southern Greece in the Roman province called Achaia. It was only 45 miles west of Athens.

1 Corinthians

- ▶ **Purpose:** Paul wrote this long epistle to the church at Corinth to attempt to answer several questions that had been asked of him by certain members of that congregation. He also wanted to address several problems that related to activities of members of that church. It is a practical letter, not a theological letter such as the epistle to the Romans.

Introduction

- ▶ **Synopsis:** Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother **Sosthenes**, to the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ--their Lord and ours: **Grace and peace to you** from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Cor 1:1-3
- ▶ Paul then goes right into reminding these people how they have been given so many great things from God... including salvation, knowledge, spiritual gifts, assurance and fellowship.

Remain faithful to Jesus

- ▶ Paul exhorted them to remain faithful and united as a church body. Apparently there had arisen many divisions among the people there, unfortunately.
- ▶ Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength. 1 Cor 1:22–25
- ▶ You are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God--that is, **our righteousness, holiness and redemption**. Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord." 1 Cor 1:30–31

Preach through the power of the Spirit

- ▶ As Paul continued in his letter, he said that he did not come to preach to them with eloquence or the wisdom of man. Instead, he came to give them the message of Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- ▶ The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.
- ▶ But we have the mind of Christ. 1 Cor 2:14&16
- ▶ "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" -- but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. 1 Cor 2:9-10

Living by the Holy Spirit

- ▶ After writing about the power of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer, Paul once again returned to his admonition concerning the divisions in the Corinthian Church. There simply was a great lack of unity there because too many people were following a person and not Jesus.
- ▶ For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.
- ▶ Good works must be done with the proper motives and via the aid of the Holy Spirit.

The Temple of God

- ▶ Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for **God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple.** 1 Cor 3:11–17
- ▶ Now it is required that those who have been **given a trust must prove faithful.** 1 Cor 4:1–2
- ▶ Paul uses sarcasm to make his point.

Some Sage Advice

- ▶ I urge you to imitate me. For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.
1 Cor 4:16–17
- ▶ I will come to you very soon, if the Lord is willing, and then I will find out not only how these arrogant people are talking, but what power they have. For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power. 1 Cor 4:19–21

Sexual Sin and Pride

- ▶ Do not tolerate sin within the Church.
- ▶ “a little yeast work through the whole batch of dough”. (1 Cor. 5:6)
- ▶ I am writing you that **you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.** 1 Cor 5:11

More Advice

- ▶ Lawsuits between two Christian brothers – these should not occur... but the problem should be handled within the brotherhood of the church
- ▶ Flee from sexual immorality – Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. 1 Cor 6:19–20
- ▶ Paul expounds on marriage
- ▶ Circumcision – should not be an issue at all
- ▶ Virginity – an honorable situation
- ▶ Do not eat food sacrificed to idols – this looks bad to some and therefore should be avoided as there is no need to make anyone stumble

Paul's Credentials

- ▶ Paul next turned to the topic of his credentials to oversee their church.
- ▶ Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not the result of my work in the Lord? Even though I may not be an apostle to others, surely I am to you! For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. 1 Cor 9:1–2
- ▶ Some of the church members looked down at Paul and Barnabas because they worked so hard to earn their own living instead of living off a salary from the church. Apparently, the other apostles and their families did take advantage of this appropriate system.

The Race of Life

- ▶ Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. **Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.** Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I **beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.** 1 Cor 9:24–27

Avoid these sins

- ▶ Paul listed some of the sins that these Old Testament people were guilty of:
- ▶ Idolatry
- ▶ Murmuring/complaining
- ▶ Grumbling
- ▶ Testing the Lord
- ▶ Sexual immorality
- ▶ if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. 1 Cor 10:11-13

Worship Services

- ▶ Dress properly for Church.
- ▶ Observe the Lord's Supper with dignity and respect.

Spiritual Gifts

- ▶ Paul spent some time writing on the abuse of spiritual gifts in the Corinthian Church.
- ▶ Paul listed many of the spiritual gifts: *apostles, prophets, teachers, wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, distinguishing between spirits, administration, exhortation, helping others, tongues, and the interpretation of tongues*
- ▶ All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.
1 Cor 12:11
- ▶ But eagerly desire the greater gifts. And now I will show you the most excellent way. 1 Cor 12:31

Love

- ▶ If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

Love

- ▶ But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.
1 Cor 13:1-13

Some Closing Words

- ▶ A few more words on the subject of speaking in tongues.
- ▶ Paul then reminds these believers of the gospel message.
- ▶ Some warnings concerning false teachers and teaching.
- ▶ But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if **Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.** And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. 1 Cor 15:12–14&17–19

Christ is Coming Again

- ▶ But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For he "has put everything under his feet." 1 Cor 15:20-27

- ▶ Paul continued on this topic to explain that people like him have risked everything, including death, because they were totally convinced that Jesus had risen from the dead.
- ▶ Paul next tells them of the coming Rapture.

The Rapture

- ▶ Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed-- in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."
"Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" 1 Cor 15:51-55
- ▶ Paul has much to say about the coming Kingdom.

Paul Closes His Letter

- ▶ After that rousing teaching on the future resurrection of the saints, Paul concluded this epistle with a request that they collect an offering for the saints in Jerusalem... a church with a great many poor members. He also had a few personal requests... i.e. he asked them to treat Timothy well if he came to visit them and he wrote that he hoped to winter there.
- ▶ Conclusion

2 Corinthians

- ▶ **Author, Date, Key Facts:** The Apostle Paul spent approximately three years in Ephesus ministering to the people there. That is where he wrote 1 Corinthians. In late A.D. 55, he again heard disturbing news concerning the many false teachers that had infiltrated the church at Corinth and were leading it significantly astray. He decided to visit Corinth immediately and see if he could correct the problem. Unfortunately, his visit there at that time did not end well. Apparently, he was insulted and was unable to rid the congregation of the false teachers on that occasion.

- ▶ He returned to Ephesus and stayed there a little longer. Paul decided to write them another letter... often referred to as the “severe letter” and he sent it to Corinth with Titus. A little while after Titus had gone to Corinth, a riot broke out (sparked by Demetrius) in Ephesus and Paul headed north to Troas. He was so anxious to see how the church had responded to Titus and his “severe letter” that he continued on to Macedonia hoping to see Titus as soon as possible. He was very happy when Titus met up with him in Macedonia and told him that a large portion of the members of the Corinthian church had repented and were now following the true gospel message

- ▶ Paul was extremely pleased and soon began to write them one last letter... now known as 2 Corinthians. He wrote this epistle in approximately A.D. 56. Interestingly, this is the fourth letter that Paul wrote for which we have at least some evidence. The first and third letters have been lost.

Reasons for this epistle

- ▶ **Purpose:** Paul's primary reasons for writing this letter were:
 - ▶ Defend his apostleship
 - ▶ Discuss the inevitable trials a Christian must face and the hope that God gives to help through these difficult times
 - ▶ Exhort the Corinthians to resume their collection for the poor in Jerusalem
 - ▶ Confront the false apostles
 - ▶ Talk of the need for church discipline

Synopsis

- ▶ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the church of God in Corinth, together with all the saints throughout Achaia: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Cor 1:1–2
- ▶ Timothy is with Paul as he writes this letter from Macedonia...

The God of all comfort

- ▶ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the **God of all comfort**, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. 2 Cor 1:3–5
- ▶ Paul then went on to give a personal testimony of the terrible hardship that he had endured, almost even to death, while in Asia–Minor.

- ▶ Paul then explained why he changed his earlier plans to visit Corinth... he did not want to come until he would be able to come under better circumstances.
- ▶ Paul then gives some advice on how to treat a repentant former church member.
- ▶ Paul reminded them of the inability of the Law of Moses to save anyone... it only was able to convict people of their sins. Although this was important, of course, Jesus had come to bring salvation from these same sins. The New Covenant was infinitely better.

The Lord gives Freedom

- ▶ Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. 2 Cor 3:15-18

Treasure in Jars of Clay

- ▶ But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed
2 Cor 4:7–9

Do Not Lose Heart

- ▶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. 2 Cor 4:16–18
- ▶ Due to our new relationship with Jesus, we do not have to concern ourselves anymore with the weakness of our bodies. We now have the knowledge and the power to keep our minds on the Lord through all of the difficulties and trials of life.

