

Touring the New Testament

Romans - 2 Thessalonians



Pauline Epistles

by Drs. Jack & Grace Tuls

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PREFACE TO THE PAULINE EPISTLES

This group of letters was written by Paul to specific churches in contrast to the General Epistles which were not, but were written to either individual believers or to a class of believers as in Hebrews. When Paul addresses specific churches, he brings correction, explanation of certain doctrines, warnings, or encouragement to grow in Christian love.

The letter of Romans is a sublime description of the doctrines of condemnation, justification, sanctification (transformation), God's choice of Israel, Christian duties, and Christian liberties. Paul distinguishes between the doctrines of pre-destination and election, and points out that the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross was sufficient to liberate both Mankind and creation from the contamination of sin, and to restore both to a "new creation" status.

In the letters of 1 and 2 Corinthians, Paul corrects several errors in both doctrine and practice, and addresses the reasons for divisions in that church. In 2 Corinthians he also defends himself against doubts that he was a true apostle, and gives credible witness to his credentials by reminding the people of the miracles that God wrought among them through his apostolic ministry.

The letter to the Galatian church was written to stop the people from returning to the Mosaic Law, and neglecting the New Covenant in Jesus' blood. Paul tells them that they were not born again through the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus. Why did they want to return to an inferior covenant? Paul also talks of the fruit of the Spirit, and that sanctification is by the Spirit and not by the Law..

The letter to the Ephesian church talks about the believer's position in Christ Jesus, where we are seated together with Him in heavenly places. It also teaches how we should walk in the vocation to which the Lord has called us, and how we must stand against the wiles of the devil when we engage in spiritual warfare.

The letter to the Philippians is a tender letter thanking the church for its fellowship in the gospel and for its financial support of Paul's ministry. He explains how Christ humbled Himself for our sakes that we might be saved, and he encourages the believers to press on in their Christian lives toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Paul ends by telling the people to rejoice in the Lord always, and that God would supply their every need since they had supplied Paul's needs.

The letter to the Colossians was written to come against the doctrine of the Gnostics who said that God had created Jesus, and that He in turn had created the universe. Paul showed clearly that Jesus was equal to God and was the source of all wisdom and knowledge.

The letters of 1 and 2 Thessalonians were written to assure the church that Jesus had not yet returned from heaven, but that the signs of His coming would be the falling away of the Church worldwide, and that the Lord Jesus would first return to take the faithful ones to heaven with Him, and then the Antichrist would come.

ROMANS

Author: Paul was the author of Romans. Its vocabulary, style, logic, and theological development are consistent with the other epistles that Paul wrote. It is both a book of theology and of practical exhortation. The gospel of Jesus Christ is more than facts to be believed, but is also a life to be lived in righteousness befitting a person who is justified by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

Setting: Paul wrote Romans in 57 AD, near the end of his third missionary journey. It was written during his 3 month stay in Corinth, a city of Greece. The financial collection that he had obtained from the churches of Macedonia and Achaia for the needy Christians in Jerusalem was complete, and Paul was ready to sail to Jerusalem to deliver it. Since the Jews were planning to kill Paul if he sailed directly to Jerusalem, he knew of their plot and sailed north to Philippi first, and then sailed from there to Jerusalem. He gave the letter to the Romans to Phoebe from the church at Cenchrea, who later brought it to Rome.

Theme: The theme is the righteousness of God which is freely offered to everyone who comes to Christ by faith in his shed blood as a payment for sin.

Purpose: To reveal God's sovereign plan of salvation, to show how both Jews and Gentiles fit into that plan, and to exhort them to live righteous and harmonious lives before God and Man.

Christ Seen: Christ is presented as the second Adam, the second representative of mankind, whose righteousness and substitutionary death provided justification from sin to all who place their faith in Him. His death and resurrection are the foundation for the Believer's redemption and future glorification.

Significance in the Bible: The book of Romans provides the doctrinal foundation upon which all the other epistles are built. It is the most systematic and detailed exposition of theological truth in the Scriptures.

Key Verses: 1:16-17 The gospel reveals the righteousness of God from faith to faith as the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes.

Key Chapters: 6-8 These chapters talk about the transformation or sanctification of the life of the Believers as they grow in God's righteousness.

Survey:

I. Condemnation (Needing God's Righteousness) (ch. 1-3:20)

A. Theme of Romans: 1:17

In it (Gospel of Christ) is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just shall live by faith.

B. God's Creation Reveals: 1:20

His power
His Godhead

C. Man's Rejection of God. Results---

Worship of idols	1:23
Dishonored their own bodies	1:24
Engaged in vile affections (homosexuality)	1:26
A prostrate mind (not knowing good from evil)	1:28

D. Both Gentile and Jew are Guilty (ch 2)

God's goodness leads to repentance	2:4
No respect of persons with God	2:11
Man's conscience knows right and wrong	2:15
The Law of Moses condemns the Jew	2:23
Jewishness is inward, not outward	2:29

E. The Whole World is Guilty Before God (3:10-12)**II. Justification (Acquiring God's Righteousness) (ch. 3:21-5)****A. Definition of Justification: (3:22)**

The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference.

