

Paul's Epistles—Possible Order

-Dating of Paul's epistles can be difficult

-Especially the book of *Galatians*

I. Theory One

(1) <i>Galatians</i>	48-49
(2) 1 Thessalonians	50-51
(3) 2 Thessalonians	50-51
(4) 1 Corinthians	54-56
(5) 2 Corinthians	54-56
(6) Romans	56-57
(7) Philemon	60-61*
(8) Colossians	60-61*
(9) Ephesians	60-61*
(10) Philippians	61-62
(11) 1 Timothy	62-63
(12) Titus	62-63
(13) 2 Timothy	64-68

*Written close together. Scholars disagree as to order.

II. Theory Two

(1) 1 Thessalonians	50-51
(2) 2 Thessalonians	50-51
(3) 1 Corinthians	54-56
(4) 2 Corinthians	54-56
(5) <i>Galatians</i>	55-56
(6) Romans	56-57
(7) Philemon	60-61*
(8) Colossians	60-61*
(9) Ephesians	60-61*
(10) Philippians	61-62
(11) 1 Timothy	62-63
(12) Titus	62-63
(13) 2 Timothy	64-68

III. Theory Three

(1) 1 Thessalonians	50-51
(2) 2 Thessalonians	50-51
(3) 1 Corinthians	54-56
(4) 2 Corinthians	54-56
(5) Romans	56-57
(6) <i>Galatians</i>	60-61
(7) Philemon	60-61*

(8) Colossians	60-61*
(9) Ephesians	60-61*
(10) Philippians	61-62
(11) 1 Timothy	62-63
(12) Titus	62-63
(13) 2 Timothy	64-68

IV. Dean's Theory

*Taken from John A.T. Robinson's *Redating the New Testament*

(1) Galatians	48-49
(2) Thessalonians	early 50
(3) 2 Thessalonians	50-51
(4) 1 Corinthians	Spring 55
(5) 1 Timothy	Autumn 55
(6) 2 Corinthians	Early 56
(7) Romans	Early 57
(8) Titus	Late Spring 57
(9) Philippians	Summer 58
(10) Colossians	Summer 58
(11) Philemon	Summer 58
(12) Ephesians	Late Summer 58
(13) 2 Timothy	Autumn 58

Galatians—The Writer

I. Identity

“There can be no serious question about the authorship of this letter. The testimony of the ancient church uniformly ascribes it to Paul with no hint of doubt.”

“The letter itself not only claims Paul as its author but contains nothing which is in the slightest degree inconsistent with that claim” (J. Knox, *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible, II*, 338).

-The identity of the writer has never been questioned

*by “sane” Bible scholars

-The Apostle Paul wrote the letter

-Internal evidence, external evidence all agree

II. Setting

-The author’s identity is clear

-The setting in Paul’s life has been much debated

(1) Did Paul write Galatians after his first missionary journey?

*A.D. 48-49

(2) Did Paul write Galatians during his third missionary journey?

*A. D. 55-56

(3) Did Paul write Galatians during his Roman imprisonment?

*A.D. 60-61

-All the views have some merit

-See Gundry’s map, p. 388 (p. 352)

(a) Arguments for the A.D. 55-56 date (The North Galatia View)

(1) Paul may have evangelized North Galatia during his 2nd missionary journey

*though Acts makes no mention of such a trip

*and such a trip northward would seem to be far out of the way

(2) Paul may allude to the Jerusalem Council in Gal 2:1-10

*though Paul makes no mention of the Council’s decree

*and that decree would seem to be a powerful argument in his favor

(3) Paul may have written the letter shortly before Romans

*because the subject matter is much the same

(4) Paul may have used the term “Galatia” in its original, “historical” sense

*to describe the region north of Pisidian Antioch

*a region populated by an ethnic group known as the Galatians

(b) Arguments for the A.D. 60-61 date

(1) Paul may have written the letter during his Roman imprisonment

*though he makes no mention of being in prison

(2) Paul expresses frustration with the Jerusalem church leaders

*which would be understandable if he had been arrested in Jerusalem

(c) Arguments for the A.D. 48-49 date (The South Galatia View)

(1) Paul often uses provincial names (names given by the Romans to their provinces) for territorial identification

*the southern cities of Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, were part of the province of “Galatia”

(2) Paul had visited South Galatia—the cities of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe—on his First Missionary Journey and planted churches there