One Day We Shall Be Clothed in a Heavenly Body

- ▶ Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. 2 Cor 5:1-5

- ▶ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. 2 Cor 5:9–10
- ▶ There were apparently many men that were preaching a different gospel in Corinth at that time. They were doing what a lot of the false preachers do today. They would take certain portions of the gospel message and use them, but then add other things... usually some necessity of the performance of ‘good works’ in order to gain one’s salvation.
- ▶ Paul reminds his readers that he simply brings them the truth of the gospel.

A New Creation

- ▶ **If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.**

2 Cor 5:17-21

Turn away from the false gospel

- ▶ Paul asked that they turn away from the false gospel that some in their congregation were considering. Instead, they should stand united under the gospel of Jesus Christ...
- ▶ We are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."
2 Cor 6:16
- ▶ Given this great promise from God, Paul exhorted these people to push forward toward sanctification.
- ▶ Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God. 2 Cor 7:1
- ▶ Paul pays them a compliment.

Paul gives a compliment

- ▶ I had boasted to him about you, and you have not embarrassed me. But just as everything we said to you was true, so our boasting about you to Titus has proved to be true as well. And his affection for you is all the greater when he remembers that you were all obedient, receiving him with fear and trembling. I am glad I can have complete confidence in you. 2 Cor 7:14-16
- ▶ The Corinthians had begun a collection many months earlier, but because of their recent problems, this collection had faltered. Paul reminded them of the real need to pick up once again on this collection...

Be a cheerful giver

- ▶ Remember this: **Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. 2 Cor 9:6–8**

Paul's Warning

- ▶ Paul had some difficult issues that he needed to talk to them about...
- ▶ Paul began by telling them that it was much easier for him to tell them difficult things by letter than face-to-face. Therefore, he was about to tell them some important things, but difficult things. First, Paul asked them to look at the people and the message that they had been taught to follow carefully before deciding on who and what to believe.

- ▶ I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough. But I do not think I am in the least inferior to those "super-apostles." I may not be a trained speaker, but I do have knowledge. We have made this perfectly clear to you in every way. 2 Cor 11:2-6

Warning continued

- ▶ For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve. 2 Cor 11:13–15
- ▶ You gladly put up with fools since you are so wise! In fact, you even put up with anyone who enslaves you or exploits you or takes advantage of you or pushes himself forward or slaps you in the face. 2 Cor 11:19–20

Paul's Resume

- ▶ Paul wanted them to note his resume and compare it with those other false teachers:
- ▶ Paul was a Hebrew as were the false teachers
- ▶ Paul worked much harder than they did
- ▶ Paul had been flogged, imprisoned and on the verge of death on numerous occasions, all for Christ – the false teachers had no such claims
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Paul's Resume cont.

- ▶ Paul had been stoned – the false teachers had not
- ▶ Paul had been on missionary trips for many, many years – the false teachers had not
- ▶ Paul had been cold and naked for the cause of Christ – the false teachers had not
- ▶ Paul donated his services because of his love of Christ and the people – the false teachers had not
- ▶ Paul had planted a multitude of churches – the false teachers had not
- ▶ So, the question? Who are you going to follow? The answer should be obvious.

Paul's Vision

- ▶ God granted Paul a vision of the third heaven. It was incredibly beautiful.
- ▶ Because of all that God had permitted Paul to see and do (such as the many miracles and healings, etc), Paul said that God gave him...
- ▶ a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.
2 Cor 12:7-10

- ▶ Paul told them about his coming visit and his fears concerning how he would find their congregation...
- ▶ For I am afraid that when I come I may not find you as I want you to be, and you may not find me as you want me to be. I fear that there may be quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, factions, slander, gossip, arrogance and disorder. 2 Cor 12:20

Concluding Remarks

- ▶ Now, as the letter was drawing to a close, Paul asked them to examine themselves and see whether or not they really were Christians. Did they have the Holy Spirit living within? Was Jesus the Lord of their life? If not, they should get right with God.
- ▶ Conclusion

Galatians

- ▶ **Author, Date, Key Facts:**

Paul wrote the letter to the Galatian churches as one of the earlier, if not the first, of his New Testament epistles. He probably wrote it in A.D. 49 (soon after the Jerusalem council) while in Antioch with Barnabas. Some believe he wrote it a few years later.

Purpose of this epistle

- ▶ **Purpose:** Paul wrote this letter to make sure that those in this church understood the true gospel... especially as distinguished from that put forward by the Judaizers.
- ▶ Judaizers were teaching that salvation not only required the sacrificial death of Christ but also required strict adherence to the Law of Moses... including circumcision

Synopsis

- ▶ After his usual greeting, Paul got right to the point...
- ▶ I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel-- which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: **If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!** Gal 1:6-9
- ▶ The problem with these Judaizers was that they did not understand how the gospel of Jesus Christ actually worked. They were unaware of the change that would come upon a person who *truly trusted* in Jesus for their salvation and turned their lives over to him.

Paul's Credentials

- ▶ Paul continued on to write concerning his credentials to teach these people about Jesus and salvation. These false teachers had been disparaging him by saying that he did not have the authority of an apostle and therefore had no right to be teaching them anything concerning God and the scriptures.
- ▶ In this review of his credentials Paul noted that when he finally came to see the other apostles in Jerusalem, they accepted him as one of them...
- ▶ "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." And they praised God because of me. Gal 1:23-24
- ▶ James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews. Gal 2:7-9

The Main Point

- ▶ Paul then came to the major point of this epistle. He wanted to show these churches that the only means of salvation was through faith in Jesus and His finished work on the cross. There was no place for any other addition to this gospel... not circumcision, not any particular rite or Law... nothing at all. Therefore, Paul brought up one of the more difficult situations in the early history of the Church.
- ▶ When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray...

Justified by Faith Alone

- ▶ When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs? "We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners' know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.

Gal 2:11-16

Crucified with Christ

- ▶ I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God, for if **righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!** Gal 2:20–21
- ▶ Paul next tries to teach them more about the gospel and why no one should suggest that the Law of Moses has anything to do with our salvation. But first, he asks a question...

Stay with the Spirit

- ▶ Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard? Gal 3:3,5
- ▶ These, of course, are rhetorical questions.

The Just Shall Live by Faith

- ▶ Anyone who attempts to live their life and gain salvation via the keeping of the Law will not be blessed... instead, they will receive a curse...
- ▶ All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, **"The righteous will live by faith."**
Gal 3:10–11

- ▶ In order to show the Galatian readers that this was not anything new, Paul reviewed the life of Abraham and showed how their great patriarch was granted righteousness through his faith in God... not because of any of his good works.
- ▶ What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed (Jesus) to whom the promise referred had come. Gal 3:18–19

The Purpose of the Law

- ▶ To demonstrate to the Jews how they should live and, therefore, to help the Jews live as good a life as humanly possible
- ▶ To point out that it was impossible to keep the Law perfectly so that the need for a Savior would become apparent
- ▶ To show the need for a “perfect blood sacrifice” for the forgiveness of sins – in the case of the Law, it was an animal sacrifice. One day, Jesus would be the ultimate fulfillment of this “blood sacrifice for humanity’s sins”

Christians are sons of God

- ▶ the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law. Gal 3:24–25
- ▶ Because you are sons, **God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts**, the Spirit who calls out, "*Abba*, Father." So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, **God has made you also an heir.** Gal 4:6–7

Paul teaches on life by the Spirit

- ▶ Paul goes on to ask the readers in these churches what has happened to them of late. He notes that when he left them not that long ago, they seemed to be “on fire” for Jesus. They seemingly understood the true gospel message. Not only that, but they had taken such good care of him when he was sick. So, what happened?
- ▶ Paul next gave them an intriguing example that he hoped would help them understand the difference between living a life in bondage to the Law vs. living a life freed by the grace of God. He used Sarah and Isaac and Hagar and Ishmael as his two examples.

Freedom through Christ

- ▶ It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love. Gal 5:1-6

- ▶ These people in the Galatian churches thought that they must believe in Jesus plus be circumcised in order to gain entrance into heaven. Paul told them if they did not correct that doctrinal error, they would be “alienated from Christ”.
- ▶ As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and **emasculate** themselves!
Gal 5:12

Be led by the Holy Spirit

- ▶ Paul next points out the importance of being led by the Holy Spirit as they live from day to day...
- ▶ So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. Gal. 5:16–18

Fruit of the Spirit

- ▶ The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.
- ▶ But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. Gal 5:19-26

- ▶ So to summarize Paul's points here in this portion of Galatians:
- ▶ Do not add anything to salvation by the grace of God through Jesus Christ.
- ▶ Be led by the Holy Spirit day by day, hour by hour, as we live our lives
- ▶ The fruit of the Holy Spirit will be seen in our lives as we strive toward sanctification
- ▶ **“Love your neighbor as yourself” Gal 5:14**

You reap what you sow

- ▶ Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Gal 6:7–8
- ▶ Paul tells all of his readers that God will settle everyone's account someday. God knows all of our hearts. He cannot be fooled.

