

# An overview of the New Testament

## Journey epistles, part 2

### Revised schedule for Sunday morning study

October 2	An overview of the New Testament – Journey epistles, part 2
October 9	<i>A special Bible study presentation by an administrator from Arizona Lutheran Academy</i>
October 16	Romans 9-16
October 23	Romans 9-16
October 30	Romans 9-16
November 6	Romans 9-16
November 13	Romans 9-16
November 20	Romans 9-16
November 27	<i>No study – Thanksgiving weekend</i>
December 4	Romans 9-16
December 11	Romans 9-16
December 18	Romans 9-16
December 25	<i>No study – Christmas</i>
January 1	<i>No study – New Year's Day</i>
January 8	An overview of the New Testament – Prison epistles
January 15	An overview of the New Testament – Pastoral epistles
January 22	An overview of the New Testament – General epistles
January 29	An overview of the New Testament – Writings of John

## 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           **Silas**           on the second missionary journey.

After visiting the church in Galatia and bringing the decision from the Jerusalem Council, Paul circumcised           **Timothy**           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           **Philippi**          . 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           **three**           weeks (Acts 17:2). Because of hostile           **persecution**           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).           **Silas**           and           **Timothy**           stayed in Berea (Acts 17:14) with the directives to join Paul as soon as they could.

It appears as though Timothy 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 Timothy from Athens instead.

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

Place: Corinth, Date: 51 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: Corinth, Date: 51 A.D. (summer)

### The letters

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

- Encourage new converts (chapters 1-3),
- Instruct in godly living (chapter 4),
- and give assurances about the resurrection (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 persecution (chapter 1) and idleness (chapter 3) from his first letter. In this second letter he also tackled one new matter: the man of lawlessness (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 day of the Lord had already come (2:1,2).
  - Paul assures them that the day will not come until the man of lawlessness 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

## Paul's "first" letter to the Corinthians

### A possible scenario

49-52 A.D. The Christians in Corinth first met Paul when he came to the city on his second missionary journey. Many first heard him preach Christ crucified in a house right next to the synagogue. Paul was so encouraged when the Lord spoke to him in a vision that he stayed for 1 1/2 years teaching the word of God (Acts 18:7-11). It was during this time that he wrote his letters to the Thessalonians.

After some time, Paul left Corinth with Priscilla and Aquila and traveled to Ephesus. Priscilla and Aquila stayed at Ephesus while Paul made his way to Caesarea and then to Jerusalem. After a brief stay he went back to Syrian Antioch (Acts 18:18-22).

53-57 A.D. After spending some time in Antioch, Paul and Timothy went on the third missionary journey (Acts 18:23). It is at this time that we are introduced to Apollos who went to Ephesus and met Aquila and Priscilla. Eventually, Apollos went to Corinth and was a tremendous asset to the ministry of that congregation (Acts 18:24-19:1).

After going through the areas of Galatia and Phrygia (Acts 18:23), Paul and Timothy arrived in Ephesus (Acts 19:1). He spent more than two years there (Acts 19:8,10). Since Paul's first arrival in Corinth, some big problems arose in the congregation. It even appears that while Paul was in Ephesus, he made a quick and "painful" visit to Corinth (which is *not* recorded in Acts) in order to correct the problems (2 Corinthians 2:1). Shortly after he returned to Ephesus, Paul wrote a letter to the Corinthian congregation, in which he continued to address the problems that he had seen when he visited (1 Corinthians 5:9). (God did not preserve that letter for us.)

News came to Paul from people in the Corinthian church that there were even more problems among the Christians (1 Corinthians 1:11). Leaders from the church had even written a letter to Paul concerning various issues (1 Corinthians 7:1). All these problems prompted Paul, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to write a second letter from the city of Ephesus (1 Corinthians 16:8,9). (This is the letter we refer to as *First Corinthians*.) Paul wrote that letter in great distress and anguish (2 Corinthians 2:4). In that letter, Paul also mentioned that he had plans to visit the Corinthian congregation again in the future. It is very likely that Titus delivered this letter to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 2:12).

Place: Ephesus, Date: 56 A.D. (spring)

### The letter

A good theme for 1 Corinthians might be: We preach Christ crucified (1 Corinthians 1:23).

### Outline of 1 Corinthians:

1. Introduction (1:1-9)
2. Paul's responses to matters addressed in Chloe's report (chapters 1-6)
  - Chapters 1-4: Christ crucified creates unity among Christians as opposed to divisions.
  - Chapters 5-6: Christ crucified means we are liberated from sin and cannot tolerate things like sexual immorality.

3. Paul's responses to matters the Corinthians had written about (chapters 7-16)
  - Chapter 7: Christ crucified has destined us for glory, regardless of our current status (married or celibate, slave or free).
  - Chapters 8-10: Christ crucified gives us freedom from the law, freedom that we use to love one another. Specific example in Corinth: eating certain foods.
  - Chapters 11-14: Matters relating to worship life:
    - 11:1-16: Christ crucified does not abolish God's roles for men and women, but affirms them.
    - 11:17-34: Christ crucified is present among us in Holy Communion, therefore we will avoid abusing it.
    - 12-14: The goal of the gifts of the Spirit is to proclaim Christ crucified in love in order to build up the church.
  - Chapter 15: Because Christ was crucified, we have confidence that we will rise, just like he did.
4. Conclusion, personal matters (chapter 16).