B. We are Justified by Faith, not by Works

Abraham's faith received God's righteousness	3:28
God Himself operates by faith	4:3
God Himself operates by faith	4:17b
Abraham ignored natural circumstances	4:19-20
Being justified brings peace with God	5:1
God's love is given to us in our spirit	5:5

C. God Loved Us When We Were Sinners

Christ's death removed the guilt of our sin	5:8
The Holy Spirit in us removes the power of sin	

D. Each Person Has the Same Choice as Adam

5:17-18

III. Sanctification (Growing in God's Righteousness) (ch. 6-8)**A. Water Baptism—Symbol of Our Identity with Christ**

Our "Old Man" was crucified with Christ	6:4
The sin factory was shut down	6:6
The righteousness factory was opened	

B. Sin Has No More Dominion Over Us	6:14
The gift of God is eternal life	6:23
In our flesh dwells no good thing	7:18
The Spirit of Life in Christ has made us free from the Law of Sin and Death	8:2
The Holy Spirit gives life to our mortal bodies	8:11
Being led by the Holy Spirit brings maturity	8:14
The creation will be delivered from corruption by mature sons of God	8:19-21
The Holy Spirit prays through us	8:26-27
Nothing can separate us from God's love	8:38-39

IV. Choosing Israel (Vindicating God's Righteousness) (ch. 9-11)

A. Israel Had All the Advantages	9:4-5	
Adoption	Glory	Covenants
The Law	Promises	Service of God
The Fathers	Christ—a Jew	
B. God Chose Jacob Rather Than Esau	9:11-13	
Elect according to the foreknowledge of God (1 Pet 1:2)		
C. Israel Rejected by God—Why?	9:31-32	
Israel sought righteousness by the Law		
Israel trusted their own righteousness	10:3	
The way to God's righteousness	10:9-10	
Faith comes by hearing the quickened Word of God	10:17	
Self-Works blinds Israel to faith	11:7	
Israel's rejection brings Gentile's salvation	11:11	
D. All Israel Will One Day Be Saved	11:26	
E. The Gifts and Callings of God are Without Repentance	11:29	

V. Christian Duties (Applying God's Righteousness) (ch. 12-13)

A. Present Our Bodies a Living Sacrifice	12:1
Renew our minds with God's Word	12:2
Operate within our measure of faith	12:3
Use our natural gifts with patience, waiting for opportunities	12:6-8
Remember to remain humble	12:16
Obey secular government which is ordained by God	13:1
Owe nobody anything but love	13:8

**B. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and Don't
Provide for the Flesh** 13:14

VI. Christian Liberties (Applying God's Righteousness) (ch. 14-16)

A. Do Not Judge Someone's Christian Liberty 14:4
 Regarding foods
 Regarding special days
 Principle: We live and die unto the Lord

B. Do Not Cause a Brother to Stumble 14:13

**C. The Kingdom of God is Righteousness, Peace,
and Joy in the Holy Spirit** 14:17
 Whatever is not of faith is sin 14:23
 Please our neighbors for their good, to build them up 15:2
 Operate in unity to glorify God 15:5-6
 Joy and Peace bring hope through the power of the
 Holy Spirit 15:13
 God shall bruise Satan under our feet shortly 16:20

End of Romans

1 CORINTHIANS

Author: Paul, the apostle was the acknowledged author and was quoted by many of the early church fathers such as Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian. The letter opens with Paul's usual greeting of love, grace and peace to them all from the Lord Jesus Christ and Paul's encouragement in the gifts that are operating among them.

Setting: the city of Corinth was a key city in ancient Greece but was overtaken by the Romans in 146 BC. The Greek language was still spoken in the city which was an important commercial city because of its strategic location with two seaports. The temple was filled with temples the most important being the temple of Aphrodite on the top of a high hill. Sexual perversion was common here because Aphrodite was the goddess of "love" in Greek meaning "eros", not the "agape" kind of love which Jesus demonstrated. There were many temple prostitutes. Paul established a church here on his second missionary journey. Paul, at first spoke in the synagogue and engaged in tent making with Aquila and Priscilla. Later, he was free to teach the Word of God which he did for 18 months in 51 AD. Then Paul left to go to Ephesus where he also taught for two years.

The reason for the writing of this letter is the receipt of a letter from a church member in Corinth which included many problems in the church. Paul addressed the problems one by one.

Theme: Christ Jesus gives wisdom and power for every area of one's life

Survey: I. Problem of Divisions (Ch. 1:1-4:21)

II. Problem of Fornication (Ch. 5:1-6:20)

III. Various other Problems (Ch. 7:1-16:24) Marriage, Food Offered to Idols, Public Worship, Christ's Resurrection

Significant Scriptures:

I. Problem of Divisions (Ch 1:1-4:21)

1:4-7 I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and knowledge...so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1:9 God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Paul then rebuked them for claiming each was baptized by a different person which resulted in pride and division. Paul said they should look to the cross of Jesus Christ.

1:18-25 For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God...but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews, a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness...but to those who are called...Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is wiser than men.

1:27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong.

1:30 But by his doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

2:7-10 But we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory the wisdom which none of the rulers or this age understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory...things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him...

2:16 For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.

3:1-8 Paul tells them they are still babes in Christ and fleshly by arguing among themselves about planting and watering seeds.

3:9-11 For we are God's fellow workers, you are God's field, God's building, according to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it...the foundation is Jesus Christ.

3:12-17 Paul warned them that a fire would come to test the quality of each man's work. He said they were the temple of God and holy and they must build wisely.

3:21-23 So then let no one boast in men, for all things belong to you whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come; all things belong to you and your belong to Christ and Christ belongs to God.

4:5 Paul warned them about judging others because when the Lord comes, He will judge all the motives of men's hearts.