Closing Words

- ▶ Paul also told us here in Galatians that **God does not want anyone adding on anything to His mechanism for salvation.** This is absolutely forbidden. Indeed, the major reason for writing this epistle was to get across this point.
- ▶ Conclusion

A New Creation in God

- ▶ May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation. Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of God. Finally, let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen. Gal 6:14–18

Ephesians

- ▶ **Author, Date, Key Facts:**
- ▶ Ephesus was a very important port city in Asia–Minor in the middle of the first century A.D.. Paul first visited this city as he made his return trip to Jerusalem as he was concluding his second missionary journey (A.D. 53). He went back there in A.D. 54, on his third mission trip and preached and taught there for three years. In A.D. 61, while a prisoner on house arrest in Rome, Paul wrote this letter to the folks in the church there.

History of the church at Ephesus

- ▶ Paul was able to have visitors while on house arrest. Mark, Timothy, Epaphroditus and Tychicus were four men who helped him a lot during those years. Tychicus carried the letter to the Ephesians upon its completion. Over the years, this church had a series of great leaders. Paul, of course, was leading the church during his three year stay in the mid-50's A.D. Prior to Paul's visit, Apollos had taught there and was instructed himself by Priscilla and Aquila. Paul later commissioned Timothy to lead the Ephesian Church. Decades later, the apostle John spent a great deal of time ministering in this city – he wrote his gospel while living there. As can be seen, this church has quite the impressive history of pastors.

- ▶ **Purpose:** Paul presented the Church as Christ's spiritual "body" of believers, Jew and Gentile, with Christ as the head. All Christians were to be joint heirs with Jesus Christ of the eternal gifts from God. He also reminded them of the richness of blessings that Jesus has given to each Christian. He concluded the letter with a discussion on how to defend against the spiritual warfare that every Christian will face at one time or another.

Synopsis

- ▶ Paul's introduction: Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. 4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will-- 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace Eph 1:3-7

The Christian's Hope in Christ

- ▶ Paul taught the Ephesians on the hope that they had in Christ... in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way. Eph 1:18–23

Saved by Grace Alone

- ▶ It is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.
Eph 2:8-10
- ▶ There is now no barrier between the Jew and the Gentile... Jesus has died for the entire world and to reconcile all people to Himself...

- ▶ Paul wrote this beautiful prayer...
- ▶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge--that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.
Eph 3:16-21
- ▶ After this prayer, Paul urged his readers to live their lives for Christ in a manner that was worthy of Christ's holy calling.

- ▶ Jesus apportioned out the spiritual gifts.
- ▶ It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Eph 4:11–13

Put on the new self

- ▶ Put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Eph 4:22–24
- ▶ do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Eph 4:30

- ▶ Keep at least two things in mind:
 - ▶ Find and use our spiritual gifts for the body of Christ... His Church
 - ▶ Obey Christ and live a holy life
- 

Husbands and Wives

- ▶ Husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church-- for we are members of his body. "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery-- but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. Eph 5:28-33

Honor your father and mother

- ▶ Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother"--which is the first commandment with a promise-- "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

Eph 6:1-5

Put on the full Armor of God

- ▶ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Armor of God

- ▶ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the **belt of truth** buckled around your waist, with the **breastplate of righteousness** in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

Armor of God

- ▶ In addition to all this, take up the **shield of faith**, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the **helmet of salvation** and the **sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God**. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. Eph 6:10–18
- ▶ Conclusion

Philippians

- ▶ **Author, Date, Key Facts:** Philippi was the first town in Macedonia where Paul established a church. He did this on his second missionary journey in A.D. 51. Many years later he became a prisoner in Rome on house arrest where he stayed for two years. This was the last of four letters that he wrote during those years of his arrest. This one was probably written in A.D. 61 /62. Philippi was an important city in the Roman Empire at that time as it was a gateway city to the east. Since this was the first church Paul founded in Macedonia, it represented the first major penetration of the gospel into Europe and to the Gentiles there.

Philippians

- ▶ In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy **5** because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, **6** being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. Phil 1:4–6

- ▶ **Purpose:** He wrote to commend the church there for its faith and to encourage them. He also sent it to thank them for their prayers and financial gifts. Paul also took the time to remind the believers there to be diligent to watch for those that would try to disrupt their relationship with God.

Synopsis

- ▶ Paul begins with a greeting from Timothy and himself.
- ▶ Paul notes that even though he is in chains while under arrest in Rome, things have continued to work out for the best. God has used his confinement to allow him to win many of the palace guards to Christ. Also, because of his current situation, other Christian saints have stepped up and have begun to spread the good news of the gospel. Paul then adds some very great words of wisdom concerning his predicament.

To live is Christ, to die is gain

- ▶ I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. **For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.** If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me.
Phil 1:18–26
- ▶ While on this earth, we should live with joy at the opportunity given to all of us to serve Jesus Christ... but, when our time comes... WOW!!! We then enter into and through the gates of heaven and live eternally with God and our Lord Jesus!

To Suffer for Christ

- ▶ For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have. Phil 1:29–30

A name above every name

- ▶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Phil 2:6–11
- ▶ Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation. Phil 2:14

- ▶ Paul follows this thought by telling the folks there in Philippi that he plans to send Timothy along with their friend Epaphroditus with this letter. He then praised Timothy for being a great example of the type of life that a Christian should strive to lead... looking out for the interests of Christ, not their own. He also commended Epaphroditus on his selfless service as well.

Confidence in Christ

- ▶ If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless. But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him... Phil 3:4–9
- ▶ Paul had come to the correct conclusion that we are saved only via our relationship with Jesus Christ. He had all of the right pedigree and training to be saved, if were possible, by the flesh... the Law. However, after meeting Christ on the road to Damascus, he realized that gaining salvation on one's own merits was impossible.

Press toward the goal

- ▶ Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: **Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.** Phil 3:12–14
- ▶ What is the goal? The prize?

- ▶ Euodia and Syntyche
- ▶ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. **Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things. Phil 4:4-8**
- ▶ I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Phil 4:13
- ▶ Conclusion

Colossians

- ▶ **Author, Date, Key Facts:** Paul wrote this epistle while in house arrest in Rome in A.D. 60–62. He wrote this letter during the same time period that he wrote Ephesians and Philemon. He wrote it to the people of the church in Colossae, Phrygia (in modern day Turkey). This city is located about 100 miles east of Ephesus. The Christian church there had significant members of both Jewish and Gentile believers. This church got its start when Paul evangelized Ephesus on his third missionary journey. Epaphras was the founder of this church.

- ▶ **Purpose:** Paul wrote this epistle after Epaphras came to him in Rome and told him of the problems he was having dealing with the attacks of heretics that were becoming all too prevalent during those years. So Paul wrote this letter to refute the heretical teachings and emphasize the total sufficiency of Christ.
- ▶ Tychicus left from Rome with this letter as well as the letter to Philemon.

Synopsis

- ▶ Paul opens with his typical greeting, as he and Timothy wish grace and peace from God to the church members there in Colossae. He told them that he and his friends there in Rome always thank God for the faith and love that the members of the church at Colossae clearly have demonstrated since turning to Christ.
- ▶ Paul then begins a mini-sermon on the supremacy of Christ.

