New Testament Survey

Teacher’s Manual
New Testament Survey
Contents

Lesson 1 – Introduction to the New Testament……3-10
Lesson 2 – Why Four Gospels?.......................11-18
Lesson 3 – Matthew.................................19-25
Lesson 4 – Mark....................................26-31
Lesson 5 – Luke....................................32-37
Lesson 6 – John.................................38-46
Lesson 7 – Acts....................................47-55
Lesson 8 – Romans...............................56-62
Lesson 9 – I Corinthians.........................63-67
Lesson 10 – II Corinthians........................68-70
Lesson 11 – Galatians.............................71-77
Lesson 12 – Ephesians............................78-82
Lesson 13 – Philippians..........................83-88
Lesson 14 – Colossians...........................89-94
Lesson 15 – I & II Thessalonians...............95-101
Lesson 16 – I & II Timothy.......................102-107
Lesson 17 – Titus and Philemon...............108-119
Lesson 18 – Hebrews.............................120-125
Lesson 19 – James..................................126-133
Lesson 20 – I Peter...............................134-140
Lesson 21 – II Peter..............................141-144
Lesson 22 – I, II & III John.....................145-150
Lesson 23 – Jude..................................151-156
Lesson 24 – Revelation..........................157-164
Lesson 1
Introduction to the New Testament

I. What world powers controlled Palestine during the inter-testamental period?

In this section we are looking at the world powers that had primary control over Palestine in the period of time from Malachi through to the end of the New Testament age. It should be noted that the dates are not necessarily consistent with the issue of world control as an empire, but only the control pertaining to Palestine itself. In some ways we could refer to this period of time as “the preparation of the world for the coming of Christ and the Gospel.”

A. The Persian Period – 536-333 B.C.

The united Medo-Persian Empire conquered the fierce Assyrians and became the primary world power. Under Cyrus king of Persia many of the Israelites were encouraged to go back to Palestine and rebuild their temple (Note: This is the temple that was in use in Jesus’ day). Cyrus philosophy was to conquer a people and then give them back their religious freedom to encourage long term loyalty to him and his kingdom.

A significant thing that happened in this period is that the synagogue system was established under Ezra to promote the reading and study of the Old Testament among the Jews both in Palestine and in exile. When we get to the New Testament period the existence of these synagogues would be vital for the spread of the Gospel. In many cities they became a spring board for Paul’s church planting ministry.

Another significant thing that happened in this period that has a huge bearing on understanding the New Testament was the serious antagonism and rivalry that developed between the Jews and the Samaritans. The Samaritans were some of the main opposition to the rebuilding of the walls under Nehemiah. This national grudge continued to increase up to the time of Jesus to the point that each despised the other.

B. The Greek Period – 333-323 B.C.

Under the leadership of Alexander the Great, perhaps the greatest military leader of all time, the world was brought under the control of the Greek Empire in just a few short years. Alexander subjected most of the world from Greece to India. Legend has it that when he entered Palestine he was shown the predictions of Daniel about the kingdoms of the world and was so impressed that he became very benevolent to the Jews.

Perhaps the most significant thing that happened under the Greek period is that of the unification of the world under the Greek language and in a lesser extent the Greek culture. This would eventually prove extremely beneficial for the spread of the Gospel, particularly as we know of it under the ministry of Paul.
Most of the New Testament would be written in the Greek language which was the universal language in the time of Christ.

C. The Egyptian Period – 323-204 B.C.

Under the leadership of Ptolemais, Egypt took control of Palestine. They would remain in control for well over 100 years. They were very kind to the Jews and it was not uncommon for a steady stream of Jews to move freely from Palestine to Egypt.

It was under his leadership that Alexandria became a major learning center and the location of the greatest library in the world. He promoted a strong emphasis on learning and education on a wide range of topics including religion. It was through his initiative that the Septuagint was produced, which was a Greek version of the Old Testament.

This is significant because the Septuagint, written in the most common language in the world, became the Bible of Jesus, Paul and the Early Church. It was also accessible to people of non-Jewish origin. This was the Bible of the land for 500 years until the Latin Vulgate superseded it.

D. The Syrian Period – 204-165 B.C.

As the Egyptian hold on things grew weaker and other powers grew stronger (including the Romans), the Selucids or Syrians were seeking to exercise their own freedom from dominance and desired control of Palestine to serve as a buffer zone to the rest of the world powers.

The Syrians had a tremendous hatred for the Jewish people and under the leadership of Antiochus Epiphanes killed many of the priests, changed the name of Jerusalem to Antioch, dedicated the temple to Jupiter and outlawed Jewish observances including Passover. When Antiochus declared himself to be a god and set up an altar to Jupiter in the temple offering pig’s blood upon it, the Jews saw this as the abomination of desolation to which Daniel had referred (Dan. 12:11).

Unfortunately he went way too far in antagonizing the Jewish people and he aroused the wrath of a man by the name of Maddatheaus Maccabeas. He and his four sons would become freedom fighters for the Jews.

E. The Maccabean Period – 165-63 B.C.

Maddatheaus Maccabeas began his quest for freedom by killing the priest of Jupiter who had been functioning in the temple. He then fled to the hills and organized about 10,000 volunteers to serve as an army of farmers. Even though they were outnumbered five to one and were armed with much inferior weapons, somehow they overcame the Syrians and drove them out with heroic acts of bravery.
Judas Maccabeas went to Jerusalem, cleansed the temple and the city and brought a restoration of worship. It took several years before complete control of the land was accomplished under the leadership of the Maccabeian family.

Unfortunately, after the death of the original Maccabeian leaders, their successors (nephews and grandchildren) were corrupt politically and the nation declined spiritually over time.

F. The Roman Period – 63 B.C. – 476 A.D.

Eventually the Romans grew in strength to the point that they were accomplishing their vision for world domination. One of the needs of the empire was clear and safe avenues of transport for goods and supply lines. They hired Pompeii to clear the Mediterranean of pirates. In the course of his efforts he landed in Palestine, saw the internal warring among the Maccabeas and seized the opportunity to take them captive to Rome.

From that point the Romans began their domination of Palestine. This is where we find the situation when Jesus was born. The Jews hated the Romans and the Romans had little respect for the Jews. They saw them as a difficult people who were nearly impossible to rule over because of their narrow, monotheistic views.

The greatest things that the Romans did for the Gospel was to create a universal society of laws, to establish a kingdom of peace (Pax Romana) and to establish a system of roads that made world-wide travel much easier and safer than it had ever been before. Many of the roads that were built by the Romans endure to this day. These roads would be the means by which the Gospel would be carried into the entire world.

II. What was the political setting at the time of Christ’s birth?

As has been stated above, the world was under the dominance of the Roman Empire. Palestine was under Roman rule and Roman appointed leaders. The Romans placed kings or tetrarchs over the Jews. Antipater was given the initial position of tetrarch of Palestine about 47 B.C. and served in that position for about 10 years. He was succeeded by the following.

A. Herod the Great (37-4 B.C.)

This is the Herod that was the tetrarch or king of Judea when Jesus was born. He was a very paranoid leader who was afraid of being deposed by freedom fighters (descendents of the Maccabees) or other rivals. Initially he married a Maccabean woman to ensure a safe relationship with the Maccabees, but he never trusted his wife. Thinking that she might sell him out he eventually allowed her to be killed. His method of killing off potential rivals continued when he was informed of the birth of a potential rival by an unusual visit from three Persian kings (See: Mt. 2:1-19; Luke 1:5).

B. Herod’s Three Sons (4 B.C. – 36 A.D.)
After the death of Herod there was much turmoil over the issue of succession and the realm was divided among his sons.

1. Archelaus (4-6 A.D.)

He was given rule over the southern areas including Judea. This included the city of Bethlehem. He was a short-lived ruler who was known for his brutality toward both the Jews and the Samaritans. It was because he was over the region which included Bethlehem that Joseph, Jesus’ earthly father, determined to move to Nazareth after returning from Egypt rather than back to Bethlehem (Mt. 2:22-23). Archelaus fell into ill favor with the Romans and his own brothers and was deposed after a very short reign.

2. Philip (4-34 A.D.)

Philip was given rule over the northern areas (Luke 3:1). He was a relatively peaceful leader. He was well liked by his subjects. He eventually married Salome, the daughter of Herodias who was responsible for the death of John the Baptist.

3. Antipas (4-39 A.D.)

Antipas (also called Herod) was given rule over the east side of the Jordan (Luke 3:1). Of all of Herod’s sons, he played the most prominent role in biblical history because his region included Galilee and Perea, the area where both John the Baptist and Jesus did most of their ministry. He is the one who was most responsible for the death of John the Baptist (Mt. 14:1-12). When people reported of Jesus’ ministry to him as possibly John risen from the dead (Mt. 4:1-2; Mark 6:14-16; Luke 9:7-9), he was interested in meeting Jesus. He was reported at a later point to be interested in killing Jesus (Luke 13:31). He was the Herod who tried Jesus and wanted to see a miracle from Him. When Jesus did not perform for him, he abused Him and sent Him back to Pilate for sentencing (Luke 23:6-12).

C. Agrippa I (37-44 A.D.)

Agrippa I was the grandson of Herod the Great. He was a very indulgent and vain man who, in an effort to find favor with the Jews, became a persecutor of Christianity. He was responsible for the death of James, the first one of The Twelve to be martyred (Acts 12:1-3). Agrippa’s unusual and agonizing death is recorded in the Book of Acts which seemed to be the judgment of God on his blasphemous attempt to be worshipped as God (Acts 12:20-25).

D. Agrippa II (48-70 A.D.)

Agrippa II was the son of Agrippa I and eventually came to power some time after the death of Agrippa I since he was only seventeen when his father died. He was known to have lived in an incestuous relationship with his sister Bernice. He seemed to have had a good understanding of Jewish affairs and was consulted by
Rome on religious matters. He was one of the rulers who heard Paul’s case after his arrest by the Jews (Acts 25:13-26:32). Had not Paul already appealed to Rome, he may have released him. He was the last of the Herodian dynasty.

III. **Who are the other political leaders that are relevant to New Testament study?**

In addition to kings or tetrarchs being placed over Palestine, there were governors or procurators who served regionally. For the purpose of our study we will only look at procurators in relation to Judea who are specifically mentioned in the New Testament.

A. **Pontius Pilate (26-36 A.D.)**

Pilate was the procurator during the most significant time of biblical history, being the one who tried Jesus and ultimately consented to His crucifixion (See: Luke 13:1-2; 23:1-5, 13-25)

B. **Antonius Felix (52-59 A.D.)**

Felix was the procurator of Judea when Paul was being prosecuted by the Jews (Acts 23:23-26). He was a corrupt leader who was more interested in bribes than in justice and left Paul in prison for two years throughout the rest of his tenure.

C. **Porcius Festus (59-61 A.D.)**

Festus succeeded Felix and was left with Paul’s case hanging in the balance. Festus was more interested in making inroads to the Jews rather than justice. Paul’s only hope for a fair trial was to appeal to Rome and have his trial moved to a place where the Jew had no political influence (Acts 25:1-12).

IV. **What are some of the religious and cultural background that serve to help us understand the New Testament?**

The best way to get a picture of the background information is to define certain groups and parties that existed in Christ’s day.

A. **Synagogues** – During the 400 silent years the Jews developed synagogues which most likely can be traced back to Ezra. These were local assemblies in nearly every city where the Scriptures were read, taught and discussed by the people. There was still only one temple, but each city had a synagogue which had its elders. There were no priests who functioned in relation to the synagogue. These synagogues set a beautiful stage for the later development of the local church. There were some cities in the Roman Empire that were off-limits to an official synagogue. These were Roman colonies that were established to be a model of Roman government and law and they did not allow any foreign temples in these areas. Philippi was such a city (Acts 16:12).

B. **The Sanhedrin** –This was the official Jewish council or board that was established perhaps as early as Jehoshaphat to administrate the affairs of the nation (II Chr.
19:8). It consisted of 70 members plus the High Priest, 24 chief priests, 24 elders and 22 scribes or lawyers. These members of the Sanhedrin were given plenty of room by Rome to dictate local affairs as long as they paid due homage to Rome. They found it easier to govern a conquered people if they could work through a body composed of those same people. Jesus stood before this council and so did some of the Apostles (Mt. 26:57-58; John 18:31; 19:7; Acts 4:1-7; 6:12-7:1). The Sanhedrin had limited authority under Rome. They could sentence someone to death, but they could not carry it out without Roman approval and execution.

C. Priests – The Jewish priesthood was ordained by God in the time of Moses and their function was primarily religious. But after the captivity from the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, the priests also served as civil leaders and princes. The High Priest was the head of all of the priests and, in the absence of a king, was the highest non-Roman, Jewish authority in the land and the official head of the Sanhedrin.

D. Scribes – In the New Testament the scribes were the students, interpreters and teachers of the Scripture or the Law. They were held in high esteem by the people and may have found their origin as a group in the time of Ezra. They were experts in expounding the Scripture and were serious opponents of Christ, perhaps because He arose to notoriety outside of their rabbinical schools. The scribes were always trying to test Jesus’ Scripture knowledge or to catch Him in His words (Mt. 22:35-36; Luke 10:25-26; 14:3; Mark 12:28, 35).

Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” Matthew 22:35-40

Now it happened, as He went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath, that they watched Him closely. And behold, there was a certain man before Him who had dropsy. And Jesus, answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?” But they kept silent. And He took him and healed him, and let him go. Then He answered them, saying, “Which of you, having a donkey or an ox that has fallen into a pit, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?” And they could not answer Him regarding these things. Luke 14:1-6

E. Pharisees – The Pharisees were a religious sect that arose during the time of the Maccabees and were called “separatists” by their enemies because they separated themselves from the ambitious political parties in their nation. They were the ultraconservatives of the day and were sticklers for the letter of the law. The Pharisees had a hatred for Jesus because He exposed them for what they were—white on the outside, but full of death on the inside (Mt. 12:1-2; 23:1-2; Luke 6:6-7; 12:1).

F. Sadducees – The Sadducees were an aristocratic and political party among the Jews and were seen as the rivals of the Pharisees. They were the liberals and
modernists of the day who denied the supernatural (e.g. angels, miracles, the resurrection of the dead, Acts 23:7-8). It is interesting that the Sadducees and the Pharisees who normally disliked each other would team up with to get rid of Jesus (Mt. 16:1-12; 22:23-33).

But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, “Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!” 7 And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the assembly was divided. 8 For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection—and no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both. 9 Then there arose a loud outcry. And the scribes of the Pharisees’ party arose and protested, saying, “We find no evil in this man; but if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him, let us not fight against God.” Acts 23:6-9

G. Herodians – The Herodians were an exclusively political party who took their name from Herod and derived their authority from the Roman government. They were pro-Roman in their emphasis and were not interested in any change in the political situation of the day. They tended to view Christ as a revolutionary which explains how they interacted with each other (Mark 3:6; 12:13-17).

Then they sent to Him some of the Pharisees and the Herodians, to catch Him in His words. 14 When they had come, they said to Him, “Teacher, we know that You are true, and care about no one; for You do not regard the person of men, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? 15 Shall we pay, or shall we not pay?” But He, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, “Why do you test Me? Bring Me a denarius that I may see it.” 16 So they brought it. And He said to them, “Whose image and inscription is this?” They said to Him, “Caesar’s.” 17 And Jesus answered and said to them, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” And they marveled at Him. Mark 12:13-17

H. Zealots – The Zealots were the Jewish nationalistic party and would be on the opposite political spectrum to the Herodians. They wanted to be rid of Roman rule over the Jews and were not oppose to using violent means to overthrow the Roman yoke (See: Luke 6:15; Acts 23:12-13 ).

I. Galileans – This is a party that arose in northern Palestine and consisted of the followers of Judas of Galilee. He was also violently opposed to Roman rule. The Galileans were quite radical in the expression of their views and were known for inciting riots and other violent clashes with Roman authorities. This party came into a violent collision with Pilate (Luke 13:1-3). In order to turn Pilate against Jesus, His enemies tried to link Jesus and His disciples with this party (Mt. 26:69; Mark 14:70; Luke 23:6).

V. What is the general timeline for the events covered in the New Testament?
In order to better understand the way in which the events in the New Testament relate to each other, the following timeline will offer incite. Note that all dates are approximate and some expositors may suggest slightly different ones.

4 B.C.    The Birth of Christ  
26        The Inauguration of Jesus’ Ministry  
30        The Death of Christ  
32        The Death of Stephen  
33        The Conversion of Paul (Acts 9)  
43        The Martyrdom of James (Acts 12)  
45        The Book of James Written  
46-48     Paul’s First Missionary Journey  
49        The Book of Galatians Written  
49-52     Paul’s Second Missionary Journey  
51        The Book of I Thessalonians Written  
52-56     Paul’s Third Missionary Journey  
54-55     The Books of Corinthians Written  
56-58     Paul’s Imprisonment in Caesarea  
56        The Books of Mark and Romans Written  
60        The Books of Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians Written  
60-61     The Books of Luke and Acts Written  
61        The Martyrdom of James (the half brother of Jesus)  
61        The Books of Hebrews (?) and Philemon Written  
62        The Books of I Timothy and Titus  
63        The Books of Peter Written  
64        The Book of II Timothy Written  
64        The Martyrdom of Peter and Paul  
66        The Book of Matthew Written  
68        The Book of Jude Written  
70        The Capture and Fall of Jerusalem  
91-95     The Writings of John including Revelation
Lesson 2  
Why Four Gospels?

One of the questions that is often raised is why do we need four Gospels and why were four Gospels included in our Bible. Why not just one? Why only four? Why no more or no less?

I. Does the number four have any significance?

A. The number four is sometimes referred to as the number of earth or the number of creation.

1. There are four seasons (winter, spring, summer and fall).
2. There are four principle directions (north, south, east and west).
3. There are four ancient elements (earth, air, fire and water).
   In addition we speak of:
4. The four corners of the earth.
5. The four winds.

B. In type we see that the number four is seen in the following:

1. The four streams coming out of one in the Book of Genesis (Gen. 2:10).
   These four streams all came from the one river in the Garden and watered the four corners of the earth.
   
   Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four riverheads. Genesis 2:10

2. The four pillars holding up the veil in the Tabernacle of Moses (Ex. 26:31-32).
   "You shall make a veil woven of blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen. It shall be woven with an artistic design of cherubim. You shall hang it upon the four pillars of acacia wood overlaid with gold. Their hooks shall be gold, upon four sockets of silver. Exodus 26:31-32

   The veil was a symbol of Christ’s body or flesh (Heb. 10:20).

Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh… Hebrews 10:19-20

   It is interesting that in conjunction with His death the veil in the temple was rent at the same time that His body died (Mt. 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45).

   Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. Then the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two. And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said,
“Father, ‘into Your hands I commit My spirit.’” Having said this, He breathed His last. Luke 23:44-46

The four Gospels are the four pillars that uphold Christ as we know him according to the flesh or the earthly Christ. The Book of Acts presents us with Christ in His risen and exalted state where we see Christ according to the Spirit or the heavenly Christ since His body is no longer here on earth.

II. Why do the differing accounts give us such a different view?

The four accounts give us different pictures or facets of Christ’s earthly ministry. In some ways the accounts give us as much insight into the authors of these books as it does to Christ Himself. No two people will look any anything the same way. Who we are as individuals will often affect our impression of things. In order to give us a well rounded view of Jesus, God has taken four distinctly different individuals and given us their view of Jesus. In these four views, we can all find ample for us to know Jesus in His earthly walk and appreciate Him in His fullness.

III. What are the four distinct pictures that the four Gospels give us of Christ?

As we look at the four Gospels each one of them has significant value in getting a full view of Jesus Christ. Just like a precious diamond must be studied from different angles and the assessor must look into each of the facets in order to determine the true value, so we must see Christ through the eyes of these four observers of Jesus. The following are a few ways in which the four Gospels show us the Christ, the Son of the Living God (Note: These are meant to be studied in relation to the accompanying chart on page 19).

A. Four Prophetic Streams

Throughout the Old Testament there are perhaps as many as 300 different prophecies regarding the coming of Messiah. All of these can be divided into four principle pictures of the Coming One.

1. Behold Your King! (See Zech. 9:9; Jer. 23:5-6; 33:15; John 19:14)

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.” Zechariah 9:9

Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, “Behold your King!” 15 But they cried out, “Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!” Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar!” 16 Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. Then they took Jesus and led Him away. John 19:14-16
Matthew is the Gospel that focuses on Jesus as the King and His Kingdom. It is in his Gospel that Jesus goes up on a mountain in a kingly manner, sits down and gives the laws of His kingdom. In his genealogy he traces Jesus’ lineage to King David.

2. Behold My Servant! (See Zech. 3:8; Is. 42:1; 52:13-15)

‘Hear, O Joshua, the high priest, you and your companions who sit before you, for they are a wondrous sign; for behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the BRANCH. Zechariah 3:8

“Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. Isaiah 42:1

Mark is the Gospel that views Jesus as the servant of the Lord. In Mark’s Gospel, Jesus has no genealogy, no spectacular birth or heavenly choirs. Jesus is a doer or a man of action in the Gospel of Mark.

3. Behold the Man! (See Zech. 6:12-13; John 19:5)

“Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, and He shall build the temple of the L ORD; yes, He shall build the temple of the L ORD. He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on His throne; so He shall be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.” Zechariah 6:12-13

Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them, “Behold the Man!” John 19:5


4. Behold Your God! (Is. 40:9)

O Zion, you who bring good tidings, get up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, you who bring good tidings, lift up your voice with strength, lift it up, be not afraid; say to the cities of Judah, “Behold your God!” Isaiah 40:9

John’s Gospel is the Gospel of Jesus’ deity. He presents Jesus as the Son of God who is without beginning and end. His genealogy starts with God Himself and with Jesus preexistent union with the Eternal God. John places a great deal of emphasis on Jesus relationship to the Father.

B. Four Tabernacle Colors

The four colors that were used in the veil in the Tabernacle of Moses which pointed to Jesus as the true tabernacle reflect in type these four streams (Ex. 26:31-32).
“You shall make a veil woven of blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen. It shall be woven with an artistic design of cherubim. You shall hang it upon the four pillars of acacia wood overlaid with gold. Their hooks shall be gold, upon four sockets of silver.

1. Purple

Purple is a kingly color and speaks of royalty. Matthew is the Gospel of Jesus’ kingly splendor.

2. Scarlet

Scarlet is the color of blood and speaks of the pouring out of one’s life in humble service and suffering. Mark is the Gospel of Jesus’ servanthood.

3. Fine Linen

The fine linen was bleached white by the sun. It speaks of the spotless man who lived a perfect life to become our sin bearer. Luke is the Gospel of Jesus’ perfect humanity.

4. Blue

Blue is the heavenly color and speaks of Jesus as the Lord of heaven. John presents to us Jesus as the heavenly manna that came down from above (John 6:30-40).

C. Four Faces of the Cherubim

The four faces of the cherubim described by Ezekiel reflect in type these same four streams (Ezek. 1:5-11).

As for the likeness of their faces, each had the face of a man; each of the four had the face of a lion on the right side, each of the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and each of the four had the face of an eagle. Thus were their faces.

Ezekiel 1:10-11a

1. The Lion

The lion with its kingly crown is referred to as the “king of beasts.” Matthew shows us Jesus as the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Rev. 5:5).

2. The Ox

The ox was used in the culture of the day as a “beast of burden” and a symbol of work. Jesus is our burden bearer who is presented to us in the Mark’s Gospel.

3. The Man
Luke’s Gospel presents Jesus as a man of compassion who is acquainted with our sorrows qualifying him as our sympathetic High Priest.

4.  The Eagle

The eagle is a glorious creature who symbolizes majesty. The eagle soars high above the earth and has the vision to see well beyond man. The eagle has an extra eyelid and is the only bird that can look directly at the sun. John is the one who displays to us the glory of the Son.

It is worthy of note that all of these animals are kings in their own realm.

D.  Four Genealogies

The four genealogies presented in the four Gospels reflect these same four streams.

1.  Matthew traces Jesus’ lineage back to Abraham, the first one to receive the promise of kings, and to King David to establish His right to the throne. Even though Joseph was not Jesus’ actual father, the oldest child in a royal family inherited the right to the throne. According to law, Joseph was his legal father even though he was not his natural father.

2.  Mark has no genealogy because there is no particular value in recording the lineage of a slave.

3.  Luke traces Jesus’ lineage back to Adam through His mother Mary. This genealogy does two things. Like Matthew it traces Jesus back to David and Judah thus giving Him the right to the throne of David. It also goes all the way back to Adam making Jesus fit to be our near kinsman and redeemer, the last Adam.

4.  John’s genealogy is God. Jesus is God, and therefore has no beginning or no end.

E.  Four Old Testament Offices

The four offices that were highlighted in the Old Testament pointed to Jesus who would be the ultimate fulfillment of each one of them. The four Gospels also reflect these four streams.

1.  King

The office of Christ’s kingship is presented in Matthew.

2.  Prophet

Christ as the prophet or suffering servant is announced by prophecy in the Gospel of Mark (Is. 40:3; Mal.3:1).
3. Priest

Luke begins with a priest and pictures Christ as the sympathetic High Priest who identifies with fallen man.

4. Judge

The ultimate judge is God. Through the Gospel of John the relationship of the Son to the Father is highlighted and a thread that runs through it is that the Father has placed judgment into the hands of the Son (John 5:22, 27; 9:39).

For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.  John 5:22-23

F. Four Aspects of His Sonship

The aspects of His sonship reflect these four streams.

1. The Son of David – Matthew
2. The Son of Man – Mark
3. The Son of Adam – Luke
4. The Son of God – John

G. Four Different Audiences

It is obvious that the writers took to write for a specific purpose and to reach a certain group of people. This is clearly seen as a reflection of these four streams.

1. Matthew was written to the Jews. It contains more Old Testament references than any of the other Gospels and clearly establishes Jesus as the fulfillment of prophecy and the King Messiah for whom they were waiting. He talks more about the king and the kingdom than any other of the evangelists.

2. Mark was written to the Romans. The Romans were not as interested in what a person said as in what they did. They were not the philosophers that the Greeks were, they were pragmatists. In Mark's Gospel, Jesus is a man of few words and the focus is on His works of service.

3. Luke was written to the Greeks. The Greeks were impressed with learning and culture. Luke was the most educated and cultured of all of the evangelists. His writing reflects a much higher vocabulary and is written in a more educated style.

4. John was written to the world. It is interesting that when people give out testaments for evangelism, it is usually the Gospel of John that is selected. It reflects the coming of Christ as a reflection of God’s love for the world.
H. Four Different Evangelists

Different people see things differently from the perspective of who they are and what is important to them. The four evangelists were four very different people who reflect a cross-section of humanity and give all of us a point of identification. Note: We will go into more details about who they were when we look at their individual books.

1. Matthew was a Jew who originally worked as a Roman official.

2. Mark was a servant to the apostle Paul and Barnabas and a minister who proved profitable.

3. Luke was a Gentile and a trained physician who became a very close friend and a regular traveling companion of the Apostle Paul.

4. John was originally a fisherman who became perhaps Jesus’ most intimate friend.
## THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM UNFOLDED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MATTHEW</th>
<th>MARK</th>
<th>LUKE</th>
<th>JOHN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Four Prophetic Streams</td>
<td>Behold Your King</td>
<td>Behold My Servant</td>
<td>Behold the Man</td>
<td>Behold Your God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Tabernacle Colors</td>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>Scarlet</td>
<td>Fine Linen</td>
<td>Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Cherubim Faces</td>
<td>Lion</td>
<td>Ox</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Eagle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Genealogies</td>
<td>To King David</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>To the First Adam</td>
<td>Without Beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Four Old Testament Offices</td>
<td>King</td>
<td>Prophet</td>
<td>Priest</td>
<td>Judge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Four Aspects of His Sonship</td>
<td>Son of David</td>
<td>Son of Man</td>
<td>Son of Adam</td>
<td>Son of God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Different Audiences</td>
<td>Jews</td>
<td>Romans</td>
<td>Greeks</td>
<td>Whosoever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Four Descriptions of Jesus</td>
<td>What He said</td>
<td>What He did</td>
<td>Who He was</td>
<td>Who He is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Four Different Evangelists</td>
<td>Jewish/Roman Official</td>
<td>Minister/Servant</td>
<td>Gentle/Physician</td>
<td>Intimate Friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Key Words</td>
<td>&quot;That it might be fulfilled&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Straightway&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Son of Man&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;World&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Kingdom&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;To them&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Son&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson 3  
Matthew—The Book of the King

I. What do we know about the author of the book of Matthew?

A. He is known by two names, Matthew and Levi (Mt. 9:9; Luke 5:27).

After these things He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the 
tax office. And He said to him, “Follow Me.” 28 So he left all, rose up, and 
followed Him. 29 Then Levi gave Him a great feast in his own house. And there 
were a great number of tax collectors and others who sat down with them. 30 And 
their scribes and the Pharisees complained against His disciples, saying, “Why 
do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” 31 Jesus answered and said 
to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 
32 I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.” Luke 5:27-32

B. He was a Jew and the son of Alphaeus (Mark 2:14).

C. He was a tax collector by occupation (Mt. 9:9-11; Lk. 5:27).

1. Tax collectors worked for Rome.

2. Tax collectors had to be literate, educated, bilingual and Roman sympathizers.

3. Tax collectors were ones who had to keep detailed records, which undoubtedly 
aided Matthew in his preparation of this document.

4. Tax collectors were usually quite rich.

5. Tax collectors were considered traitors by the people and despised. They were 
not even allowed to enter the temple. The priests would not even pray for 
them.

6. Tax collectors or publicans were considered lower than thieves and prostitutes 
on the Jewish social register (Mt. 21:28-32).

