

**Journey epistles, part 1**

**Introduction**

Perhaps we don't communicate very often with letters anymore, but imagine sending a letter (or an email). What are some challenges and some benefits of communicating by letter or email?

Challenges

Benefits

**Paul's letter to the Galatians**

**A possible scenario**

- 31 A.D. Death of Stephen and conversion of St. Paul (Paul spends parts of three years in Arabia; see Acts 7 and 9.)
- 33 A.D. Paul returns to Damascus and has to flee via a \_\_\_\_\_ (Galatians 1:17; 2 Corinthians 11:32). He goes to \_\_\_\_\_ and meets Peter and James (Acts 9:26-30; 22:17,18; Galatians 1:17-20). He returns to Tarsus where he remained for about ten years (Acts 9:30).
- 43 A.D. Paul summoned to Syrian \_\_\_\_\_ by Barnabas (Acts 11:19-26). Even though we do not hear much about Titus' conversion, it is likely that he was one of Paul's converts from Antioch (Galatians 2:1,3; Titus 1:4).
- 46 A.D. Paul visits Jerusalem a second time, fourteen years after his previous visit (Galatians 2:1-3 and Acts 11:30). It is likely that Titus accompanied Paul and Barnabas.
- 47-48 A.D. On his first missionary journey, Paul spread the gospel in the Roman province of Galatia. Some cities that Paul visited included Pisidian A \_\_\_\_\_, I \_\_\_\_\_, L \_\_\_\_\_, and D \_\_\_\_\_. After the first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas were in Syrian \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 14:26-28) for "a long time." As the word of God spread, confusion and tension grew in the church regarding Jews and Gentiles. Some examples included clean and unclean, to circumcise or not. As an example, think of Peter defending his actions of going to the house of Cornelius (a Gentile) to the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem (Acts 11:1,2). This confusion and tension also spread to the Galatian churches. A group of people came to them and insisted that Gentile converts needed to be \_\_\_\_\_. These men are usually referred to as Judaizers. The determined efforts of the Judaizers to undermine Paul's work in both Antioch and Galatia provoked Paul to write a letter to the churches in Galatia.

48/49 Paul wrote \_\_\_\_\_, his epistle to the churches in Galatia. *(It is hard to imagine that Paul would not specifically mention the ruling of the Jerusalem Council in his letter to the churches in Galatia if it had already been in existence when he wrote this letter. He doesn't mention the result of the Jerusalem Council in this letter at all. Why not? It most likely hasn't happened yet. It also seems very likely that the situation mentioned in Galatian 2 with Peter and Barnabas occurred before the Jerusalem Council when there was confusion even among the apostles, thus, necessitating a Council to discuss these matters further. Most likely, the Council met after Paul wrote this letter.)*

49 The apostolic council meets in \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 15). On his second missionary journey, the decision was reported to Galatia by Paul and Silas (Acts 16:4), confirming what Paul wrote in his letter to the Galatians.

Place: \_\_\_\_\_, Date: \_\_\_\_\_ A.D.

### The letter

- The Judaizers presented a three-part attack against Paul and the gospel he had preached:
  1. Paul was not a first-rank apostle like the apostles at \_\_\_\_\_.
  2. Paul's gospel omitted essential \_\_\_\_\_ of God, such as circumcision.
  3. Paul's gospel would result in moral \_\_\_\_\_.
- Outline:
  1. **Paul defends his apostleship** (1:1-2:21). By retelling in great detail the story of his conversion and early ministry (1:11,12), Paul wanted the Galatians to know that what he preached was not from \_\_\_\_\_ but rather from \_\_\_\_\_.
  2. **Paul defends the gospel of free forgiveness** (3:1-4:31). In order to prove that faith, not circumcision, makes someone righteous before God, Paul pointed to the example of \_\_\_\_\_ (3:6-9). Those who have faith in God's Son are no longer \_\_\_\_\_, but sons of God and heirs of eternal life (4:4-7).
  3. **Paul defends the results of this gospel freedom** (5:1-6:10). A good theme for the book of Galatians would be: Stand firm in your \_\_\_\_\_ (5:1). The gospel of free forgiveness does not result in moral chaos because sons of God are driven by the \_\_\_\_\_, not by their \_\_\_\_\_.
- Things to remember about Galatians:
  1. We are saved by \_\_\_\_\_, not by \_\_\_\_\_ (2:15,16; 3:2,5,11).
  2. We become sons of God, clothed in the righteousness of Christ through \_\_\_\_\_ (3:26,27).
  3. The child of God will naturally produce the fruit of the \_\_\_\_\_ (5:22,23).