The Supremacy of Jesus

- ▶ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. Col. 1:15–18
- ▶ Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation-- if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. Col. 1:21–23

The Mystery of God... Christ

- ▶ Paul said that he was struggling with the fact that he had not been able to come to them, nor the Laodicean church. He really wanted to help them become more knowledgeable about the “**mystery of God, namely Christ**” (Col 2:2).
- ▶ **For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. Col. 2:9**

Alive with Christ

- ▶ God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. Col 2:13–15
- ▶ Then Paul told the readers to not believe those who told them such things as:

False Doctrine

- ▶ A person needed to follow certain Holy Days in order to be saved
 - ▶ Circumcision was a requirement for salvation
 - ▶ Only certain foods could be eaten
 - ▶ Do not follow false teachers who speak on such things as the worship of angels
- 

Sanctification

- ▶ Put to death our earthly nature (lust, greed, evil desires, etc.)
- ▶ Learn to forgive others
- ▶ Eliminate anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Col 3:8
- ▶ Do not lie
- ▶ clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience Col 3:12
- ▶ Love one another
- ▶ Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts
- ▶ Be thankful to God
- ▶ Study the Word of God and keep it in your hearts
- ▶ Sing songs and hymns to God
- ▶ whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Col 3:17

Final Comments

- ▶ Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Col 3:23–24
- ▶ Paul then concludes with a note that includes those that are currently with him back in Rome as he serves out his sentence. It is interesting to note who these men are:

In Conclusion

- ▶ Mark, the cousin of Barnabas who had skipped out on Paul about 15 years earlier when they were on the famous first missionary journey. Paul and Mark were now best of friends
- ▶ Aristarchus – a fellow prisoner with Paul in Rome
- ▶ Jesus, who is called Justus – a friend of Paul
- ▶ Epaphras (the founder of the Colossian church)
- ▶ Luke the doctor (the writer of Acts and Luke)
- ▶ Demas – a companion of Paul during his first imprisonment
- ▶ Conclusion

1 Thessalonians

- ▶ **Author, Date and Key Facts:** During Paul's second missionary journey, he stopped in the Macedonian port city of Thessalonica to witness to the people concerning Christ. The Bible implies that Paul and Silas (and probably Timothy) stayed with a man named Jason while preaching there. Even within the first several weeks, Paul's preaching had won many converts to the New Covenant in that European city. Unfortunately, that resulted in the expulsion of the missionaries from the city. In fact, Jason had to provide some sort of a bond assuring that his visitors and house guests would not return and begin their evangelizing work again.

Paul's letter to Thessalonica

- ▶ Their first stop was in Berea where they found a receptive group of people. Many accepted Christ. However, when the Jews at Thessalonica heard that Paul was down at Berea, they went to that town and began making trouble again. So, Paul then left for Athens. Paul sent his young student and friend Timothy back to Thessalonica to encourage the newly planted church and to see just how they were doing. A few months later, Timothy rejoined Paul and Silas in Corinth ... he brought with him a full and very hopeful report on their brothers and sisters in the church at Thessalonica.
- ▶ At that time, Paul penned this letter to his newly made friends in that Macedonian city... he wrote this epistle in A.D. 51.

Reason for this letter

- ▶ **Purpose:** Paul had several reasons for writing this epistle to Thessalonica:
- ▶ To commend the brothers for their steadfastness in following Jesus
- ▶ To defend himself against slander from false teachers that had followed him there
- ▶ To encourage the new Christians to continue to stand firm against those who were spreading a false gospel
- ▶ To answer some of their questions about the afterlife

Synopsis

- ▶ Paul's complimentary opening. Then he speaks of his goals of ministry...
- ▶ Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

1 Thess 2:9-12

Tips toward sanctification

- ▶ It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body 1 Thess 4:3–4
- ▶ Paul urged them to excel even more in brotherly love... which they already practiced
- ▶ Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business 1 Thess 4:11

The Rapture

- ▶ The last section of the letter has Paul answering a question that apparently Timothy had brought to him from the brotherhood of that church. They were perplexed concerning what would happen to those Christians who had already died before the Lord had come back. Paul answered...
- ▶ Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him...

The Rapture

- ▶ According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words. 1 Thess 4:13-18

The Day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night

- ▶ Paul continued on this theme of the ends times. He told them that the sons of darkness would not have any idea when Jesus would return. On the other hand, since they lived in the light and had so much scripture to read and learn, they should not be caught totally unaware. Although, it is true that..
- ▶ **The day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.** 1 Thess 5:2

Christians are not appointed to wrath

- ▶ For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. 1 Thess 5:4–11
- ▶ After this discussion concerning the end-times, Paul concludes with an exhortation to live a steady Christian life
- ▶ Conclusion

2 Thessalonians

- ▶ **Author, Date, Key Facts and Purpose:** Paul wrote this epistle to the church at Thessalonica not very long after his first letter there in ~ A.D. 52. He had written about the end-times and the rapture in that first letter, but apparently, there had been some misunderstanding. Some there were under the impression that the tribulation was already beginning and that they apparently had missed the Rapture.
- ▶ Paul wrote this letter to set them straight.

The Tribulation

- ▶ Paul reminds them of his teachings concerning the end times. He notes that it certainly is not what they are experiencing at that time. He told them to relax and not follow every new prophecy that they heard or read about. Certain things would occur before the tribulation would begin, and Paul then mentions a few...

The Second Coming

- ▶ Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come **until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed**, the man doomed to destruction. **He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything** that is called God or is worshiped, so that **he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.** 2 Thess 2:1–4
- ▶ Paul goes on to say that this wicked Anti-Christ will not be revealed until something is removed from the earth... most commentators believe he is alluding to the Holy Spirit.

Do not be idle

- ▶ Paul notes that there will be many that will believe the lie of Satan and turn away from God and the gospel, leading to their condemnation and death.
- ▶ Paul then concludes his short letter by asking for their prayers and by actually then commanding them to...keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us. 2 Thess 3:6–7
- ▶ For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat." 2 Thess. 3:10
- ▶ Conclusion

1 Timothy

- ▶ **Author, Date, Key Facts:** The Apostle Paul wrote this epistle to his young protégé, Timothy after he was released from prison in Rome in approximately A.D. 62. It was written from Macedonia (northern Greece). This letter, along with 2 Timothy and Titus, are often referred to as the pastoral epistles as they include instructions for church pastors... in particular, Timothy and Titus.
- ▶ This letter was sent to Timothy in Ephesus in ~ A.D. 63.

- ▶ **Purpose:** Paul wrote this letter to encourage Timothy and give him instructions on organizing and running a local church as well as personal conduct. He also warned him to beware of false teachers and false doctrine... this problem was becoming prevalent in that time.

Synopsis

- ▶ To Timothy my true son in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. 1 Tim 1:2
- ▶ As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God's work--which is by faith. The goal of this command is love. 1 Tim 3:4

Paul, the chief of sinners

- ▶ Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners--of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life. 1 Tim 1:13-16
- ▶ Paul then instructed Timothy on his primary mission there in Ephesus...

Timothy's Job Description

- ▶ I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone-- for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men--the testimony given in its proper time. 1 Tim 2:1-6
- ▶ The next portion of this first letter to Timothy involved a description of what Paul saw as Timothy's job there in Ephesus. Paul instructed him on various aspects of the ministry. He wrote concerning the qualifications for overseers and deacons. He also discussed the role of both men and woman in the church.

- ▶ The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. 1 Timothy 4:1–2
- ▶ Paul then continued with his practical instruction on how to deal with the various categories of people in the church.
- ▶ Paul's concluding words to Timothy in this letter...

Paul's Exhortation to Timothy

- ▶ We brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. **For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.** Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.
- ▶ But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

1 Tim 6:7-12

2 Timothy

- ▶ **Author, Date, Key Facts:** The epistle of 2 Timothy was written by Paul shortly before his death at the hands of Roman government. After his fourth missionary journey, Paul was placed under arrest once again in approximately A.D. 66–67. This time, the imprisonment was by Nero and was not at all as reasonable. Nero had begun a ruthless persecution of Christians after a fire burned down Rome in A.D. July, 64. Some blamed him for the fire. He tried to deflect the blame onto the Christians. This began a decadent time for Rome... a time that included having prisoners thrown to the lions!

- ▶ **Purpose:** This letter was therefore a letter of encouragement and exhortation for Timothy. Even at death's door, Paul was working to provide adequate leadership for the Church upon his passing.

Synopsis

- ▶ Opening Remarks: I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline. So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, who has saved us and called us to a holy life--not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace.

- ▶ This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day. 2 Tim 1:6-12

Endure All for Christ

- ▶ Paul continued to exhort Timothy to endure any and all suffering that may come his way as he served Christ. He even quoted a song that those in the church sang in those days...
 - ▶ If we died with him, we will also live with him;
 - ▶ if we endure, we will also reign with him.
 - ▶ If we disown him, he will also disown us;
 - ▶ if we are faithless, he will remain faithful,
 - ▶ for he cannot disown himself.
- 2 Tim 2:11-13

Paul continues to teach Timothy

- ▶ Paul warned of those teaching the false gospel
- ▶ Paul told Timothy to avoid being argumentative.
- ▶ An end time prophecy followed these words of advice... There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God-- having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.