“But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and 
said, ‘Son, go, work today in my vineyard.’ 29 He answered and said, ‘I will 
not,’ but afterward he regretted it and went. 30 Then he came to the second 
and said likewise. And he answered and said, ‘I go, sir,’ but he did not go. 31 
Which of the two did the will of his father?’ They said to Him, “The first.” 
Jesus said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots 
enter the kingdom of God before you. 32 For John came to you in the way of 
righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots 
believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe 
him.

7. Tax collectors were known to have been killed by zealots especially in times 
of tax revolt (This is significant because one of the other disciples of Jesus 
would be Simon the Zealot).
Matthew seems to have had an obsession with money. It is interesting that this is the only Gospel that records Jesus’ payment of the temple tax from the coin in the fishes mouth (Mt. 17:24-27). It is equally interesting that he is the only one to record the bribing of the Roman guard to say that the disciples had stolen the body of Jesus (28:12-15). He would have been familiar with corruption among the Roman soldiers.

D. He was called by Jesus when he was sitting in receipt of taxes (Mark 2:14).

E. His conversion to Christianity seems to have been a rather significant event (It is recorded in all three of the Synoptic Gospels).

F. After his conversion he became quite evangelistic, inviting all of his tax collector friends over to dinner to meet Jesus (Luke 5:27-32).

*After these things He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, “Follow Me.”* 28 So he left all, rose up, and followed Him. 29 Then Levi gave Him a great feast in his own house. And there were a great number of tax collectors and others who sat down with them. 30 And their scribes and the Pharisees complained against His disciples, saying, “Why do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” 31 Jesus answered and said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 32 I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”

II. **When was the book of Matthew written?**

While the date of the writing is not certain, most scholars place the date of the book somewhere between 50-69 A.D.

A. His use of the phrase “until this day” suggests that he wrote sometime after the events that are recorded occurred (Mt. 27:8; 28:15).

*Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day.* Matthew 27:8

B. However, it was most likely written before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. because of his references to “the city of the great King” (5:35), “the temple” (24:1-2), impending trouble (24:16-20), and the “holy city” (27:53).

III. **To whom was the Book of Matthew written?**

Matthew is sometimes referred to as the Gospel to the Jew. It is believed that his intended audience was the Jewish people for a couple of reasons.

A. It is clear that he was writing to a people who were very familiar with the prophecies of the Old Testament. Matthew makes over 60 references to the Old Testament in his 28 chapters.
B. It is also clear that he was writing to a people who had an expectation of the coming Messiah. 

Because of Daniel’s seventy weeks prophecy, there was a great expectancy for Messiah to appear during this time frame. The Jews were expecting this Messiah to manifest himself as a king and a deliverer from the Roman rule or bondage. The signs of the true Messiah would be the fulfillment all of the promises and prophecies in the Old Testament pertaining to his coming.

IV. What was the apparent purpose for the writing of this book?

The purpose of the Gospel of Matthew seems to be to substantiate the fact that Jesus is indeed the Messiah for whom the Jews were waiting. Matthew sets about this in a couple of ways.

A. He demonstrates that Jesus has the correct blood line to qualify as the Messiah. He is of royal decent and linked to other covenant men in the Old Testament (i.e. Abraham, David).

B. He proves conclusively that Jesus’ life was a succession of one fulfilled prophecy after another. Note that the key phrase in the Gospel of Matthew is “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets” (Mt. 1:22; 2:15, 17, 23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:14’ 35; 21:4; 24:34; 26:54, 56; 27:9, 35).

But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.” 22 So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets” (Mt. 1:22; 2:15, 17, 23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:14’ 35; 21:4; 24:34; 26:54, 56; 27:9, 35).

C. He seeks to show that the coming Messiah is coming to reign over a spiritual kingdom and not a natural kingdom. Matthew is the only Gospel that uses the phrase “Kingdom of Heaven.” He seems to use the phrase consistently where Luke and Mark use the phrase “Kingdom of God.” His basis for doing this may be Daniel 2:44.

And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. 

Daniel 2:44

Note the following comparison:
**Kingdom of Heaven** | **Kingdom of God**
---|---
“The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matthew 4:17 | “the gospel of the kingdom of God.” Mark 1:14
“Theirs is the kingdom of heaven”. Matthew 5:3 | “Yours is the kingdom of God.” Luke 6:20
“He that is least in the kingdom of heaven” Matthew 11:11 | “He that is least in the kingdom of God” Luke 7:28
“to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” Matthew 13:11 | “to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God” Luke 8:10
“to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” Matthew 13:31 | “kingdom of God…is like a grain” Luke 13:18-19
“of such is the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 19:14 | “of such is the kingdom of God.” Mark 10:14

Fulfilled prophecy is one of the biggest arguments for the authenticity of Christ. However, all such evidence must be coupled with a heart of openness and a genuine hunger for the truth. Without that combination, no amount of evidence will be enough. Had the nation of Israel had such a heart of openness, they would not have missed the one for whom they had been waiting. They would not have missed their day of visitation. Fortunately, even though the nation as a whole did not respond, there were many Jews who did and they became the foundation of the New Testament Church (Acts 2:5, 41).

**V. What are the things that mark this book as the Book of the King?**

There are several elements in the Gospel of Matthew that distinguish it as the “Book of the King.” The Old Testament prophets had declared that the Messiah would indeed come as a king (Is. 9:6-7; 32:1; Jer. 23:5-6; Zech. 9:9; 14:9).

*For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.* Isaiah 9:6-7

“Behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.” In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Jeremiah 23:5-6
“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey. Zechariah 9:9

A. Jesus’ Kingly Genealogy (Mt. 1:1-17)

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham.
Matthew 1:1

Jesus is immediately linked to the kingly line through David. Even though we know that Joseph was not Jesus’ earthly father, if he were to sit on David’s throne, his earthly lineage would have to go back to David.

B. Jesus’ Kingly Visit (Mt. 2:1-12)

The baby Jesus is visited by three kingly figures from the east. Not only do these kings pay homage to Jesus (the lesser serving the greater) they present Him with three kingly gifts—gold, frankincense and myrrh. Matthew is the only Gospel that records this kingly event.

C. Jesus’ Kingly Title (Mt. 2:2)

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.
Matthew 2:1-2

Right at the very outset of Jesus’ life He is referred to by the wise men as “the king of the Jews.” This statement by the wise men caused a great deal of concern in the heart of Herod who saw this as a threat to his throne. This declaration is also seen in connection with His death (27:37).

And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Matthew 27:37

D. Jesus’ Kingly Function (Mt. 2:6; Mic. 5:2)

‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.’
Matthew 2:6

The prophecy that gave clues to Jesus’ place of birth also gave insight into the function that He would have in relation to the people of God. He would be a ruler who will shepherd the people of Israel.

E. Jesus’ Kingly Forerunner (Mt. 3:2-3)

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” For this is he who was
spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the LORD; make His paths straight.’”

Matthew 3:1-3

It was customary that when a king traveled through his domain that a crier would go forth before him to prepare the way giving people time to get ready for his arrival so that they could pay him due respect when he actually arrived.

F. Jesus’ Kingly Laws (Mt. 5:22, 28, 34, 39, 44)

In the Gospel of Matthew Jesus is seen as the king of the kingdom. One of His first official acts in this reign of righteousness is to go up a mountain, sit down and deliver to His subjects the laws that will govern this kingdom. The key phrase is “You have heard it said of those of old…but I say.”

G. Jesus’ Kingly Connection (Mt. 12:3, 23)

Several times in Matthew’s gospel, Jesus is clearly linked to David. He is the Son of David (Mt. 9:27; 12:3, 23; 15:22; 20:30-31; 21:9, 15; 22:42-45).

Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw. And all the multitudes were amazed and said, “Could this be the Son of David?”

Matthew 12:23

H. Jesus’ Kingly Manifestation (Mt. 17:1-13)

On the mountain of transfiguration the glory of the Son was made manifest by the Father. Mountains in the Scripture represent kingdoms.

I. Jesus’ Kingly Apparel, Crown and Scepter (Mt. 27:27-30)

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him. 28 And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. 29 When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” 30 Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. 31 And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified.

Matthew 27:27-30

Though the soldiers who were involved in the crucifixion were mocking Jesus, they gave Him a purple robe of royalty, crowned Him and put a scepter in His hand. Little did they know that He would one day judge all men and rule with a scepter of righteousness.

VI. How does Jesus demonstrate the authority of the Kingdom of God in the Book of Matthew?
Jesus is seen in the Book of Matthew as having all power and authority (Mt. 28:18). This power of the King of the Kingdom is demonstrated in several ways. As the King of the Kingdom, Jesus is supreme over the following:

- People (4:20, 22)
- Paralysis and Suffering (8:6, 13)
- Illness and Disease (9:22; 14:35-36)
- Blindness (9:30)
- Leprosy (8:3)
- Winds and Waves (8:23-27)
- The Temple (12:3-6)
- Sin (9:2)
- Demons (8:31-32; 15:28)
- Nature (21:18-19)
- History (26:64)
- All (28:18-20)
Lesson 4
Mark—The Book of the Servant

I. What do we know about the author of the book of Mark?

A. His Background

1. His full name was John Mark (Acts 12:12). This is a combination of a Greek and Latin or Roman name. It may suggest that his father was a Roman and his mother was a Greek, in which case he was most likely a Roman citizen.

   So, when he had considered this, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying.
   Acts 12:12

2. His mother’s name was Mary. Little is known of her except that she had a home large enough for gatherings of the church and seems to have been a prominent figure in the early Christian community. Apparently she was a person of wealth (Acts 12:12).

3. There is no mention of his father. This suggests that either his father was not a Christian or that he was no longer in the home, possibly dead. The emphasis seems to be in his relationship to his cousin (or uncle) Barnabas (Col. 4:10).

B. His Early Life

1. Little is known of his early childhood, but it is most likely that he was used to being around very important figures in the early church.

2. He was most likely very close to the ministry of Jesus through the faith of his mother and others that were close to him. Some historians have suggested that this home of Mary was a center of activity in Jesus’ ministry and the Early Church. They have suggested that it may have been the place with an upper room for Jesus and His disciples to celebrate the last supper and the place where the disciples waited for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Notice Mark’s more detailed description of the upper room (Mark 14:12-16).

3. He is not named in the Gospel that bears his name, but most scholars feel that he was most likely the unnamed man who fled naked when apprehended by the soldiers (Mark 14:51-52). Mark is the only one who records this incident.

   Now a certain young man followed Him, having a linen cloth thrown around his naked body. And the young men laid hold of him, and he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked.

   It was customary for authors to leave their names out of the book that they were writing (See: John 19:26).

C. His Biblical Experience
1. He returned to Antioch from Jerusalem with Barnabas and Paul after they presented the church with a relief offering (Acts 12:25).

   And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their ministry, and they also took with them John whose surname was Mark.

2. He accompanied Barnabas and Paul on their first missionary journey to serve as their assistant (Acts 13:4-5).

   So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John as their assistant.

3. He left the team and went home to Jerusalem early on the journey (Acts 13:13). This was interpreted by Paul as a serious negative (Acts 15:37-39).

   Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem. Acts 13:13

   Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing.” 37 Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark. 38 But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. 39 Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; 40 but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God.

   Acts 15:36-40

Some of the reasons that have been suggested for his departure include the following:

- Homesickness
- Anxiety for his mother’s safety
- Home duties
- Fear of perils on the journey—cowardice
- Wanted more preaching and less serving

4. He was given a second chance by Barnabas (Acts 15:37-39). He represents a man who was overcome by some problems, but who overcame in the end (See: Genesis 49:19).

   Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last.  
   Genesis 49:19 KJV

5. He was acknowledged as a profitable ministry by the Apostle Paul (Philemon 24; II Tim. 4:11). It is worthy of note that the man who perhaps needed to learn how to be a servant, became the writer of the Gospel of the Servant.
Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.

II Timothy 4:11

D. Later Traditions

1. Many believe that because of the unique use of his mother’s home that Mark had a bit of a spiritual father/son relationship with Peter (I Peter 5:13).

   She who is in Babylon, elect together with you, greets you; and so does Mark my son.

2. He is believed to have acted as Peter’s interpreter when he preached in Rome.

3. It is most likely that much of what is contained in the Gospel of Mark came from his association with Peter. Iranaeus, the early church father, suggested that Mark’s Gospel was a reflection of much of Peter’s preaching (Iranaeus, Against Heresies, III. i.1.)

4. It is believed that after his work with Peter at Rome he went to Alexandria, Egypt and helped establish the church there.

5. While in the work there he was severely persecuted and tortured (drug through the city behind a horse, jailed numerous times), but he did not waver in his determination. The man who was once a coward had become very courageous, all because someone believed in him and would not let him fail.

6. Some traditions have him being martyred by burning under the reign of Nero (who also was responsible for the death of Peter and Paul).

II. When was the book of Mark written?

As with most of the books of the Bible there is considerable debate about when this book was written. Many believe it was the first Gospel to be written and date it as early as 45 A.D. which may be a bit early. Most likely it was written about 62-68 A.D. If the traditions about John Mark are reliable he had some living to do before he was ready to write this account. Most scholars believe that he wrote it when he was in Rome. Mark’s Gospel covers approximately four years in the life of Jesus from the ministry of John the Baptist to the ascension of Jesus.

III. To whom was the Book of Mark written?

Mark’s Gospel was written to the Gentiles in general and, more specifically, to the Romans. His desire was to show the Romans that Jesus was God’s servant acting under the authority of the Lord God, giving immediate and full obedience to all of His commands. There are several evidences of this intent.

A. Since it was written to the Gentiles we find only one actual quotation from the Old Testament and that was in regards to John the Baptist and not Jesus (Mark 1:2-3).
This is an amazing contrast to the Book of Matthew that cites the Old Testament authority for nearly everything significant in Jesus’ life.

B. Mark omits much of the preaching and actual words of Jesus and clearly focuses on the actions of Jesus. For this reason it is one half of the size of the Book of Matthew. Romans would naturally be more inclined to be interested in the practice and not the preaching of an individual.

Notice the key word “immediately” (Gk. euheus). This word occurs 42 times in Mark’s sixteen chapters as compared to 15 times in Matthew’s 28 chapters, 8 times in Luke’s 24 chapters and only four times in the Gospel of John. Actually this word is used more in Mark’s Gospel than in the rest of the New Testament combined!

Mark’s Gospel is a Gospel of continuous action. Almost every verse or set of verses begins with a conjunction (and, but, for, etc.).

C. Mark seems to feel the need to explain certain Jewish customs to the reader (Mark 7:3-4, 11; 14:12; 15:42).

Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem. 2 Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. 3 For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders. 4 When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, like the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.  Mark 7:1-4

D. Mark gives the translation of certain Aramaic words that the Jews would have known (Mark 3:17; 5:41; 7:34).

Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, “Talitha, cumi,” which is translated, “Little girl, I say to you, arise.”  Mark 4:41

E. Mark often gives a Latin version of certain normal Greek words which suggest a Roman orientation. The terms that Mark used for basket (4:21), taxes (12:14) and centurion (15:39, 44-45) are all a Latinized version of these words.

F. Mark seems to feel the need to give a geographical description of the Mount of Olives (Mark 13:3) and that the Jordan was a river (Mark 1:5), which no Jew would need.

G. Mark omits any reference to Jewish law, which would not impress the Romans.

IV. What was the apparent purpose for the writing of this book?

Although Mark gives no statement of purpose as some of the other writers (Luke 1:1-4), his basic purpose seems to have been to win converts to the Christian faith by presenting Jesus of Nazareth as the perfect and faithful Servant of the Lord. He is
immediately acknowledged as the Son of God (Mark 1:1) and then shown to be the suffering servant and the willing sacrifice for the sins of mankind.

In his portrayal of Jesus he focuses on two main things that both reflect the mission of Jesus to minister and to give His life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45). In the first half of the book we see Jesus serving others by ministering to human need (Mark 1-10). In the second half we see Jesus laying His life down as a ransom for our sins (Mark 11-16). Mark seems to focus more intently on the suffering of Jesus.

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” Mark 10:45

V. What are the things that distinguish this book as the Book of the Servant?

Apart from the use of the word “immediately” in the Book of Mark, there are several other aspects of this book that highlight the servant nature of Christ’s ministry.

A. The first indication of servanthood is the absence of a genealogy, birth record, adoration of the wise men, pre-existence in glory and early life. A servant’s genealogy is of no importance to the Roman mind. There is no real value to a servant or slave until they can start to work. Mark’s Gospel jumps right into the work of Jesus.

B. The focus on the work of serving rather than on talk of serving is characteristic of the function of a servant. There is no sermon on the mount, no lengthy discourses and few parables.

C. After Jesus performed miracles he would often instruct those touched to tell no one (Mark 1:44; 5:43; 7:36; Compare Mark 8:29-30; 9:9-10, 31-32). Servants do not get a lot of credit for what they do.

While He was still speaking, some came from the ruler of the synagogue’s house who said, “Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?” 36 As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, “Do not be afraid; only believe.” 37 And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. 38 Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. 39 When He came in, He said to them, “Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping.” 40 And they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those who were with Him, and entered where the child was lying. 41 Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, “Talitha, cumi,” which is translated, “Little girl, I say to you, arise.” 42 Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years of age. And they were overcome with great amazement. 43 But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that something should be given her to eat. Mark 5:35-43
D. Jesus ministry at times left Him no time to eat (Mark 3:20). A servant’s work is never done. Sometimes they have to lay aside their own needs to serve others (See: Luke 17:7-10).

> When Jesus returned to the house where he was staying, the crowds began to gather again, and soon he and his disciples couldn’t even find time to eat.
> Mark 3:20, NLT

E. There are some other things that are strangely absent. There is no reference to judgments of Christ and the king enthroned in glory (Compare: Mk. 13:32 with John 15:15). In the Garden there is no reference to His ability to call forth angels to His rescue. In His commission He gives no reference to His having all power and authority.

F. The book ends with Jesus still working in His followers (Mark 16:19-20).

> So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. 20 And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.

The Book of Mark is important because the world needs to see a Christianity that is more than speaking. They need to see Christ in action through the lives of those who bear His name. They need to see an army of believers who live to serve and touch the felt needs of the world.

VI. **What are the concerns about the last chapter of the Book of Mark?**

There are many scholars who feel that Mark 16:9-20 and most particularly verses 15-20 should not be included in the Book of Mark. The reasoning behind this has to do with the fact that some of the oldest manuscripts dating back to the 4th Century do not contain these verses. It is rather interesting that the greatest conflict comes over the verses dealing with the supernatural commissioning of the disciples.

Many explanations have been offered for this.

1. Some feel that since Mark ends so abruptly, later writers filled in the gaps from the other Gospels to give a sense of completion. If these were indeed added later, it would seem to confirm that the things mentioned in these verses were part of the practice of the church or at least the belief of the church at that time.

2. Some feel that the manuscripts that omit the verses reflect the fact that the last verses were dropped because they posed a theological problem relating to the miraculous expressions (particularly tongues) in Christ’s commission.

Whatever the case, it is important to understand that all of the things mentioned by Christ in this commission are confirmed in other places in the New Testament and, therefore, safe for the purpose doctrinal study and formation.
Lesson 5
Luke—The Book of the Perfect Man

I. What do we know about the author of the book of Luke?

A. Luke, the Author

There is little controversy over the fact that the author of this book is a man by the name of Luke. This can be clearly demonstrated by the fact that whoever wrote this Gospel also wrote the Book of Acts. After thorough study of the Book of Acts, it is clear that Luke, the beloved physician and occasional traveling companion of Paul, was the author of both books.

1. The style is the same in both books and uses medical language and technical vocabulary. There are fifty words common to the two books that are not found anywhere else in the New Testament.

2. Luke was a companion of Paul and therefore qualified to write the book (Acts 16:10, 20:4-6, 28:16; Col 4:14; II Tim 4:11; Phil 4).

3. Luke's authorship of both books is unanimously attested to by the Early Church.

B. Luke, the man

1. He was born in Antioch of Syria (at least this is where his parents resided [Eusebius]).

2. He was not a Jew but of Greek background (Col. 4:11, 14).

3. He was educated in the science of medicine (Col. 4:14).

_Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you._

As an educated physician…

a. He was distinct from the 12 apostles (who were mostly unlearned and ignorant men by the world’s standards).

b. He was more apt to be concerned about historical records. He is more concerned with dating than any of the other evangelists (Luke 1:5; 2:1-2; 3:1-2).

c. He was a likely candidate for close fellowship and relationship to Paul. Paul too was highly educated for his day.

d. His writing is more lofty and technical in its design.

e. He gives a greater place and description the birth of Jesus and to the healing power of the Lord (all of us see things through different eyes). He uses the word “heal, healed or healing” nearly as much as the other three gospels combined.
4. He was possibly a convert of the apostle Paul.
   a. He was not an eyewitness of Christ in His earthly ministry (Luke 1:2).
   b. He may have been converted in Antioch or later in Troas.

   Some suggestion is given in history that he may have been a part of the
   Antioch church and was present at the events described in Acts 11. One
   ancient sixth-century manuscript offers the following rendition of Acts
   11:28, “And there was great rejoicing, and when we gathered together, one
   of their number, named Agabus spoke…”

5. He was an occasional traveling companion of Paul.
   a. His first linking up with Paul seems to have been at Troas on Paul's second
      missionary journey (Acts 16:11).
   b. He accompanied Paul to Philippi (Acts 16:12-17).
   c. He seems to have remained in Philippi (Acts 17:1).
   d. He rejoined Paul whenever he got near to Philippi (Acts 20:5).

6. He was most likely discipled into leadership by Paul.
   a. Paul seems to have sent him with Titus to carry the second letter to the
      Corinthians (See the subscription to that letter).

      The second epistle to the Corinthians was written from Philippi, a city of
      Macedonia, by Titus and Lucas. –KJV

   b. Luke seems to have developed into an influential church leader in Macedonia
      (II Corinthians 8:18 - Early tradition applies this passage to Luke).

      And we have sent with him the brother whose praise is in the gospel
      throughout all the churches…

7. He was one of Paul's most intimate friends.
   a. Paul refers to him as beloved (Col 4:14).
   b. He met Paul and traveled with him anytime Paul got close to his home.
   c. He was with Paul on his last trip to Jerusalem (Acts 20:6-21:18).
   d. He was shipwrecked with Paul on the prison ship to Rome (Acts 28:2).
   e. He stayed with him in Rome during Paul's imprisonment there, and was a
      fellow-laborer with him when he wrote Colossians (4:14) and Philemon (24).
   f. He was with Paul during his second imprisonment in Rome when Paul wrote
      II Timothy (4:11).
   g. He remained faithful to Paul to the end when others were forsaking him (II
      Tim 4:11).
8. Other traditions about Luke

   a. He never married.
   b. He most likely returned to Philippi after Paul's death.
   c. He is believed to have died in Bithynia of natural causes (although there are some less-reliable traditions that suggest he was martyred at the age of 80 by crucifixion).

II. When was the book of Luke written?

Luke was written in the same time frame as the other two Synoptic Gospels. Most scholars place the date of the writing between 58 and 63 A.D. The Gospel of Luke covers approximately 35 years of history from the announcing of the birth of John the Baptist to the ascension of Jesus. In this sense it is the most complete of the Gospels.

III. To whom was the Book of Luke written?

The Gospel of Luke has both a specific audience and a general audience.

A. The Gospel of Luke is written specifically to a person by the name of Theophilus.

   It is difficult to know who is referred to by this title or name. Since the oldest manuscripts of our Bible are written in all capital letters, it cannot be determined for certain whether THEOPHILUS is to be taken as a proper name, and therefore an actual person by that name (Luke 1:3), or to be treated as a common noun, and translated “friend of God” or “lover of God.” If it is a general designation, it is written to all Christians everywhere who were eager to learn more about the life of Jesus.

   If Theophilus is a specific individual (which is most likely the case), there are many theories as to who he was.

1. He was a Roman official such as a governor or procurator (for Luke’s use of “most excellent” see Luke 1:3; Acts 23:26, 24:2, 26:25).
2. He was some person of standing in Rome whose influence was sought for Paul’s trial.
3. He was the magistrate who was due to hear Paul's case.
4. He was a Gentile of rank who came under the influence of Luke or under that of Paul in Rome, and was converted to the Christian faith.
5. He was a person of nobility who was the patron of Luke, and who funded the production of this book.
6. Some have even suggested that he was Luke’s adoptive father who was a Greek.

The Greeks were those who were in pursuit of the ideal or the perfect man. When you study their art, religion and literature it is obvious that this was seen as an ideal to them. Their ideal man was not the same as the Roman ideal. Their ideal man was a man of beauty, wisdom and grace.

1. Luke was Greek and, therefore, the only fully Gentile writer in the New Testament who would have had a greater passion for the Gentile or the Greek world.

2. Luke traveled and spent a great deal of time with Paul who ministered almost exclusively among the Greek world.

IV. What was the apparent purpose for the writing of this book?


Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, 2 just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, 3 it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, 4 that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.

A. To set forth a well-researched and orderly account of the life of Christ.

B. To strengthen the faith of believers in Jesus affirming that their faith rested on solid historical fact.

V. What are the things that mark this book as the Book of the Perfect Man?

Luke’s Gospel written to the Greeks would portray Jesus as the perfect or the ideal man.

A. The genealogy of Jesus goes back to the first man, Adam (Luke 3:38).


So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in
swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. Luke 2:6-7


So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth. And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him. Luke 2:39-40

3. His reasoning in the temple and hunger for knowledge (Luke 2:49).

Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, “Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously.” And He said to them, “Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?” But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them. Luke 2:46-50


Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart.

5. His gradual development into full manhood (Luke 2:52).

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

a. He developed intellectually (in wisdom).
b. He developed physically (in stature).
c. He developed spiritually (favor with God).
d. He developed socially (favor with man).

6. His full manifestation at the age of 30 (Luke 3:23). This is only mentioned by Luke.


So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed. Luke 5:16

Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. Luke 6:12

D. There are other things that demonstrate Luke’s focus on Jesus’ humanity.
1. Luke’s focus on Jesus’ need to eat both before and after His resurrection (Luke 4:2; 24:41-43). Luke actually makes more references to Jesus sitting at meat than any other of the gospels.


5. Luke’s depiction of Jesus agonizing in the garden and sweating as it were “drops of blood” (Luke 22:44).


VI. **What are some of the distinctive features of the Book of Luke?**

A. In terms of volume of text, Luke has written more than any other writer in the New Testament including Paul.

B. Only Luke records four songs that became part of the liturgy of the historic church.

1. The *Magnificat* or song of Mary (Luke 1:39-45).
2. The *Benedictus* or song of Zechariah (Luke 1:67-79).
3. The *Gloria in Excelsis* or the song of the angels (Luke 2:13-14).
4. The *Nunc Dimittis* or the song of Simeon when seeing the Messiah (Luke 2:28-32).

C. Luke seems to have a much higher emphasis on women than any other writer.
Lesson 6
John—The Book of the Son of God

I. What do we know about the author of the book of John?

While the authorship of nearly every book of the Bible is disputed by someone, all of the earliest church fathers agree that this book was written by the apostle after which this book is named.

A. John’s background

1. John was a Jew and, therefore, familiar with all of the Jewish customs and feasts (John 5:1; 6:4; 7:2; 10:22; 13:1).

2. John lived in Palestine and was very familiar with Jerusalem and its surroundings (John 5:2; 11:18).

3. John was one of the sons of Zebedee a successful fisherman (Mark 1:19-20). He not only had a boat (or possibly boats), but he was also able to hire other employees to assist in the business.

4. John’s mother was Salome who was most likely the sister or cousin of Mary (Mt. 27:56; Mark 15:40; John 19:25). This would have made John a relative of Jesus, most likely a cousin. John the Baptist was also a cousin of Jesus (It is interesting that Jesus’ ministry was prepared by a cousin and it would be carried on by cousins and brothers). Salome must have had some financial ability since she seems to have been among those who contributed to Jesus’ material support (Mark 15:40-41; Luke 8:3).

5. John and his family were most likely relatively secure financially. He is one apostle who seems to have had his own home at some point (John 19:27).

Now it came to pass, afterward, that He went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with Him, and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities—Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for Him from their substance. Luke 8:1-3

There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome, who also followed Him and ministered to Him when He was in Galilee, and many other women who came up with Him to Jerusalem. Mark 15:40-41

5. John and his family were most likely relatively secure financially. He is one apostle who seems to have had his own home at some point (John 19:27).

When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, “Woman, behold your son!” Then He said to the disciple, “Behold your mother!” And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home. John 19:26-27
B. John the Apostle in biblical history

1. John started his spiritual journey as a disciple of John the Baptist (John 1:35-40).

2. John was called by Jesus while engaged in the fishing business with his father (Mark 1:19-20; Luke 5:9-11). Evidently they worked with Peter and Andrew (Mark 1:16-18).

3. John was chosen by Jesus as one of The Twelve (Mark 3:17). He was most likely the youngest of them all and may have even been a teenager.

4. He and his brother James were nicknamed by Jesus “the sons of thunder” (Mark 3:17). This may speak of their somewhat impetuous nature and their desire to call fire down from heaven on the opposition (Luke 9:51-56).

   Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?” But He turned and rebuked them, and said, “You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them.” And they went to another village. Luke 9:51-56

5. John became part of Jesus inner circle of three with James his brother and Peter (Mark 5:37; Mt. 17:1; 26:37).

6. He and his brother James (through their mother) requested a place of honor at the right and left hand of the Lord in his glory (Mark 10:35-37).

7. John referred to himself as the disciple “whom Jesus loved” (John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20) or “the other disciple” and may have been the closest friend of Jesus (John 18:15-16; 20:2; 21:2). It was customary for authors not to name themselves in a book, but to refer to themselves in some other way.