II. Problem of Fornication (Ch. 5:1-6:20)

5:1-13 Paul was informed about a problem of incest in the member of the church namely someone had his father's wife. Paul said he was with them in spirit and advised them vs. 5 *to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ.* Paul goes on to advise in vs. 11 *I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he should be an immoral person...not even to eat with such a one.* Vs. 13 *Remove the wicked man from among your selves.* This only applied to the body of Christ, not outsiders.

Paul continues advising them concerning lawsuits in which they were taking brothers to courts rather than settling their difference among themselves. He said that the saints will judge the earth and angels and they should be competent to judge themselves. Vs. 7 *Why not rather be wronged or defrauded?* Then he said in vs.9 *The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God...neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate nor homosexuals nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers shall inherit the kingdom of God and such were some of you, but you were washed...sanctified... justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.*

Paul encouraged them that they were raised though God's power (6:14,15) Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? May it never be!

6:16-20 Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a harlot is one body with her? For He says, "The two shall become one flesh." But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him. Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a

temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.

III. Various other Problems (Ch 7:1-16:24)

A. Marriage and Remarriage (Ch.7)

7:4-7 The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise, the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time that you may devote yourselves to prayer, can come together again lest Satan tempt you...yet I wish that all were as I am. However each man has his own gift from God...

7:10-11 The wife should not leave her husband, but if she does leave let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband and that the husband should not send his wife away.

7:13-15 And if a woman has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, let her not send her husband away, for the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife and the wife is sanctified through her believing husband for otherwise your children are unclean... Yet if the unbelieving one leaves let him leave, the brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace. (My insertion, with which many godly leaders agree – remarriage is permitted, but only between two believers.)

7:25-38 Paul writes about the present distress, recommending those who are single remain single and that fathers could release their virgin daughters to marry or stay at home.

B. Principals about Eating Food Sacrificed to Idols (Ch.8)

Paul wrote that it didn't matter if a person ate the meat which had been sacrificed to idols or did not eat this meat, but he wrote they should vs. 9 *Take care lest this liberty of yours somehow became a stumbling block to the weak...vs. 13 Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, that I might not cause my brother to stumble.*

C. Paul's Rights as a Minister (Ch.9)

Paul wrote that he had a right to receive material gifts from those to whom he sowed spiritual things, just as farmer eats his own produce. He said he voluntarily preached the gospel to them and he wanted to offer the gospel without charge, not making full use of his right. Vs. 19 *For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all that I might win the more...To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak, I have become all things to all men that I might by all means save some... Vs. 27 I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.*

D. Other Principals Especially Concerning the Lord's Supper (Ch.10-11)

10:12-13 *Therefore let him who thinks he stand take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.*

11:23-34 These instructions are so important, read the Lord's words and His instructions in their entirety. Some words even include reasons for sickness.

E. Gifts and Their Importance (Ch.12)

12:3 *Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God can say "Jesus is accursed", and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord", except by the Holy Spirit.*

12:4-7 *same Spirit...same Lord...same God who works all things in all persons but to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.*

12:8 *Word of wisdom... word of knowledge...faith...gifts of healing...miracles...prophecy ...distinguishing of spirits...various kinds of tongues..interpretation of tongues.* (See my husband Jack's teaching on these gifts or the A.L. Gill manual from www.gillministries.com "Supernatural Living through the Gifts of the Holy Spirit"

12:11 *But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.*

F. Characteristics of Love (Ch.13)

Read it in its entirety in your Bible.

G. Rules for Exercising the Gift of Prophecy (Ch.14)

Read about this in your Bible and also my husband's teaching soon on www.ocnbroadcasting.com or www.gillministries.com "Supernatural Living Through the Gifts of the Holy Spirit".

H. Facts about Christ's Resurrection (Ch.15)

15:5-8 *... He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now...then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles and last of all, as it were to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.*

15:9 *For I am the least of the apostles, who am not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God but by the grace of God, I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain, but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.*

15:12-28 Paul writes about how important the resurrection was, *for if Christ has not been raised our preaching is vain your faith also is vain...you are still in your sins. But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first born of those who are asleep. For since by man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive...The last enemy that will be abolished is death.*

15:42-54 Paul wrote about our new resurrected body. Vs. 51 *Behold, I tell you a mystery, we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable and this mortal must put on immortality ...Death is swallowed up in victory.*

15:55-57 *O death where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?...But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

I. Concluding Remarks (Ch.16)

16:13-14 *Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love,*

Christ seen:

In the book of 1 Corinthians, Paul shows the importance of Jesus Christ in governing every area of the Christian's life. Without His influence the believer has no godly government in his life. With the Lord Jesus governing a person's life, there is wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption according to 1 Cor 1:30, in addition to peace and joy according to Rom 14:17.

Significance in the Bible:

This epistle is a very practical guide for any New Testament local church. In it Paul gives his apostolic guidance in resolving social, moral, and spiritual problems that arose in the Corinthian church. It is written in simple language, easy to be understood. It is the most detailed advice given by Paul in the New Testament to regulate the believer's life according to the will of God.

2 CORINTHIANS

Author: Paul, the apostle who called himself the bondservant of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul also mentions Timothy in his introduction, I believe because Timothy gave him information about the church in Corinth, having been there himself.

Setting: As we wrote before, the city of Corinth was a commercial city and worship of the goddess Aphrodite was popular. The believers were new in Christ and according to Timothy's report; they were questioning Paul's anointing and authority. Therefore, this letter concentrates largely on Paul's credentials, testimony and experiences. Paul always draws attention to the **Greater One** who lives in him and in us: the **Treasure** in our earthen vessel, (2 Cor. 4:7). Christ is also presented as the believer's comfort in all trials.