2 Tim 3:1-5

The Scripture

- ▶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.
2 Tim 3:16-17
- ▶ Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.
2 Tim 4:2-4

Paul's Coming Death

- ▶ For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day--and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing. 2 Tim 4:6-8
- ▶ The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. 2 Tim 4:18
- ▶ Paul says his goodbyes...

Titus

- ▶ **Author, Date, Key Facts:** Paul wrote this very short letter to Titus sometime during the time between his first and second Roman imprisonments (approx. A.D. 63–65). He wrote it from either Nicopolis or Corinth and it was probably delivered to Titus in Crete by Zenas or Apollos.
- ▶ Titus presumably was converted to Christianity by Paul early on in Paul's missionary journeys. At one point in his ministry, he decided to stay in Crete and that is where Paul wrote to him at this time.

- ▶ **Purpose:** Paul wrote this letter to give Titus clear instructions on certain aspects of organizing and running the church on the island and to bolster Titus's authority by virtue of having received this letter from the famous apostle, Paul.

Synopsis

- ▶ After a beautiful opening, Paul quickly tells Titus the reason for leaving him in Crete.
- ▶ The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Titus 1:5–6

Cretans

- ▶ Paul went on to say to Titus to be aware of the false teachers in Crete who had been described earlier in the following way...
- ▶ Even one of their own prophets has said, "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons." This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the commands of those who reject the truth. Titus 1:12-14
- ▶ Paul then goes on to give Titus specific instructions on how to teach different groups of the church: older men, younger men, older women, younger women and slaves.

More Words of Advice

- ▶ For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. These, then, are the things you should teach. encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.

Titus 2:11–15

- ▶ Conclusion

Philemon

- ▶ **Author, Date, Key Facts:** Paul wrote this short epistle to a man named Philemon while he was a prisoner in Rome sometime between the years A.D. 60–61. A friend of Paul's, Tychicus would deliver the letter in the same trip in which he delivered Paul's letter to the church at Colossae.

- ▶ **Purpose:** Paul had made good friends with a person named Onesimus during the time of his Roman house arrest. The two men spent a lot of time together, talking and worshipping God. Paul led Onesimus to Jesus and wanted to help him out as much as possible... as he certainly had some serious problems. Onesimus was a run-away slave and a thief!
- ▶ Paul attempts to get Philemon, his master, to accept Onesimus back without exacting a penalty. Exactly how Paul plans to accomplish this task is the essence of the letter.

Synopsis

- ▶ Paul begins the letter with greetings to not only Philemon, but also to Apphia, and to Archippus (probably the wife and son of Philemon) and to the entire church that met in their home. Paul then compliments Philemon on his faithfulness as a Christian brother.
- ▶ Paul then asks for Philemon to allow Onesimus to go free.

Paul's Request

- ▶ Therefore, although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do, yet I appeal to you on the basis of love. I then, as Paul--an old man and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus-- I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains. Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me. I am sending him--who is my very heart--back to you. I would have liked to keep him with me so that he could take your place in helping me while I am in chains for the gospel. But I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that any favor you do will be spontaneous and not forced...

Paul's Request

- ▶ Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back for good-- no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother (note how Paul subtly suggests that Philemon free Onesimus here). He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord (Paul points out that these two men should not be looked at as master and slave... but as two men who are simply brothers in Christ). So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back--not to mention that you owe me your very self..... I do wish, brother, that I may have some benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ. Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask. Philemon 1:8-21

Hebrews

- ▶ **Author, Date, Key Facts:** There is not a consensus as to the human author of this excellent New Testament epistle. Today, most theologians believe that Paul probably wrote this letter, but good arguments can be made for other human authors.
- ▶ Most theologians place the date sometime between A.D. 67–69. However, it is possible that a somewhat later date is correct. Certainly it was written before A.D. 95, as this letter was quoted by Clement of Rome at that time.

- ▶ **Purpose:** The message given in this general epistle to all Hebrew Christians in the mid-first century A.D. was to demonstrate that the New Covenant brought to the world through Jesus Christ was infinitely better than the Old Covenant. Many of the recent Hebrew converts were having second thoughts about this New Covenant and were dangerously close to abandoning their walk with Christ. The writer gives them many reasons to hold on to their new found belief system as he shows them how following Christ is the proper way, and the only way, to salvation and an eternity in heaven.
- ▶ Another theme of this epistle is that with the New Covenant the Christian now has direct access to God.

Synopsis

- ▶ The writer presents Jesus...
- ▶ In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. Heb 1:1-3

Characteristics of Jesus

- ▶ With this opening, the writer points out many great things concerning Jesus:
- ▶ **Jesus is heir to everything in the universe**
- ▶ **God is speaking through Jesus in these “last days” – from that time until the Millennial Kingdom**
- ▶ **Jesus is synonymous with God the Father**
- ▶ **Jesus sustains the universe by His Word**
- ▶ **Jesus died on the cross to provide salvation for mankind**
- ▶ **Jesus currently is sitting at the right hand of God, the Father**

The Superiority of Jesus

- ▶ The entire first chapter of Hebrews is concerned with showing just how Jesus is superior to the angels.
- ▶ **Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. Heb 2:8–9**

Jesus came to save mankind

- ▶ Jesus came to the earth to die for men and women... not angels.
- ▶ **For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants.** For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. Heb 2:16-18
- ▶ Jesus is also greater than Moses... and reasons are given.

A Warning is Given

- ▶ It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance. Heb 6:4–6
- ▶ OSAS vs. Conditional Perseverance

Melchizedek

- ▶ There follows an interesting discussion about a priest named Melchizedek who was first mentioned in Genesis. Without going into much detail, the essence of the argument is that Melchizedek was actually a priest of a higher “order” than the Levitical priests. Jesus was then stated to be a priest of the “order of Melchizedek”.

- ▶ Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. Such a high priest meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day. Heb. 7:23–28
- ▶ Here is noted the primacy of Jesus versus the Old Covenant sacrificial system. One was not able to save... the sacrifice of Jesus is unto salvation.

The Need for a New Covenant

- ▶ This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. **I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.** No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear. Heb 8:10-13

Jesus our High Priest

- ▶ When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.
Heb 9:11-12

Christ awaits the saints in heaven

- ▶ For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. Heb 9:24-28

Faith

- ▶ **Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Heb 11:1**
- ▶ The remainder of the chapter reminds the Hebrew readers of the great faith of nearly twenty of their Old Testament saints. The purpose of this review is two-fold. Of course, the hope would be that by recalling how the great leaders of their nation had put their faith in God, the Hebrew Christians and those considering following Christ, would similarly put their faith in Jesus. Secondly, the writer noted how there was a great cloud of witnesses in heaven that would be proud of those that chose the right path... the path set down by Jesus Christ.

Witnesses in Heaven

- ▶ Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Heb 12:1–3

Godly Discipline

- ▶ "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because **the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.**"

Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons.

Heb 12:5–9

- ▶ A final appeal is made once again to the Jewish readers who were in danger of turning their backs on Jesus Christ and returning to their old ways and Old Covenant. This would only result in terrible sorrow as these Jews now knew the truth of the Gospel.
- ▶ But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant Heb 12:22-24

Concluding Words

- ▶ Since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our "God is a consuming fire." Heb 12:28–29
- ▶ May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Hebrews 13:20–21

James

- ▶ **Author, Date, Key Facts:** James, the half-brother of Jesus, wrote this general epistle. At first, James was not a believer in Jesus... but, after seeing and visiting with his brother after He was resurrected from the dead, that belief changed. He actually became the leader of the church in Jerusalem and, apparently, remained in that position until his death. According to Josephus, he was martyred in A.D. 62. Most theologians date this book as the earliest of the epistles, written sometime between A.D. 44-48.

- ▶ **Purpose:** The topics James covered in his epistle related primarily to faith in Jesus put into action. He wanted his audience to understand that true faith always results in good works... always. He gives them several *tests* that they could use to evaluate whether they had true faith.

Synopsis

- ▶ James begins by addressing this letter to the twelve tribes of Israel, scattered “among the nations”. He then starts out with some great advice...
- ▶ Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that **the testing of your faith develops perseverance**. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

James 1:2–8

Trust God in all things

- ▶ The main point made here is to face all of life's trials with a positive attitude. A Christian should realize that God will use these trials to build a better, more Christ-like person. Becoming more like Christ should be every Christian's primary goal in life. When a Christian faces difficulties and sorrows, he should ask through prayer for God's help... strongly trusting that God will provide this help. No one should doubt that God will answer their prayers. When a Christian does persevere under the trials of life, blessings will follow:
- ▶ Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. James 1:12

Temptation

- ▶ For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone. James 1:13
- ▶ It is true that all temptation and all difficulties that we experience in life are *allowed* by God. However, He is not the *cause* of any temptation and He will not allow the Christian to be tempted beyond what he can endure.