8. Jesus entrusted John with the most important thing in His life, his mother (John 19:25-27).

9. John was an eyewitness to most of what is recorded (John 1:14).

   And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

10. John became a key leader along with Peter in the establishing of the church at Jerusalem. He is listed second only to Peter (Acts 1:13; Gal. 2:9) and he and Peter seemed to have ministered together often (Acts 3:1; 8:14).
…and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

Galatians 2:9

11. His brother James was the first of The Twelve to be martyred (Acts 12:1-2).

12. It was rumored that he would not die until Christ returned (John 21:20-23).

Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, “Lord, who is the one who betrays You?” 21 Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, “But Lord, what about this man?” 22 Jesus said to him, “If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me.” 23 Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, “If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you?”

C. John’s later non-biblical history and tradition

1. John is referred to as the Apostle of Love because of his emphasis on love in both his gospel and his epistles.

In his gospel alone he makes over 50 references to love. This is quite a contrast to the young John who seems to have been prejudiced and judgmental.

2. John is believed to have served as a key figure in and most likely the bishop of the church at Ephesus in the later 1st Century.

3. John wrote the gospel that bears his name.

4. John was exiled for his faith on the Isle of Patmos by the Roman emperor.

5. John wrote the three epistles that bear his name and the Book of Revelation.

6. John was later released from exile to return to Ephesus where he most likely died of natural causes between 96 and 100 A.D.

7. He was the last of The Twelve to die and perhaps the only one who died of natural causes.

II. When was the book of John written?

There is a considerable amount of debate over the date of this writing. Some date it as early as 45 A.D., but most scholars date it much later sometime between 85 and 95 A.D. Most feel that it was definitely written while John was in Ephesus and before his exile to Patmos. Internal evidence also suggests that he most likely wrote after the destruction of Jerusalem.
III. **To whom was the Book of John written?**

John is a gospel that is written to the world. It is interesting that in the world of modern day evangelism, it is the Gospel of John that is most commonly reproduced and given out as a tract.

The emphasis in the book of John is God’s love for and on Jesus’ ministry to the world. The word “world” (“kosmos” in the Greek) is used nearly 80 times in the book of John compared to a total of 15 times in the other three gospels combined.

A. In the Gospel of John, God the Father has a vision for the world.
   2. God sent His son into the world (John 3:17; 10:36).

B. In the Gospel of John Jesus has a ministry to the world.
   1. He is the creator of the world (John 1:10),
   2. Jesus is the light of the world (John 1:9; 3:19; 8:12; 9:5; 12:46).
   3. Jesus takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29).
   4. Jesus is the savior of the world (John 4:42; 12:47).
   5. Jesus was a prophet to the world (John 6:14).
   7. Jesus sent his followers into the world (John 17:18).

IV. **What was the apparent purpose for the writing of this book?**

The key to discovering John’s purpose is to be found in the book itself (John 20:30-31).

> And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

A. It is clear that John’s primary intent is evangelistic in nature.

   His desire is that those reading this book might come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and that they would see Jesus as the very Son of God.

B. It is also clear that John’s intent was to verify the deity of Jesus.

   It should be noted that during the time in which John wrote, Gnosticism was very prevalent. Gnosticism undermined the deity of Christ. John’s gospel would be an important refutation of this heresy.
John refers to the signs that he has recorded as being only a sample of what Jesus did on earth. But the particular miracles that he selected truly demonstrate Jesus power and divinity. Note the choice of miracles recorded by John and what they demonstrate.

1. Turning water into wine (John 2:6-11). In this miracle Jesus is demonstrated to have authority over the elements.

2. Healing the nobleman’s son (John 4:46-54). In this miracle Jesus is demonstrated to have authority over space and distance.

3. Healing the paralyzed man (John 5:1-15). In this miracle Jesus is demonstrated to have authority over sickness and disease.

4. Feeding the five thousand (John 6:1-14). In this miracle Jesus is demonstrated creative provision.

5. Walking on the water (John 6:15-21). In this miracle Jesus is demonstrated to have authority over natural laws.

6. Healing the man born blind (John 9:1-41). In this miracle Jesus is demonstrated to have authority over both natural and spiritual blindness.

7. Raising Lazarus from the dead (John 11:1-44). In this miracle Jesus is demonstrated to have authority over death.

8. Calling forth a miracle catch of fish (John 21:3-11). In this miracle Jesus is demonstrated to have authority over the animal world.

V. What are the things that mark this book as the Book of the Son of God?

There is no question that John’s Gospel from beginning to end has the singular focus of establishing Jesus as the Son of God. This is seen in several ways.

A. This is seen in the opening pages establishing Jesus’ preexistence and equality with God (John 1:1-5). Therefore there is no genealogy.

\[\text{In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.} \quad (1:1-2)\]

\[\text{All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.} \quad (1:3-4)\]

\[\text{And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.} \quad (1:5)\]

1. Jesus was in the beginning.

2. Jesus was God.

3. Jesus was involved in the creation of everything.

B. This is seen in Jesus continual reference to God as His Father. While God is referred to as Father over 120 times, Jesus emphasizes that God is His Father over
35 times (John 5:17-18; 10:24-39; 14:9). This is much more than all of the other gospels combined.

“The I and My Father are one.”  John 10:30

C. This is seen in John’s focus on the “I AM’s” Jesus (John 8:58, Compare Exodus 3:14). Jesus is the “I AM” of the New Covenant.

Jesus answered, “If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God. 55 Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, ‘I do not know Him,’ I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word. 56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.” 57 Then the Jews said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?” 58 Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.” 59 Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.  John 8:54-59

1. I AM the Bread of Life (John 6:35).
2. I AM the Light of the World (John 8:12; 9:5).
3. I AM the Door (John 10:7).
4. I AM the Good Shepherd (John 10:11, 14).
5. I AM the Resurrection and the Life (John 11:25).
6. I AM the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6).
7. I AM the True Vine (John 15:1).

Compare Jesus’ encounter with the soldiers who were going to arrest Him. When He identified Himself as the “I AM” they were literally “blown away” (John 18:3-8).

Then Judas, having received a detachment of troops, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. 4 Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, “Whom are you seeking?” 5 They answered Him, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus said to them, “I am He.” And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. 6 Now when He said to them, “I am He,” they drew back and fell to the ground. 7 Then He asked them again, “Whom are you seeking?” And they said, “Jesus of Nazareth.” 8 Jesus answered, “I have told you that I am He. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way,” 9 that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, “Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none.”

D. This is seen in the seven-fold affirmation of His deity by credible witnesses.

1. John the Baptist (John 1:34)

And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.

2. Nathanael (John 1:49)
Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!

3. Peter (John 6:69)

_Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God._

4. Jesus Himself (John 10:36)

_I said, “I am the Son of God.”_

5. Martha (John 11:27)

_I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world._

6. Thomas (John 20:28)

_And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!”_

7. John (John 20:31)

_Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God…_

VI. What are some other distinctive features of the Book of John?

A. Ninety percent of the content of John is unique to the book. John was written as the last of the four gospels and he would have been aware of the existence of the others. In John’s mind there was more to be told and little need to duplicate what had already been brought forth.

B. The Gospel of John is the gospel of Jesus’ Apostleship. Jesus is the “Sent One” who came down from heaven with the authority of the Father to build the church (John 4:34; 5:19, 23, 30, 36, 43; 7:16, 18, 28-29; 8:18, 29, 38, 42; 9:4; 10:38; 12:44, 45, 49; 14:9-11, 24; 16:28; 17:18; 20:21).

“_My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work._” John 4:34

“Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner” 

John 5:19

“He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him” 

John 5:23

“I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own but the will of the Father who sent Me” 

John 5:30
“But I have a greater witness than John’s: for the works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me”  John 5:36

“I have come in My Father’s name”  John 5:43a

“My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me”  John 7:16

“He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him”  John 7:18

“I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. But I know Him, for I am from Him and He sent Me”  John 7:28b-29

“I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me”  John 8:18

“And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him”  John 8:29

“I speak what I have seen with My Father...”  John 8:38a

“I proceed forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me”  John 8:42

“I must work the works of Him who sent Me...”  John 9:4a

“...believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him”  John 10:38b

“He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him Who sent Me. And he who sees Me sees Him Who sent Me...For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak”  John 12:44, 45, 49

“He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show me the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves”  John 14:9b-11

“He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me”  John 14:24

“I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father”  John 16:28

“As you have sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world”  John 17:18

“Peace be to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you”  John 20:21

*And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.*
Lesson 7
The Book of Acts—The Book of the Holy Spirit

I. Why is the Book of Acts such an important book?

A. The Book of Acts is a bridge connecting the Gospels and the Epistles.
   1. It is the outcome of the Gospels.
      a. In the Gospels, Jesus is seen as a corn of wheat who falls to the ground and
dies (John 12:24).

         Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground
         and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.

      b. The book of Acts gives us the result of Jesus' willingness to lay down His
         life. It is the "much fruit" that is brought forth.

      c. It is a sequel to the Gospels.

         • In the Gospels, Christ purchases the Church with His blood. In the Book
           of Acts, that Church rises to actual existence.

         • In the Gospels, Jesus gives His famous prophecy stating, "I will build my
           church" (Matt 16:18). In the Book of Acts, we see the fulfillment of that
           prophecy.

         • In the Gospels, Christ issued the commands to His followers to take the
           gospel to the ends of the earth. In the Book of Acts, we get a glimpse of
           just how the apostles responded under the guidance and direction of the
           Holy Spirit.

   2. It is an introduction to the Epistles
      a. It gives the background and occasion for much of what will follow.

      b. It helps us to understand the Epistles in their historical context (See Chart).

   1. Acts establishes for us the foundational truths and principles of the Church "in
      word and deed."

   2. It demonstrates for us in living form all of the teaching of Christ in the Gospels.

   3. It illustrates the life application of all the doctrine outlined in the Epistles.

   4. It provides a textbook on such things as:

      a. Evangelism
b. Ministry in the Spirit  
  c. Missions  
  d. Church planting  
  e. Church government  
  f. Team ministry  
  g. Prayer life of the church  
  h. Character of a biblical Christian  
  i. Discipling and raising up leaders


The book, like Genesis, is the book of beginnings and is just as important. It contains the following beginnings:

1. The Holy Spirit's work of evangelism
2. The preaching of the Gospel (I Cor 15:1-4)
3. A new dispensation (the Holy Spirit)
4. The Church of our Lord
5. World-wide evangelism
6. Salvation through the blood of Christ

D. The Book of Acts is a book of inspiration in days of restoration.

1. It provides a record of the early rain outpouring of the Spirit.
2. It is a description of that which God is restoring.
3. It provides us a glimpse of and stirs our faith in regard to what God wants to do in the Church today.


1. It is one book that has no "amen" to it (Acts 28:30-31).
2. It closes with the continued preaching of the Kingdom of God.
3. Our lives are to help complete the book throughout the ages.

   Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.

II. What is the title of the book and what other names have been suggested?


1. Although many would suggest other titles, this one has merit.
2. It is the story of how God uses weak human vessels to implement His eternal purposes.

3. It is the story of what can be accomplished as we stand "in Christ?" I can do all things . . .

4. A key word to the Book of Acts is "apostle(s)" (used 30 times).

B. Some expositors have suggested other titles.

   a. It neither contains all of the acts of some of the apostles,
   b. Nor some of the acts of all of the apostles.
   c. It focuses on two apostles. In the first twelve chapters, Peter is the central figure. In the rest of the Book of Acts, the central figure is Paul.

2. Others feel it could more appropriately be called "The Acts of the Holy Spirit in the Church".
   b. There are about 50 references to the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts.

3. Other suggestions include:
   a. Acts
   c. The Gospel of the Holy Spirit
   d. The Gospel of the Resurrection
   e. The Acts of the Ascended and Glorified Lord
   g. The Life of Paul
   h. The Book of the Continual Doing and Teaching of the Living Christ by the Holy Spirit through His Body Which Is the Church (Morgan)

III. Who is the author of this book and when was it written?

A. The real author is the Holy Spirit, but He worked through a man by the name of Luke (See introduction to the Gospel of Luke for details regarding Luke, the man).

B. The Book of Acts was most likely written between 63 and 65 A.D.

1. Paul was still in prison, before his trial.
2. The reign of Nero included these years.
3. It was obviously written before the death of Paul.
4. It was very likely written shortly after the close of the time covered in the book, after Paul had been two years in Rome.

C. The Book of Acts covers approximately 33 years from the ascension of Jesus to the time when Paul had been in prison in Rome for two years.

IV. What was the purpose for which this book was written?

There are many possible reasons that have been suggested for which Luke may have written this book.

A. To preserve an historical record of the origins of the Early Church. Luke, being a man of education, would be concerned that these happenings be recorded for future generations.

B. To demonstrate the continuing work of Christ through the ministry of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:1).

C. To defend the church from the Roman Empire’s antagonism toward the Jews by showing that while they share common scriptures, they are a separate religious group that the Romans need not fear.

D. To demonstrate the pattern by which Christ builds His church.

E. To provide a defense of Christianity in a time when world-wide persecution was foreseen. From this book could be demonstrated the past Roman policy of ignoring but never persecuting the early Christian leaders.

F. To assist in the evangelization of the Jews by showing that Christianity is indeed the fulfillment of the Old Testament.

G. To provide a biographical sketch of the life of one of the greatest apostles in the early church.

H. To provide a defense brief to be presented at Paul's trial to explain his arrest and the charges that were against him.

V. What is the key verse and how is it fulfilled in the Book of Acts?

The key verse in the Book of Acts is Acts 1:8. It is the key verse because it gives the order of witness in the Book of Acts.

*But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*

A. Jerusalem (Acts 1:8, 4; Luke 24:47)

B. Judea (Acts 2:9, 14, 8:1, 9:31, 10:37, 11:1, 19, 15:1)
VI. **What are the keys to the kingdom that operate in the Book of Acts?**

The Four Keys of the Kingdom in the Book of Acts

**A. The Word of God—The Sword of the Spirit**

The Apostles in the Book of Acts looked solely to the Word of God to import faith and life to their hearers.

1. The word of God was central to all of their teaching and preaching. Every message is totally saturated with the word of God.

   The Word of God was:

   - The Word of exhortation (Acts 13:15)
   - The Word of salvation (Acts 13:26)
   - The Word of His grace (Acts 14:3, 20:32)
   - The Word of the gospel (Acts 15:7)
   - The Word of truth and soberness (Acts 26:25)

2. The word of God was the sword of the spirit that they wielded skillfully.

   a. They spoke it boldly (Acts 4:29, 37).
   c. They taught the Word (Acts 15:35, 18:11).
   d. They testified the Word (Acts 8:25).
   e. They published the Word (Acts 13:49).
   f. They used the Word to determine policy (Acts 15:15).
   g. They commended people to the Word (Acts 20:32).

3. The word of God affected great results.

   b. All in the area heard the Word (Acts 19:10).

   So will the Word of God in this day if it is preached and placed first above all of the words of men.
“So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.” Acts 20:32

B. The Holy Spirit

The Church cannot function or fulfill the Great Commission without a relationship to and a reliance on the Holy Spirit. The apostles in the Book of Acts lived in the conscious awareness of being motivated by, empowered by, and under the authority of the Holy Spirit.

The work and ministry of the Holy Spirit is central to the Book of Acts, being mentioned some 50 times.

1. The Holy Spirit has a nine-fold role in the Book of Acts.

- The Commander-in-Chief (1:2)
- The Inspirer of Prophecy (1:16, 11:28, 13:2, 4)
- The Fulfillment of Prophecy (2:17-18)
- The Promise of the Father (2:33)
- The Gift of God (2:28, 15:8)
- The Comforter of the Churches (9:31)
- The Confirmer of the Word (10:38, 44-47)
- The Rain from Heaven (2:11-18, 10:38, 44-47)
- The Bringer of Joy (13:52)

2. The disciples have a nine-fold relationship to the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts.

- Empowered by the Spirit (1:8) or baptized in the Spirit (1:5)
- Recipients of the Spirit (8:15, 19:2-6)
- Co-witnesses of the Spirit (5:32)
- Prompted by the Spirit (18:5)
- Appointed by the Spirit (20:23, 28)
- Separated and sent by the Spirit (13:2, 4)
- Led, guided and directed by the Spirit (8:29)
- Transported by the Spirit (8:39)
- Filled with the Spirit (Acts 2:4, 4:8, 6:3, 5)

C. The Name of Jesus—The Authority of the Believer

The Apostles in the Book of Acts were totally dependent on the name of the Lord to effect results and empower their ministry. His name is equal to His person or His authority (Acts 4:7).

1. In the Book of Acts we see the name of the Lord bringing:

   a. Salvation (Acts 2:21, 4:12)
   b. Deliverance (16:18)
c. Healing (Acts 3:6, 4:10)
e. Forgiveness and remission of sins (Acts 10:43)

2. In the Book of Acts, they:
   a. Had faith in His name (3:16)
   b. Called on the name (2:21, 9:14, 22:16)
   c. Baptized in the name (2:38, 8:16, 10:48, 19:5)
   d. Taught and preached in the name (9:21, 27, 29)
   e. Taught and preached the name (4:17, 8:12)
   f. Magnified the name (19:17)
   g. Took out a people for His name (15:14)
   h. Bore His name (9:15, 15:17)
   i. Did signs and wonders in His name (4:30)
   j. Suffered for His name (5:41, 9:16)
   k. Hazarded their lives for His name (15:26)
   l. Were willing to die for His name (21:13)

D. Prayer—The Pipeline of the Spirit

The Apostles in the Book of Acts demonstrated an absolute dependence on God which is evidenced by their continual watchfulness in prayer. Someone has once said that you can measure your dependence on God by the amount of time that you spend in prayer.

   a. To continue steadfast is "to persevere; to give constant attention to a thing; to adhere to one; be devoted to; not to faint; to show oneself courageous; to be in constant readiness for; to wait on continually."
   b. The Apostles saw their primary ministry to be that of prayer (Acts 6:4).

   ...but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.

2. They prayed on a regular basis (Acts 3:1, 2:42, 6:4, 10:2, 4, 12:5, 16:13).

3. They prayed in specific situations.
   a. In selecting leadership (1:24)
   b. In setting in leaders (6:6)
   c. In sending out ministries (13:3)
   d. In ordaining elders (14:23)
   e. In departing from friends (20:26, 21:15)

4. They prayed for special requests and needs.
   a. For boldness (4:31)
b. To receive the Holy Spirit (8:15)
c. To raise the dead (9:40)
d. Peter’s release (12:12)
e. The mind of the Lord (16:16)
f. Deliverance (16:25)
g. Healing (28:8)

5. The Church in the New Testament was born in prayer.

From then on, prayer was a vital key. The Christians in the Book of Acts breathed the atmosphere of prayer; believed in the power of prayer; began, continued, and ended all their work with prayer. At least 17 out of the 28 chapters have a reference to prayer.
## CHRONOLOGY OF THE BOOK OF ACTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY EVENTS</th>
<th>ACTS Chapter/s</th>
<th>DATE/s</th>
<th>HIGH PRIESTS</th>
<th>RULERS IN JUDEA</th>
<th>PAULINE EPISTLES WRITTEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ascension of Christ</td>
<td>1:9-11</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Caiaphus</td>
<td>Pontius Pilate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecost</td>
<td>2:1-41</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martyrdom of Stephen</td>
<td>6:7</td>
<td>32-33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversion of Saul</td>
<td>9:1-19</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saul’s First Visit to Jerusalem</td>
<td>9:26-30</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Jonathan, Theophilus</td>
<td>Marcellus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saul in Tarsus</td>
<td>9:30</td>
<td>36-44</td>
<td>Simon, Matthias</td>
<td>Marcellus, Herod Agrippa I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saul Moves to Antioch</td>
<td>11:25-26</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Elioanai</td>
<td>Cuspius Fadus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saul’s Second Visit to Jerusalem</td>
<td>11:27-12:25</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Joseph</td>
<td>Tiberius Julius Alexander</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Missionary Journey</td>
<td>15:1-14</td>
<td>47-49</td>
<td>Ananias</td>
<td></td>
<td>Galatians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Jerusalem Council</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Cumanus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Missionary Journey</td>
<td>15:40-18:22</td>
<td>49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I &amp; II Thessalonians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul in Corinth</td>
<td>15:51-52</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I Corinthians (54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul’s Fourth Trip to Jerusalem</td>
<td>18:1-22</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Antonius Felix</td>
<td></td>
<td>II Corinthians (56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ephesus</td>
<td>18:23-21:4</td>
<td>58-58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troas, Illyricum, Achala</td>
<td>21:5-23:22</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Ismael</td>
<td></td>
<td>Romans (57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul’s Fifth Visit to Jerusalem</td>
<td>21:5-23:22</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Ismael</td>
<td></td>
<td>Romans (57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Sails for Rome</td>
<td>27:1</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Joseph</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul’s Roman Imprisonment</td>
<td>27:1</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Ananus, Jesus</td>
<td></td>
<td>Prison Epistles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul’s Release from Prison</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Jesus, Son of Gamaliel</td>
<td>I Timothy, Titus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul’s Final Imprisonment</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>II Timothy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul’s Death</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Matthias</td>
<td>Gessius Fleurus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* It should be noted that because of limited historical records, dates are approximate.
Lesson 8
Romans—The Book of Justification

I. What do we know about the author of the Book of Romans?

This is the first of many books written by the apostle Paul. Paul wrote at least 13 (possibly 14) of the 27 books of the New Testament. The books range in size from one chapter (Philemon) to 16 chapters. Most of his books are epistles or letters that were written to individuals or churches including personal greetings, exhortations, admonitions, doctrinal instruction, personal information and salutations.

A. Paul’s pre-Christian Life

1. Paul was born in Tarsus (Acts 22:3) with his original name being Saul (Acts 7:58; 6:1; 9:1; 13:9).
2. Paul was born a Roman citizen (Acts 22:3, 28).
3. Paul was a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin (Phil. 3:5).
4. Paul was educated in Jerusalem under Gamaliel, a teacher of considerable reputation in both the secular and religious world (Acts 22:3, See Acts 5:34-39).
5. Paul was fluent in at least three languages (Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic and possibly Latin).
6. Paul was trained as a Pharisee (Phil 3:5).
7. Paul was being groomed for the Sanhedrin (Gal. 1:14).
8. Paul became a zealous opponent of Christianity (I Tim. 1:13; Gal. 1:13, 23).
   a. As such he was a key player in the death of the first martyr Stephen (Acts 7:58; 8:1; 22:20).
   b. As such he became a lead persecutor of the church (Acts 8:1-2; I Cor. 15:9; Phil. 3:6).
   c. As such he received letters of authority to imprison Christians (Acts 9:1-2; 22:5; 26:10, 12).
   d. As such he participated in the torture, the trial and the death of Christians (Acts 22:4-5, 19-20; 26:9-11).
   e. As such he was instrumental in scattering the seed of the New Testament Church (Acts 11:19-21).
9. Paul was a good candidate for salvation. Sometimes the people that resist the most become the most zealous for the truth.


4. He spent some about three years in Arabia (Gal. 1:17).
6. After rejection and death threats he returned to Tarsus and functioned as a tentmaker (Acts 9:30; Gal. 1:21-24).
7. After up to ten years, he was remembered by Barnabas who invited him to help in Antioch of Syria.

C. Paul’s ministry at Antioch

3. Paul and Barnabas were sent out by the Antioch church with John Mark on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:1-3, 5).

D. Paul’s missionary journeys

Paul is noted for three missionary journeys.

1. The first journey was initially led by Barnabas with John Mark as an attendant. This journey would pass through Cyprus and begin work in the cities of Asia Minor (Acts 13:4-14:27).

2. The second journey was initially set up as a follow-up to the first. Paul and Barnabas split over the issue of John Mark. Paul took Silas, a prophetic ministry from the Jerusalem church, and they were later joined by Timothy. This trip broke new ground in the region of Macedonia. Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens and Corinth were significant stops on this journey (Acts 15:36-16:18:22).

3. The third journey was both follow-up and extension. Paul, Silas and Timothy broke new ground in Ephesus (which he had visited only briefly on the second journey). This journey ended up with Paul and his team in Jerusalem presenting a relief offering from the Gentile churches (Acts 18:23-21:14).

E. Paul’s arrest, death and other traditions

3. Paul is rescued by Rome and sent to Caesarea where he stood trial before Felix, Festus and Agrippa and was delayed for over two years (Acts 23:23-26:32).

7. Later traditions suggest the following:
   a. Paul never came to trial but was released by Rome.
   b. Paul wrote I Timothy and Titus during this period of freedom.
   c. Paul may have traveled to Spain for up to two years (Rom. 15:24).
   d. Paul was retaken by Rome and eventually killed by beheading about 67 A.D. (as a Roman citizen he could not be crucified).

II. **To whom was this book written?**

The Book of Romans was written to the believers who made up the church at Rome. While Paul had never visited this church prior to the writing of this epistle (Rom. 1:13), he had a great respect for the church and they for him. It is not difficult to see why the Christians from the Roman church met Paul with such great affection when he finally came to Rome as a captive (Acts 28:11-16).

Of all of Paul’s writings, this book is written more like a legal treatise than any other. He approached the Book of Romans as an attorney would approach a case presenting logical arguments to the jury. This would be particularly relevant to the Roman way of thinking.

III. **When was this book written?**

Paul evidently wrote this letter while he was on his third missionary journey when he was gathering the offerings for the Jerusalem relief effort. He wrote this letter at some point near the end of the gathering up of the funds (Rom. 15:26-28). He most likely wrote it from Corinth before he left for Jerusalem (Compare II Cor. 8:1-9). For this reason it is fairly easy to date the book at around 57-60 A.D.

*But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints.* 26 *For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem.* 27 *It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things.* 28 *Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I shall go by way of you to Spain.* 29 *But I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.*

Romans 15:25-29

This letter was most likely carried to the Romans by Phoebe, a sister who was an integral part of the church at Corinth (Rom. 16:1-2).

*I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also.*
IV. What is the main purpose for the writing of this book?

While there is much debate about the purpose for which Paul wrote this book, a couple of things are obvious from the content. Paul wrote…

A. To prepare for his future visit.

It is clear from the book that Paul had never been to Rome, that he had tried to come on several occasions, that he still was making plans to come on his way to the westward expansion of the Gospel to Spain (See Rom. 1:8-15; 15:22-33). And while it appears that he knew quite a number of people in Rome, this book would give him a good introduction to the rest of the church when he came.

B. To strengthen the foundation of the church at Rome.

While many of the letters that Paul wrote were occasioned by specific issues or problems in the church, Paul had no correction or adjustment agenda for the church at Rome. For one thing, he did not found this church and would not naturally give correction in such a situation. In this book it appears that he was speaking to things that he knew would be on the mind of Gentile believers. He, therefore, wrote…

1. To strengthen their concepts of salvation by faith (chapters 1-8). This would be diametrically opposed to the Roman way and the former Jewish way of works and work righteousness.

2. To emphasize spiritual heritage over natural heritage in God’s tree of faith (chapters 9-11). The Jewish people had the advantage of history and the law, but under the New Covenant, God’s people are comprised of those with a spiritual lineage of faith not a natural birth line to Abraham.

3. To focus on the practical expressions of Christianity that must be the result of faith (chapters 12-15). It is one thing to be doctrinally sound, it is another thing to put your faith into practice and demonstrate God’s love in practical ways.

V. What is the main message of the book?

The key phrase in the Book of Romans is “the righteousness of God.” The words “righteousness” and “justification” occur over 60 times in this book. Righteousness with God becomes the main theme of the book.

A. Righteousness Required (chapters 1-4)

In this section Paul establishes the need for a savior. This he applies clearly to both the Jew and the Gentile. All self righteousness is inadequate. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. All are condemned to death and apart from the same faith exhibited by Abraham there is no hope.

B. Righteousness Received (chapters 5-8)
In this section Paul lets us know that the only hope for man is if God Himself provides for man’s righteousness. He demonstrates that Christ has acquired this in our behalf by his work on the cross and that we access God’s gift of righteousness by faith in Christ’s work. Paul establishes that faith has always been God’s plan even with the people in the Old Testament (e.g. Abraham, David).

C. Righteousness Rejected (chapters 9-11)

In this section Paul expresses his love for his own Jewish people and how they were used of God to preserve a seed and the Word of God for the rest of the world. But he also makes it clear that God only has one tree of faith made up of both Jews and Gentiles. The Jewish branches that rejected Christ were cut out of the tree of faith and the Gentiles who received Christ were grafted into the tree of faith. The way into the tree is through faith in the finished work of Christ and the way out of the tree is through unbelief whether you are Jew or Gentile.

D. Righteousness Revealed (chapters 12-16)

In this section Paul turns a major doctrine of the Bible into the implications of the doctrine and focuses on how this thing we call “faith” should affect our lives. He focuses on the practical expressions of Christianity and what it actually means to display the righteousness of Christ in our relationships with each other and the world.

VI. What are some of the unique features of the book?

A. It is in the Book of Romans that we learn of important concepts relative to our salvation in Christ.

1. **Justification (Rom. 4:25; 5:18)**

   Justification is the process by which God declares us “not guilty” based on our acceptance of the finished work of Christ on the cross.

2. **Propitiation (Rom. 3:25)**

   Propitiation is the process by which God removes the due punishment for our sin because of the sprinkling of Christ’s blood on our behalf.

3. **Redemption (Rom. 3:24; 8:23)**

   Redemption is the process by which Jesus Christ paid the debt that we owe freeing us from bondage to sin and death.

4. **Sanctification (Rom. 5:2; 15:16)**
Sanctification is the process by which the Holy Spirit of God takes the level of our experience in Christ up to match our judicial position in Christ. This is the practical application of the atonement.