## Paul's letters to the Thessalonians

### A possible scenario

49-52 A.D. After the Jerusalem Council, Paul wanted to go back to the churches in Galatia to encourage them (Acts 15:36). There was a fallout between Paul and Barnabas regarding John Mark (perhaps even some unmentioned fallout with the situation with Peter and Barnabas in Antioch). Paul and Barnabas go their separate ways. Paul takes \_\_\_\_\_ on the second missionary journey.

After visiting the church in Galatia and bringing the decision from the Jerusalem Council, Paul circumcised \_\_\_\_\_ and took him on the journey. They wanted to go to Asia, but the Spirit of Jesus prevented them (Acts 16:7). After the vision in Troas, they headed for Macedonia where they visited various cities including Samothrace, Neopolis, and \_\_\_\_\_. After the jailer's conversion and being released from prison, Paul left Philippi. Passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica (Acts 17:1).

Paul founded the church in Thessalonica, and he preached there for at least \_\_\_\_\_ weeks (Acts 17:2). Because of hostile \_\_\_\_\_ against the apostles, they had to leave. The Jews from Thessalonica even pursued Paul in Berea, forcing him to flee to Athens (Acts 17:13). \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ stayed in Berea (Acts 17:14) with the directives to join Paul as soon as they could.

It appears as though \_\_\_\_\_ did join Paul while he was in Athens (1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:2). Paul wanted to return to Thessalonica to encourage them, but he couldn't. Therefore, he sent \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ instead.

After spending some time in Athens, Paul went to \_\_\_\_\_ where \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ joined him from Macedonia (Acts 18:1-5). They reported \_\_\_\_\_ news about the church in Thessalonica. Therefore, Paul responded to that news with a letter.

Place: \_\_\_\_\_, Date: \_\_\_\_\_ A.D. (early)

Paul receives word about several matters that required a follow-up letter. The Holy Spirit uses him to write a second letter to the church. Since it is very similar to the first letter and deals with many of the same topics, it is believed that not much time has elapsed since the first letter; perhaps only a few months.

Place: \_\_\_\_\_, Date: \_\_\_\_\_ A.D. (summer)

### The letters

When Timothy returned with a report from Thessalonica, Paul wrote his first letter in order to:

- \_\_\_\_\_ new converts (chapters 1-3),
- \_\_\_\_\_ in godly living (chapter 4),
- and give assurances about the \_\_\_\_\_ (chapters 4 and 5)

Outline of 1 Thessalonians:

1. **Paul gives thanks** by retelling the history of the Thessalonian church (1:1-3:13).
2. **Paul gives instructions** in order to "supply what is lacking in their faith" (4:1-5:28).
  - Instructions regarding morality
  - Instructions regarding the end times
  - Instructions regarding congregational life

Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians to follow up on \_\_\_\_\_ (chapter 1) and \_\_\_\_\_ (chapter 3) from his first letter. In this second letter he also tackled one new matter: the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ (chapter 2).

Outline of 2 Thessalonians:

1. Additional **thanksgiving for their faith** (1:1-12)
2. Additional **instruction concerning the end times** (2:1-16)
  - Some Thessalonians were concerned that the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ had already come (2:1,2).
  - Paul assures them that the day will not come until the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ is revealed (2:3-12).
3. Additional **instruction concerning moral living** (3:1-18)

Things to remember about the letters to the Thessalonians:

1. **End times:** the resurrection of the dead
2. **End times:** the man of lawlessness (sin)
3. **End times:** warnings against idleness

## Your homework

**For next time...**

1. Review Galatians and 1 & 2 Thessalonians. Mark outline divisions and note key passages in your Bible.
2. Review the books of the New Testament and be prepared to recite them in front of your mirror.
3. Read 1 & 2 Corinthians and Romans.