Saving Faith

- ▶ James then begins his teaching on true, saving faith. It is simply not enough to simply say that one believes in Jesus Christ as their Savior. If this is actually true, that person's actions will reflect this belief.
- ▶ **Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.** James 1:22
- ▶ Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe--and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that **faith without works is dead?**
James 2:17-21

Abraham and Rahab

- ▶ Two excellent examples are then given to show exactly what James meant. Both Abraham and Rahab proved their **faith** in God by their **actions**:
- ▶ Abraham was prepared to actually sacrifice his son
- ▶ Rahab gave shelter and direction to the Israeli spies
- ▶ Genuine faith produces good works for God.

The Power of the Tongue

- ▶ Interestingly, James spends a reasonable amount of time discussing the **power of the “tongue”**. This little organ possesses great power if you think about it. It can be used for great good... beautiful singing, great and powerful speeches have changed history, superb preaching has led millions to Christ, etc. On the other hand, the tongue can be very destructive.

Some Important Advice

- ▶ Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. James 3:1
- ▶ Submit yourselves, then, to God. **Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.** Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. James 4:7-10

A Few Sage Comments

- ▶ You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes James 4:14
- ▶ The Lord is full of compassion and mercy. James 5:11
- ▶ The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. James 5:16
- ▶ Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins. James 5:20
- ▶ Concluding remarks

1 Peter

- ▶ **Author, Date, Key Facts:** Christians in the first century were subject to persecution for their faith. As we will see, virtually all of the apostles actually were martyred for their faith in Jesus. This persecution reached horrifying levels at the hands of Nero just after the burning of Rome in A.D. 64. He blamed the Christians for the destruction of much of Rome and set out to punish them – this was done in large measure as his attempt to deflect blame from himself.
- ▶ Peter wrote this first epistle to all the Christians in the world at that time... the time was approximately A.D. 63/64, just before Nero's great persecution really began and just after the death of James.

- ▶ The letter states that it was written from Babylon. Babylon could have either been the ancient city that is on the Euphrates River or been “code” for Rome (Rome was referred to as “Babylon” by victims of the oppression during that time). Peter was purportedly crucified upside down on a cross only 4–5 years after he wrote this letter (~ A.D. 68). He asked to be crucified in this manner as he did not believe himself worthy to be crucified in the same way as his Master, Jesus.

- ▶ **Purpose:** Peter wrote this letter to:
 - ▶ Encourage Christians (Jewish and Gentile) to stay strong
 - ▶ To instruct people in the means to salvation and point to the many blessings received by Christians
 - ▶ Give instructions concerning proper submission to authority
 - ▶ Discuss how to live for the Lord even through much suffering
- 

Synopsis

- ▶ Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, who have been **chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood:** Grace and peace be yours in abundance. 1 Peter 1:1–2

- ▶ God chose His people according to His foreknowledge
- ▶ the Holy Spirit works in each Christian for the purpose of sanctification
- ▶ the Christian's duty is to obey Christ
- ▶ the shed blood of Jesus was required for our salvation.

Praise God for all blessings

- ▶ Peter continued and said that all Christians should praise God for all the blessings He has given them... most notably the gift of eternal life in heaven with Him. It is true that all Christians will suffer at some time for their faith, especially those who obey Christ as they should. Yet, this suffering will result in good:

Faith may prove genuine

- ▶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that **your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.** Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

1

Peter 1:6-9

Peter's Advice

- ▶ Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so **be holy** in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy"
1 Peter 1:13–16
- ▶ Salvation was bought with a price.

Peter's Advice cont.

- ▶ **Love one another deeply, from the heart. For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. 1 Peter 1:22–23**

The Living Stone

- ▶ As you come to him, the living Stone (Jesus) -- rejected by men (the majority of Israel) but chosen by God and precious to him-- you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (all Christians are temples of the Holy Spirit and should live for Jesus at all times). For in Scripture it says:
"See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone (Jesus, of course), and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

- ▶ Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone, a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall."

1 Peter 2:4–8

- ▶ Jesus is the Rock upon which the Church is built. He is the power unto salvation for those who ask Him into their hearts. However, for those who reject Him, such as most of Israel did in that day, He becomes a stumbling block, so to speak. Why? Because there is only one way to heaven and it is through Jesus. (see John 14:6)

- ▶ Peter goes on to exhort his readers to fight against sin in their lives at all times. He notes that they may be able to win others to Christ simply due to their example...
- ▶ Dear friends, I urge you, as **aliens and strangers in the world**, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.
1 Peter 2:11–12
- ▶ Peter continued with instructions on how to live in harmony with others...

Husbands and Wives

- ▶ On husbands and wives...
- ▶ woman are spiritual equals
- ▶ as the physically weaker sex (typically), the husband must make sure to protect his wife and certainly never abuse her in any way
- ▶ wives are an equal half in the marriage - when a man and a woman marry they become **one flesh** and **must work together in harmony**
- ▶ In turn, wives should honor and respect their husbands.

Know how to defend your beliefs

- ▶ Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. 1 Peter 3:15–17

Trust in the Lord

- ▶ be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because **love covers over a multitude of sins.**
- ▶ Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But **rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ**, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. **If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.**

1 Peter 4:7-8,12-14

Cast your anxiety on the Lord

- ▶ After asking the elders to remember to lead their flock and set a good example in the difficult days and years to come, Peter concluded with some well known words to all Christians...
- ▶ **Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.**

Stand firm in the faith

- ▶ Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power forever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 5:6–11
- ▶ Peter then wraps the letter up.

2 Peter

- ▶ **Author, Date, Key Facts:** Peter wrote this epistle in approximately A.D. 67, not very long before his martyrdom. He was crucified upside down during the wicked reign of Nero. Peter wrote it while in the city of Rome. Rome had become a terrible place for Christians ever since A.D. 64 when fire destroyed a large portion of that great city.
- ▶ There are many similarities between this epistle and the epistle of Jude. One may have used the other as a resource while composing their letter.

- ▶ **Purpose:** This letter was written to warn the churches of Asia Minor, Greece and the surrounding area of the influx of false prophets and their false gospel. Peter also wrote to encourage the people in their faith and Christian walk. In the final portion of the epistle, he wrote of the second coming of Christ.

Synopsis

- ▶ After his introduction, where he wished the readers grace and peace through the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, Peter reminded them how God had given them everything that they needed to live a life of godliness and holiness.
- ▶ you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
2 Peter 1:11
- ▶ Peter went on to say that he would intermittently remind them of these things as long as he had life. He knew that the Lord Jesus would want him to do this. He also told them that he knew that it would not be much longer before he would be going to be with Jesus

The Old Testament Prophets

- ▶ Peter also wrote that another very important reason to believe on Jesus as the Son of God and that He is our Savior is the testimony of the Old Testament prophets. There are multitudes of Old Testament prophecies that Jesus had fulfilled... far too many to be just coincidences.
- ▶ After pointing out the importance of the Christian leading a holy life and pursuing sanctification, given the veracity of the New Covenant and the reality of Jesus Christ, Peter went on to speak to them about the false teachers and false doctrines that were becoming far too prevalent at that time in history.
- ▶ In fact, Peter really ripped into these evil men...

Unrighteous Men – False Prophets

- ▶ the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment. 10 This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature and despise authority. Bold and arrogant, these men are not afraid to slander celestial beings; 11 yet even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not bring slanderous accusations against such beings in the presence of the Lord. 12 But these men blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like brute beasts, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like beasts they too will perish.

2 Peter 2:9–12

The Day of the Lord

- ▶ The final point of discussion in his second epistle related to “the day of the Lord”...
- ▶ in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word **the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire**, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.
2 Peter 3:1,3-7

God's Time is not Man's Time

- ▶ But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: **With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.** The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, **not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.** 2 Peter 3:8–9
- ▶ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. 2 Peter 3:10
- ▶ All Christians should be looking forward to that day and be living a holy life.

Peter's Letter Comes to a Close

- ▶ Peter ended this second letter with:
- ▶ But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever! Amen. 2 Peter 3:18

1 John

- ▶ Author, Date, Key Facts: This first epistle of John was written by the apostle John in approximately A.D. 90 from Ephesus. He wrote to those believers in Asia Minor, but to no specific church. Therefore, this epistle is known as a “general” epistle.