5. **Glorification (Rom. 8:18-19, 30)**

Glorification is not a process but an act of God by which man completes the process of full redemption and his whole spirit, soul and body overcome the effects of sin and death.

B. It is in the book of Romans that we walk the “Roman Road” of salvation.

1. Romans 3:23

   ...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...

   a. All people on earth are sinners.
   b. Sin separates us from God and keeps us from fulfilling our destiny.

2. Romans 6:23a

   *For the wages of sin is death...*

   a. The penalty for sin is death.
   b. The death that is referred to is both physical and spiritual.
   c. Eternal death is separation from God.

3. Romans 5:8

   *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

   a. God set Him love upon us in spite of our sinful condition.
   b. Because of God’s great love for us, He provided a plan for our condition.
   c. God in His holiness could not simply ignore our sin.
   d. God sent Jesus to pay our debt and die in our place.

4. Romans 6:23b

   *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

   a. Christ died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sin. He became our sinless substitute.
   b. Because of what Christ did, God offers to us a free gift of eternal life.
   c. In order to receive that gift we must reach out and accept the gift.

5. Romans 10:9-10 and Romans 10:13
If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Romans 10:9-10

For “whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.” Romans 10:13

a. When Christ died on the cross He made it possible for us to receive the forgiveness of sins.

b. This gift of salvation is given to those who call on the name of the Lord Jesus and accept him as their Savior and Lord.

VII. What makes the Book of Romans so special?

A. It was the Book of Romans that inspired Martin Luther to personal faith and put the seeds in his heart that triggered the Reformation.

B. It was Luther’s commentary on the Book of Romans that stirred the heart of John Wesley and caused him to receive Christ in a personal way.

C. It is the truths found in the book of Romans that have served as the basis of faith for all who call upon the name of the Lord.
Lesson 9
I Corinthians—The Book of New Testament Church Order

I. What do we know about the City of Corinth?

A. The Location

1. The city of Corinth was located in southern Greece forty miles (60 kilometers) west of Athens.
2. It was located on a narrow strip of land called an isthmus.
3. It formed a land bridge between the Aegean and the Adriatic seas.
4. It was considered one of the most strategic cities of its day.

B. Relevant History

1. Corinth as a city dates back to ancient times.
2. It was leveled in 146 B.C. by the Romans.
3. It was rebuilt by Julius Caesar in 44 B.C. and established as a major capital for all of southern Greece.
4. It was established as a Roman colony and therefore a model city for Roman rule. Unlike many Roman colonies, Corinth had a strong Jewish population and a synagogue.

C. The Importance

1. Corinth was the capital city of the southern province of Greece called Achaia.
2. Because of its strategic location, it became a major center of travel and commerce.
3. Corinth was the site of a large stadium for athletic contest. It hosted the second most significant games outside of the Olympics, the Isthmian Games held every first and third year of the Olympiad (Note: I Cor. 9:24-27).

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. 25 And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. 26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. 27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

D. Unique Features

1. Corinth constructed a road (that was later converted into a canal in 1893) to carry cargo and later ships across the isthmus to avoid going a longer and more dangerous way around.
2. The population of the city and surrounding areas at the time of Paul could have been as high as 700,000 which made it the largest city in Greece

3. Because of its more recent history, it was a blending of many cultures.

4. Corinth was a very immoral city. Because of the high number of sailors, merchants and travelers, it became a hotbed of prostitution and carnal pleasures (I Cor. 6:9-11). The actual English word “Corinthian” means “luxurious, licentious” coming from the reputed lifestyle of the dwellers of Corinth.

   Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

5. The temple of Aphrodite (the goddess of love) stood high above the city and also served to fan prostitution.
   
a. Over 1000 prostitutes served in the temple which was a major source of revenue to the city.
   
b. All manner of immorality was practiced all in the name of religious experience.
   
c. Drunkenness was also characteristic of many of the religious ceremonies.

II. What is the background and Paul’s relationship to this church?

A. Paul founded this church on his second missionary journey (Acts 18:1-8).
   
1. Paul began alone in Corinth by ministering in the synagogue.
2. Paul started a tent making business with Aquilla and his wife Pricilla.
3. Paul wore out his welcome in the synagogue and started a church in an adjacent home.
4. Paul had good fruit in Corinth including Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue.

B. Paul had more follow-up interaction with this church than any other.
   
1. He visited it three times.
2. He may have sent up to four letters to the church of which we have two (See: I Cor. 5:9).

   I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. I Corinthians 5:9

Staying in communication with a city like Corinth would be much easier than with most cities because of its central location and constant flow of traffic.
3. He most likely wrote this letter about 55 A.D. from Ephesus on his third missionary journey (I Cor. 16:8 with Acts 19:1-20).

C. Peter and Apollos also ministered in this church (Acts 18:24-19:1; I Cor. 1:12; 9:5).

   Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." 13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? 14 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15 lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name. I Corinthians 1:10-15

III. What was the occasion for this letter?

   Paul had received personal reports and letters that this church was having some problems (I Cor. 1:11; 5:1; 7:1, 25; 8:1; 16:17).

   Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me… I Corinthians 7:1

   A. Because of the very nature of this city it was prone to have many problems.

      1. There was a blending of many cultures and religious belief systems.
      2. There were all kinds of temptations in the area of morality.
      3. There was an unusually high emphasis on the pursuit of personal pleasure.

   B. The biggest issue that may have sparked this letter had to do with immorality in the church (I Cor. 5).

      It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles--that a man has his father's wife! I Corinthians 5:1

      1. A man was having sexual relation with his father’s wife.
      2. The local church was tolerating this activity.
      3. The local church was rather proud that they were so tolerant and accepting of this brother.

   C. Many other issues would be addressed by Paul all relating to issues of immaturity, carnality and the blending of pagan doctrines with Christianity (I Cor. 3:1-4). Some of these problems included:

      And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you
were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able: for you are still
carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not
carnal and behaving like mere men?

1. The problem of division, strife and envy (1:10-11; 2:3).
3. The problem of lavish and immoral living (6:12-20).
5. The problem of Christian liberty verses license (8:1-13).
7. The problem of the abuse of the Table of the Lord (11:17:33).
8. The problem of the abuse of the Gifts of the Spirit especially tongues and
   prophecy (I Cor. 12-14).
9. The problem of misunderstanding the resurrection and the return of Christ (I Cor.
   15).

IV. What are the distinct features of this book?

A. This is an important book because it gives us a manual for dealing with problems in
   the local church. A key verse is I Corinthians 3:10 “Let each one take heed how he
   builds…”

   1. The church is to be pure if it is to be a witness to the world.
   2. The unity of the church is critical to the power of the church’s witness.
   3. Leaders are to do more than pray about problems in the church.
   4. Part of Christian love is to confront problems when they occur.
   5. The individual believer must be willing to adjust their behavior for the sake of
      the health of the rest of the believing community.

      This relates to both their personal lifestyle and liberties as well as to how they
      conduct themselves in the corporate gatherings of the church.
   6. Behavior in the church must be determined on the basis of love and edification.

      Note the emphasis in chapter 14 on “edification” (I Cor. 14:3, 4, 5, 12, 26).

      Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the
      edification of the church that you seek to excel.  I Corinthians 14:12

      How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a
      psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation.
      Let all things be done for edification.   I Corinthians 14:26

B. This book is an important book because it gives us definition to some of the most
   important practices in the local church.

   1. Church Discipline
2. The Church Service (Corporate Gathering)
3. The Table of the Lord
4. The Ministry of the Body of Christ
5. The Gifts of the Spirit
6. Speaking with other Tongues
7. Prophecy

C. This book is an important book because it stresses the importance of the Lordship of Christ in our lives.

1. One of the greatest causes of carnality in the life of the believer is not acknowledging the lordship of Jesus Christ in one’s life.

2. This epistle emphasizes Christ’s lordship.
   a. Six times in this epistle in the first ten verses Jesus is referenced with His full title “Lord Jesus Christ” (1:2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10). Read: I Corinthians 1:1-10
   b. References to the lordship of Jesus are prominent in this book especially when compared to other epistles (See: I Cor. 1:31; 2:8, 16; 3:20; 4:4; 5:4, 5; 6:13, etc.). The word “Lord” occurs about 70 times in this book.

D. This book is an important book because it contains the most powerful description of love to be found anywhere in the world of history (1 Cor. 13).

   Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. 4 Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. 11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. 13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.
Lesson 10
II Corinthians—The Book of Ministry Qualifications

I. What is the occasion for the letter called II Corinthians?

A. It was a follow up to the first letter most likely written from Macedonia in 56-57 A.D.
   1. Paul was waiting perhaps as much as a year to hear how the local church had responded to his previous letter.
   2. He most likely made a short trip in the meantime to try to correct some problems (II Cor. 12:14; 13:1-2).
   3. Many of the problems had improved for which he would give them praise (7:4, 15).
   4. He would address a new threat that had arisen from the Judaizers.

B. It was a response to reports of the infiltration of some false teachers and false teaching.
   1. As was common in Paul’s experience some false teachers had come behind him who were teaching things other than that of Paul (II Cor. 11:1-4, 13-15, 22-23).
   2. In order to establish themselves and their teaching, they had to try to undermine the authority and reputation of Paul in the church. The Judaistic Party had attacked Paul’s apostleship in several grounds.
      a. They accused Paul of lightness and indecision, promising to come and then not coming (II Cor. 1:16-18).
      b. They accused Paul of not preaching the whole gospel because of his lack of emphasis on works (II Cor. 4:1-6).
      c. They accused him of not being a real apostle (II Cor. 12:11-13).
      d. They accused him of pride and boasting (II Cor. 10:12-18).
      e. They even attacked his personal appearance and manner of speech as being less than impressive, even contemptible (II Cor. 5:12; 10:7-11).

C. It was a defense of his right to speak into the life of the church.
   1. Paul explained why he had to change his plans for coming to them (II Cor. 1:12-2:4).
   2. Paul felt the need to vindicate his apostleship against false charges (II Cor. 10:1-13:4).
   3. Paul used his suffering in the ministry as a primary proof of his motives in ministry.
II. What are the main themes in this letter?

A. Paul reaffirms some of the previous admonitions.

B. Paul defends his apostleship and answers charges against him (all for the sake of the church).

C. Paul presents a message of reconciliation.

> Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.  

II Corinthians 5:18-20

1. Reconciliation of the world back to God (II Cor. 5:18-21).
2. Reconciliation of the church back to himself.
3. Reconciliation of the repentant man to the church family (II Cor. 2:6-11).

D. Paul contrasts the weakness of man as opposed to the power of God (II Cor. 1:5-11; 3:4-6; 4:7-18; 5:1; 6:4-10; 7:5-7; 11:23-30; 12:5, 9-10; 13:4).

E. Using his own life as a pattern for ministry, Paul lays down principles of servant-style leadership. Paul recognized that he was a role model of ministry and he encouraged others to follow his example (I Tim. 1:16).

Every minister should be a ministry of:

1. Comfort and Deliverance (1:4-6, 9-10).
2. Forgiveness (2:7-11).
3. The Spirit (3:3-11).
4. Life and Faith (4:8-12).
5. Reconciliation (5:18-21)
7. Restoration (7:8-11).

III. What are some of the unique features of this book?

A. Paul opens up his life in a more personal way. Apart from Philemon it is the least doctrinal of all of his writings and certainly the most difficult to outline. It has been said that it was written more with the heart than with the head.
1. He shares some more interesting details of his life. There are several experiences in the life of Paul that are found only in this epistle.
   a. His escape from Damascus in a basket (II Cor. 11:32-33).
   b. His being caught up into the third heaven (II Cor. 12:1-4).

2. He shares some of his personal struggles.
   a. His thorn in the flesh (II Cor. 12:7).
   b. His personal suffering in the ministry (II Cor. 1:8-11; 6:3-10; 11:23-27).

3. He shares issues related to his gifting and stature.
   a. Not particularly eloquent in speech (II Cor. 11:6).
   b. Inferior in stature (II Cor. 10:10).

B. Paul gives us one of the greatest New Testament passages on giving in preparation for an offering for the Jerusalem church. The model for giving is found in II Corinthians 8-9.
   1. Giving liberally out of your own poverty (8:2).
   2. Giving willingly beyond your ability (8:3, 12).
   3. Giving ourselves to God first (8:5).
   4. Giving in such a way as to abound in the grace of giving (8:7).
   5. Making yourself poor so that others can be made rich (8:9).
   6. Sowing generously leads to bountiful reaping (9:6).
   7. Giving should be done purposefully not haphazardly (9:7).
   8. Giving should be done cheerfully not grudgingly (9:7).
   9. Giving in faith leads to multiplication (9:10).
  10. Spiritual blessing come upon givers (9:11).

C. The person and ministry of Satan are emphasized in this book (II Cor. 2:11).
   1. Satan is seen as the god of this world (II Cor. 4:4), the serpent (II Cor. 11:3) and an angel of light (II Cor. 11:14).
   2. Satan is their adversary who tries to keep them from doing right (II Cor. 2:10-11).
   3. Satan is the one who seeks to corrupt their minds (II Cor. 11:3).
   4. Satan blinds the hearts of those who do not know God (II Cor. 4:4).
   5. Spiritual warfare is necessary to defeat this enemy (II Cor. 10:3-6).
Lesson 11
Galatians—The Book of Liberty

I. To whom was the Book of Galatians written?

While there is some divergence of opinion concerning the region of Galatia that was being specifically aimed at in this letter, the most popular view is that the letter was directed toward the region of Southern Galatia that would have been the object of Paul’s first missionary journey.

Some feel that it may have been a later letter written to the northern region of Galatia which would have been covered by Paul on his second missionary journey. In either case the problem that he addresses is the same.

A. Southern Galatia is in the lower region of Asia Minor. The provinces visited by Paul on his first missionary journey included Pamphylia, Pisidia, Lycaonia and Southern Phrygia (See Atlas).

1. The people of this region had the reputation for being hasty, spontaneous and impulsive.

2. The people of this region had a reputation for being augmentative and confrontational.

3. The people of this region had a reputation for being emotionally unstable and subjective.
   a. This can be seen in Lystra where the people were ready to worship Paul one minute and stone him the next (Acts 14:11, 19).
   b. This can also be seen in their quickness to receive the gospel and their quickness to change to another gospel.

B. The specific cities that Paul visited and, in most cases, left churches include:

   • Paul started his ministry by preaching in the Jewish synagogue (vs. 14).
   • Certain Gentiles heard of his preaching and begged Paul to preach to them (vs. 42).
   • Paul had city wide interest in his message and multitudes came to hear him (vs. 44).
   • The Jews were moved with envy and began to oppose Paul (vs. 45).
   • Paul and Barnabas focused on the Gentiles who were more open (vs. 46).
   • Paul had great fruit among the Gentiles (vs. 48-49).
   • The Jews stirred up prominent leaders in the city and had Paul and Barnabas expelled from the region (vs. 50).
2. Iconium (Acts 14:1-5)
   - Paul started his ministry by preaching in the Jewish synagogue (vs. 1).
   - Many Jews and Gentiles responded in faith (vs. 1).
   - The unbelieving Jews stirred up both Jews and Gentiles against them (vs. 2).
   - It eventually got so bad that violent attempts were made to harm them and even stone them (vs. 4-5).
   - This forced Paul and Barnabas to leave for the sake of peace (vs. 5).

3. Lystra (Acts 14:8-20)
   - Paul started his ministry in Lystra by speaking in the streets (vs. 9).
   - When Paul healed a lame man the people acclaimed them as gods (vs. 8-12).
   - When the people tried to offer sacrifice to them as gods, Paul and Barnabas rebuked the people for their idolatry (vs. 13-18).
   - When the Jews from Antioch and Iconium heard that Paul was in Lystra they came there and incited the people against them (vs. 19).
   - The people stoned Paul and left him for dead (vs. 19).
   - After the disciples in that city prayed for him, he arose and eventually departed from that city (vs. 20).

   - Paul preached the gospel and had many converts (vs. 21).
   - Paul left and went back to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch strengthening the disciples and setting the churches in order (Acts 14:21-24).

   - Paul had stopped briefly in Perga on his initial entry into Asia Minor.
   - Paul preached in Perga on his way home after leaving Derbe.
   - Paul returned to Antioch of Syria and had a well needed rest (Acts 14:28).

II. What is the background to the Book of Galatians?

A. Paul’s first missionary journey

1. Paul and Barnabas were sent out by the church at Antioch.

   Their principle method was to go to the synagogue of the Jews, if one was present in the city. Their call was to the Jew first and then to the Greek (Rom. 1:16). If there was no synagogue they would usually start in the streets believing
God to open a door through supernatural means or divine encounters. In many cases, God allowed them to perform significant miracles that attracted crowds to them and that gave them an opportunity to preach.

2. They had great fruit on their first journey and may have started up to five churches.

3. They returned to Antioch from where they have been sent and remained there.

B. The Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:2-35)

1. The Conflict (Acts 15:1-5)

Because of the fruit that Paul was having among the Gentiles, many of the Jewish believers felt that Paul was only preaching half of the gospel. They felt that he was making it too easy for people to “get saved.” It was their contention that when people got saved that they should also become identified with Judaism through circumcision and the keeping of the Old Testament law.

2. The Council (Acts 15:6-18)

   a. Since the ones who were stirring things up were from Judea, Paul and Barnabas traveled to Jerusalem to meet with the apostles and elders of the Jerusalem church to discuss the matter.

   b. The Jerusalem leaders had a rather heated discussion (15:7).

   c. Peter shared his testimony of what had happened at the house of Cornelius (15:7-11).

   d. Paul and Barnabas shared their testimony of what was happening in other Gentile areas (15:12).

   e. James, the senior pastor of the Jerusalem church, summarized the discussion, shared a relevant scripture and suggested a solution that was received by all (Acts 15:13-22).

3. The Conclusion (Acts 15:19-29)

   a. They agreed on the demands that should be placed on Gentile converts which did not include circumcision (vs. 19:21).

   b. They agreed that a letter should be written stating the official position of the Jerusalem church (vs. 20, 23-29).

   c. They agreed that key leaders from the Jerusalem church should carry the letter to the church at Antioch to give authority to the letter (vs. 22).

C. The Judaizers and their mission

Unfortunately, not all of the Jewish believers in Judea accepted the findings of the council. They still felt that Paul was not preaching the whole gospel. Part of the problem was the Jerusalem church itself. Many of the believers in the Jerusalem
church still observed much of the ceremonial law of the Old Testament era and blended it with their expression of Christianity.

The Judaizers were a conservative party in the Early Church.

1. What did they teach?

   The Judaizers taught:

   a. That obedience to the law was necessary for salvation.
   b. That while faith in Christ brings us into the kingdom, the works of the law bring us to perfection.
   c. That the law is permanent and the rite of circumcision is part of the initiation process into Christianity.

2. What was their principle concern?

   They were concerned that these converts to Christianity that were coming in under the ministry of Paul and Barnabas were not giving due attention to matters of the law and were not being circumcised.

3. What were they doing in the Gentile churches?

   They were coming in after Paul and Barnabas and preaching their message claiming to be representing the apostles in Jerusalem. In doing so they were undermining the ministry of Paul and they were creating a great deal of confusion. They accused Paul of not being a true apostle and of watering down the message of the gospel just to make it easier to get people saved.

D. Paul’s Concern

1. Paul founded these churches and they were in danger of being destroyed by false teaching.

2. Paul was upset with the Judaizers and had no kind words for them (Gal. 1:7-9; 4:17; 5:10-12; 6:13).

   I am shocked that you are turning away so soon from God, who in his love and mercy called you to share the eternal life he gives through Christ. You are already following a different way that pretends to be the Good News but is not the Good News at all. You are being fooled by those who twist and change the truth concerning Christ. Let God’s curse fall on anyone, including myself, who preaches any other message than the one we told you about. Even if an angel comes from heaven and preaches any other message, let him be forever cursed. I will say it again: If anyone preaches any other gospel than the one you welcomed, let God’s curse fall upon that person.  Galatians 1:6-9, NLT

   I only wish that those troublemakers who want to mutilate you by circumcision would mutilate themselves.  Galatians 5:12, NLT
Those who are trying to force you to be circumcised are doing it for just one reason. They don't want to be persecuted for teaching that the cross of Christ alone can save. And even those who advocate circumcision don't really keep the whole law. They only want you to be circumcised so they can brag about it and claim you as their disciples. As for me, God forbid that I should boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of that cross, my interest in this world died long ago, and the world's interest in me is also long dead. It doesn't make any difference now whether we have been circumcised or not. What counts is whether we really have been changed into new and different people.  

Galatians 6:12-15, NLT

3. Paul was equally upset with the people for being so gullible. Note Paul’s apostolic rebuke to the leaders of these churches (Gal. 1:6; 3:1, 3).

Oh, foolish Galatians! What magician has cast an evil spell on you? For you used to see the meaning of Jesus Christ’s death as clearly as though I had shown you a signboard with a picture of Christ dying on the cross. Let me ask you this one question: Did you receive the Holy Spirit by keeping the law? Of course not, for the Holy Spirit came upon you only after you believed the message you heard about Christ. Have you lost your senses? After starting your Christian lives in the Spirit, why are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort? You have suffered so much for the Good News. Surely it was not in vain, was it? Are you now going to just throw it all away? I ask you again, does God give you the Holy Spirit and work miracles among you because you obey the law of Moses? Of course not! It is because you believe the message you heard about Christ.  

Galatians 3:1-5, NLT

4. Paul was even upset with Peter and some of the brethren from Jerusalem who seemed to be taking a weak stand on the issue of the Gentiles and the law (Gal. 2:11-14).

III. When was the Book of Galatians written?

The Book of Galatians may have been the first of Paul’s letters and was most likely written between 49 and 55 A.D. It may have been written from Corinth on Paul’s second missionary journey.

IV. What is a simple outline of the Book of Galatians?

A. Paul defends his apostleship (chapters 1-2).

B. Paul explains the doctrine of justification by faith (chapters 3-4). The emphasis that he makes is that all of the work that needed to be done for our salvation has already been done by Jesus Christ on the cross.

C. Paul gives some instructions in the practical Christian living that results from our liberty in Christ (chapters 5-6).
V. What are some of the main themes in the Book of Galatians?

A. The contrast between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-26).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Works of the Flesh (vs. 19-21)</th>
<th>The Fruit of the Spirit (vs. 22-23)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are:</em> adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*</td>
<td><em>But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. The purpose of the Old Testament law (Gal. 3:19-25).

1. It was a hedge to keep them and was added because of their transgressions (Gal. 3:23).
2. It was a tutor to lead them to Christ (Gal. 3:24).

C. The doctrine of justification through faith in Christ (Gal. 2:16-17; 3:11).

VI. What are the distinct features of the Book of Galatians?

A. Contrasts in the Book of Galatians

The Book of Galatians demonstrates the superiority of the New Covenant. Note the superiority of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Gospel</th>
<th>over</th>
<th>Judaisim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Spirit</td>
<td>over</td>
<td>The flesh (Gal. 3:3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>over</td>
<td>Works (Gal. 3:11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being Justified</td>
<td>over</td>
<td>Being held by the Law (Gal. 3:11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being Blessed</td>
<td>over</td>
<td>Being Cursed (Gal. 3:9-10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promises thru Abraham</td>
<td>over</td>
<td>Commandments thru Moses (Gal. 3:12-14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abrahamic Covenant</td>
<td>over</td>
<td>Mosaic Covenant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maturity</td>
<td>over</td>
<td>Tutelage (Gal. 3:25-26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonship</td>
<td>over</td>
<td>Bondsmanship (Gal. 3:26; 4:6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberty</td>
<td>over</td>
<td>Bondage (Gal. 4:8, 21-31)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Paul’s unusual approach in this letter.

1. He does not give any words of praise as is usual in most of his letters.
2. He is unusually harsh suggesting that he was upset when he wrote it.
3. He does not ask them for their prayers as is customary in many of his letters.
4. He wrote the entire letter in his own hand (Gal. 6:11).

C. This epistle was a key to Luther’s understanding and helped lay the foundation for the Reformation.
Lesson 12
Ephesians—The Book of the Church

I. What is the background to the Book of Ephesians?

A. Paul first visited the city of Ephesus on his second missionary journey (Acts 18:19-21). On that occasion he was in a hurry to get to Jerusalem and only ministered briefly in the synagogue.

B. The church of Ephesus was founded on Paul’s third missionary journey (Acts 19:1-41).

1. Paul’s first converts were disciples of John the Baptist (Acts 19:1-7).

2. Paul spent about three months ministering in the local synagogue (Acts 19:8).

3. When he was rejected in the synagogue he moved to a rented facility (the school of Tyrannus) and continued to teach for two or more years with great results (Acts 19:9-10).
   - All in Asia heard the word (19:10). Some have suggested that the seven churches of Asia describe in Revelation 1-3 may have been started during this time either directly or indirectly through the ministry of Paul.
   - Unusual miracles were done by Paul (19:11).
   - Magicians were dramatically saved (19:18-19).
   - The word of God grew mighty and prevailed (19:20).
   - The gospel disrupted the local trade in goddess replicas and silver shrines (19:24-27).

4. Demetrius, a local silversmith, instigated a riot against Paul (19:29-41).

5. Paul felt that it was expedient for him to leave so the work could continue (Acts 20:1; I Cor. 16:9). As it turned out Paul would spend nearly three years ministering in Ephesus, longer than he spent in any one place throughout his entire ministry.

II. What do we know about the city of Ephesus?

A. It was one of the top five cities of the world in that day (the others being Alexandria, Antioch, Corinth and Rome).

B. It was a major shipping port and a crossroad for merchants moving good from east and west.

C. It was a very wealthy city and had many of the same issues as Corinth.
D. It was the home to the great temple dedicated to the goddess Diana. It was a huge temple and a major tourist attraction in its day. It was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

E. It had a high concentration of Jews from the Diaspora and a strong synagogue (Acts 2:9; 6:9; 19:8, 10). Some of these Jews would be the ones who followed Paul to Jerusalem and stirred up trouble for him causing his arrest (Acts 21:27-32).

F. It received ministry from many key leaders including Aquilla, Pricilla, Apollos, Timothy and the apostle John.

III. When was the Book of Ephesians written?

The Book of Ephesus was written by Paul during his first imprisonment in Rome.

A. It is one of four such letters know as the Prison Epistles (Philippians, Colossians and Philemon are the others). Note Paul’s references to his bonds:

…and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. Ephesians 6:19-20

1. Ephesians (Eph. 3:1; 4:1; 6:20)
2. Philippians (Phil. 1:12-13)
3. Colossians (Col. 1:24; 4:18)
4. Philemon (Philemon 1, 10)

B. It was most likely written some time between 60 and 64 A.D.

C. It was written for no particular reason except that he was sending some other letters as well. When he wrote the other letters from prison he had a specific purpose in mind. This is significant because it tells us what his meditations were while in custody.

1. The letter to the Philippians was written to thank them for their offering and to encourage them through times of suffering.

2. The letter to the Colossians was written as the request of the founder to correct certain doctrinal errors.

3. The letter to Philemon was to serve as a door opener for the return of his slave Onesimus.

IV. What are some of the main themes in the Book of Ephesians?

What were Paul’s meditations while in custody? On what did Paul focus in prison to keep himself encouraged?

A. Paul focused on what he had in Christ not on what he did not have (Eph.1:3-14).
Read: Ephesians 1:1-14

1. This portion more closely resembles the Psalms than any of Paul’s writings.
   a. It is the longest sentence of sustained praise.
   b. It begins with “blessed.”
   c. It lifts up God in praise and thanksgiving for His benefits.
   d. It is poetic in nature (It may have even been sung.).

2. This portion has a three-fold division acknowledging the unique work of each person of the Godhead in our redemption.
   a. A Tribute to the Father (vs. 3-6). He planned it.
   b. A Tribute to the Son (vs. 7-12). He provided it and purchased it.
   c. A Tribute to the Holy Spirit (vs. 13-14). He applies it.

3. This portion focuses on nine things that we experience as believers in Christ.
   1. We are CHOSEN before the foundation of the world.
   2. We are PREDESTINED unto the adoption as children.
   3. We have OBTAINED an inheritance.
   4. We are ACCEPTED in the beloved.
   5. We have the FORGIVENESS of sins.
   6. We have REDEMPTION through his blood.
   7. We are SEALED with the Holy Spirit of promise.
   8. We HEARD the word of truth.
   9. We TRUSTED after we heard the word.

B. Paul focused on the eternal purpose of God and God’s instrument for that purpose—the church.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>The Church</th>
<th>Christ</th>
<th>Aspect of Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Eternal Purpose</td>
<td>The Pre-eminent One</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Temple of God</td>
<td>The Chief Cornerstone</td>
<td>Communion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The Family of God</td>
<td>The Firstborn Son</td>
<td>Multiplicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The Body of Christ</td>
<td>The Head of the Body</td>
<td>Function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The Bride of Christ</td>
<td>The Husband of the Wife</td>
<td>Bride for Son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The Army of God</td>
<td>The Captain of the Army</td>
<td>Dominion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. Paul focused on what is happening in the heavenly places not on what he sees with his eyes.