Paul also wrote about the joy of serving Him, godly sorrow and repentance necessary for all to live in triumph, 2 Cor. 2:14. One can also sense the love burden he had for the church members, wanting them to live pure lives and forgiving offenders. He wrote about the sweet incense we are and the coming glory on all those who desire transformation.

Theme: Paul's ministry and ours because of the Treasure within

Christ Seen: Christ is presented as the believer's comfort (1:5), triumph (2:14), Lord (4:5), light (4:6), judge (5:10), reconciliation (5:19), substitute (5:21), gift (9:15), owner (10:7), and power (12:9).

Significance in the Bible: This book gives the best insight into the heart of Paul. In it are several personal stories and details not mentioned elsewhere in Paul's writings. His emotional state may be discerned by the broken sentences, mixed metaphors, and sudden shifts in feeling and tone. His authority had been questioned by those whom he loved, and it had hurt. Nevertheless, this book has several doctrinal contributions to the Scripture.

Survey: I. Paul's Explanation of His Ministry (ch. 1-7)
II. Generosity in Giving (ch. 8-9)
III. Paul's Vindication of His Apostleship (ch. 10-13)

Significant Scriptures:

I. Paul's Explanation of His Ministry (ch. 1-7)

1:4 who comfort us in all our afflictions so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we have been comforted by God.

1:20 *for as many as be the promises of God, in Him they are yes, wherefore also by Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us.*

In chapter 2, Paul wrote how the incident of sexual misconduct in his last letter, brought him much sorrow but that his love for them abounded.

2:6 *Sufficient for such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the majority, and then he encouraged them to forgive the person, reaffirm your love for him.*

2:11 *that no advantage be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.*

2:14-16 *But thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place...a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life.*

3:18 *But, we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.*

4:7 ***But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves.***

4:8-9 Paul listed some of his afflictions saying he carries about in his body the dying of Jesus that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

4:12-13 *So death works in us, but life in you but having the same spirit of faith..."I believed, therefore I spoke." We also believe, therefore also we speak.*

4:16-18 *Therefore, we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day, for momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory...for we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

5:7 ***for we walk by faith, not by sight.***

5:17 *Therefore, is any man is in Christ, he is a new creature, the old things passed away, behold, new things have come.*

5:18-21 Paul said that we are ministers of reconciliation, ambassadors for Christ. He also stated that we are the righteousness of God in Him (Christ).

In Chapter 6, Paul defended his ministry, writing of how much he suffered as a servant of God so that in other's eyes his service would not be discredited. Yet, he rejoiced!

6:14-16 *Do not be bound together with unbelievers...for what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? **For we are the temple of the living God.***

7:10 *For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.*

II. Generosity in Giving (ch. 8-9)

8:1-5 Paul wrote how the *grace of God in the churches in Macedonia, abounded in giving and their deep poverty overflowed in...liberality...beyond their ability they gave of their own accord, begging us... for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, and not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.*

8:7 Then Paul encouraged them to *abound in this gracious work also.*

8:9 *For we know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake, He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.*

9:6 *he who sows sparingly, shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully, shall also reap bountifully.*

9:10-11 *Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food, **will supply and multiply** your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness, you will be enriched in everything for all liberality...*

9:15 ***Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift.***

III. Paul's Vindication of His Apostleship (ch.10-13)

10:4-5 *for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. (May this be our mandate).*

10:17 *But he who boasts, let him boast in the Lord.*

In Chapter 11, Paul felt called to give his credentials (little foolishness, he said) saying that he *betrothed them to one husband, that to Christ* and he feared that their *minds would be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.* Then he wrote about false prophets and apostles.

11:14-15 *...for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness...*

Defense for Healing

11:18-29 Admitting foolishness again, Paul wrote of his Hebrew birthright, many sufferings, dangers and daily burden for the churches.

11:30 *If I have to boast, I will boast of what pertains to my weakness* In Hebrew: the word “infirmities” means lack or inadequacy. I believe here that the word “weakness” refers to the persecutions he suffered. (This word is used 3 more times in the next chapter.)

There is much confusion in the body of Christ over this word “weakness” in chapters 11 and 12. Because of lack of understanding, I believe Satan has been able to put sickness on countless people. My husband Jack and I wondered about this too, so we looked up what Ken Copeland and Andrew Womack said about it. You can find their explanations on the internet. I will summarize some of it.

Pastor Andrew Womack says concerning 12:7, *the thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me*. "This is an explanation of what the thorn was. It was not a thing but rather a demonic messenger. In the eleventh chapter Paul used the same word and he had just finished listing what those infirmities were." They were stoning, beatings, dangers, hunger, thirst, sleeplessness and even being left for dead, but he never mentioned sickness.

Also in Josh. 23:13 and Judg. 2:3, people were referred to as "being thorns in your side" and "thorns in your eyes."

Womack continues: "So when Paul spoke of glorying in these infirmities or persecution, he was speaking of victory even in the midst of continual harassment. The Lord did not stop the persecution, but God's strength was certainly made perfect in Paul's weakness 12:9."

Many people say Paul had an eye problem, Gal. 4:15, and makes reference to people being willing to *poke out their eyes and give them to him*. Womack says "Paul was speaking to people in the region of Galatia, where the city of Lystra was located. It was outside the city of Lystra where Paul was stoned and left for dead. After prayer the Lord raised him up, and the next day he walked at least twenty miles into Derbe, another city in the region, and started preaching again. The Lord did not stop the persecution, but God's strength was certainly made perfect in Paul's weakness. In this city, they could see Paul's cuts, bruises and runny, puffy eyes". Paul said: 12:10 *For when I am weak, then am I strong.*"

Pastor Ken Copeland writes: "Paul's thorn in the flesh is a tradition that Satan has used to deceive and rob many people. Using it as an excuse, tradition says that God gets glory from sickness because the world sees how marvelously the Christian bears pain and agony. Anyone knows that the world has all the pain and agony it can stand. The world wants a way out of sickness, not another way into it."