- ▶ **Purpose:** John wrote this letter to counter the growing heresy that was infecting the Church as the first century was drawing to a close. Gnosticism was growing. One important subset of this heretical teaching, known as Docetism, was also on the rise. Docetism was a belief system that denied that Jesus had actually been born to Mary in a human body... that is, as flesh and blood. Instead, they believed that Jesus Christ did not actually have a real body, but *only the appearance of a body*.

Synopsis

- ▶ John begins his important letter by telling his readers that he (and many others, including all of the apostles) has seen everything that he is about to tell them concerning Jesus Christ... with their own eyes! This was the same Jesus who had existed from eternity past. John had actually seen Jesus Christ in bodily form.

God is Light

- ▶ This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: **God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.* If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives** 1 John 1:1-10

If we know Jesus we will obey Him

- ▶ We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: **Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.** 1 John 2:3–6
- ▶ We surely can doubt the salvation of many people who claim to be Christians but who live their lives as if Jesus and his commands were irrelevant. However, we are not to judge others... that is to be left for Jesus.

- ▶ Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 1 John 2:15
- ▶ John tells the reader that anyone who claims that Jesus is anyone other than God the Son, is wrong and a false teacher, a heretic. Anyone who denies Jesus and the biblical view of Jesus, denies the Father as well. To deny Jesus is to doom oneself to hell.

Important Facts About True Saints

- ▶ **No one who lives in him keeps on sinning.** No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him. Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. **He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. He who does what is sinful is of the devil,...** the reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.
- ▶ **No one who is born of God will continue to sin,** because God's seed remains in him; **he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.** This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: **Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.** 1 John 3:6-10

- ▶ John continued to show the evidence of a true believer. He stated that a Christian will love his brother and demonstrate this love with his actions... for example, giving to the poor.
- ▶ Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.
1 John 3:18
- ▶ this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us. 1 John 3:23–24

Importance of Love

- ▶ We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother. 1 John 4:19–21
- ▶ This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome 1 John 5:2–3

John's Comments on a true Christian

- ▶ God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. 1 John 5:11–12
- ▶ if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us--whatever we ask--we know that we have what we asked of him. 1 John 5:14–15
- ▶ We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him. 1 John 5:18
- ▶ We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. 1 John 5:19

Conclusion

- ▶ This concluded his first letter to the various churches in Asia Minor. Even in those days, this letter surely circulated much beyond Asia Minor and into the farthest reaches of the Christian world of that time. It was very important as an instrument to help curtail the growing Gnostic movement that was competing with Christianity in those days. John soon sent out two other shorter letters as well.

2 John

- ▶ **Author, Date, Key Facts:** This epistle was written by John the apostle just a short time after he wrote 1 John. He wrote this letter from Ephesus as well, sometime around A.D. 90.

- ▶ **Purpose:** John wrote this letter to a “chosen lady and her children” to warn them of false teachers and to encourage them and commend them for their Christian walk. Some theologians believe that the “chosen lady” is code for the local church. If so, that makes the “children” the congregation of the church. Of course, John may well be writing to a specific Christian lady and her actual children.

Synopsis

- ▶ Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, will be with us in truth and love. It has given me great joy to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as the Father commanded us. And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. **I ask that we love one another. And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands.** As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love. 2 John 1:3–6

Watch out for Deceivers

- ▶ John then gets to his main point of the letter. He wants this lady to be more discriminating when welcoming preachers and/or teachers into her home.
- ▶ Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching (i.e. the true gospel), do not take him into your house or welcome him. Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work. 2 John 1:7, 10-11
- ▶ Conclusion

3 John

- ▶ **Author, Date, Key Facts:** This was the third letter that the apostle John wrote while living in Ephesus late in his life. He referred to himself as “The Elder”. This term conveyed to the recipient the advanced age as well as the authority of the individual writing the letter. It was written in approximately A.D. 90 – shortly after 2 John was penned.

- ▶ **Purpose:** This was a very short letter to a man named Gaius, a member of one of the churches that was under John's oversight during those years. John wrote it to address the issue of Christian hospitality.

Synopsis

- ▶ John begins this short letter by commending Gaius for his fine Christian walk. Certain Christian brothers had reported this recently when they had stopped by to visit the apostle John. However, John did want to point out one thing...
- ▶ John reprimanded another member of that church by the name of Diotrophes for doing just the opposite. Apparently, this man would have nothing to do with travelling missionaries. He even interfered with their work...

Diotrephes

- ▶ I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will have nothing to do with us. So if I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, gossiping maliciously about us. Not satisfied with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church.
3 John 1:9-10
- ▶ This man, Diotrephes, had set himself up as a demagogue it would seem. He wanted to be the “man” in his local church. Everything must center around him. He apparently even denied John’s apostolic leadership.
- ▶ His point being made, John closed this letter saying that he hoped to be seeing his friend Gaius very soon.

Jude

- ▶ **Author, Date, Key Facts:** Jude was James's brother... and the half-brother of Jesus. The letter was written sometime around A.D. 69. The exact date is not known. The city in which it was written is also not known. Jude seems to have been referenced by Paul to be a married man who travelled around Palestine preaching the gospel since the death and resurrection of Christ. This letter was written to all Jewish Christians... thus, it is referred to as a "general epistle".

- ▶ **Purpose:** This letter was written to warn believers about the increasing apostasy that was entering into the Church. Gnosticism was on the rise. More and more heresy was finding its way into the Church. Jude warns that it is of the utmost importance to reject all of these teachings.

Contend for the faith

- ▶ **Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord. Jude 1:3-4**

- ▶ Note what Jude is specifically talking about here. He is concerned about those false teachers who are mistaking the grace of Jesus for a license to sin! In addition to this perverse teaching, he also points out that some are denying the unique position of Jesus as God the Son and our only hope and way for salvation...
- ▶ Jude next goes on and gives examples of Old Testament Jews and even angels who foolishly and with pride rejected God and turned to immorality only to become examples of those who “suffer the punishment of eternal fire”.
Jude 1:7

- ▶ Jude condemns false teachers as those living immoral lives, defying proper authority and scoffing at the powers of celestial beings (even the power of Satan and of demons should not be taken lightly).
- ▶ Jude went on to tell how even the archangel Michael called on God to defeat Satan when that was needed... even an archangel did not take the powers of darkness lightly.

Some very important advice

- ▶ But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. They said to you, "In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires." These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit. But you, dear friends, **build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.**

▶ Be merciful to those who doubt; snatch others from the fire and save them to others show mercy, mixed with fear--hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh. To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy-- to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen. Jude 1:17-25

▶ Conclusion

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

- ▶ **Author, Date, Key Facts:** The Revelation of Jesus Christ is the last book in the New Testament. It was written in approximately A.D. 95, while the apostle John was on the Isle of Patmos. He had been exiled there during the persecution of Christians under the Roman Emperor, Domitian. John had been fearlessly preaching the gospel of his Lord, Jesus Christ, while leading the church at Ephesus. While there in Patmos, Jesus appeared to his old friend in a grand vision.

- ▶ **Purpose:** This book is an amazing book of prophecy. It begins, however, with a brief letter to each of seven churches in Asia Minor. These are churches with leaders and congregations that John knew fairly well. Remember, he had been a leader of the entire Christian movement for over sixty years... much of his time had been spent in Asia Minor.
- ▶ After the messages to these churches, John launches into a description of the apocalyptic vision that Jesus had given him of the last days... in particular, the seven year tribulation period that just precedes the return of Jesus to set up His Millennial Kingdom on earth.

Synopsis

- ▶ The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who testifies to everything he saw--that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near. Rev 1:1-3
- ▶ Jesus then told John to write to seven churches in Asia Minor... churches that were not far apart from one another. This letter would then be circulated among these churches. Then, of course, it would find its way to all the churches...and eventually become a part of New Testament canon.

The Alpha and the Omega

- ▶ Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen. "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." Rev 1:7–8

Letters to Seven Churches

- ▶ I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, which said: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea."
Rev 1:9-11

The Son of God

- ▶ I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone "like a son of man," dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

The First and the Last

- ▶ When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades. Rev 1:12-18
- ▶ John had just experienced an incredible vision of Jesus Christ in all of His heavenly glory. As is always the case when a mere man meets God in His heavenly glory, John dropped to the ground in worship and, frankly, fear. Jesus quickly put his good friend John at ease.