Note the key phrase “heavenly places” and notice how the passages containing this phrase can be read consecutively (Eph. 1:3; 19b-21; 2:6; 3:10-11; 6:12).
Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ...according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all... and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus...to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord... For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

V. What are the distinct features of the Book of Ephesians?

A. Paul references the three different spiritual postures of the believer.

1. Sitting (Eph. 2:6). This is the believer’s position in Christ seated with Him in heavenly places.

2. Walking (Eph. 4:1). This is the believer’s calling to walk worthy of Lord.

3. Standing (Eph. 6:11). This is the believer’s posture of resistance to the work of the devil.

B. Paul describes the relationship of the Jew and Gentile in Christ (Eph. 2:11-22).

1. Paul describes the former condition of the Gentiles.
   - Gentile in the Flesh
   - Uncircumcision
   - Without Christ
   - Aliens form the Commonwealth of Israel
   - Strangers from the Covenants of Promise
   - Having No Hope
   - Without God in the World
   - Far Off
   - Enmity from God and Man

2. Paul describes the present condition of the Gentiles.
   - But Now...
   - In Christ Jesus
   - Made Nigh by then Blood of Christ
   - At Peace with God and Man
• Made One With the Jew
• Middle Wall of Partition Broken Down
• Enmity Abolished
• One New Man
• Both Reconciled to God in One Body
• Preaching of Peace to Those Which Were Far
• Both Have Access to the Father

3. Paul describes the new relationships that results.
• No More Strangers and Foreigners
• Fellow Citizens with the Saints
• Of the Household of God
• Jew and Gentile Joined Together

C. Paul gives us a close look at the five-fold ministry and how it functions (Eph. 4:7-12).

D. Paul gives us a detailed description of the armor of God (Eph. 6:12-18).
Lesson 13
Philippians—The Book of Joy and Rejoicing

I. What is the background to the Book of Philippians?

Read Acts 16:6-40

A. Paul’s Second Missionary Journey

1. After Paul circulated through Galatia founding churches on his first missionary journey he returned to Antioch and reconnected with the sending church (Acts 14:27).

2. After spending up to three years in Antioch he decided to revisit the churches that he had established and deliver the findings of the Jerusalem Council (Acts 14:28; 15:35-36; 16:4-5).

3. After visiting the churches Paul felt they should continue into new territory and proposed to go northward to Bithynia or Asia (Acts 15:40-41; 16:6).


5. After receiving a night vision from the Lord, he determined a new course of action (Acts 16:9).

B. Paul’s Macedonian Call

1. Paul received a vision of a man from the region of Macedonia pleading with Paul to come to Macedonia (officially Europe) and help the Macedonians (Acts 16:9).


3. Paul eventually arrived at Philippi which is “the foremost city of that part of Macedonia, a colony” (Acts 16:12).

C. The First Church in Europe

1. When Paul and Silas arrived in Philippi, since there was no synagogue, they connected with some Jewish women (including Lydia) who gathered by a river for prayer and fellowship (Acts 16:13-15).

2. Paul preached in the streets and began to create a stir especially when he cast the spirit of divination out of a young lady (Acts 16:16-19).

3. The masters of the servant girl drug Paul and Silas before the city magistrates and accused them of being Jews and of preaching things that were anti-Roman (Acts 16:19-21).
4. Because of the city’s antagonism toward Jews, Paul and Silas were beaten hastily and thrown into prison without a trial (Acts 16:22-24).

5. Paul and Silas sang their way to deliverance and eventually led the jailor and his household to the Lord (Acts 16:25-34).

6. Paul was released from prison when it was discovered that he was a Roman citizen (Acts 16:40). Paul forced them to make a public issue of their release since they had beaten them publicly.

7. Paul picked up where he left off at the house of Lydia which was most likely the meeting place for this new church (Acts 16:40).

D. Follow-up on the Philippian Church

1. Luke, who most likely was with Paul in the beginning stages of this church, may have stayed in the church (Acts 16:11 ff.).

   It should be noted that whenever Paul got close to Philippi, Luke, the writer of the book of Acts, seems to link up with Paul (Acts 20:5).

2. The church at Philippi sent gifts to Paul on a couple of occasions during his ministry at Thessalonica (Phil 4:15-16).

3. Paul undoubtedly visited the church at Philippi on the front end of his third missionary journey when he came into Macedonia (Acts 20:1).

4. Paul revisited Philippi on his way to Jerusalem after his third missionary journey (Acts 20:1-6).

5. The church at Philippi sent an offering to Paul while he was in prison in Rome by the hand of Epaphroditus (Phil. 4:10-14).

6. Paul sent the letter that was addressed to this great church by the hand of Epaphroditus while in prison in Rome (Phil. 1:1-3).

7. Paul fully expected that he would visit Philippi again after his release from prison (Phil. 1:25-27; 2:24).

   But I trust in the Lord that I myself shall also come shortly. Philippians 2:24

II. What do we know about the city of Philippi?

   A. Philippi was founded as a gold mining center and became a city of prominence because it was on the main road to Rome from the western world.

   B. Philippi was a chief city of that part of Macedonia. Even though Thessalonica was the capital city of that Roman province.
C. Philippi was a Roman colony. As a result of being a Roman colony…

1. The people of the city were Roman citizens.
2. The city was a model of Roman law and education.
3. The people were noted to be noble, educated and disciplined.
4. The city did not officially allow a synagogue and would be somewhat anti-Semitic.

III. When was the Book of Philippians written?

This epistle was primarily written to express thanks to the church for their generosity in giving Paul a financial gift while in prison in Rome. The only note of correction in the letter has to do with a couple of individuals in the church who were not getting along as Christians should (Phil. 4:2).

This book was most likely written toward the end of Paul’s first Roman imprisonment. He seems to have had an expectation of release (Phil. 2:24). Therefore, it was most likely written between 62 and 64 A.D.

IV. What are some of the main themes in the Book of Philippians?

A. The principle theme and the title of this book is joy and rejoicing. Some form of the word joy and rejoicing occurs 18 times in this short book. It is a book of thanksgiving to God, love for the believers at Philippi and joy in the midst of suffering. Think of Paul’s introduction to this city and his own imprisonment and suffering.

1. Joy is to be our attitude in prayers of thanksgiving (Phil. 1:4; 4:6).
2. Joy springs from faith (Phil. 1:6, 25; 3:3).
3. Joy comes when we focus on the outcome of our faith not the process of suffering (Phil. 1:12-20, 25).
4. Joy comes from seeing lasting fruit in your life and ministry (Phil. 2:2, 16).
5. Joy comes from serving others (Phil. 2:17).
6. Joy comes when we see ourselves in Christ (Phil. 3:3).
7. Joy comes from a positive confession (Phil. 3:1; 4:4) and a positive thought life (Phil. 4:8).
8. Joy comes when others show care and concern for you (Phil. 4:10).

B. Each chapter contains a “classic” text that has provided great blessing to the church.

1. Chapter 1 – The Confidence of the Believer, Philippians 1:6

...being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ...
2. Chapter 2 – The Supreme Example of Christ, Philippians 2:5-11

5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. 9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

3. Chapter 3 – The Ultimate Goal of the Believer, Philippians 3:12-16

12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. 15 Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. 16 Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.

4. Chapter 4 – The Believer’s Meditation, Philippians 4:8

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things.

-- The Supernatural Power Within, Philippians 4:13, 19-20

13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me... 19 And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. 20 Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

C. Christ is seen in four ways in the book of Philippians.

1. Christ is the believer’s life (Phil. 1:21).

For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

2. Christ is the believer’s mind (Phil. 2:5).

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus...

3. Christ is the believer’s goal (Phil. 3:10).
…that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death…

4. Christ is the believer’s strength (Phil. 4:13).

\textit{I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.}

D. Our spiritual citizenship is more important than Roman citizenship.

1. We are to conduct ourselves (lit. behave as a citizen) in a manner worthy of the Gospel (Phil. 1:27).

\textit{Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ…}

2. We are not to look to Rome for our blessings of citizenship, but to God (Phil. 3:20).

\textit{For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ…}

V. What are the distinct features of the Book of Philippians?

1. Paul had a special relationship with this church.

1. Paul had deep affection for this church (Phil. 1:8). This is seen in the overall tone of this book which is kind, gentle and encouraging. It is truly a love letter to this special church.

\textit{For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.}

2. This church was more generous to Paul to support him financially (Phil. 4:15). This is significant because they were a very poor church and they gave out of their poverty. Paul used this church as an example to others of sacrificial giving (II Cor. 8:1-5).

\textit{Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only.}

3. Paul seems to be more personal with this church than any other. He uses personal pronouns (I, me and my) more in this epistle than in any other (over 100 times).

4. Paul had a special relationship with the leader of this church referring to him as his “true yokefellow” or companion (Phil. 4:3).

5. Paul shares his inner motivations with this church (Phil. 1:21; 3:10; 3:14).
For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. Philippians 1:21

…that I may know Him… Philippians 3:10a

I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus… Philippians 3:14

B. Paul gave a unique description of faithful, support ministry (Phil. 2:19-30).

1. Timothy (Phil. 2:19-23)
   a. Timothy was like-minded as Paul.
   b. Timothy had a genuine care and concern for people.
   c. Timothy was a man of proven character.
   d. Timothy served Paul as a son would his father.

2. Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:24-30)
   a. Epaphroditus was a soldier.
   b. Epaphroditus was sacrificial in his service.
   c. Epaphroditus put the needs of others ahead of his own.
   d. Epaphroditus was willing to risk his life for the work of Christ.
Lesson 14  
Colossians—The Book of the Head

I. What is the background to the Book of Colossians?

A. The City Itself

1. The city of Colosse was located about one hundred miles east of Ephesus and 12 miles north of Laodicea.

2. The city had an important history, but by this time it had declined somewhat in world significance.

3. The city still was on the main trading lines in that part of the world and, therefore, would still have a lot of traffic moving through it. Whenever you have traffic, there is a positive result and a negative one. You get the blessing of the cultures of the world and you get the problems of the rest of the world as well.

4. A few short years after this letter was written a major earthquake nearly leveled the city. However, it was rebuilt immediately.

5. Many ancient ruins of the city exit today. The closest modern city to these ancient ruins is Chronas.

B. The Founder of the Church

1. The founding of this church is not covered in the New Testament record.

   a. The Church at Colosse was not founded by Paul (although indirectly he may have had something to do with it). Evidently he had never been to the church personally (Col. 2:1).

      For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh...

   b. The Church at Colosse may have been the result of all Asia having heard the word under the ministry of Paul in Ephesus (Acts 19:10, 26). The personal greetings in this book suggest that Paul knew many people in this church.

      And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. Acts 19:10

      Moreover you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands. Acts 19:26

2. The Church at Colosse was most likely founded by a man by the name of Epaphras (Col. 1:7).

   a. Epaphras was a Colossian (Col. 4:12).
b. Epaphras may have been influenced by Paul in the early days of Paul’s ministry in Ephesus (Acts 19:10, 26).

c. Epaphras may have also been the founder of the church at Laodicea and Hierapolis (Col. 4:12-13).

> Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis.

d. Paul only had good things to say about this man and his ministry.

- A faithful minister of Christ (Col. 1:7)
- A preacher of the Gospel (Col. 1:23)
- A teacher of foundation principles (Col. 2:6-7)
- A man of fervent prayer (Col. 4:12)
- A man of passion for the local church (Col. 4:13)

3. The Church at Colosse was evidently composed of mostly Gentile converts with little Jewish base (Col. 1:21-22; 2:13; Compare Eph. 2:1, 11-12).

> And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight...

Colossians 1:21-22

C. The Purpose of the Letter

While 78 out of the 95 verses in Colossians have a marked resemblance to the verses in Ephesians, we are more interested in the material that is different. Paul was obviously in the same frame of mind when he wrote both of these books, but Colossians is distinguished by virtue of the fact that it was written with a specific purpose. It is similar to Galatians in the sense that it was written to address certain doctrinal errors that were becoming prevalent in the area and in the church.

II. When was the Book of Colossians written?

Paul was a prisoner in Rome when he wrote this book. Epaphras, the founder of the church, was visiting Paul and described some of the problems that were occurring in the church. Paul wrote this letter about the same time as he wrote the letter to the Ephesians and Philemon somewhere between 62 and 64 A.D. It was carried back to the Colossians by Tychicus. This epistle was also intended to be read at the church of Laodicea (Col. 4:16, See also Rev. 3:14-22).

> Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea. Colossians 4:16
III. What were the specific problems that Paul was addressing in this letter?

A. Epaphras let Paul know of his concern about doctrinal error creeping into the church.

B. The errors revolved around two main philosophies that were circulating at the time. They actually may have been combined into one in the teachers that had come into the church. In either case, the heresies represented two clear streams.

1. Revived Judaism (Col. 2:11-17)

In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. 13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, 14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. 16 So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, 17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

There was the usual attempt of many of the Judaizers to bring the New Testament believer back into bondage to the law by insisting on a return to traditions of the past. This was caused by an inability to understand and relate to the past in light of the present revelation from God.

a. These Judaizers were insisting on the following:

- Circumcision
- Clean and unclean foods
- Celebration of feasts days
- Keeping the Old Testament Sabbaths

b. Paul made it clear that all of those things were only shadows of the realities that would come to us in Christ (Col. 2:17).

2. Gnosticism (Col. 2:18-23)

Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, 19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God. 20 Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations—21 “Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,” 22 which all concern things which perish with the using—according to the commandments and doctrines of men? 23 These things indeed have an
appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

Gnosticism was a philosophy that attempted to explain the universe, the source of evil, the concept of God and man’s pursuit of a supreme being and spiritual experience. It was the New Age culture of that day that was reserved for those of superior intellect. It took bits and pieces of many religions and blended them into one. For this reason it was constantly changing to somehow be inclusive of all of the religions of the day.

a. Some of the traits of this system included:

- Self imposed humility
- Austere treatment of the body and suppression of appetites (asceticism)
- Exaltation of the spirit world and angels (angelic emanations were credited with the creation of the universe)
- Lack of acknowledgement of the superiority or lordship of Christ
- A sense of superior wisdom

b. Paul refers to these heresies as persuasive words, philosophy, empty deceit, appearance of wisdom, basic principles of the world and doctrines of men (Col. 2:4, 8, 20, 22, 23).

C. Paul warns the Colossians not to let themselves be beguiled or spoiled by these heresies.

1. Paul did not want them to be beguiled (Col. 2:4, 18).

   Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words.

   Colossians 2:4

   Let no one cheat you of your reward… Colossians 2:18a

   This word means to be deceived, led astray or deluded by false reasoning.

2. Paul did not want them to be spoiled (Col. 2:8).

   Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

   This word means to be carried off as a captive or slave as booty or prey.

3. Paul wanted them to “beware” (Col. 2:8).

   To “beware” is to be constantly looking out for and to keep a watchful eye open for danger.
D. Paul answered the various tenets of the Colossian heresy as represented in the following chart (Note: This chart is taken from *Tyndale Handbook of Bible Charts and Maps*, page 473):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Heresy</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Paul’s Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spirit is good, matter is evil.</td>
<td>1:15-20</td>
<td>God created heaven and earth for His glory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One must follow ceremonies, rituals and restrictions in order to be saved or perfected</td>
<td>2:11, 16-23; 3:11</td>
<td>These were only shadows that ended when Christ came. He is all you need to be saved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One must deny the body and live in strict asceticism.</td>
<td>2:20-23</td>
<td>Asceticism is not help in conquering evil thoughts and desires; instead, it leads to pride.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angels must be worshipped.</td>
<td>2:18</td>
<td>Angels are not to be worshipped; Christ alone is worthy of worship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ could not be both humans and divine.</td>
<td>1:15-20; 2:2-3</td>
<td>Christ is God in the flesh; he is the eternal one, the head of the body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One must obtain secret knowledge in order to be saved or perfected—and this was not available to everyone.</td>
<td>2:2, 18</td>
<td>God’s secret is Christ, and he has been revealed to all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One must adhere to human wisdom, tradition and philosophies.</td>
<td>2:4, 8-10; 3:15-17</td>
<td>By themselves, these can be misleading and shallow because they have human origin; instead, we should remember what Christ taught and follow his words as ultimate authority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is even better to combine aspects of several religions.</td>
<td>2:10</td>
<td>You have everything when you have Christ; he is all sufficient.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is nothing wrong with immorality.</td>
<td>3:1-11</td>
<td>Get rid of sin and evil because you have been chosen by God to live a new life as a representative of the Lord Jesus.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IV. What are some of the main themes in the Book of Colossians?

Because the Book of Colossians shares so much in common with the Book of Ephesians they have many of the same themes. However, because of the unique purpose of this book, it has a stronger emphasis in some areas and some additional themes that are particular to this book.

A. The superiority of Christ as the Head of the Body—the Church

Jesus Christ is:

1. The Son of God’s Love (Col. 1:13),
2. The King of the Kingdom of Light (Col. 1:13)
3. The Redeemer (Col. 1:14)
4. The Forgive of Sins (Col. 1:14)
5. The Image of the Invisible God (Col. 1:15)
6. The Firstborn of Every Creature (Col. 1:15)
7. The Agent of Creation (Col. 1:16)
8. The Object of Creation (Col. 1:16)
9. The Pre-existent One (Col. 1:17)
10. The Sustainer of the Universe (Col. 1:17)
11. The Head of the Body (Col. 1:18)
12. The Firstborn from the Dead (Col. 1:18)
13. The Preeminent One (Col. 1:18)
14. The Fullness of the Godhead Bodily (Col. 1:19; 2:9)
15. The Reconciler of the World to God (Col. 1:20-21)
16. The Perfecter of the Body (Col. 1:22)

B. The responsibility of the believer to put off the old man and put on the new man (Col. 3:9-17, See also Eph. 4:22-5:7). When you put these two passages in Ephesians and Colossians together you come up with a thorough list of that which the believer is to “put off” and that which the believer is to “put on.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Put Off—The Old Man</th>
<th>Put On—The New Man</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lying</td>
<td>Speaking Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stealing</td>
<td>Honest Labor—Giving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrupt Communication</td>
<td>Edifying Conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bitterness</td>
<td>Kindness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrath</td>
<td>Tenderheartedness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>Forgiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malice</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fornication</td>
<td>Goodness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncleanness</td>
<td>Righteousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covetousness</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drunkenness</td>
<td>Filled with the Spirit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson 15
I & II Thessalonians—The Books of the Second Coming of Christ

I. What is the background of the Book of I & II Thessalonians?

1. Paul’s Second Missionary Journey

   1. Paul and Silas had received the Macedonian call to preach the gospel in Macedonia.

   2. They immediately responded and went to Philippi where they were beaten and put into prison.

   3. Shortly after their release from prison they decided to leave to take undue pressure off of the young church (Acts 16:40).

   4. After leaving Philippi, they came to Thessalonica (Acts 17:1).

2. The founding of the church at Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-10).

   Read: Acts 17:1-10

   1. Paul followed his normal custom and started his ministry in the synagogue of the Jews (Acts 17:1-3).

   2. Paul seemed to have an open door in the synagogue for about three weeks (Acts 17:2).

   3. Paul had his usual two-fold reaction in that quite a number of people were persuaded and believed, but those who were not persuaded and did not believe stirred up a riot against them (Acts 17:4-5).

   4. The mob that had been created came against the household of Jason where it was believed that the Christians were meeting and brought Jason before the magistrates with false charges (Acts 17:6-9).

   5. Because of the pressure of the situation, Paul and Silas were smuggled out of town by night and went to Berea where they continued to minister (Acts 17:10).

   6. Eventually the unbelieving Jews from Thessalonica came to Berea and stirred up the crowds against Paul and Silas (Acts 17:13-14).

   7. Paul was forced to leave Berea, but Silas and Timothy stayed on for a while (Acts 17:14).

   8. Paul traveled to Athens where he ministered in the marketplace while he waited for Silas and Timothy to rejoin him (Acts 17:15-34).

   9. Timothy evidently joined Paul in Athens long enough for Paul to send him back to Thessalonica to help ground this new work (I Th. 3:1-2).
10. Paul did not stay in Athens for long, he eventually went on to Corinth where he started a business, partnered with Aquilla and preached in the synagogue (Acts 18:1-4).


12. Timothy gave Paul a good report of what was happening in the church at Thessalonica even though they were facing quite a bit of persecution for their faith (I Th. 3:6-9).

   *Now Timothy has just returned, bringing the good news that your faith and love are as strong as ever. He reports that you remember our visit with joy and that you want to see us just as much as we want to see you. So we have been greatly comforted, dear brothers and sisters, in all of our own crushing troubles and suffering, because you have remained strong in your faith. It gives us new life, knowing you remain strong in the Lord.*

   I Thessalonians 3:6-8, NLT

C. The follow-up to the church at Thessalonica

1. Paul sent Timothy back to Thessalonica to help establish and strengthen the work (I Th. 3:1-5).

   *Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone, and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith, that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know. For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain.*

2. When Timothy returned and gave his report to Paul, Paul wrote to follow up on the report. The report had two emphases that Paul addressed.

   a. Paul commended them for their faith in the face of adversity.

   b. Paul corrected some problems that were prevalent in the church.

3. Paul wrote a second letter to the church just a couple of months after the first.

4. Paul may have looked in on the church briefly at the end of his third missionary journey when he circulated among the churches of Greece (Acts 20:1-3).

D. The purpose of the letter

   Paul had received a report from Timothy regarding the condition of the church. Evidently there was a positive and a negative aspect of his report.
1. On the positive side the believers in the church at Thessalonica had been very faithful under the pressure of persecution (I Th. 1:1-10).

   And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything.
   
   I Thessalonians 1:6-8

2. On the negative side there were a few problems that Paul felt the need to address.
   
   a. Paul felt the need to defend some of his actions.
      
      • How he conducted himself among them (2:1-16)
      • Why he was not with them (2:17-20).
      • Why he sent Timothy (3:1-13).
   
   b. Paul felt the need to admonish them regarding areas of Christian behavior.
      
      • Sexual purity (4:1-8)
      • Brotherly love (4:9-12)
      • Treatment of church leadership (5:12-13)
   
   c. Paul felt the need to correct them in doctrinal areas relating to the after life and the Second Coming of Christ (See below).

   Timothy most likely delivered this letter to the church.

II. What do we know about the city of Thessalonica?

   A. The city was founded in 315 B.C. and was named after the wife of the founder.

   B. Under Rome it became the capital city of Macedonia in approximately 146 B.C.

   C. It was a significant trading city with the largest harbor in the region.

   D. It became the second largest city in Macedonia (second only to Philippi).

   E. The city still exists today.

III. When were the Books of I & II Thessalonians written?

   The books of I & II Thessalonians were among the first books written by Paul. They were most likely written by Paul on his second missionary journey while he was in either Athens or Corinth. They were most likely written between 52 and 54 A.D. These two
books are very closely tied together and were most likely written only a couple of months apart.

IV. What is the central theme of the Books of I & II Thessalonians?

The central theme to both I and II Thessalonians is the Second Coming of Christ. Every chapter in these books contains at least one reference to this subject. The word “coming” (Greek, parousia) occurs 7 times (I Th. 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; II Th. 2:1, 8, 9).

A. Paul was counteracting some false concepts that people had regarding the Second Coming.

1. There were those who were suggesting that Christians who died in faith would not have the same glorious experience at Christ’s return. They would miss out. (I Th. 4:13-17). Paul let the people know that the Second Coming will not be a quiet event and that those who died in faith would not “miss out.”
   - Christ will return with a loud shout.
   - An Archangel will make a similar commotion.
   - A loud trumpet will sound.
   - The dead in Christ will rise first (because they have further to go)
   - Those believers who are alive on earth will ascend with them to meet the Lord in the air.
   - We will live together with the Lord forevermore.

2. There were those who were suggesting that since Christ’s return was imminent, there was no need to stay engaged in work (I Th. 4:9-12; II Th. 3:11-12). Paul obviously voiced Jesus’ same challenge, “occupy till I come” (Luke 19:13).

B. I Thessalonians focuses on the relationship of the Second Coming of Christ in relation to the believer. This book sees the “comfort side” of the Second Coming (I Th. 4:18).

Therefore comfort one another with these words.

C. II Thessalonians focuses on the relationship of the Second Coming of Christ in relation to the unbeliever. This book sees the “judgment side” of the Second Coming (II Th. 1:7-10).

…and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.
V. What are some of the other themes in these books?

A. The three key words of the biblical Christian’s experience—faith, hope and love (I Th. 1:2-3).

We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father...

1. These are key words in I & II Thessalonians.

   a. Faith occurs 13 times (I Th. 1:3, 8; 3:2, 5, 6, 7, 10; 5:8; II Th. 1:3, 4, 11; 2:13; 3:2).

   b. Hope occurs 5 times (I Th. 1:3; 2:19; 4:13; 5:8; II Th. 2:16).

   c. Love occurs 8 times (I Th. 1:3; 3:6, 12; 5:8, 13; II Th. 1:3; 2:10; 3:5).

2. Paul commends the believers at Thessalonia for three things:

   a. Their work of faith (I Th. 1:3-9b). The work of faith seen in these believers was their turning from idols, their turning to God in the face of persecution and their joy in the Holy Spirit.

   b. Their labor of love (I Th. 1:9c). The labor of love seen in these believers was the willingness to serve the living God and all that it means.

   c. Their patience of hope (I Th. 1:10). This is the area that Paul sought to strengthen. Their hope was to wait for Christ’s return and the prospect of deliverance from wrath to come (II Th. 3:5).

3. These words are seen in relation to each other in the New Testament (See Chart).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Chapter</th>
<th>Hebrews 11</th>
<th>Romans 8</th>
<th>I Corinthians 13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I Thessalonians 1:3</td>
<td>Work of Faith</td>
<td>Patience of Hope</td>
<td>Labor of Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Corinthians 13:13</td>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galatians 5:5-6</td>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colossians 1:4-5</td>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Thessalonians 5:8</td>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II Thessalonians 1:1-4</td>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>Patience</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Timothy 6:11</td>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>Patience</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II Timothy 3:10</td>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>Patience</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Titus 2:2</td>
<td>In Faith</td>
<td>In Patience</td>
<td>In Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revelation 2:2</td>
<td>Works</td>
<td>Patience</td>
<td>Labor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. The emphasis on the deity and exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 17:2-3).
Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ.”

Note the use of the name of Jesus some 54 times in these eight chapters:

- Lord Jesus Christ (20 times)
- Lord Jesus (4 times)
- Lord (21 times)
- Christ Jesus (2 times)
- Christ (4 times)
- Jesus (3 times)

VI. What are some of the unique features of these books?

A. Paul gives us a good look at the spirit of true and false ministry (I Th. 2:3-12).

For our exhortation did not come from error or uncleanness, nor was it in deceit. 4 But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts. 5 For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness--God is witness. 6 Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. 7 But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. 8 So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. 9 For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God. 10 You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; 11 as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, 12 that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualities of False Ministry</th>
<th>Qualities of True Ministry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>Gentle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclean</td>
<td>Loving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deceitful</td>
<td>Selfless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man Pleasing</td>
<td>Hardworking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flattery</td>
<td>Devout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covetous</td>
<td>Blameless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking Praise of Men</td>
<td>Just</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demanding</td>
<td>Fatherly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B. Paul teaches them how to face adversity.

1. Maintain your example in affliction. Your testimony is stronger because of what you are going through (I Th. 1:6-8).
2. Maintain your boldness and do not fear what men can do to you (I Th. 2:2).
3. Maintain your faith knowing that affliction is part of our destiny as believers (I Th. 3:3-5).
4. God will take care of those who trouble you (II Th. 1:6).
5. Remember that you will find rest when Christ returns (II Th. 1:7).

C. II Thessalonians introduces us to the antichrist (II Th. 2:3-12).

1. He is seen as the man of sin, the son of perdition and the lawless one (II Th. 2:3, 8, 9).
2. He will perform lying signs and wonders (II Th. 2:9).
3. He will deceive many who will worship him as God (II Th. 2:4).
4. He will be destroyed at the Second Coming of Christ (II Th. 2:8).
Lesson 16
I & II Timothy—The Book of Ministry Qualification and Teaching

I. What is the background of the Book of I & II Timothy?

The books of I & II Timothy and Titus have been called the Pastoral Epistles because of the fact that they were written to men who were involved in pastoral ministry at the time of the writing.

A. Timothy was the recipient of these letters from Paul.

1. Timothy was born in Lystra (Acts 16:1).

2. Timothy’s mother was Jewish and his father was Greek (Acts 16:1).

3. Both Timothy’s mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois were strong, godly influences in his life (II Tim. 1:5; 3:15).

4. He most likely came to Christ on Paul’s first visit to Lystra at about the age of fifteen (Acts 14:6-23; I Tim. 1:2, 18).

5. Paul utilized Timothy as an assistant and traveling companion on his second missionary journey about seven years later (Acts 16:1-3).

6. Paul also used him to visit churches in his behalf or to prepare the way for his coming (Acts 19:22; I Cor. 4:17; 16:10-11).

7. He traveled a great deal with Paul in the years ahead.
8. He developed a very close relationship with Paul and was considered a son in the faith to him (Phil. 2:19-24; I Cor. 4:17).

   *But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state. 20 For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. 21 For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. 22 But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel. 23 Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me. 24 But I trust in the Lord that I myself shall also come shortly.* Philippians 2:19-24

9. He was with Paul in Rome during his first Roman imprisonment (Phil 1:1; 2:19; Col. 1:1; Philemon 1).

10. After Paul’s release he accompanied Paul to Ephesus when he seems to have been placed in charge of the church (I Tim. 1:3).

11. He seems to have remained there to pastor the church while Paul continued his work elsewhere.

12. Tradition suggests that Timothy died as a martyr under the hand of the Romans.

B. Paul’s love for the Ephesian church and his continued discipleship of Timothy, the pastor.

II. When were the Books of I & II Timothy written?

While there are many differing viewpoints concerning the actual date and writing of these books, all are in agreement that they were some of the last of Paul’s books to be written.

A. I Timothy was most likely written after Paul’s release from Roman imprisonment while he was carrying on with his work. Timothy had been placed as the pastor of the church at Ephesus. Paul was ministering in other places. This book was most likely written sometime between 62 and 64 A.D.

B. II Timothy was written during Paul’s second imprisonment in Rome which would lead up to his death. It is his last book to be written and would be dated between 64 and 66 A.D. There is no question that Paul knew that this would be his last book and that his death was imminent. He ends on a very personal note giving greetings or reference to no less than 23 individuals.