13:1 *This is the third time I am coming to you, every fact is to be confirmed by the testimony of two or three witnesses.* Paul continued saying,

13:4 *Christ was crucified because of "weakness."* Here I believe we can use the meanings of infirmities as inadequacy, sickness, persecutions and sins. Paul then blesses them with grace and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

GALATIANS

Author: Paul, the apostle wrote this letter to a group of churches in the area known as Galatia in Asia Minor. This letter was written because the churches were being taken over by false teachers, some of whom were new believers from the Jewish faith, who wanted the Gentiles to come under the old Jewish law of the Torah including circumcision.

Setting: Paul had visited the cities of Galatia, namely Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe where he had suffered much. At Lystra, Paul was first thought to be a god, after healing a lame man, but Jews came from Antioch, stirred up the crowd who stoned him, dragged him out of the city and left him for dead. Acts 14:6-20 When the disciples gathered and prayed over him, he arose and walked to the next city! These people had seen miracles but now they were being enticed into grave error. This letter was written to identify the false teaching and direct the people's attention back to the cross of Jesus Christ who died to set them free from slavery to Jewish law, the Torah or legalism. The date for the writing was around 50 AD.

Theme: Freedom from the Law and new godly life by the grace of God.

Survey:

- I. Gospel's Source (Ch.1-2)
- II. Gospel's Superiority to Law (Ch.3-4)
- III. Gospel Applied (Ch.5-6)

Significant Scriptures:

I. Gospel's Source (Ch. 1-2)

1:6 *I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ for a different gospel.*

Paul writes defending his divine revelation from Jesus and the years he spent alone without the disciples teaching him. He said that even from his mother's womb he was called and set apart. (verses 15 and 16). After 14 years, he went to Jerusalem and submitted this revelation to the disciples who confirmed his revelation. However, the Greek Jews tried to bring him and the converts back into submission to the law (Torah). (A different gospel).

2:16 *Nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law, but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law...*

2:19 *For through the Law, I died to the Law, that I might live to God.*

2:20 *I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and delivered Himself up for me. Some scholars insert by the faith of the Son of God.*

II. Gospel's Superiority to Law (Ch. 3-4)

Paul calls them foolish since they began their walk with God by the Spirit, why did they lapse into the flesh again in order to be perfected?

3:6-7 *Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness, therefore be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham.*

3:9 *So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham the believer.*

3:11 *...The righteous man shall live by faith.*

3:13 ***Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us – for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree" – in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles...promise of the Spirit through faith.***

3:26 *For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.*

3:28-29 ***There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus and if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.***

In chapter four, Paul writes that since they received Christ, they became adopted sons of God, heirs and no longer slaves so they can cry "Abba Father." Why then Paul says, do you want to go back as slaves?

4:19 *My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you.*

III. Gospel Applied (Ch. 5-6)

5:1 *It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.* The Jews wanted the new Christians to be circumcised but Paul says this was not necessary only (verse 6) *faith working through love.*

Then in verse 13, Paul says: *through love serve one another.*

5:16 *But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.*

In verses 19-21 Paul lists the works of the flesh saying that those who practice such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

5:22-23 ***But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law.***

6:2 *Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ.*

6:3 *For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.*

6:7-9 *Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this will he also reap, for the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit, shall from the Spirit reap eternal life, and let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary.*

6:10 *...do good to all man, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.*

6:14 *But may it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*

Christ seen:

In the book of Galatians, Christ is seen as the deliverer who has freed the believer from bondage to the Mosaic Law and its curse, and from bondage to sin. Christ has given the believer a position of liberty and power to live a godly life.

Significance in the Bible:

In this epistle Paul severely rebuked the Galatians who were being weaned away from the pure gospel of freedom in Christ Jesus. The true Christian life is not to engage in rituals or historical traditions, but to live a life of faith and love toward God first and then toward people. Rules are rebuked, and faith and freedom are emphasized. It is the clearest explanation of the difference between the Old and New Testament behavior that exists in the Bible.

EPHESIANS

Author: Paul, the apostle wrote this amazing letter as one of his four prison letters while in the prison in Rome. This letter addressed to the church at Ephesus is the most profound explanation of the believer's position in Christ. Paul was probably about 65 years of age at the time of writing.

Setting: The city of Ephesus was a commercial city which Paul visited during his second missionary journey. During this visit he spoke out boldly but in spite of opposition, he was able to teach for two years in the school of Tyrannus. Extraordinary miracles were performed at his hands with handkerchiefs bringing healing and books of magic were burned. Paul went to Jerusalem and when he returned later, as is recorded in Acts 19:23-41, there was an uproar against him. The goddess Diana whom they believed fell out of heaven, was not honored but instead Jesus Christ, a God not made with hands. Paul then left to go to Macedonia.

This tender letter had no rebuke only encouragement to the new believers. Paul writes of how the death of Jesus Christ brought to them an amazing depth of resources by being "in Christ." This epistle was written about 61 AD.