Things to remember about 1 Corinthians:

- 1:23 - We preach Christ crucified
- 6:19 - You are not your own; you were bought at a price.
- 11 - Lord's Supper
- 13 - Love
- 15 - Resurrection

## Paul's "second" letter to the Corinthians

### A possible scenario

53-57 A.D. After Paul sent his "first" letter to the Corinthians with Titus (1 Corinthians), Paul waited for a report. Evidently, Paul and Titus had discussed meeting in Troas to get the report from the Corinthian congregation (2 Corinthians 2:12,13). Even though the Lord had opened a door for Paul to do mission work in Troas, he was burdened with the thoughts of what was happening in Corinth. Therefore, Paul left Troas and headed to Macedonia.

After some time, Paul was comforted by the arrival of Titus in Macedonia. Not only was he comforted by being with Titus, he was also comforted by the report Titus gave. The Corinthians longed to see Paul, and they were sorrowful over their sins (2 Corinthians 7:5-7). It was here that God used Paul to write this third letter to the Corinthians (which we call Second Corinthians).

Place: Macedonia, Date: 56 A.D. (summer or fall)

### The letter

Outline of 2 Corinthians:

- Greeting and Thanksgiving (1:1-11)
- **Part One: A Look to the Past (1:12-7:16)**
  - Paul explains his change of itinerary and in the process extols the glory of the ministry*
  - ⇒ A change of plans (1:12-2:13)
  - ⇒ Ministers of a new covenant (2:14-4:6)
  - ⇒ A treasure in jars of clay (4:7-5:10)
  - ⇒ Ambassadors of universal reconciliation (5:11-6:10)
  - ⇒ Paul pleads for a closer union with the Corinthians (6:11-7:4)
  - ⇒ Paul finds joy in a reunion with Titus (7:5-16)

- **Part Two: A Look to the Present (8:1-9:15)**

*Paul urges completion of the offering for the church at Jerusalem*

- ⇒ Encouragement to complete the offering (8:1-15)
- ⇒ Assistance in completing the offering (8:16-9:5)
- ⇒ The results of completing the offering (9:6-15)

- **Part Three: A Look to the Future (10:1-13:10)**

*Paul speaks of his coming visit to Corinth and what this implies for his adversaries*

- ⇒ Paul's defense of his ministry (10:1-11:15)
- ⇒ Paul's boasting (11:16-12:13)
- ⇒ Plans for a third visit (12:14-13:10)

- Final Greetings (13:11-14)

Things to remember about 2 Corinthians:

- 4:7ff - As a minister of Christ, Paul considers himself a jar of clay.
- 5:14-21 - Christ's death counts for all (even those who do not believe). Between Christ and the world, a Great Exchange has taken place.
- 8-9- Biblical principles for stewardship. Jesus became poor so that we might be rich.

## Paul's letter to the Romans

### A possible scenario

53-57 A.D. After sending his third letter (2 Corinthians) to the Corinthians with Titus, Paul made his way to Corinth for his "third visit" (2 Corinthians 13:1). Paul had always wanted to do some mission work in Rome. He planned to go there after this third missionary journey (Acts 19:21). In fact, he planned to use Rome as his missionary base to the West, intending to go all the way to Spain (Romans 15:23,24).

Paul's plans were to head back to Jerusalem with the offering he had been collecting for the Christians experiencing hard times from a famine. (Romans 15:25-27). After his delivery, he wanted to head for Rome. He wrote a letter to the Roman Christians to prepare for his arrival. He was near Cenchrea, which is a coastal city by Corinth (Romans 16:1). It appears that Paul was in Corinth when he wrote the letter to the Romans.

Place: Corinth (or Cenchrea), Date: 56/57 A.D. (winter)

### The letter

A good theme for Romans might be: Righteousness from God (Romans 1:17).

Outline of Romans:

- I. Introduction (1:1-17)
- II. All lack righteousness (1:18-3:20)
- III. Righteousness comes from God (3:21-4:25)
- IV. The effects of God's righteousness (5:1-8:39)
- V. God's righteousness in dealing with Israel (9:1-11:36)
- VI. God's righteousness put into practice and Conclusion (12:1-16:17)

Things to remember about Romans:

- Romans 1:16 - I am not ashamed of the gospel.
- Romans 3 - Justification through faith, not through works.
- Romans 6:1-4 - Baptism = death, new life.
- Romans 8:28 - God works for our good in all things
- Romans 13 - Government

## **For the future**

- An administrator from Arizona Lutheran Academy will give a Bible study presentation on Sunday, October 9, in the fellowship hall (or church).
- Then, we will sit in Corinth with Paul and study the words he writes to the Christians in Rome as we study Romans 9-16.
- After the New Year, we will continue our journey of an overview of the New Testament.