III. What is the central theme of the Books of I & II Timothy?

In these letters Paul deals with the kinds of things that pastors must face in ministry, particularly in relation to his son in the faith Timothy. A key verse that reveals the main intent of Paul’s letters is found in I Timothy 3:14-15.
These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

A. I Timothy issues:

1. Resisting error and false doctrine (1:1-20).
2. Guidelines for prayer and public worship (2:1-8).
5. Warnings against false doctrines that are circulating (4:1-11).
10. Warnings about the love of money and instructions to the rich (6:3-10, 17-19).

B. II Timothy issues:

1. Personal instructions to Timothy as a good soldier (1:8-2:25).
   a. Do not be ashamed of the Gospel (1:8-12).
   b. Stand fast in the Word of God (1:13-14).
   c. Be strong in grace (2:1).
   d. Be diligent in the work of the Lord (2:15).
   e. Flee youthful lusts (2:22).
   f. Avoid foolish and ignorant disputes (2:23).
2. Warnings about apostasy in the last days (3:1-9, 13-14).

IV. What are some of the unique features of these books?

A. Timothy’s character and personality are seen within the context of these books.

1. Timothy was quite young for the position in which he was serving (I Tim. 4:12).

   He was most likely about 40 years of age at this time, but he was living in a culture that honored those of age. If you were under 40 years of age, you were not deemed as having anything worthwhile to say. Timothy may have been pastoring a church of as much as 60,000 members. No doubt many of those
people would have been much older than he. Paul let him know that spiritual age is more important than natural age.

2. Timothy was naturally shy and timid (II Tim. 1:6-12).

Paul encouraged Timothy to:

- Stir up the gift that was in him (1:6).
- To shake off the spirit of fear (1:7).
- Not be ashamed of the Gospel (1:8).

3. Timothy did not handle stress and the pressures of ministry well (I Tim. 5:23).

*No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities.*

4. Timothy may have had a tendency toward philosophical pursuits. Note the many admonitions about avoiding such things:

a. Reject seducing spirits and doctrines of devils that will cause some to depart from the faith (I Tim. 4:1-5).

b. Don’t listen to fables and endless genealogies that do not build faith and cause many to stray from the truth (I Tim. 1:4-7).

c. Reject old wives fables which are contrary to faith (I Tim. 4:6-7).

d. Avoid the contradictions of what is falsely called science or knowledge when cause some to stray from the faith (I Tim. 6:20-21).

e. Shun profane and vain babblings that overthrow the faith of some (II Tim. 2:16-18).

B. Paul gives a thorough list of leadership qualifications (I Tm. 3:1-13, See also Tit. 1:5-9).

God is very particular when it comes to choosing who is to oversee His House. Because it is His House, He wants to be the One Who selects those who will preside over it. In the economy of God no one just decides to be an overseer.

These are qualifications that all elders must have which include moral, domestic, spiritual and gifting related areas. (I Tim. 3:2).

We will look at these more closely when we look at the book of Titus.

C. Paul outlines what qualifies a widow for assistance from the local church (I Tim. 5:3-16).

In order for a widow to be considered a “widow indeed” she would have to meet certain criteria, including:
1. She would have no children or grandchildren to support her.
2. She would be a woman of prayer looking to God for miraculous supply.
3. She must be living a frugal (non-indulgent) life.
4. She should be over 60 years of age.
5. She must have been faithful in marriage to one man.
6. She must be noted for good works, raising godly children, hospitality, works of service to others and charitable deeds.
7. She must be noted as a diligent worker not given to idleness.

D. Paul gives us a great description of the salvation that we have in Christ (I Tim. 6:19, NIV).

_In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life._ –NIV

…so that they may take hold of the life which is life indeed. –RSV

E. Paul highlights six different loves that may control the path of one’s life.

1. The love of money (I Tim. 6:9-10; II Tim. 3:1).
2. The love of self (II Tim. 3:2).
3. The love of pleasures (II Tim. 3:4).
4. The love of the world (II Tim. 4:10).
5. The love of God (II Tim. 3:4).
6. The love of His appearing (II Tim. 4:8).

   Obviously, we want the last two loves in our lives.

F. Paul describes the many roles of the mature believer (II Tim. 2).

1. A Faithful Man (II Tim. 2:2).
2. A Good Soldier of Jesus Christ (II Tim. 2:3-4; 4:7-8).
3. An Athlete (II Tim. 2:5; 4:7-8).
5. An Approved Worker (II Tim. 2:15).

G. Paul gives insights into his natural situation and coming death (II Tim. 4).

1. Paul speaks of his readiness to die and his finished course (II Tim. 4:6-8).

_For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness,_
which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

2. Paul speaks of his relationships both good and bad (II Tim. 4:9-15).

3. Paul speaks of his first defense before Caesar that did not go well (II Tim. 4:16).

4. Paul acknowledges that he is in the hands of the Lord (II Tim. 4:17-19).

H. Paul gives a final charge to Timothy (II Tim. 4:1-5).

The following chart is taken from Nelson’s Complete Book of Maps and Charts, page 437.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timothy must…</th>
<th>Because…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share in suffering for the gospel (1:8; 2:3)</td>
<td>Through such sharing others will be saved (2:10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue in sound doctrine (1:13; 2:15)</td>
<td>False doctrine spreads and leads to ungodliness (2:16, 17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flee youthful lusts (2:22)</td>
<td>He must be cleansed and set apart for the Master’s use (2:21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid contentiousness (2:23-25)</td>
<td>He must gently lead others to the truth (2:24-26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Militantly preach the gospel (4:2)</td>
<td>Great apostasy is coming (4:3,4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson 17
Titus—The Book of Ministry Character
Philemon—The Book of Reconciliation

I. What do we know about the man, Titus?

A. Titus was of Greek origin and was most likely a convert of the apostle Paul perhaps from the home church in Antioch (Tit. 1:4a).

To Titus, a true son in our common faith…

B. Titus accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their trip to Jerusalem for the council as an example of Gentile fruit (Gal. 2:1-3).

C. Titus was among Paul’s company as a partner and fellow laborer during the latter part of Paul’s third missionary journey (II Cor. 8:23).

If anyone inquires about Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker concerning you.

1. Paul had sent him to Corinth not only to carry the letter but to assist in with some issues within the church (II Cor. 7:14-16; 8:16-17). He most likely read the letter to the church.

2. Titus reported back to Paul on the situation of the church at Corinth.

3. Titus carried the letter of II Corinthians to the church (II Cor. 8:16-23).

D. Titus may have been involved in assisting in the gathering of finances for the Jerusalem relief effort (II Cor. 8:18-22).

E. Titus apparently accompanied Paul after his release from Roman imprisonment to Crete where Paul left him to pastor the work (Tit. 1:5).

For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you…

F. Paul asked Titus to join him in Nicopolis sometime later (Tit. 3:12).

When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there.

G. Titus was with Paul during his second Roman imprisonment for a short while (II Tim. 4:10).

Be diligent to come to me quickly; for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica--Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry. II Timothy 4:9-11
H. Titus apparently finished his life as the senior pastor of one of the churches on the island of Crete. He most likely functioned apostolically to all of the churches in the island.

I. Titus most likely died of natural causes.

II. When was the Book of Titus written?

Because of the timeframe in Paul’s life when he visited the island of Crete, the letter has to have been written sometime between Paul’s two Roman imprisonments. It was most likely written toward the middle to end of this period placing the letter between I Timothy and II Timothy. For this reason a date between 63 and 65 A.D. is to be preferred.

III. What do we know about the church at Crete?

A. The people of Crete had a negative reputation (Tit. 1:12-13).

   *One of them, a prophet of their own, said, “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.” This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith…*

   1. They were reputed to be liars.
   2. They were reputed to be slack (lazy) concerning detail. Hence the need for structure in most of the churches of the region.
   3. They were reputed to be war-like. They were not peaceable among themselves or patient with foreigners.
   4. They were reputed to be intolerant of outsiders. They were not cosmopolitan in their thinking. They had an island mentality. They were not open to new ideas and philosophies.
   5. There were many classical slogans describing the Cretans.

      a. Epimenides a Cretan poet said, *Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons* (Tit. 1:12b).

      b. In classical literature “to act as a Cretan” was the same as to be a “liar.”

B. The people of Crete had an opportunity to change by virtue of the Gospel.

   1. People from Crete were represented on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:11). In all likelihood some of these converts carried the Gospel back home with them.

   2. Paul’s ship to Rome harbored in Crete at Fair Havens (Acts 27:7-21). This may have been the thing that aroused his interest in the island.
3. Paul journeyed to Crete after his first Roman imprisonment and started works in several cities (Tit. 1:5).

4. Titus was left in Crete to set the churches in order.

IV. What is the central theme of the Book of Titus?

While the book deals with many practical principle of church life, the principle theme has to do with the setting in of leadership and the setting in order of the churches of Crete. As a result the qualifications that Titus is to look for in those who would serve as leaders in the church is a predominant theme (Tit. 1:5-9).

For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you--if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.

In this sense it gives us a close parallel to the material given to Timothy for the same purpose (I Tim. 3). When you combine these two lists of qualifications we find that Paul was concerned about four principle areas of qualification not unlike those suggested to Moses by Jethro his father-in-law (Ex. 18:21)

Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.

A. Moral Attributes

1. An elder is to be blameless (I Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:6).

This does not mean that an elder will not be blamed for things. Leaders get blamed for many things. However, it does mean that they live a life that is above reproach. Jesus was blameless and yet false witnesses blamed Him of many things.

2. An elder must be temperate (I Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8).

In other words a person in leadership must have his self under control, exhibiting self-control. To have self-control is to have the spirit under God’s control. An elder should not be given to excess in any area of life. An elder should be a person of balance.

3. An elder is to be sober-minded (I Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8).
The elder is to be a person of infinite discretion and sound mind. A good leader is one who has his mind trained or cultivated toward wisdom and sound judgment.

4. An elder must be of good behavior (I Tim. 3:3).

This Greek word for “good behavior” implies the thought of being orderly and modest. It is closely akin to the word which means “adornment”. The elder must be above reproach in all his activities of behavior, right down to the way he dresses. An elder is continually in the public eye, and there will always be those who will seek to bring reproach to God leaders.

5. An elder is not to be given to wine (I Tim. 3:3; Tit. 1:7).

This seems like a rather obvious qualification, but there are many ministries who have fallen over excess in this very thing. An elder should be free from addictions. The only addiction that God sanctions is an addiction to serving.

6. An elder is not to be quick-tempered (I Tim. 3:3; Tit. 1:7).

An elder is a person who should manifest a mature display of the fruit of the Spirit. This means that self-centeredness, fits of anger, rage and other demonstrations of immaturity should not have any place in his life.

7. An elder is not to be covetous (I Tim. 3:3; Tit. 1:7).

A person who has given himself wholly unto the Lord will have no need of extravagances. Money or lack of it will never be the motivation for life’s decisions. An elder is a person who has learned to be content in whatsoever state God has placed him. His desires are toward spiritual things and not temporal things (I Cor. 12:31).

8. An elder is not to be a quarrelsome (I Tim. 3:3; Tit. 1:7).

An elder is not to be contentious, quarrelsome or argumentative, always taking the opposing side and finding it difficult to flow easily with other leaders. Again, such a person has not yet yielded his members and rights totally unto God.

9. An elder is not to be self-willed or “so pleased with himself that nothing else pleases him and he comes to please no body” (Tit. 1:7).

A person who insists on his own way is not open to God’s way. Someone who is self-willed is one “so far overvaluing any determination at which he has himself once arrived that he will not be removed from it” (Trench). The Greek word carries the connotation of one who is self-pleasing, dominated by self-interest and inconsiderate of others. It is the opposite of gentleness.

10. An elder is to be a lover of what is good (Tit. 1:8).
The word “men” that is used in the King James Version is not found in the Greek. An elder never has a good thing to say about any practice of evil because he has a Christ-like hatred for evil.

B. Domestic Qualifications

The elder not only has to have himself under control, but he must also have his own home under control. If a person cannot rule or manage his own home life effectively, how can he qualify to rule in God’s House? It takes the same kind of skills to lead the family of God as it takes to shepherd one’s own family. The family is a good reflection of what a person’s church would be like if that same person was the principle leader of the church.

11. An elder must be the husband of one wife (I Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:6).

This does not mean that a person must be married. It literally means that the elder must be a “one woman man.” He must be a loyal spouse living in a pure marriage relationship without adulterous relationships or attitudes. God has never condoned polygamy. If he is a person divides his natural affections, he will also be prone to divide his spiritual affections and commit spiritual adultery.

12. An elder is to be hospitable (I Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:3).

If one would break this Greek word down it would be translated “a lover of strangers”. The shepherd must be able to call his sheep by name. To do this he must not be afraid to get involved with them on a personal level and have them into his home. The leader’s home should be a center of ministry and a place of refuge for those in need.

13. An elder is to rule his own house well, having his children in submission (I Tim. 3:4), having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination (Tit. 1:6).

What a terrible blight it is that pastors’ children have often been the most unruly members of the church. It is true that people in the congregation often have an unfair standard for the pastor’s children. But it is also true that the pastor’s children can be a negative testimony in the church and community. It is the leader’s faithfulness to the home that gives him the right to function in the same way in the church. The exhortation of Paul goes on, “for if man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God” (I Tim. 3:5).

C. Spiritual Qualifications

Elders of the church need to have certain spiritual qualities if they going to fulfill their leadership ministry to the local church. The leadership of the church must set the tone for the entire church. They should in effect be running on ahead of the rest of the church. They should not be those that are dragging their heels in relation to the moving of the Holy Spirit in the church.
14. An elder is not to be a novice or young convert (I Tim. 3:6).

For an elder in the church, spiritual age is more important than physical age. This admonition of Paul can refer to two possible issues. It can refer to someone who is a new convert or it can refer to someone who is newly planted in an individual local church. A new convert does not have enough experience with hearing the voice of God to be an effective elder. The main task of the elder is to hear the voice of the Lord, the Head of the Church. The person who is newly planted has not had an opportunity to get to know the vision of the local church, to demonstrate a commitment to the people of the church and to earn the respect of the people of the assembly.

15. An elder must have a good testimony among those who are outside the church (I Tim. 3:7).

This is an area of qualification that is sometimes overlooked. It is interesting how a person can look so good in and around the church, but outside of the church in the neighborhood or on the job that same person may be nearly despised. The truth is that the ability of the church to reach the lost is based on its testimony outside of the church not inside the church. The reputation of the church will to a large extent be based on the reputation of the leaders of that church. That testimony will either have a positive or a negative effect on the ability of the church to fulfill its divine call. The church has a vital ministry to the unsaved. It is essential that the church maintain a good testimony with those outside the church.

16. An elder is to be just (Tit. 1:8).

In the etymology of this Greek word we find that it originally was used of persons who observed the custom, rule and right, especially in the fulfillment of duties towards gods and men, and of things that were in accordance with right. In the New Testament it denotes right conduct judged whether by the divine standard or according to human standards of what was right (Vine). Nothing will undermine the authority of a leadership team more quickly than elders who are not perceived to be just in their judgments. If they are arbitrary or they show favoritism toward a certain group people will lose respect for them and for the other leaders as well.

17. An elder is to be holy (Tit. 1:8).

The Greek word that is used here is not the same word that refers to the holiness of God but it has some of the following connotations: “that quality of holiness which is manifested in those who have regard equally to grace and truth”, those that are “religiously right as opposed to what is unrighteous or polluted”, “those that are…pure from evil conduct, and observant of God’s will” (Vine – Compare I Th. 2:10). The leadership of the church must exhibit the same kind of balance that was in the life of Jesus. They are to be the model of Christ after which those in the church can pattern themselves.
18. An elder must be patient (I Tim. 3:3).

God knows that in dealing with people a great amount of patience is required if the people of God are going to be brought to maturity. An elder must be willing to work effectively with people at all levels of maturity.

19. And elder must hold fast the faithful word as he has been taught (Tit. 1:9; See also vs. 10-14).

This not only speaks of the ministry of an elder, but it tells us that an elder must be personally established in the truth. A leader in the church cannot be a person who is repeatedly blown about by winds of doctrine. An elder is a person who does not let “feelings” be the guiding factor in his life. The compass must be the Word of God at all times.

D. Leadership Gifting

It takes more than good character and a good family to make a good elder. The person must also possess a gift of leadership sometimes referred to as a “leadership charisma” to make the ministry effective. Because of this, when Paul lists the qualities that are needed in a potential elder, he lists some areas that have to do with leadership gifting. God has given five leadership gifts that are responsible to bring maturity to the church. They are found in Ephesians 4:11 and include the apostle, the prophet, the evangelist, the pastor and the teacher. Each elder in the church should be called by God to one of these important leadership ministries.

20. An elder must be able to teach (I Tim. 3:2).

This does not mean that every elder must be gifted as a teacher described under the five-fold ministry, but it does mean that every elder must be able to expound, proclaim, and communicate what God has done in his life relative to the Word of God. All of the five-fold ministries must be word ministries. An elder must be able to communicate it in such a way that others will learn. This qualification also implies a genuine knowledge of the Word of God that is the result of prayer over, mediation on and systematic study of the Word.

21. An elder must be able to exhort and convince in sound doctrine (Tit. 1:9).

An elder must be able to bring the truth to bear on the everyday encounters with people. The elder is not just a source of academic information but there must be a passion for truth that can be easily seen by others. An elder has a contagious faith.

It is interesting in all of Paul’s lists that there is no actual age requirement for New Testament eldership. Since no specific age is mentioned it must be assumed that when a person has come to the level of maturity where all of the character qualities necessary to qualify are indeed manifest, that person is old enough to govern in the local church. The spiritual maturity of the individual is far more important than the physical attainment of age. It is possible to be
old and yet not wise (Eccl. 4:13) and it is also possible to have wisdom beyond your years because of a heart of obedience (Ps. 119:99-100).

V. What are the unique features of the Book of Titus?

A. Paul’s emphasis on good works.

The key verses are Titus 2:11-14 and Titus 3:4-7

*For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.* Titus 2:11-14

*But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.* Titus 3:4-7

As much as the rest of Paul’s writings emphasize the grace of God, Paul also understood that we are saved by grace for the purpose of good works (Eph. 2:8-9; Tit. 2:11-14; 3:4-7). In the Book of Titus, Paul gives six references to good works.

1. False ministries are void of good works (Tit. 1:16).
2. True ministers, like Titus, are to be a pattern of good works (Tit. 2:7).
3. God’s people were set apart to be zealous of good works (Tit. 2:14).
4. All believers are to be ready to do good works (Tit. 3:1).
5. All believers are to be careful to maintain good works (Tit. 3:8).
6. All believers are “to learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they not be unfruitful” (Tit. 3:14).

B. The emphasis on the example of the minister of Christ

1. Must not profess to know God but deny Him with our deeds (Tit. 1:16).
2. Must be an example or a pattern of what is taught (Tit. 2:7).

Godliness must be seen in the actions that he carries out. A godly lifestyle is of utmost importance for ministry and all of life.

C. The practical instruction to each age/social group in the church

1. To the old men (Tit. 2:2)
2. To the old women (Tit. 2:3-4).
3. To young women (Tit. 2:4-5).
4. To young men (Tit. 2:6-8).
5. To servants (Tit. 2:9-10).

D. Guidelines for the treatment of heretics and other problem people (Tit. 1:10-11; 3:9-11)

For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.

Titus 1:10-11

But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless. Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.

Titus 3:9-11
Philemon—The Book of Reconciliation

V. What is the background of the Book of Philemon?

The book of Philemon is a personal letter written by a friend to a friend. It is the shortest book Paul wrote consisting of only 334 Greek words. The purpose of the letter is to bring reconciliation between two individuals—a master and a slave. It is a valuable book in that you discover much about the heart of Paul. You see a man who is to take the example of Jesus who was willing to lay his life down for another. He was willing to put his life on the line for a slave with no position, power or resources.

A. Paul in prison at Rome

The occasion for this book is Paul’s first imprisonment in Rome in his own hired house (Acts 31:30-31). Paul was chained to a soldier in his own rented house. He was free to receive people and to preach and teach.

B. A runaway slave by the name of Onesimus

One such person who had a divine encounter with Paul in Rome was a runaway slave by the name of Onesimus.

1. Onesimus was the slave of a man by the name of Philemon (vs. 11, 16).
2. Onesimus’ master lived in Colosse and was a key part of the church there (vs. 2).
3. Onesimus stole some of his master’s goods and ran away to the large city of Rome to get lost (vs. 18-19). Instead he got found.
4. Onesimus may have run into Epaphras, the founder of the church of Colosse and one who would have known him. He may have introduced him to Paul.

C. A miraculous conversion

1. Onesimus at some point came under the influence of the ministry of Paul and through the work of the Holy Spirit was transformed from an unprofitable servant (vs. 11) into “a faithful and beloved brother” (vs. 16).
2. Onesimus served Paul in some way for a short season while Paul was prisoner in Rome (vs. 11, 13).
3. Onesimus eventually authenticated his conversion with works suitable for repentance and at Paul’s encouragement went back to his master to make things right.

D. A letter of reconciliation to Philemon

1. Paul wrote a letter in behalf of Onesimus to help him fulfill his moral obligation to return and restore.
2. Paul wrote a letter to his friend Philemon to be gracious to Onesimus and forgive him. Under Roman law there could have been severe punishment, even death. Philemon was most likely a home church leader within the church (vs. 2).
3. Onesimus most likely carried the letter in the company of Tychicus who carried the Colossian letter (Col. 4:7-9 with Eph. 6:21-22).

4. Paul’s appealed to Philemon, not on legal grounds but on spiritual grounds, in the hope that he would receive him back not only as a slave but also as a brother in Christ (vs. 16).

5. Paul put some extra pressure on Philemon to do so.

   Read the book (as time permits)

   a. By indicating that he would not command Philemon what to do when he could actually do so (vs. 8-9, 14).

   b. By appealing to Philemon’s reputed good character, faith and love (vs. 4-7, 9).

   c. By asking for a personal favor from Philemon as a partner in the gospel (vs. 17).

   d. By offering to pay any debts owed to Philemon by Onesimus (vs. 19).

   e. By reminding Philemon of relational debts that he owed to Paul (vs. 19).

   f. By asking for personal sympathy from Philemon while he was in chains (vs. 20).

   g. By making it a matter of obedience (vs. 21).

   h. By letting Philemon know that he is coming soon and would be planning on staying with him (vs. 22).

VI. When was the Book of Philemon written?

   The date for the Book of Philemon would be the same date as the Book of Colossians somewhere between 62 and 64 A.D.

VII. What is the central theme of the Book of Philemon?

   The central theme of the Book of Philemon is forgiveness and reconciliation. It has to do with receiving an offending brother back in a spirit of love. The key word in the book is “receive” (vs. 12, 15, 17).

   As such this book gives us the essence of the Gospel:

   A. The sinner has run away from God.

   B. The law condemned the sinner and gave him no right of appeal.
C. The sinner could never pay the debt that was owed.
D. The sinner flees to the arms of Jesus.
E. Jesus stepped in to pay the debt.
F. The sinner turns from his sin and brings forth the fruit of repentance.
G. The sinner receives forgiveness not on the basis of law but of grace.
H. The sinner becomes a new creature, free from bondage.

VIII. What are the unique features of the Book of Philemon?

A. Paul spoke often of his natural situation (Was he looking for sympathy for the sake of Onesimus?).
   1. Paul, a prisoner of Christ (vs. 1)
   2. Paul, the aged and prisoner (vs. 9)
   3. Paul, a spiritual father in chains (vs. 10)
   4. My chains in the gospel (vs. 13)
   5. Paul’s hope of release (vs. 22)
   6. My fellow prisoner (vs. 23)

B. Paul wrote this letter personally, perhaps to ensure that others were not brought into a private matter (vs. 19).

IX. What became of Onesimus?

It is very likely that Onesimus became the bishop of Ephesus. In 110 A.D. Ignatius was writing to the churches of Asia Minor and mentions that the name of the bishop of Ephesus was Onesimus. This may even explain why this seemingly insignificant letter made it into the New Testament. In any event, Paul saw something of greatness in this slave. The life of Onesimus is a testament to what God can do when we give our lives fully to him.

If this is true then it also speaks something of Philemon, who not only responded to “the letter” of Paul’s admonition, but “the spirit” of it by not only forgiving Onesimus but eventually also releasing him from slavery.
Lesson 18
Hebrews—The Book of Better Things

I. What are the main views concerning the authorship of the Book of Hebrews?

The question of who wrote the Book of Hebrews is one of those questions that will not be settled until we get to heaven. There have been volumes written on this subject. The main suggestions have included Paul, Luke, Apollos, Barnabas and Aquila and Pricilla. Some have even suggested a Second Century writer by the name of Clement of Rome.

I personally lean toward the idea that Paul wrote it.

A. Arguments against the authorship of Paul

1. Paul’s name is not found in this epistle as it is in his other epistles. BUT…if Paul were indeed writing to the Hebrew believers his name on the document might do more harm than good. Paul may have been hiding his identity so that the Jews who were his greatest persecutors would accept the epistle (Acts 21:27-28; 22:17-22).

2. This book represents a different style than that found in Paul’s other writings. BUT…if this book was addressed to an entirely different audience could it lend itself naturally to a different style.

3. The language in the book is perhaps the purest Greek in the New Testament, much superior to the other epistles. BUT…there is no question that Paul’s educational background would make it possible for him to use high Greek usage.

4. Paul was chosen by God and recognized in the Early Church as “the apostle to the Gentiles” and this epistle never mentions the Gentiles (Acts 9:15; Gal. 2:7-8). BUT…Paul’s ministry was also to encompass the Jew (Acts 9:15). In this passage, the “children of Israel” is mentioned last and it is likely that this would be one of the last of Paul’s works (if he indeed wrote it).

But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.”

B. Arguments for the authorship of Paul

1. There is a typical Pauline salutation which is found in one of two forms in every one of the thirteen epistles of Paul; in fact, it was Paul’s token (II Th. 3:17-18).

This salutation is found in the book of Hebrews (Heb. 13:18-25, Compare Rom. 16:24; I Cor. 16:23; II Cor. 13:14; Gal. 6:18; Eph. 6:24; Phil. 4:23; Col. 4:18; I Th. 5:18; II Th. 3:18; I Tim. 6:21; II Tim. 4:22; Tit. 5:15; Philemon 25).

2. The author of this book obviously had a Greek background by virtue of his use of the Greek language and he also had a Jewish background by his understanding of the Jewish religious customs. Paul would certainly qualify in this area.
3. When Peter wrote to the Jewish believers, he seemed to indicate that Paul had written to them (II Pet. 3:15-16a with I Pet. 1:1; II Pet. 3:1). No other epistles that we have would qualify as this mysterious letter.

And remember, the Lord is waiting so that people have time to be saved. This is just as our beloved brother Paul wrote to you with the wisdom God gave him--speaking of these things in all of his letters. –NLT

4. The person who wrote this book was obviously a man who was thoroughly trained in the Scriptures with a tremendous amount of revelation on the relationship of the Old Covenant to the New Covenant.

Paul would again qualify on this account being trained as a Pharisee (Phil. 3:5) and receiving revelation from the Holy Spirit (II Cor. 12: 1-4, 7; Eph. 3:1-7).

5. This letter was written by one who had been in bonds (Heb. 10:34). Paul was in bonds on more than one occasion.

For you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven.

6. This letter was written by one who was now cut off from the Jewish believers (Heb. 13:18-19, Compare I Th. 5:25; II Th. 3:1).

Paul’s imprisonment would have done this for him. The letter was written from Italy of which Rome was the capital (Heb. 13:24).

Pray for us; for we are confident that we have a good conscience, in all things desiring to live honorably. But I especially urge you to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner. Hebrews 13:18-19

7. The author seems to have been a close associate and traveling companion of Timothy (Heb. 13:23).

Know that our brother Timothy has been set free, with whom I shall see you if he comes shortly.

8. Paul always had a tremendous desire to see his brethren saved (Rom. 9:1-4).

This may have been his final attempt to reach them. If keeping his name off of the letter would give it a greater audience among the Jews, so be it! It is almost as if the author is intentionally remaining anonymous for a higher purpose. The result was more important that the credit or recognition.

I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, 2 that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh… Romans 9:1-3
II. To whom was the Book of Hebrews written?

The Book of Hebrews was written to Hebrew Christians (Heb. 3:1). We can deduce several things about the intended audience from the content of the book itself.

Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling...

A. It was written to saints who were not new Christians (Heb. 5:12).

   For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

B. It was written to saints who had suffered great persecution and hardship (Heb. 10:32 with Acts 8:1).

   But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings...

C. It was written to a Christian community of considerable size (Heb. 13:24).

   Greet all those who rule over you, and all the saints.

D. Many scholars have suggested that the church at Jerusalem was the original recipient of this letter which was then circulated abroad.

III. When was the Book of Hebrews written?

As with all of the particulars of this book, there is considerable debate about the date of the writing. Most commentators put the date between 62 and 64 A.D.

A. It seems to have been written to second generation Christians (Heb. 2:3; 5:12; 13:7).

B. It was written before the heaviest of persecution which would have come under the emperorship of Nero after 65 A.D. (Heb. 12:4).

C. It was written before the destruction of Jerusalem. At the time of the writing, the temple was still standing and its services were still in operation (Heb. 8:4; 13:10).

D. It has been suggested by some that this date would correspond to the death of James, the brother of the Lord and the senior pastor of the church at Jerusalem who is believed to have died a martyr’s death in about 62 A.D.