Theme: Our inheritance in Christ and walking worthily of Him

Survey:

I. Our Inheritance in Christ (Ch.1-3)

II. How to Walk Worthily of Him (Ch.4-6)

Significant Scriptures:

I. Our Inheritance in Christ (Ch. 1-3)

1:3-6 *The Father has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ...chose us in Him...predestined us to adoption...to the praise of the glory of His grace...*

1:7-12 *obtained an inheritance...to the end that we should be to the praise of His glory. in Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses...riches of His grace which He lavished on us...*

1:13-15 *In Him...you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise...as a pledge of our inheritance.*

1:15-23 *This is Paul's prayer for the church ending with: verses 22-23 and he put all things in subjection under His feet, and He gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*

2:1-3 *Paul reminds us of times past when we were dead in trespasses and sins...being by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.*

2:4-10 *But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us...raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him, in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus...**For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not as a result of works, that no one should boast, for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.***

2:12-14 Paul had reminded them again of the past *But now in Christ Jesus...He Himself is our peace.*

2:20 *Having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone.*

3:3-11 Paul writes about the mystery of Christ which was now being revealed: *that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.*

3:14-21 **This outstanding earnest prayer is what Paul prayed for the body of believers. Read it aloud from your Bible. Meditate and believe it for yourself and others.**

3:20 *Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask of think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever, Amen*

II. How to Walk Worthily of Him (Ch. 4-6)

4:1-3 *walk in a manner worthy of the calling...with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

4:7 *But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.*

4:11-13 *And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelist, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith,...to a mature man...to the fullness of Christ.*

4:17-22 *Paul describes how in the former life as the Gentiles did, their mind was darkened, which also was our former life, now we lay aside the "old self."*

4:23-26 *...be renewed in the spirit of your mind and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth...speak truth...be angry, and yet do not sin, do not let the sun go down on your anger.*

4:29 *Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth... and do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away...and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other...*

5:3-17 *Paul describes the works of darkness which will bring the wrath of God. He said we could even expose those kinds of works. He then encourages the believer to walk as children of light.*

5:18-21 *...be filled with the Spirit speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing...always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ...and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.*

5:22-24 *Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord... the husband is the head...as the church is subject to Christ.*

5:25-29 *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her,...that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory...love their own wives as their own bodies...and cherish it, just as Christ also does the church.*

6:1-8 Paul writes how the children must obey their parents and honor them and how slaves must be obedient to their masters. Verse 6-8: *as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart...knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.*

The Armor of God

6:10-17 *Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm

Having girded your loins with truth

Having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

And having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace...

Take up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one.

And take up the helmet of salvation,

And the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

6:18 *With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit...with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.*

6:23 Paul concludes: *Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Christ seen:

The phrase “in Christ” occurs 35 times in Ephesians, more than in any other book of the New Testament. The believer is urged to see himself “inside Christ Jesus” as part of His Body. This correlates with John 3:16 where “whosoever believes into Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” The believer is seated together with Christ Jesus in heavenly places, which is the seat of authority at the right hand of God.

Significance in the Bible:

Ephesians is the book about how believers in the local church should live. It is impersonal and may be thought of as addressed to the world-wide Church. It describes our authority as to where we sit, how we are to walk worthy of our calling, and how to stand against the wiles of the devil.

PHILIPPIANS

Author: Paul. This is the last of the "prison epistles" written, Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon, bring the former ones, written while Paul was in the prison in Rome. One can sense a very loving "father" writing, who was torn between his desire to see his beloved Lord and wondering when he would see them again. It was a long imprisonment but he was still in chains and guarded by a Roman soldier. However, Paul was allowed visitors who came to him in large numbers. (Acts 28:16-31)

Setting: This epistle was written during Paul's first imprisonment of two years. Paul's beloved spiritual son, Timothy was with him as also Epaphroditus who survived a sickness and who later carried the letters to the respective cities of Ephesus and Colossae, a city 100 miles east of Ephesus. Philemon, Paul's personal friend was a resident of Colossae and had a church in his house. Still Paul's life was at stake as he awaited the verdict from the Imperial Court at Rome. (2:20-26) Paul had visited the city of Philippi on his first missionary journey and again on his second journey. The congregation was mainly Greek and some converted Jews.

Theme: *For me to live is Christ and to die is gain* (1:21) Joy comes by choice.

Survey:

I. Christ our Life and Pattern (Ch.1-2)

II. Christ our Goal (Ch.3-4:1)

III. Christ our Sufficiency (Ch.4:2-23)

Significant Scriptures:

I. Christ our Life and Pattern (Ch. 1-2)

1:6 *For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.*

1:9 *I pray that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment.*

1:20-21 *Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death, for to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

1:27 *(be) standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, in no way alarmed by your opponents, which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you...*

2:5-8 *Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but **emptied Himself (NASV) (laid aside His privileges)** taking the form of a bondservant, and being made in the likeness of men, and being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

2:9-11 *Therefore, also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him, the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

2:12 *Work out your salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who is at work in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure.*

2:17 *But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice, and share my joy with you all.*

II. Christ our Goal (Ch.3-4:1)

Paul warns them about having confidence in the flesh and writes about his many experiences in the flesh which he now considers as rubbish.

3:7-9 *But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.*

3:10 *That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering, being conformed to His death.*

3:12-14 *but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus,...I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet, but one thing I do: forgetting which lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

III. Christ our Sufficiency (Ch. 4:2-23)

4:4 *Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say, rejoice!*

4:6-7 *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God and the peace of God which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

4:8 *Finally brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable... right...pure...lovely...of good report, if there is any excellence...worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.*

4:11-13 *Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstance I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I know how to live in prosperity; in any circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need, I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.*

4:18 Paul acknowledged the gifts he had received from them as saying a *fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.*

4:19 *And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus*

Paul concludes by giving glory to our God and declaring, *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.*

Christ seen:

In 2:5-8, Christ is seen as the mighty God emptying Himself into a man's body in order to suffer and die for the sins of the world.