Messages to the Churches

- ▶ In the next couple of chapters, Jesus tells John the message that He has for each of the seven churches (represented in the vision as seven lampstands).
- ▶ The words are actually meant for the church named of that time in history
- ▶ The picture given for each local church represents a period of church history and the attitudes and performance of the Christian Church as a whole during each of seven future time periods
- ▶ Each message to each church has something important for all churches of all times... this is often referred to as the *composite* interpretation
- ▶ A brief comment on these seven letters...

The Church Likely Raptured

- ▶ He ended his message to each church with similar words such as:
- ▶ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God. Rev 2:7
- ▶ After these letters to the seven churches are given, there is no further mention of the church for the next fifteen chapters. Many commentators say that this is because the church is taken up to heaven at the rapture and all of the discussion in these next fifteen chapters relates to the Tribulation period.

The Throne in Heaven

- ▶ "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne. Rev 4:1–3
- ▶ Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it.

Jesus is “worthy” to open the seals

- ▶ I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals." Rev 5:1–5
- ▶ **"You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."** (note this... Christians will reign with Christ on earth one day) Rev. 5:9–10
- ▶ Then Jesus began to open the **seven seals**, one by one...

The Seven Seals

- ▶ white horse – represents conquering without bloodshed (the Antichrist's first method)
- ▶ red horse – war – soon after the Antichrist comes onto the scene, war will result
- ▶ black horse – famine – worldwide famine will come
- ▶ pale horse – represents death and Hades
- ▶ martyrs – related to the martyrs who had died for Christ as they wondered when they would be avenged... Christ told them the wait would be a little longer
- ▶ a great earthquake, moon turns red, sun turns black... a lot more of God's wrath is poured out
- ▶ not yet...

The Great Day of the Lord

- ▶ Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?" Rev 6:15-17
- ▶ While this is going on down on earth, the Christians who have been raptured just prior to the beginning of the tribulation plus those that accepted Jesus during the tribulation... and were martyred as many will be, are shown to be worshipping God in heaven.
- ▶ Many of the people who became Christians did so because they were witnessed to by the 144,000 Jews (12,000 from each of the 12 tribes) who finally recognized exactly who Jesus Christ was and still is... the Messiah. These Jews are supernaturally protected from harm as they became great evangelists across the world and won many to Christ.

Seven Trumpets

- ▶ *At this point, the 7th seal was opened...* and there was a pause for 30 minutes...
- ▶ Then, **seven angels** were ready to blow **seven trumpets**.
- ▶ They began to sound their trumpets in order... with the following results:
- ▶ Hail, fire and blood hurled to the earth – one third of earth burned
- ▶ Something like a huge mountain was thrown into the sea – one third of sea creatures died
- ▶ A large star (asteroid) fell to the earth – great damage

Trumpet Judgments cont.

- ▶ The sun, moon and stars were changed in some way resulting in a change in the pattern of day and night
- ▶ Locusts are unleashed to torment those without God's seal of salvation
- ▶ 200,000,000 horsemen are unleashed – killing 1 / 3 of the world's remaining population
- ▶ After this sixth trumpet, John was brought a “small scroll” by an angel. At the angels command, John ate the book. This scroll tasted sweet in his mouth, but turned sour in his stomach... as predicted by the angel. After this, John is commanded to measure the Temple of God. He also sees *two witnesses* of God.

The Two Witnesses

- ▶ The *two witnesses* are able to witness for God for forty-two months (the first half of the Great Tribulation) with supernatural protection and power. Many Bible scholars believe these men will be Elijah and Moses.
- ▶ Whoever they are, after their work is done, they are killed by the Antichrist. Satan cannot hurt any of God's children unless and until God allows it. [Until a Christian's work is done on earth, God will protect him/her from death]. After three and one half days, they will be raised from the dead and ascend into heaven. An earthquake will devastate a large portion of Jerusalem and kill 7,000 people. Then, *the seventh trumpet* sounds.

The Seventh Trumpet Sounds

- ▶ The blowing of the seventh trumpet announces the imminent coming of Jesus to defeat Satan and set up His millennial kingdom on earth. Certain details are given about the last 3 1/2 years of the seven year tribulation.
- ▶ Chapter 12 begins by telling of a woman giving birth to a child, while a dragon stood before her waiting to devour her baby.

The Battle in Heaven

- ▶ She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne. The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days. And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down--that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. **Rev 12:5-9**
- ▶ They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! **Rev 12:11-12**

The Two Beasts

- ▶ A *beast*, the Antichrist, would arise “out of the sea” and Satan would empower him with great power, even to the point that he would recover from a fatal wound. This would astonish the world and result in his gaining of power. Unsaved men and women would worship this man and follow his commands.
- ▶ Soon after these events, another man (*beast*) would come on the scene who would also be on the side of Satan. He would perform many miraculous signs that would gain him a big following. However, this “false prophet” would order the people to set up an image in honor of the Antichrist (the first *beast* on the world scene). This false prophet also made people take a mark in order to buy or sell...

666

- ▶ He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name. This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the **number of the beast**, for it is man's number. His number is **666**.
Rev 13:16–18
- ▶ Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. Rev. 14:1

Three Angels

- ▶ At that point, John saw three angels come and proclaim the final judgment on the earth.
- ▶ First angel said, “Fear God and give Him glory for the hour of His judgment is come.”
- ▶ Second angel said, “Fallen, Fallen, is Babylon the great.”
- ▶ Third angel said, "If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury Rev 14:7–10

Seven Vials

- ▶ The next section describes the bloodiest war in history, Armageddon. Seven angels will pour out **seven last plagues** onto the earth. **Seven bowls of God's wrath** were then poured out as John watched the results.
- ▶ These plagues resulted in the following terrible things: bodily sores (for those who had taken mark of the beast), all sea-life died, rivers turned to blood, the sun's heat began to scorch people's skin, darkness came over the land, the Euphrates River dried up to make way for the 200,000,000 man army to march on Israel, and a massive earthquake with giant hailstones erupted. This earthquake will be unbelievably terrible.

“MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES”

- ▶ Mystery Babylon represents the *false church* which becomes prominent in the latter days. This “church” will turn to worship the Antichrist during the first half of the tribulation.
- ▶ When the mid-point of the seven year tribulation period is reached, the Antichrist will turn against this apostate church and destroy it. Also, at the mid-point of the tribulation, the Antichrist will stop the Jewish sacrifices in the rebuilt Temple of God.
- ▶ In their place, he will defile the Temple with inappropriate, sacreligious sacrifices or worse. The final 3 ½ years will be a time of great spiritual and physical battles between the evil forces of Satan and the Holy forces of God.

Babylon the Great

- ▶ Babylon will also be a great economic power during the later portion of the seven year Tribulation. Then...
- ▶ "Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great! Therefore in one day her plagues will overtake her: death, mourning and famine. She will be consumed by fire, for mighty is the Lord God who judges her.
"When the kings of the earth who committed adultery with her and shared her luxury see the smoke of her burning, they will weep and mourn over her. Terrified at her torment, they will stand far off and cry:
"Woe! Woe, O great city, O Babylon, city of power! In one hour your doom has come!" Rev. 18:2,8-9

A Celebration in Heaven

- ▶ "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." Rev 19:6–8
(fine linen = righteous acts of the saints)

The Second Coming

- ▶ I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God (this is Jesus). The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean.

Armageddon

- ▶ Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. Rev 19:11-16

The Fate of the Evil Ones

- ▶ And the fate of the Antichrist and false prophet?
- ▶ The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. Rev 19:20
- ▶ Satan's fate was a bit different...
- ▶ He (an angel) seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time. Rev 20:2-3

- ▶ The last portion of The Revelation of Jesus Christ gives a few details concerning the Millennial Kingdom. Those who trusted in Jesus will help Jesus reign on earth during this thousand year period. Those people who rejected Jesus will have to stand before the Great White Throne Judgment at the conclusion of the Millennium. They will have no chance for salvation, but the specifics of their eternal life separated from God will be given.

The Final Battle

- ▶ When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth--Gog and Magog--to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. **And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.**

Rev 20:7-11

New Jerusalem

- ▶ If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. Rev 20:15
- ▶ God concludes the New Testament with a beautiful description of the New Jerusalem. John had a chance to see the new heaven and the new earth. He also saw the Holy City of Jerusalem coming down from the heaven.

New Heaven and New Earth

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

Alpha and Omega

- ▶ He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars--their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death." Rev 21:5-8

Come Quickly Lord

- ▶ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. Rev 21:10–11
- ▶ He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen. Rev 22:20–21















