IV. Why was the book of Hebrews written?

A. To help the Hebrew believers make a transition.
This may have been God’s last attempt to help the Jews to make the transition from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant. It was mainly written to wean the Hebrew believers from Judaism to Christianity and to help them understand the transition from the shadow to the real. Note the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hebrews 8:7; 10:9</td>
<td>First Covenant</td>
<td>Second Covenant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrews 8:13</td>
<td>New Covenant</td>
<td>Old Covenant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrews 9:9-11</td>
<td>Symbolic</td>
<td>Greater, More Perfect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrews 9:9-11</td>
<td>The Present Time</td>
<td>Good Things to Come</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrews 9:9-11</td>
<td>Made with Hands</td>
<td>Not Made with Hands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrews 9:23-24</td>
<td>Copies of Things</td>
<td>The Real</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrews 10:1</td>
<td>Shadow</td>
<td>The Very Image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrews 10:11-14</td>
<td>Continual Sacrifices</td>
<td>Once for all Sacrifice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrews 10:11-14</td>
<td>Temporal</td>
<td>Eternal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. To warn these believers regarding apostasy.

There seems to be some concern in the mind of the author of this book that because of the growing intensity of opposition to Christianity and the weakness of the faith of these believers (Heb. 5:11-14) that they might be prone to depart from the faith (Heb. 3:12; 10:19-39).

V. Why do we call the Book of Hebrews the Book of Better Things?

In keeping with the purpose for which the Book of Hebrews was written, we find a focus on two words, “better” (See Hebrews 1:4; 7:19; 8:6; 9:23; 10:34; 11:16, 34, 40) and “great” (See Hebrews 2:3; 4:14; 9:11; 10:32, 35; 12:1; 13:20).

A. Christ is presented as the Pre-eminent One and the one who established a new and better covenant.

Christ is seen as greater than:

1. The Prophets (Heb. 1:1-3)
2. The Angels (Heb. 1:4-2:18)
3. Moses (Heb. 3:1-19)
4. Joshua (Heb. 4:1-13)
5. Aaron (Heb. 5:14-7:18)
6. Abraham (Heb.7:7)
7. The Law (Heb.7:19ff.)

B. The New Covenant is seen as better than the Old Covenant (Heb. 8:7-13; 11:40).

The New Covenant is better because it is has:
VI. What are the unique features of the Book of Hebrews?

A. The Book of Hebrews gives us the most complete look at Christ, the Great High Priest (Heb. 7:24-25).

1. Christ as our High Priest is both merciful and faithful (Heb. 2:17).
2. Christ as our High Priest is to be the focus of our thoughts (Heb. 3:1).
3. Christ as our High Priest has gone into the heavens for us (Heb. 4:14).
4. Christ as our High Priest is both sinless and sympathetic (Heb. 4:15)
5. Christ as our High Priest has an eternal priesthood (Heb. 5:6)
6. Christ as our High Priest is of the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 5:9-11).
7. Christ as our High Priest is our forerunner (Heb. 6:20).
8. Christ as our High Priest is greater than Abraham (Heb. 7:4).
9. Christ as our High Priest is higher than the heavens (Heb. 7:26).
10. Christ as our High Priest has no weaknesses (Heb. 7:26-28).
11. Christ as our High Priest sits at the right hand of the Father (Heb. 8:1).
12. Christ as our High Priest makes intercession for us (Heb. 7:25).
13. Christ as our High Priest offered Himself as a sacrifice (Heb. 10:12).
14. Christ as our High Priest provided the way back to the Father (Heb. 10:19-22).
15. Christ as our High Priest is the author and finisher of our faith (Heb. 12:2).

B. The Book of Hebrews presents us with the greatest definition and examples of faith in the faith chapter of the Bible—chapter eleven. It begins by defining faith in verse one and proceeds to give us real examples of faith in real life expression.

**Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.**

Hebrews 1:1

**But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.**

Hebrews 11:6
5. The faith of Abraham (vs. 8-10, 12, 17-19)
6. The faith of Sarah (vs. 11)
7. The faith of Isaac (vs. 20)
8. The faith of Jacob (vs. 21)
9. The faith of Joseph (vs. 22)
10. The faith of Moses’ parents (vs. 23)
11. The faith of Moses (vs. 24-28)
12. The faith of the Children of Israel (vs. 29-30)
13. The faith of Rahab (vs. 31).
14. The faith of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets (vs. 32-35).
15. The faith of those who were persecuted (vs. 35-40)
Lesson 19
James—The Book of Practical Christianity

I. What do we know about the author of this book?

The name James is the English form of the word “Jacob” (Gk. Jacobos).

A. This James is to be distinguished from the other men by the name of James in the New Testament.

1. James the son of Zebedee or James the Greater (Mt. 4:21)

_Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them,_

James the son of Zebedee was the brother of the Apostle John (Mt. 4:21; Mark 1:19; Luke 5:10). He was the cousin of Jesus since his mother Salome was the sister of Mary (Mt. 27:56; Mark 15:40; John 19:25). He was one of three in Jesus’ inner circle and is referred to as “the greater” because he is mentioned far more than the other disciple named “James” (Mt. 17:1-8; Mark 5:37; 9:2-8; Luke 8:51; 9:28-36). James the son of Zebedee was the first of the Twelve Apostles to be martyred when he was killed by Herod Agrippa in about 44 A.D. (Acts 12:2).

2. James the son of Alpheaus or James the Less (Mark 15:40-41)

_There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome, who also followed Him and ministered to Him when He was in Galilee, and many other women who came up with Him to Jerusalem._

James the son of Alpheaus was numbered among the Twelve (Mt. 3:18; 10:3; Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13). He may have been related to Matthew whose father also was named Alpheaus (Mt. 9:9; Mark 2:14). Little is known of this man but tradition suggests that he was stoned by the unbelieving Jews for preaching Christ.

B. This James is the son of Mary and Joseph and the half brother of Jesus (Jesus having had a different father). He is sometimes referred to as “James the Just” in historical literature.

1. He was most likely the eldest son of Mary and Joseph and the brother of Jesus (Mt. 13:55; Mark 6:3; Gal. 1:19). He is usually listed first in any reference to the brothers.

_“Is this not the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?”_ Matthew 13:55-56

The other siblings in this family include the following:
• Joses (or possibly Joseph)
• Simon
• Judas (See: Jude 1)
• Unnamed sisters

See also: Matthew 12:46-47; John 2:12; Acts 1:14

2. He was not numbered among the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb (Acts 1:13).

   And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas the son of James.

3. He did travel with Jesus on various occasions with his other brothers (John 2:12; 7:3, 10).

   This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him. After this He went down to Capernaum, He, His mother, His brothers, and His disciples; and they did not stay there many days. John 2:11-12

4. He and his brothers were not totally convinced about Jesus’ calling and mission in the early days of Jesus’ ministry (John 7:3-5; Mark 6:3-6).

   His brothers therefore said to Him, “Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world.” For even His brothers did not believe in Him. John 7:3-5

5. He was attentive to the teachings of Jesus which is reflected in his obvious knowledge of the Sermon on the Mount (See unique features).

6. He was noticeably absent from the foot of the cross at Jesus crucifixion (John 19:25-27).

   Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, “Woman, behold your son!” Then He said to the disciple, “Behold your mother!” And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.

7. He was one of the first to receive the message of Christ’s resurrection (John 20:17).

   “Don’t cling to me,” Jesus said, “for I haven’t yet ascended to the Father. But go find my brothers and tell them that I am ascending to my Father and your Father, my God and your God.” —NLT
8. He had a personal encounter with the risen Christ sometime later (I Cor. 15:5-7).

*He was seen by Peter and then by the twelve apostles. After that, he was seen by more than five hundred of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died by now. Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles.*

9. He was with the 120 in the upper room in anticipation of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:14).

*These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.*

10. He was referred to by Paul as an apostle (Gal. 1:18-19).

*Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord’s brother.*


*Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision.*  

Galatians 2:11-12

12. He was instrumental in writing the decrees sent out in letter form to the Gentile churches from the Jerusalem council (Acts 15:22-30; 16:4).

13. He achieved the high status of that of a bond-servant of Jesus Christ (Jam. 1:1, Gk. *doulos*, lit. slave).

*James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ…*

14. Tradition suggests that he died as a martyr at the hand of the Jews somewhere around 62 A.D.

II. What is the background to the Book of James?

A. The Audience

James identifies his audience as being “the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad” (Jam. 1:1). Just like the Jacob of the Old Testament had a word for his twelve natural sons, the New Testament Jacob will have a word for the spiritual Israel of God.
1. Some have suggested that he was writing to the natural Israelites of the dispersion. However, when you study the content of the book there is no question that he was not writing to unbelievers but to believers.

2. He is most likely writing to the spiritual Israel of God (Gal. 6:16). He is writing to believers in the Gentile regions.

3. More specifically, he could have been writing to members of his own congregation who had moved away from Jerusalem or had been dispersed through various persecutions that had occurred in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1-4; 11:19).

B. The Occasion

Little is known of the specific reason why James wrote this book except that as a pastor he was concerned with caring for those under his spiritual influence whether they were local or abroad.

When you examine the content of the letter with the strong emphasis on “works,” James may be writing out of a concern that the message of grace that was being preached was being taken too far by the recipients of the message. He may be concerned that too much focus on grace was causing people to become careless in the walk with the Lord.

III. What is the date of the writing?

Most scholars place the writing of this book fairly early in the spread of the Gospel to the Gentile world. It may have even been written prior to the council held in Jerusalem because no reference is made to the decrees that were documented at that time. For this reason it may have been one of the earliest, if not the earliest of the epistles.

Dates for this book vary, but it was most likely written sometime between 45 and 50 A.D.

IV. What is the main message of the Book of James?

The central message to the Book of James is that Christianity cannot be merely a confession of the lips. It cannot be based on statements of faith alone. Christianity must be authenticated by the way we live our lives. James emphasized the practical nature of Christianity and the necessary connection between faith and works.

This is seen in all that James writes, but it is especially noted in two of his principle discussions.

A. Hearing and Doing (Jam. 1:19-27)

In this section James deals with the self deception that can occur when we think that knowing the truth is the same thing as practicing the truth (See also James 4:17). We
have to do more than talk the talk, our religion must reach the practical side of life (Jam. 1:27).

*If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.*  
James 1:26-27

*Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.*  
James 4:17

**B. Faith and Works (Jam. 2:14-26)**

In this section James makes it clear that saying you have faith in not enough, one must authenticate their faith with action that corresponds to his or her confession.

James almost seems to be saying the opposite of some of Paul’s writings or is he? This is why Martin Luther did not like the Epistle of James. He called it “The Straw Epistle.”

Note the following:

1. Compare James 2:21 with Romans 4:2-3 and John 8:39

   *But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?*  
   James 2:20-21

   *For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”*  
   Romans 4:2-3

   *They answered and said to Him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham.”*  
   John 8:39

2. Compare James 2:14 with II Timothy 1:9 and Ephesians 2:8-9

   *What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?*  
   James 2:14

   *…who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began…*  
   II Timothy 1:9

   *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.*  
   Ephesians 2:8-9

3. Compare James 2:24 with Galatians 2:16
You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. James 2:24

...knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. Galatians 2:15

There is no real conflict in these passages. James is simply saying that faith is not real faith unless it leads to actions that are consistent with the faith that is expressed.

V. What are some unique features of the Book of James?

A. James’ Pastoral Concerns

There is no question that James is a pastor. He sees and addresses all of the issues that pastors have to face everyday when working with people who are not living victoriously as mature believers. He is less concerned about doctrine and more concerned about practice. He is less concerned about what people say and more concerned about what they do.

The issues that are addressed by James are usually the result of people being double minded or literally “two-souled” (Jam. 1:8). One minute they are close to the kingdom and the next moment they are afar off, very much like a cork floating on the waves of the sea. Some of the subjects that he addresses include:

1. Handling Temptation (Jam. 1:1-4; 12-15)
2. Handling Riches (Jam. 1:9-11; 17-18; 5:1-6)
3. Hearing and Doing (Jam. 1:19-27)
4. Dealing with Prejudice (Jam. 2:1-13)
5. Faith and Works (Jam. 2:14-26)
6. Taming the Tongue (Jam. 3:1-12; 5:12)
7. Walking in Wisdom (Jam. 3:13-18)
8. Dealing with Carnality (Jam. 4:1-17)
9. Cultivating Patience (Jam. 5:7-12)

B. James’ Knowledge of the Sermon on the Mount

There is no question that James either was present when the Sermon on the Mount was given or he talked intimately with someone who was present. The whole book of James deals with the application of the Sermon on the Mount to the local church setting.

1. Under Moses, God laid out the laws for the children of Israel, God’s covenant people of the Old Testament on Mount Sinai.
2. Under Jesus, God laid out the laws of the kingdom relating to the New Testament on the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-8).
3. With James, God lays out how the laws of the kingdom apply to the Church, the spiritual Israel of God.

C. James’ Process of Temptation

James gives the clearest presentation of the process of temptation found in the Bible all with the view to helping the believer overcome (Jam. 1:14-15).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Every Man</th>
<th>Eve</th>
<th>David</th>
<th>Achan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Man is tempted</td>
<td>Tempted by serpent</td>
<td>Tempted by seeing woman</td>
<td>Tempted by spoils of war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>He is Enticed by His Own Lusts</td>
<td>Combined with desire within</td>
<td>Combined with sexual arousal</td>
<td>Combined with an eye for things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lust conceives</td>
<td>She took the fruit</td>
<td>He inquired about the woman</td>
<td>He coveted them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>It gives birth to Sin</td>
<td>She ate and gave to her husband</td>
<td>He took the woman for sex</td>
<td>He took what was forbidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sin is accomplished</td>
<td>Her eyes were opened</td>
<td>He plotted to kill husband</td>
<td>He hid it in the earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>It only brings forth death</td>
<td>Sent from the garden</td>
<td>Sword in his own household</td>
<td>He was stoned and burned</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D. James’ Heroes of the Old Testament

1. Abraham is cited because he was a man who verified his faith by his works (Jam. 2:21).
2. Isaac, as the sacrifice of Abraham, is seen as the ultimate example of works verifying faith (Jam. 2:21).
3. Rahab is seen as someone who demonstrated her faith by her actions which resulted in her salvation (Jam. 2:25).
4. Job is seen as a man of perseverance through suffering (Jam. 5:11).
5. Elijah is seen as a man who knew how to pray and believe God for the impossible (Jam. 5:17).

E. James’ Description of the Tongue

Every pastor knows that the greatest enemy of the local church is disunity and the greatest cause for disunity is the misuse of the tongue. James describes the power that the tongue can have for both good and evil (Jam. 3:1-12).

1. The tongue is like the bit in the horse’s mouth. It is a small thing but it can control a large animal.
2. The tongue is like the rudder on a large ship. It is very small by comparison but it controls the direction of the entire vessel.

3. The tongue is a spark of fire. It seems insignificant but it has the potential to destroy an entire forest.

4. The tongue is more difficult for man to tame than the wild animals.

5. The tongue can be just like the venom of a snake that when injected can kill its prey.

6. The tongue is like a spring of water. When it is pure, it produces life, but when it is tainted it brings forth death.

7. The tongue is like a fruit tree or vine from which people can eat. It can be a tree of life or a tree of death.
Lesson 20
I Peter—The Book of Suffering and Glory

I. What do we know about the author of this book?

A. The author of this book is the apostle Peter. Peter is referenced 210 times in the New Testament, more than any single figure other than Christ. Peter is referred to in the New Testament by three different names.

1. Simon. Simon was the name given him by his parents and means “reed.”

2. Cephas. Cephas an Aramaic name given to him by Jesus and means “stone” or “pebble” (John 1:41-42).

3. Peter. Peter is a Greek equivalent of the Aramaic name Cephas and means “small stone” as well.

Jesus makes a play on his name when he talks about the building of His Church (Mt. 16:16-18).

*Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”*

B. Peter was a prominent figure among the disciples.

1. He was born in a town of Bethsaida on the Sea of Galilee (John 1:44).

2. He was the son of a man by the name of Jonah (John 1:42; Mt. 16:17).

3. He was a fisherman by trade with his brother Andrew (Mt. 16:17; John 1:41).

4. He may have been a disciple of John the Baptist (John 1:35-40).

5. He left his trade when Jesus called him to be a disciple (Mt. 4:18-20; Mark 3:16; John 1:40).

*And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” They immediately left their nets and followed Him. Matthew 4:18-19*

6. He was called to be one of the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb (Luke 6:14).

8. He was considered a part of the inner circle of three (Mt. 17:1-8; Mark 5:37; 9:2-8; Luke 8:51; 9:28-36).

9. He did not want Jesus to wash his feet and then he wanted Jesus to give him a complete bath (John 13:6-11).

   Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. Then He came to Simon Peter. And Peter said to Him, “Lord, are You washing my feet?” Jesus answered and said to him, “What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this.” Peter said to Him, “You shall never wash my feet!” Jesus answered him, “If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.” Simon Peter said to Him, “Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!” John 13:3-9

10. He tried to protect Jesus from the arresting soldiers (Mt. 26:50-54; John 18:10-11).

11. He denied knowing Christ after Jesus arrest (Mt. 26:31-35; Mark 14:66-72).

12. He was one of the first disciples to go to the empty tomb of Jesus (Luke 24:12; John 20:3-6).

13. He was commissioned by Jesus to feed His sheep (John 21:15-19).

14. Jesus indicted the manner in which he would die (John 21:19).

C. Peter was the object of some special miracles.

   1. He received a miracle catch of fish, twice (Luke 5:3-10; John 21:3-6).

   2. His mother-in-law was healed by Jesus (Mt. 8:14-15; Mark 1:29-36).

   3. He walked on the water at the invitation of Jesus (Mt. 14:28-29).

   4. He experienced the mount of transfiguration (Mt. 17:1-8 with II Peter 1:16-18).

   5. He caught the fish with the coin in its mouth for tax money (Mt. 17:24-26).

D. Peter was a key player in the Book of Acts and the life of the Early Church.

   1. He encouraged the rest of the apostles in the process to replace Judas (Acts 1:15-22).


   3. He became a man of many miracles.
• He healed a lame man with the apostle John (Acts 3:1-10).
• His shadow falling on people resulted in healing and deliverance (Acts 5:12-16).
• He healed a man by the name of Aeneas in Lydda (Acts 9:33-35).
• He raised Dorcas from the dead in Joppa (Acts 9:36-42).

6. He was imprisoned on several occasions (Acts 5:18; 12:3-16).
7. He opened the door of faith to the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius (Acts 10).
8. He was a main spokesman at the Jerusalem council (Acts 15:7-11).
9. He made many ministry trips. In some cases he traveled with his wife (I Cor. 9:5).

Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?

• He ministered in Samaria with John (Acts 8:14-17, 25).
• He ministered in Lydda and Sharon (Acts 9:32-35).
• He ministered in Joppa (Acts 9:36-43).
• He ministered in Caesarea (Acts 10).
• He may have visited the church in Antioch (Acts 12:17; Gal. 2:11).
• He most likely ministered in Asia Minor (I Pet. 1:1).
• He spent some time in Babylon (I Pet. 5:13). It should be noted that some scholars believe this to be a symbolic reference to Rome.

E. Further traditions fill in the rest of Peter’s life.

1. Peter lived his latter years in Rome.
2. Peter was crucified upside down in Rome at the hands of Nero.

II. What is the background to the Book of I Peter?

A. The Audience

1. Peter identifies his audience as the pilgrims scattered abroad focusing on areas of Asia Minor (I Pet. 1:1-2).
Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ…

2. While some feel that Peter was writing to the Jews, it is more likely that Peter was writing to both Jewish and Gentile believers in the identified areas. Peter makes a number of references to the previous “unsaved” state of his readers. Peter would surely have been known in these regions since many representatives from these regions were present on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:9).

- They were those who once walked in ignorance (I Pet. 1:14).

  ...as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance...

- They were those who had been involved in aimless conduct resulting from empty traditions (I Pet. 1:18).

  ...knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers...

- They were those who had been called out of darkness (I Pet. 2:9).

  But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.  I Peter 2:9-10

- They were those who were once “not a people” but now are the people of God (I Pet. 2:10).

- They were those who walked in gross sin and idolatries (I Pet. 4:3-4).

  For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles--when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.

3. Regardless of the specific audience for whom Peter wrote, I Peter has always been considered an epistle for all believers in Christ and the Church worldwide.

B. The Occasion

Little is know of the particular occasion that would have inspired Peter to write this letter. Judging from the contents it is likely that Peter was getting some reports from churches over which he had influence that they were suffering ridicule for their faith.
Peter appears to have written this letter in the company of or perhaps even with the help of a man by the name of Silvanus. Because this is the lengthened form of the name “Silas” this may have been the same Silas who had been the traveling companion of Paul (See: Acts 15:40; II Cor. 1:19; I Th. 1:1; II Th. 1:1). In any case, it appears that Silvanus was also the one who would carry the letter to the churches (I Pet. 5:12). It should be remembered that Silas was originally part of the Jerusalem church and would be well known to Peter (Acts 15:22). He was also one who circulated the decrees from the Jerusalem council (Acts 15:27, 32).

Another strong view that is suggested is that Peter was writing to clear up any rumors that he and Paul taught differently about things. The fact that he sent the letter by the hand of someone who knew Paul intimately would help to close any gaps as well.

C. The Origin

Peter claims to be writing from Babylon. When you study the geography of the day there is no city named Babylon that seems the likely origin of Peter’s letter. Ancient Babylon on the Euphrates was only a shell of a city. Many expositors feel that the name “Babylon” is actually used in a symbolic sense and refers to the city of Rome. We know that Peter was in Rome, we know that he was imprisoned in Rome and we know that ultimately he was martyred in Rome.

Another evidence of this is that one of Peter’s companions was Mark who was also with Paul during his imprisonment in Rome (I Pet. 5:13 with Col. 4:10).

III. What is the date of the writing?

If this letter was indeed written by Peter from Rome, then it was most likely written around 63-65 A.D. This was at a time when Nero was moving more and more against the church. Peter was one of his principle targets.

IV. What is the main message of the Book of I Peter?

The main message of the book of I Peter has to do with patiently enduring suffering knowing that those who suffer with Christ will also be glorified with Him. The word suffering in one form or another occurs approximately sixteen times in the book.

D. Those addressed in this letter seem to have been undergoing persecution (I Pet. 1:6-7; 4:12-19).

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ… I Peter 1:6-7

E. Peter will give instructions as to how to face suffering and persecution. This instruction comes from a man who had his opportunities to suffer and moved from
failure to victory. Peter’s theology of suffering can be found in the following references.

1. Suffering for righteousness is part of the call of the believer (I Pet. 2:19-21).

2. Suffering is to be patiently endured without retaliation (I Pet. 2:23; 3:9).

3. Suffering patiently does not count for anything if it is for doing wrong (I Pet. 2:20).

4. Suffering can be seen as a blessing (I Pet. 3:13-17). It demonstrates that you must be doing something right (Mt. 5:12).

5. Suffering identifies us with Christ who suffered for us (I Pet. 4:1).

6. Suffering verifies our faith and will lead to certain glory (I Pet. 4:12-14). Suffering must be seen from an eternal perspective.

7. Suffering is part of the will of God and the nature of Christianity (I Pet. 4:19).

8. Suffering should not concern us because we have better things to look forward to (I Pet. 4:19).

9. Because of all of this, we can actually rejoice in suffering (I Pet. 4:13).

V. What are some unique features of the Book of I Peter?

A. Personal glimpses of Peter found in the book.

1. He makes reference to his being an eye witness to that which he proclaims.
   - He was an eyewitness of the sufferings of Christ (I Pet. 5:1).
   - He was an eyewitness of the transfiguration (II Pet. 1:16-18).

2. He charges the elders to feed the flock, much like the charge that Jesus gave to him (I Pet. 5:2; John 21:15-17). Evidently there was a problem with leaders being overly domineering. Peter gives a great model of leadership (I Pet. 5:1-4).

   *The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.*

3. He encourages his audience to be clothed with the apron of humility much like a servant would be girded with a towel to wash the feet of guests (I Pet. 5:5-7; John 13:3-17).
Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.” Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

4. The transformation of Peter from the man we see in the Gospels is remarkable. In the Gospels he is impetuous, quick to judgment, ambitious and unpredictable. In this epistle we see a stable, patient, loving and humble servant of the Lord who referred to himself as a “fellow elder” (I Pet. 5:1).

B. The use of the word “precious”

Peter uses the word eight times in both I and II Peter to refer to five precious things:

1. A faith more precious than gold (I Pet. 1:7; II Pet. 1:1)
2. The precious blood of Christ (I Pet. 1:19)
3. Christ, the precious, chosen Cornerstone Stone (I Pet. 2:4, 6, 7)
4. A precious gentle and quiet spirit (I Pet. 3:4)
5. Great and precious promises (II Pet. 1:4)

C. The references to the redemptive work of Christ

1. His incarnation (I Pet. 1:20).
2. His sinless life (I Pet. 1:19; 2:22)
3. His suffering and death (I Pet. 2:24)
4. His resurrection (I Pet. 3:21-22)
5. His ascension (I Pet. 3:22)
6. His enthronement (I Pet. 3:22)
Lesson 21
II Peter—The Book of True Knowledge

I. What is the background to the Book of II Peter?

A. While there is much dispute regarding the authorship of this book most early church fathers and most modern scholars accept that the author of this book was the Apostle Peter.

1. The writer claims to be Simon Peter (II Pet. 1:1).

> Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ…

2. The writer claims to have been on the mount of Transfiguration (II Pet. 1:15-18 with Mt. 17:1-13).

> For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. II Peter 1:17-18

3. The writer makes reference to a former epistle (II Pet. 3:1).

> Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder)…

4. The writer is aware of his own imminent death (II Pet. 1:13-14).

> Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me.

B. Peter wrote this book toward the end of his life just before his persecution experience. As such it is much like II Timothy in relation to Paul. It represents his last words to the church and the focus is on the most important things.

1. He was concerned about and warns of false teachers in the church. These teachers were out of balance in the area of the law (antinomianism). They were overly proud of their position on grace that promoted sexual sin and lawlessness (II Pet. 2:1-3, 12-22).

> For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. II Peter 2:18-20
2. He was concerned about temptations to fall away from the faith (II Pet. 1:10; 2:2; 3:17).

_You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked..._ II Peter 3:17

3. He was concerned about the infiltration of false doctrine into the teachings of the church (II Pet. 2:1-3). Therefore he was faithful to remind them of that in which they have been established.

_For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease._ II Peter 1:12-15

4. He was concerned that believers had a true concept of the return of the Lord (II Pet. 3:3:13).

_But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance._ II Peter 3:8-9

C. Peter most likely wrote this book from Rome. This was written late in his life just prior to his martyrdom. We know that he spent his latter days in Rome.

II. What is the date of the writing?

Second Peter was most likely written very soon before Peter was martyred for his faith. This puts the writing of the book around 65-66 A.D.

III. What is the main message of the Book of II Peter?

Peter’s primary message centers on true knowledge. Some form of the word for “know” or “knowledge” occurs sixteen times in this short book (II Pet. 1:2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 12, 14, 16, 20; 2:9, 20, 21; 3:3, 17, 18).

A. A proper knowledge of Him is a key to inheriting the promises of God (1:2-4).

B. We are to continue to increase in this knowledge and continue to grow (1:3-11; 3:18).

..._but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ._ II Peter 3:18
C. We are to be continually reminded of and established in the truth or true knowledge (1:12-15; 3:1).

D. We are to realize that the source of this knowledge is God Himself (1:16-21).

E. We are to resist heresy by holding fast to the way of truth (2:1-3). True knowledge will be a safeguard against heresy and falling away.

IV. What are some unique features of the Book of II Peter?

D. Peter’s Guarantee (II Pet. 1:5-11)

Peter gives an unusual guarantee in his book. He indicates that if you do certain things, you will not be unfruitful (II Pet. 1:8) and you will never fall (II Pet. 1:10). His list of things includes those things that we should be diligent to add to our faith.

1. Virtue
2. Knowledge
3. Self-control
4. Perseverance (Patience)
5. Godliness
6. Brotherly Kindness

Doing these things helps us to make our calling and election sure (II Pet. 1:10).

But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. 8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; 11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.  II Peter 1:5-11

E. Peter’s Doctrine of Inspiration (II Pet. 1:20-21; 3:2 with II Tim. 3:16)

…knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.  II Peter 1:20-21

The false teachers were suggesting that keeping the Ten Commandments was not required. Peter’s focus on the inspiration of the Scripture was intended to counter this viewpoint. The principles and precepts of the Word of God are not anyone’s personal preference or choice. They are not cleverly devised fables of human origin. They were spoken and ordained of God through the Holy Spirit.
F. Peter’s Descriptions of False Teachers

Peter has no kind words to say about false teacher coming into the churches. He refers to them as:

1. Teachers of destructive heresies (2:1).
2. Those who exploit with deceptive words (2:3).
3. Natural brute beasts to be caught and destroyed (2:12).
4. Spots and blemishes (2:13).
5. Using covetous practices to beguile unstable souls (2:14).
7. Followers of the way of Balaam (2:15).
8. Lovers of money (2:15).
10. Cloud carried by a tempest (2:17).

G. Peter’s Description of the Day of the Lord (II Pet. 3:4-13)

1. Scoffer will come prior to the day questioning the reality of Christ’s coming (II Pet. 3:3-4).
2. This present earth will be renovated with fire at Christ’s return (II Pet. 3:7).
3. The ungodly will be judged after Christ’s return (II Pet. 3:7).
4. Even though there is a delay, that day is surely coming (II Pet. 3:8-9).
5. The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night (II Pet. 3:10).
6. The day of the Lord will involve the destruction of the present heavens and earth and give place to new heavens and a new earth (II Pet. 3:10-13).
7. Believers have nothing to fear, but they can look forward to this day if they conduct themselves in godliness (II Pet. 3:11-12, 14).