In 3:21, Christ is the one who will transform our bodies to be like His glorious body...

In 4:13, Christ strengthens us to do whatever He commands us to do.

In 4:19, Christ is the one who supplies all our needs according to His riches in glory.

Significance in the Bible:

Philippians is a warm, personal letter from Paul to a local church which had supported him financially at least twice in his travels. There is no rebuke for defects in doctrine, discipline, or disorder. The words "joy" or "rejoice" are used 16 times in this letter. Paul wanted to show that one could, by the power of God, live above difficult circumstances and still have great joy. This can be applied to every believer who is experiencing adversity.

COLOSSIANS

Author: Paul, the apostle writes this from prison in Rome around 60 AD. While in prison Paul is able to have friends visit and possibly stay with him. Epaphras was the one who founded the church at Colossae which met in the home of Philemon. Tychicus and Onesimus were planning to deliver this letter with instructions to have it read to the church at Laodicea. Paul had never been to Colossae. The letter shows great interest and love for the church members he had never met but had heard of their great faith and love. They were in his prayers constantly.

Setting: Paul is in prison awaiting a verdict from the Imperial Court and rejoicing when he receives a rare message from the churches he founded. Wonderful news comes from the small church in Colossae. Epaphras arrived and told Paul of the great faith and love which the people had and how they understood the grace of God in truth (Col.1:4-8). However, the false doctrine of Gnosticism was creeping into the young church which Paul must address. This doctrine taught that God created Jesus, who in turn created the universe. Paul dealt with this doctrine by lifting up the superiority of Jesus Christ in everything, making Him equal with God. Jesus, being the first-born of creation, refers to being the first-born from the dead of the old creation, into the new creation of which all believers are a part.

Theme: Jesus Christ is All and in All.

Survey:

I. The Supremacy of Christ in the Church (Ch. 1-2)

II. The Submission to Christ in the Church (Ch. 3-4)

Significant Scriptures:

I. The Supremacy of Christ in the Church (Ch. 1-2)

1:1-8 Paul greets the saints, thanks God for them and rejoices in hearing of their great faith, love and hope which was bearing great fruit.

1:9-12 Paul says he prays for them constantly that they *be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding...walk in a manner pleasing Him,...bearing fruit...strengthened with all power...for the attaining of steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.*

1:13-14 *For He delivered us from the domain (power) of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, for forgiveness of sins.*

1:15-17 *He is the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation, **For by Him all things were created both in the heavens and on earth**, visible and invisible...all things have been created by Him and for Him; He is before all things and **in Him all things hold together.***

1:19 *He is also head of the body, the church, and He is the beginning, the first born from the dead...first place in everything...all the fullness to dwell in Him.*

1:23 Paul encourages them to continue in the faith...and the hope of the gospel

1:26-27 *the mystery which has been hidden...which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory.***

2:1-3 Paul writes that he struggles greatly on their behalf *that their hearts may be ...knit together in love...and understanding ...and true knowledge of God's mystery, that is Christ Himself in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

2:8-10 Paul warns them of false doctrine (against Christ's deity) *for in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form and in Him you have been made complete and He is the head over all rule and authority.*

2:13 *And when you were dead in your transgression...He made you alive together with Him having forgiven us all our transgression having cancelled out the certificate of debt...decrees against us and which was hostile to us, and He has taken it out of the way having disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.*

II. The Submission to Christ in the Church (Ch.3-4)

3:2-3 *Set your mind on things above, not on the things that are on the earth, for you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*

3:5-11 Paul tells them to put off the many works of the flesh which was the "old self" (or the wrath of God will come) but he says to put on the "new self" *who is being renewed to a true knowledge of .the One who created him...no distinction between Greek, Jew...(other groups) but Christ is all, and in all.*

3:12-14 Paul gives the characteristics of the "new man" *and beyond all these things, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.*

3:23-24 *Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for man knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance...*

4:2-3 *Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving...praying for us as well...open door...that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ.*

4:6 *Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were , with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person.*

Christ seen:

In Colossians, Christ is seen as the fullness of the Godhead bodily (2:9). He is the supreme God in the flesh. God is ONE, but has 3 expressions of Himself, the Father, the Son Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.

Significance in the Bible:

This letter was written to refute the false doctrine of Gnosticism, which held that God had created Jesus Christ, who in turn had created the universe. Colossians has the highest explanation of Christology in the Bible. He is at the same time the exalted Creator and Redeemer of creation, who gave up His life for His fallen world, to redeem it back to Himself in a new creation.

1 THESSALONIANS

Author: Paul, the apostle wrote this letter while Silvanus (Silas) and Timothy were with him in Corinth.

Setting: Thessalonica was a prominent seaport and capital of the province Macedonia. It was part of a popular East West trade and military route between Rome and Asia Minor. Most of the residents were Greeks but there was a fairly large segment of Jews. Since Mt. Olympus the famed residence of the god Zeus was close by, there were many unbelievers who became dissatisfied with their religion when Paul and Silas explained the Scriptures (Acts 17:1-9). A great number of Greeks along with many leading women became believers. However, the Jews became jealous, formed a mob and dragged Jason before the authorities. As a result Paul and Silas had to promise they would leave the city, which they did immediately. This letter was written from Corinth around 51 AD being one of Paul's earliest letters. Paul had heard from Timothy who visited them later that they were doing well.