H. Peter’s Personal References to Paul (II Pet. 3:14-16)

Peter makes references to Paul and to his writings. He may have been in Rome at the same time as Paul and may have developed a new closeness to him in the latter days of his life.

_Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation— as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures._
Lesson 22  
The Epistles of John

I. What is the background to the Epistles of John?

All of these epistles were written by the same man, the Apostle John (Refer to notes under the Gospel of John for the details on his life). Even though he does not refer to himself, the language, the style, the distinctive words and the universal acceptance by the Early Church Fathers all suggest that John was indeed the author.

The similarity of the opening verses of First John ties it in to the Gospel of John (I John 1:1-3).

*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us— that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.*

Each of these books has a different focus and occasion for their writing.

A. First John

1. First John is referred to as The Book of Love. John is often referred to as the disciple who Jesus loved. He is sometimes called the Apostle of Love. It is primarily because of the book of First John that he is given this title. Love is used more in this little book than in any other book of the Bible (over 50 times). Evidently John was concerned about the lack of true Christian love among the body of believers.

2. John was also concerned about the rising heresy of Gnosticism and its effects on the churches. He was particularly concerned about the branch of Gnosticism that believed that Jesus did not have a physical body. They denied the dual nature of Christ accepting His deity but not His full humanity. In their view Christ only seemed to have such a body (Docetic Gnosticism).

   a. They believed that all matter was evil.

   b. They believed that spirit was good.

   c. They believed that in order for Jesus to be fully good He could not have been a partaker of flesh and blood (bad).

   d. They believed that Christ did not literally die on the cross; He only appeared to do so.

3. John was also writing simply to encourage the saints. He gives us seven reasons of his own for writing.
a. That they might have fellowship with him (1:3).
b. That their joy might be full (1:4).
c. That they might not sin (2:1).
d. That they might be instructed (2:12-14).
e. That they might not be deceived (2:26).
f. That they might be assured of eternal life (5:13).
g. That they might continue to believe in Jesus, the Son of God (5:13).

B. Second John

1. Second John is the Book of Truth. The focus of the book is that of having a love for the truth and walking in the truth.

2. Second John is the only New Testament book specifically addressed to a woman. John is writing to “the elect lady and her children” or “the chosen lady and her children” (NIV, NLT, Etc.).

Just exactly who this lady is has been the source of much conjecture. Some of the principle views include the following:

a. She is the personification of the Universal Church. In this case it is a universal letter to all believers who are children of their spiritual mother—the Church. This is not likely the case because this letter was never circulated to the same degree as First John.

b. She is a woman in leadership in the church in Babylon (I Pet. 5:13).

She who is in Babylon, elect together with you, greets you; and so does Mark my son.

c. She is a well known lady in the church who was loved by all including John. This is the most common view. The personal nature of the greetings at the end of the book seem to lean toward it being addressed to an actual friend of John. She was a woman who:

- Had believing children obedient to the truth (vs. 4).
- Used her home for congregational gatherings (vs. 10).
- Was known for her tremendous spirit of hospitality (vs. 10-11).
- Had a sister, nieces and nephews who were friends of John (vs. 13).

3. The purpose for this letter is similar to the first. John addresses similar concerns to that of First John but on a more personal basis. Perhaps he wanted to warn a woman who was noted for receiving itinerant ministry to be on the look out for false teachers who might try to infiltrate her home gathering.

C. Third John
1. Third John is also a Book of Truth but with more of an emphasis on the practical side of walking in truth rather than the doctrinal side of protecting the truth from error as seen in Second John. It is the shortest book in the New Testament.

2. Third John is written to a man by the name of Gaius. There are several men by the name of Gaius mentioned in the Bible. One was a man of Macedonia who traveled with Paul (Acts 19:29), another was a man from Derbe who also traveled with Paul (Acts 20:4) and a third man was a resident of the church at Corinth who was baptized by Paul and hosted Paul when he wrote the book of Romans (I Cor. 1:14; Rom. 16:23). Because the Gaius of Third John was a convert of John, he most likely is none of the three mentioned above.
   
a. He may have been converted by John (III John 4).
b. He may have been a respected leader in the church (vs. 1).
c. He was a man who walked out his faith (III John 3).
d. He was well noted for hospitality (II John 5-8).

3. The purpose for the letter was to commend Gaius for his attitude of hospitality and to express concern over Diotrephes who seemed to be rejecting apostolic input into the life of the church. It appears that Diotrephes openly rejected outside ministry particularly the ministry and letters of John.

II. What is the date of these letters?

All of these books were most likely written from Ephesus prior to John’s exile on Patmos somewhere between 85 and 90 A.D. First John was most likely written with the intent that it be circulated among the churches of Asia including (but not limited to) those listed in the Book of Revelation (Revelation 1-3). The other two epistles were more personal in nature and were never circulated to the extent that First John was.

III. What is the main message of the books?

A. First John

The main message of First John is that love is the glue that binds the universe together. It begins with God who is love, demonstrating His love for us in actions by giving His Son to die for us. Love is extended when we reciprocate God’s love and in turn love our neighbor as ourselves.

B. Second John

The main message that can be gleaned from the book of Second John it that loving the truth, abiding in truth and walking in truth will keep us from being deceived by those who lie against the truth.

C. Third John
The main message of this book is that we verify our love for the truth by demonstrating hospitality, maintaining openness and imitating what is good.

IV. What are some unique features of the books?

A. First John

1. John’s refutation of the Gnostic heresy.

   Jesus Christ was true man with flesh and blood.

   a. John saw and heard Jesus personally with his own eyes and ears (I John 1:1).
   b. John actually touched and handled Jesus (I John 1:1).
   c. Jesus had flesh and blood (I John 1:7; 5:6).
   d. Jesus must be received as having true flesh (I John 4:2-3; 5:7).

2. John’s depiction of Christ

   a. Jesus is the Son of God (1:3; 3:8; 4:15; 5:10, 13, 20).
   b. Jesus is our Advocate with the Father (2:1).
   c. Jesus is the Propitiation for our sins (2:2).
   d. Jesus is the Holy One (2:20).
   e. Jesus is the Christ (2:22; 5:1).

3. John’s depiction of someone who is born of God.

   a. They keep His word (2:5).
   b. They practice righteousness (2:29).
   c. They do not continue to sin (3:9; 5:18).
   d. They love God and others (4:7).
   e. They believe that Jesus is the Christ (5:1).
   f. They overcome the world (5:4).
   g. They guard themselves from evil (5:18).

4. John’s comparison between God’s love and our love (I John 4:11, 16)

   a. God’s love for man is manifested in that:

      • He sent His Son into the world (4:9-10, 14).
      • His Son laid His life down for us (3:16).
      • He has given us His Spirit (4:13).
      • He has called us His children (3:1).

   b. Our love for God is manifested in that we (I John 3:23; 4:7-8, 19):
• Keep his commandments (2:3-5; 5:2-3).
• Love His only begotten Son (5:1).
• Love our brothers and sisters (2:9-10; 3:14; 4:12, 20-21).
• Do not love the world and the things in the world (2:15).
• Lay our lives down for one another (3:16).
• Share our possessions with brothers and sisters in need (3:17).
• Love not in word and tongue, but in deed and truth (3:18).

B. Third John

1. John’s insight into itinerant ministry (vs. 5-8, 11)

   In the absence of modern means of communication, it was common for apostolic
   ministries such as John to send out others to function in their behalf. They would
   travel from church to church with letters from the apostles and bring
   encouragement to the congregations. This was a great service to the churches
   and it helped to keep them in touch with the greater body of Christ.

   These traveling ministers depended a great deal on the hospitality of the churches
   to provide for them as they traveled. Gaius had been known for his hospitality
   while Diotrephes was on the opposite spectrum. John evidently had sent a letter
   to the church and Diotrephes did not allow it to be read (vs. 9). Evidently,
   Diotrephes was so against this ministry that he persecuted those who opened
   their homes to these traveling ministers (vs. 10).

2. John’s commendation for hospitality (vs. 5-8)

   Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and for strangers,
   who have borne witness of your love before the church. If you send them
   forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God, you will do well...

   III John 5-6

   This commendation could be interpreted two ways. Either way you interpret the
   text, it places a tremendous challenge before those who would be lovers of
   hospitality.

   a. You treat people the way you would treat God Himself.
   b. You treat people the way God Himself would treat them.

3. John’s three men in contrast

   a. Gaius (See above)

   b. Demetrius

   • A good testimony from all
   • A good life in relation to the truth
c. Diotrephes

- Loves the preeminence
- Malicious in running other ministries down
- Refuses to receive other ministries
- Forbids others to receive them and punishes them if they do
- Does evil in relationship to the church

Dear friend, you are doing a good work for God when you take care of the traveling teachers who are passing through, even though they are strangers to you. 6 They have told the church here of your friendship and your loving deeds. You do well to send them on their way in a manner that pleases God. 7 For they are traveling for the Lord and accept nothing from those who are not Christians. 8 So we ourselves should support them so that we may become partners with them for the truth. 9 I sent a brief letter to the church about this, but Diotrephes, who loves to be the leader, does not acknowledge our authority. 10 When I come, I will report some of the things he is doing and the wicked things he is saying about us. He not only refuses to welcome the traveling teachers, he also tells others not to help them. And when they do help, he puts them out of the church. 11 Dear friend, don't let this bad example influence you. Follow only what is good. Remember that those who do good prove that they are God's children, and those who do evil prove that they do not know God. 12 But everyone speaks highly of Demetrius, even truth itself. We ourselves can say the same for him, and you know we speak the truth.
Lesson 23
Jude—The Book of False Ministry

I. What do we know about the author of the book of Jude?

A. There are several people in the New Testament who had the name of Jude or Judas.

1. Judas Iscariot, the apostle and betrayer of Jesus (Mark 3:19)

2. Judas, an apostle and the son of James, also called Thaddaeus (Mt. 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:6; John 14:22; Acts 1:13)

   *Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?”*  
   John 14:22


4. Judas, the man of Damascus who provided the home where Saul stayed after his conversion (Acts 9:11)

5. Judas, also named Barsabas, who traveled with Silas from Jerusalem delivering the decrees from the council (Acts 15:22, 27, 32)

6. Judas, the natural brother of Jesus (Mt. 13:55; Mark 6:3)

B. The Jude who is most likely the author of this book was the natural brother of Jesus and James (Jude 1).

   *Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James…*

1. Jude was the son of Mary and Joseph (Mark 6:3).

   *Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?*

2. Jude was numbered among Jesus other siblings who were not immediately convinced that Jesus was the Messiah (John 7:3-5; Mark 6:3-6).

   *His brothers therefore said to Him, “Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world.” For even His brothers did not believe in Him.*  
   John 7:3-5

3. He traveled with Jesus on various occasions with his other brothers (John 2:12; 7:3, 10).

   *This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him. After this He went down to...*
4. He was also absent from the foot of the cross at Jesus crucifixion (John 19:25-27).

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, “Woman, behold your son!” Then He said to the disciple, “Behold your mother!” And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.

5. He was among the first to receive the message of Christ’s resurrection (John 20:17).

“Don’t cling to me,” Jesus said, “for I haven’t yet ascended to the Father. But go find my brothers and tell them that I am ascending to my Father and your Father, my God and your God.” –NLT

6. He was with the 120 in the upper room in anticipation of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:14).

These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

7. He did not consider himself among the twelve apostles (Jude 17).

But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ…

Little is known beyond this about the man who wrote this book. There are no reliable traditions about his life or his manner of death.

II. What is the occasion for the book of Jude?

A. The book of Jude was most likely written after the book of II Peter and reflects the same concerns.

Jude wrote this letter to give warning regarding false ministries who were beginning to secretly invade the church. He had a very similar message to that of Peter directed toward those primarily Jewish believers in his sphere of influence. It is amazing how so many of the later epistles deal with the subject of false ministries and apostasy. It tells us that there was a serious struggle for the faith early on in the history of the church. Many believe that this struggle was associated with persecutions that were more common that tended to weaken the faith of some and made them more vulnerable to falling away.

B. Jude identified his audience in verse 1.
To those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ...

C. Jude outlined the purpose for his writing in verse 3-4.

Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

III. When was the book of Jude written?

Most scholars place the writing of this book after II Peter. In fact, most feel that Jude may have been familiar with Peter’s work and was reiterating some of the main concerns of Peter to his audience. Because of this, most date this book between 66 and 80 A.D.

IV. What is the main message of the book of Jude?

The main concern in the book of Jude is to warn against false ministries that have crept into the church. In warning them, his message takes on five distinct elements.

A. Jude reminds them that true faith is a struggle for which we must contend (vs. 3).

B. Jude warns them about the need to be on the alert for false ministries (vs. 4).

C. Jude outlines the marks or characteristics of false ministries (vs. 8, 10, 12-13, 16).

D. Jude foretells the eventual judgment upon false ministries (vs. 5-7, 15).

E. Jude gives an unflattering description of false ministries (vs. 8-19). This is quite amazing when you consider how short this book is.

• Dreamers
• Defilers of the flesh
• Rejecters of authority
• Speaking evil of dignitaries
• Brute Beasts
• Spots on your feasts
• Serving themselves
• Clouds without water
• Autumn trees without fruit
• Twice dead
• Raging waves of the sea
• Wandering stars
• Murmurers
• Complainers
• Great swelling words
• Flatterers
• Mockers
• Walking according to their own lusts
• Sensual persons
• Causers of division
• Void of the Spirit

V. What are the unique features of the book of Jude?

A. The Clear Connection to II Peter

When you read the book of II Peter and then read the book of Jude, you immediately notice the striking similarity. In point of fact, most of the book of Jude has a direct parallel in the book of II Peter. Since it is clear that Jude quoted other writers in his book, it is the common opinion that Jude was familiar with the works of Peter and used his book to bring what Peter foretold into the actual time of Jude’s writing. Peter had foretold of false teachers that would come. Jude wanted his readers to know that they have arrived in the here and now.

B. The Description of Apostate Ministry of Old (vs. 11)

Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

1. The Way of Cain (Gen. 4)

   The way of Cain is a path of willful sin, impenitence and self-righteousness.

2. The Error of Balaam (Num. 22-24)

   The error of Balaam is a path of covetousness and greed.

3. The Rebellion of Korah (Num. 16)

   The rebellion of Korah is a path of presumption and rejection of authority.

C. The Need to Contend for “the Faith” (vs. 3b)

I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

Contending for “the faith” is different than contending for faith. We are all to walk by faith and, therefore, must strive to grow in that faith. But there is also a common salvation which can be described as “the faith.” That is, there is a body of belief that has been passed down from Christ, to the apostles and on into the church age. The believers of today are inseparably linked to the apostolic church and are responsible to preserve the elements of “the faith” once delivered.
1. Paul spoke of a common faith (Tit. 1:4).

   To Titus, a true son in our common faith...

2. Paul urged people to receive no other gospel (Gal. 1:6-9, 23).

   I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the
grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some
who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an
angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have
preached to you, let him be accursed.  Galatians 1:6-8

   But they were hearing only, “He who formerly persecuted us now preaches
the faith which he once tried to destroy.”  Galatians 1:23

3. Paul urged people to mark those who did not correspond to the tradition handed
down (I Cor. 11:2; II Th. 2:15; 3:6).

   Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught,
whether by word or our epistle.  II Thessalonians 2:15

   But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you
withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the
tradition which he received from us.  II Thessalonians 3:6

4. Jude and Paul both urged believers to earnestly contend for the faith once
delivered (vs. 3; Phil. 1:27).

   Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I
come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast
in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel...

   Philippians 1:27

D. Unique Details Cited

There are a couple of pieces of information that are found in Jude that are not found
in any of the other books of the Bible. The source of this information comes from
the extra biblical record contained in the oral tradition and some of the apocryphal
writing of the Old Testament era.

1. Contention over the body of Moses (vs. 9)

   Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed
about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation,
but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”

   This information comes from an apocryphal book by the name of The
Assumption of Moses.
2. The prophecy of Enoch (vs. 14-15)

Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”

This information comes from an apocryphal book by the name of The Book of Enoch.

E. The Closing Verses (vs. 20-25)

But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And on some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh. Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Savior, Who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.

The key word in the book of Jude is “keep” or “kept”. The last few verses outline the believer’s responsibility in relation to themselves and to others.

1. They are to keep themselves in the love of God by building themselves up in the most holy faith praying in the Holy Spirit (vs. 20-21).

2. They are to have mercy on others and save them out of the fire (vs. 22-23).

3. They are to look to God who is able to keep them from stumbling (vs. 24).
Lesson 24  
Revelation—The Book of Last Things

The Book of Revelation is a book that is surrounded with a great deal of controversy, mystery and intrigue. It is intriguing even to the newest of Christians. It is mysterious because it is a book with an extensive amount of symbolic language. It is surrounded by controversy because it is futuristic in nature and therefore one’s interpretation of the book depends a great deal on one’s overall eschatology.

I. What do we know about the background of the book of Revelation?

A. The Author of the Book

The author of the book of Revelation is John the son of Zebedee and the author of the Gospel of John (Rev. 1:1, 4, 9, 21:2; 22:8).

Even though the style of this book is quite different, there is very little controversy over his authorship. Much of the style difference could be attributed to the fact that John is sharing a vision from the Lord and many of the words are prophetically received from the Lord Himself. In other words, the nature of the content itself lends itself to a different style.

B. The Occasion for the Book

1. John was in exile on the island of Patmos when this vision was received (Rev. 1:9). It may have been actually put into the written form that we have it today sometime after the exile ended because of John’s choice of words. He indicates the past tense when he says the he “was” in Patmos when he saw this vision.

   *I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

   In the tradition of the early church fathers, John was exiled on the island of Patmos under the reign of Domitian. Domitian was the emperor of Rome from 81 to 96 A.D.

   2. Patmos is a small island off the coast of Asia Minor in the Aegean Sea. It was about 60 miles southwest of Ephesus. It was a small, barren, mountainous island only six miles wide and ten miles long.

C. The Date of the Writing

Because John was evidently exiled under the reign of Domitian, the book would have to have been written during that general time frame. Most scholars place John’s writing near the end of Domitian’s reign at approximately 95 A.D.

D. The Name of the Book
1. The book is called “Revelation” because it represents the revelation that John received in vision form from the ascended Son of God (Rev. 1:1). There is a strong emphasis in this book on what John saw (Rev. 1:2, 12, 17, 19, 20; 4:1; 5:1; 6:1; 7:1; etc.). Almost every chapter begins with “I saw.”

2. The book can also be called “Revelation” because it reveals to us the ascended Son of God as he functions as our Great High Priest (Rev. 1:10-20).

   The word for revelation or “apocalypse” means an unveiling. Something that was veiled is now brought into light or focus. The book of Revelation is an unveiling of Jesus Christ as He truly is in the present tense.

   The book of revelation begins with a vision of the Lord Jesus Christ in His exalted and glorified state.

In the Book of Revelation, Jesus Christ is seen as:

a. The Great High Priest ministering among the churches (Rev. 1:9-3:22). This image of Christ presents Him as the Head of the church.

b. The Lamb of God Who provided for our salvation (Rev. 4:1-16:21). He is the one Who is worthy to open the seals. He is the one Who offers up incense for His people.

c. The King of kings and Lord of lords Who conquers over all (Rev. 17:1-21:8). He is the one Who comes riding on a white horse to execute judgment.

d. The Bridegroom Who is ready to receive His bride (Rev. 21:9-22:20).

II. What was the apparent purpose for the writing?

John makes it clear some of the reasons why he is writing. This of course must be seen more as Christ’s purpose than John’s purpose in that the revelation is coming primarily from Christ Himself (Rev. 1:1).

A. To respond in obedience to the Lord who commanded him to write (Rev. 1:10-11, 19).

   *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, saying, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,” and, “What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.”*  Revelation 1:10-11

B. To give believers a look into the future and to encourage them regarding the ultimate triumph of the Church (Rev. 1:1).

   …to show His servants--things which must shortly take place.
C. To address specific churches of Asia in both commendation and concern (Rev. 1:20-3:22).

John evidently had significant influence in the seven churches of Asia addressed in this book. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the High Priestly ministry of Jesus, John speaks into the life of these local assemblies.

III. What is the relationship of the book of Revelation to the rest of the biblical record?

A. The book of Revelation is a book of symbols that can only be interpreted by the rest of the biblical record. In order to understand the book of Revelation it is critical to prepare yourself by studying the rest of the Bible first.

B. The book of Revelation has a unique relationship to the book of Genesis. The book of Genesis is the seed plot of the Bible. The book of Revelation represents the full fruit that was in the seed. Notice the following comparison:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENESIS</th>
<th>REVELATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The first heaven and the first earth</td>
<td>The new heaven and the new earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun and moon created</td>
<td>No need for sun or moon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The first Adam and his bride</td>
<td>The last Adam and His bride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A river passes through the garden</td>
<td>A river proceeds from the throne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satan makes his first appearance</td>
<td>Satan makes his final exit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satan overcomes the first Adam</td>
<td>Satan overcome by the last Adam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paradise defiled by sin</td>
<td>Defilement banned from Paradise of God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The curse of sin imposed</td>
<td>The curse of sin lifted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The beginning of death</td>
<td>The end of death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorrows and tears result from sin</td>
<td>Sorrow and tears wiped away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redemption promised</td>
<td>Redemption completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man driven from Paradise</td>
<td>Man restored to Paradise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man denied access to the tree of life</td>
<td>Access to the tree of life restored</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. The book of Revelation is the capstone to the rest of the biblical record. The eternal purpose of God is declared in the first two chapters of Genesis. The eternal purpose of God is completed in the last two chapters of the book of Revelation.

IV. What are the various ways that the book of Revelation is interpreted?

There are five major schools of thought when it comes to the interpretation of the book of Revelation.

A. The Preterist View

In this view, the book of Revelation is to be seen as primarily applying to the past. That is, the issues addressed and the events described related to the actual struggles
encountered by the local churches that were specifically addressed. In this view the book may have some futuristic elements, but most the book related to early church history. In this view the Harlot was Rome and the struggles represent the conflict between Rome and the church. The book was therefore written to encourage and strengthen the first century church which was facing the threat of the Beast—Rome.

B. The Historicist View

In this view, the book of Revelation is to be seen as applying to the entire church age and represents the conflict of good and evil throughout the church age. In this view most of the events described have already taken place in the 2000 years of church history including such things as the middle ages, the Crusades, the epidemic plagues and the like. Very few historicists agree with each other in ascribing particular verses to specific events of history. But in general terms, this view holds that the beast and the false prophet represent false religion, more specifically the pope and his religious system known as the Roman Catholic Church. This view has its roots in the Reformation period and became the traditional view of Protestants until the 19th Century.

C. The Idealist View

In this view, the book of Revelation is to be seen purely symbolic in nature and can be applied to any time period and any group of believers. In this view there is no specific historical application in relation to the events described. The book is simply allegorical and written with the intent that believers can be encouraged in the ultimate triumph of good over evil.

D. The Futurist View

In this view, the book of Revelation (especially chapter 4 to the end) is to be seen as primarily future in application. This view espouses that most of the content of the book pertains specifically to the last of the last days prior to the return of Jesus to the earth. It represents the ultimate conflict of between the seed of the serpent and the Seed of the Woman as good and evil come to full fruit.

The futurists can further be divided into two main categories:

1. Pre-tribulationist. This view is sometimes referred to as dispensationalism. It makes a distinction between Israel and the Church. In this view the church is raptured out in Revelation chapter four at the calling up of John (Rev. 4:1). Israel remains after the rapture to go through the tribulation, contend with the antichrist and complete the plan of God on the earth.

2. Post-tribulationists. In this view the Israel of God is the church which remains on earth until the Second Coming of Christ at the end of the age.

E. The Combined View

While this term is not formally used among commentators, it represents somewhat of a combination between the Futurist and the Preterist view. In this view the book of
Revelation had some very immediate application with regard to the struggles of the early church and its conflict with Rome, but it also asserts that the primary application is futuristic in nature. This view would line up closely with what we find in relation to prophecy of the Old Testament. Most prophetic utterances of the Old Testament had a local application and fulfillment and at the same time a futuristic application and fulfillment.

John himself seems to put the vision into three categories (Rev. 1:19):

*Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.*

1. The things which you have seen (1:1-20). Christ exalted at the right hand of God.

2. The things which are now (2:1-3:21). The seven churches of Asia and their report card.

3. The things which will take place after this (4:1-22:5). The future events preceding the Second Coming of Christ.

V. What are some to the distinct features of the book of Revelation?

A. The book of Revelation tops the list of a number of things.

1. The use of Old Testament references and allusions. While the book of Revelation does not specifically quote verses like Matthew and others, it has more references and allusions to the content of the Old Testament than any other book in the New Testament. It may have as many as 400 allusions or direct references to the Old Testament. This is much higher than the next closest book with just over 100 such references (Hebrews).

2. The use of the symbols. The book of Revelation is the book of the symbol. Depending on how you count, there have been suggestions that put the use of symbols up to 300.

3. The use of numbers. While many books contain a large quantity of numbers, the book of Revelation has the highest use of symbolic numbers of any other book. Numbers like 4, 10, 12, 666, 1000, 144,000 and ten thousand times ten thousand. One of the most prominent numbers in the book of Revelation is the number seven.

- Seven churches (1:11)
- Seven lampstands (1:13)
- Seven stars (1:16)
- Seven spirits (4:5)
- Seven seals (5:1)
- Seven trumpets (8:2)
- Seven thunders (10:3)
• Seven heads (12:3)
• Seven diadems (12:3)
• Seven angels (15:6)
• Seven vials or bowls (15:7)
• Seven mountains (17:9)

B. In addition, the book of Revelation invokes seven blessings on the people of God. It is interesting that the New Testament starts off with the Gospel of Matthew and the beatitudes of Jesus in chapter 5. The New Testament closes with the beatitudes of Jesus issued from heaven.

1. Blessed are those who read and keep the words of this prophecy (Rev. 1:3).

*Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.*

2. Blessed are those who die in the Lord (Rev. 14:13).

*Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. “Yes,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.”

3. Blessed are those who watch and keep themselves pure (Rev. 16:15).

“Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.”

4. Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:9).

*Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!*

5. Blessed are those who have a part in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:6).

*Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.*

6. Blessed are those who keep the words of this prophecy (Rev. 22:7).

*Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.*

7. Blessed are those who do His commandments (Rev. 22:14).

*Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.*

C. The book of Revelation gives a report card to seven churches of Asia.

These seven churches were located on a major Roman road. If the person bearing the letter started at Ephesus and traveled north to Pergamum, turned east to Thyatira
and continued south, they would touch these churches in the exact order in which they appear in this book.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church/ City</th>
<th>Positives about Church</th>
<th>Negatives about Church</th>
<th>Response Demanded</th>
<th>Reward to Overcomers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ephesus Rev. 2:1-7</td>
<td>Hard workers, Morally pure, Good doctrine</td>
<td>Forsaken first love</td>
<td>Remember, repent and do as you once did.</td>
<td>Eat of the Tree of Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smyrna Rev. 2:8-11</td>
<td>Spiritually rich, Suffering for faith</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Be faithful unto death.</td>
<td>Crown of Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pergamum Rev. 2:12-17</td>
<td>Faithful in persecution</td>
<td>Compromise, Indulgent lifestyle</td>
<td>Repent</td>
<td>A White Stone and a new name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thyatira Rev. 2:18-29</td>
<td>Love, faith, patience, good works</td>
<td>Immorality, Teaching of Jezebel, Heresy</td>
<td>Repent and hold fast that which you have to the end.</td>
<td>Power over the nations and the morning star</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sardis Rev. 3:1-6</td>
<td>Some are doing well</td>
<td>Dead faith, defiled garments</td>
<td>Remember, repent, be watchful</td>
<td>Clothed in white, named before angels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia Rev. 3:7-13</td>
<td>Faithful</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Persevere; Keep on doing what you are doing.</td>
<td>Kept from the hour of trial, Made a pillar, New name.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laodicea Rev. 3:14-22</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Lukewarmness, Pride, Spiritual nakedness</td>
<td>Be zealous and repent</td>
<td>Sit on throne with Jesus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should be noted that there are those who interpret these seven churches as typical and prophetic of conditions of the church during the church age.

D. The book of Revelation is a book of worship.

We are to worship God and not worship the beast (Rev. 9:20; 13:4, 11-12; 14:7; 16:2). God is interested in measuring the worshippers (Rev. 11:1). Note the worship and the worshippers in the book.

*Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, “Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there.”*

Read: Revelation 5:8-16

1. John, the Apostle, worshipped at the feet of Jesus (Rev. 1:17).
2. The angels of heaven worshipped at the throne (Rev. 5:11-12; 7:11-12; 19:4).
3. The living creatures worshipped the Lamb (Rev. 5:11-12; 7:11-12).
4. The twenty four elders worshipped (Rev. 4:10-11; 5:8, 14; 7:11-12; 11:16-18; 19:4).
5. All nations shall worship before Him (Rev. 14:4).
6. Every creature in heaven and on earth worshipped (Rev. 5:13).
7. We are all exhorted to “Worship God!” (Rev. 22:9).

E. The book of Revelation leaves us with a great hope (Rev. 22:3-5).

And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.

In this passage we learn that there will be:

1. Perfect sinlessness because “there shall be no more curse.”
2. Perfect government because “throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it.”
3. Perfect service because “His servants shall serve Him.”
4. Perfect vision because “they shall see His face.”
5. Perfect image because “His name shall be on their foreheads.”
6. Perfect illumination because “the Lord God gives them light.”
7. Perfect hereafter because “they shall reign [with Him] forever and ever.”

(The above adapted from Explore the Book, by J.S. Baxter, page 349)