Theme: The Lord Jesus Christ is coming again.

Survey:

I. Paul's Personal Reflections (Ch. 1-3)

II. Paul's Instructions to the Thessalonian Church (Ch. 4-5)

Significant Scriptures:

I. Paul's Personal Reflections (Ch. 1-3)

1:1-3 Paul compliments the Thessalonians that they were in faith, laboring in love, being steadfast in hope in the Lord Jesus Christ.

1:5 *For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction...*

1:6-8 Paul was pleased that they *received the word in much tribulation...and became an example to all believers in Macedonia and in Achaia... which sounded forth from you... but also in every place your faith has gone forth...*

2:1-8 Paul writes how he had suffered in Philippi, and then had met the Thessalonians, not flattering them, *but gentle among them as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children...you had become very dear to us.*

2:9 Paul reminded them how he labored among them, *working night and day so as not to be a burden (tent making?) to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.*

2:11-12 *Just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you...as a father...that you may walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.*

2:19-20 *For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? For you are our glory and joy.*

3:6-8 Paul was glad that Timothy returned from seeing them and gave a good report: their faith and love had grown, and that they *always think kindly of us just as we long to see you... For now we really live, if you stand firm in the Lord.*

II. Paul's Instructions to the Thessalonian Church (Ch. 4-5)

A. The Believer's Pattern for Life (Ch. 4:1-12)

4:1-10 Paul exhorts them to walk in purity and sanctification and pleasing God.

4:11 *lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands...so that you may behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need.*

B. Revelation of the Translation of the Church (Ch. 4:13-18)

4:13-16 Paul doesn't want the church members to grieve over their loved ones who had fallen asleep (died). *Even so, God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus...that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep, for the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.*

4:17-18 *Then, we who are alive and remain shall be caught up (Greek: harpazo meaning to seize, catch up, pluck, take by force) together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore, comfort one another with these words.*

C. How to Wait for the Coming of the Lord (Ch. 5)

5:2 *The Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, while they are saying peace and security...then destruction shall come upon them suddenly, but you brethren are not in darkness... for you are all sons of light...be alert and sober...having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation...for God has not destined us for wrath but for obtaining salvation....*

5:12-13 *brethren, appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction...and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work...*

5:16-18 *Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus...*

5:23 *Now may the god of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit, soul and body be preserved complete without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.*

Christ seen:

Christ is seen as the soon-coming King. The early Christians greeted each other with the word "Maranatha" which meant "The Lord is coming." This was a great comfort to them during the early persecutions which they endured.

Significance in the Bible:

This letter contains one of the most helpful and illuminating passages about the return of the Lord Jesus for His bride. It also shows the tender care of Paul for his converts' feelings about their loved ones who had died in Christ. He assures them that they would see their loved ones again when they returned with Jesus to get their resurrection bodies.

2 THESSALONIANS

Author: Paul, the apostle, wrote this letter while with Silvanus (Silas) and Timothy in Corinth.

Setting: Timothy, who was sent by Paul to deliver the first letter to the church at Thessalonica returned with not only a good report but also some bad news. Paul first commends the church members for their faith and love which was increasing, and then he mentions this report: they were *disturbed by a spirit, or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord had come (2:2)*. Paul did not want them to be shaken from their composure that they missed the rapture, or that the rapture was so imminent that they could stop working and just wait to be taken. Paul had visited this group of believers on his second missionary journey, but since he left they were suffering from great persecution. They didn't understand that there were more signs besides persecution, of His second coming. Paul then gave them instruction in this letter of what to expect before the day of the Lord.

Theme: More signs of Jesus' second coming and the Antichrist to be revealed

Survey:

I. Encouragement in Persecution (Ch. 1)

II. Events Preceding the Day of the Lord (Ch. 2-3)

Significant Scriptures:

I. Encouragement in Persecution (Ch.1)

1:1-12 Paul gave thanks to God that their faith and love had grown in spite of great persecution and afflictions which they were enduring. He said that *a just God will repay with affliction those who afflict you*. He added that the afflictors *will pay the penalty of eternal destruction*. He prayed that the name of the Lord would be glorified in their lives.

II. Events Preceding the Day of the Lord (Ch. 2-3)

2:3-4 Paul wrote: *don't be deceived, the apostasy comes first, the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.*

2:7 *the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains (the Spirit filled believer or those with oil in their lamps) will do so until he is taken out of the way.*

2:8-9 *And then the lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders.*

See additional Scriptures for a description of the Antichrist: the little horn (Dan.7:8), the prince that shall come (Dan. 9:26), the willful king (Dan.11:36), the beast out of the sea (Rev. 13:1-10).

3:3 *But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.*

3:6-9 Paul warned the church to withdraw their fellowship from unruly brothers and tells them to get to work, rather than to sit and wait for Christ to return.

3:10-11 *if anyone will not work, neither let him eat for we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all but acting like busybodies.*

Christ seen:

Again in this letter as in 1 Thessalonians, Christ is seen as the coming King. But His coming was not imminent as Paul explained. When He comes in power and glory, the enemies of Christ will be punished with everlasting destruction from His presence.

Significance in the Bible:

The letter of 2 Thessalonians gives a very detailed description of events which must happen before the return of Jesus occurs. It was a comfort to the local church that they could know that since the necessary events preceding the return of Jesus had not yet occurred, they had not missed His return. It has comforted believers throughout the Church Age in the same way.

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