*so Paul would be well known to his readers

(3) Paul had traveled with Barnabas on his First Missionary Journey

*so Barnabas would be well known to his readers

(d) Reconstruction based on the A.D. 48-49 date

(1) Paul (Saul) and Barnabas teach in Antioch in Syria (11:25-26)

(2) Paul (Saul) and Barnabas carry a love offering from Antioch to Jerusalem to help poor Jewish believers there (11:29-30)

(3) Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark set out from Antioch in Syria on their First Missionary Journey (Acts 13:3)

(4) Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark minister in Cyprus (Acts 13:4-12)

(5) Paul and Barnabas minister at Perga in the province of Pamphylia (Acts 13: 13)

(6) Paul and Barnabas journey on to the province of Galatia, ministering in the South Galatian cities of:

*Pisidian Antioch (13:14-52)

*Iconium (14:1-7)

*Lystra (14:8-19)

*Derbe (14:20-21)

(a) They see lots of converts

(b) They face lots of opposition

*instigated by Jews, who win over the Gentile mobs

- (c) Paul was even “stoned” at Lystra
“They stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. But while the disciples stood around him, he got up and entered the city” (14:19-20)
- (7) Paul and Barnabas return through these cities, teaching, encouraging, and appointing pastors (14:21-23)
- (8) Paul and Barnabas return to their home church at Antioch in Syria, and stay there for a “long time” (14:26-28)
- (9) Judaizers (most likely from Judea) travel to South Galatia, attacking Paul, and threatening the new churches (Gal 1-6)
- (10) Paul writes a letter to the South Galatian churches, attacking the Judaizers and their message (Gal 1-6)
- (11) Judaizers from Judea travel to Antioch in Syria, demanding circumcision of the Gentile believers (Acts 15:1-2)
- (12) Paul and Barnabas resist the Judaizers and head off to Jerusalem for the “Jerusalem Council” (15:2)

Galatians—The Date, Place, Purpose, Structure

I. The Date

- Most probable date—*A.D. 48-49*
- After Paul’s First Missionary Journey
- Before the Jerusalem Council
- “If Galatians were not written until after Paul toured the Galatic territory on his second or third journey, and consequently long after the council of Jerusalem, it is difficult to explain why he made no appeal to the decision of that council in settling the controversy of law versus grace” (Tenney, *New Testament Survey*, 267)

II. The Place

- Written from *Antioch in Syria*
- Written to *the churches of South Galatia*

III. The Purpose

- Paul *defends the gospel of grace*
 - (1) *Against legalists*
 - *those who preach the message of “grace plus law”
 - The Judaizers—who sought to force Gentile Christians to submit to circumcision and the Jewish way of life
 - (2) *Against antinomians*
 - *those who preach the message that “grace without law justifies lawlessness”
 - The Libertinists—who taught that freedom from law gives license to sin

IV. The Structure

- Paul’s book is built around the *gospel of grace*
- Paul identifies the perversions of the true gospel
- Paul attacks the perversions of the true gospel
- The book is fairly easy to outline
 - (1) The gospel of grace—perverted by Judaizers (1:6-9)
 - (2) The gospel of grace—defended against Judaizers (1:11-5:12)
 - (3) The gospel of grace—perverted by Libertinists (5:13-15)
 - (4) The gospel of grace—defended against Libertinists (5:25-6:10)
- Most of the book is focused on the Judaizers
- Legalism has always been the greatest enemy of the church*
 - (1) The Legalist—develops rules to live by
 - (2) The Legalist—is unable to distinguish his rules from scripture

- (3) The Legalist—seeks to satisfy God—at least partially—by keeping rules
- (4) The Legalist—communicates his rules to others
- (5) The Legalist—mandates (enforces) his rules for others
- (6) The Legalist—tries to enforce his rules on others
- (7) The Legalist—judges others for not keeping his rules
- (8) The Legalist—attacks others who do not keep his rules

Galatians—The Problems

I. Three Years Later (Gal 1:18)

- The phrase, “three years later” could carry the idea of “in the third year”
- “In the New Testament era an inclusive method of reckoning periods of time was often used. By this method any portion of a given year could be counted a whole year” (Timothy George, *Galatians*, 136)
- This is Paul’s first visit to Jerusalem as a believer (A.D. 35)
 - *recorded in Acts 9:26-30
- It took place 2 to 3 years after his salvation experience
- Paul spent much of this 2 to 3 year period in Arabia (A.D. 33-35)
 - (1) Reflecting on scripture
 - (2) Meditating on his new-found faith
 - (3) Being taught by Jesus

II. An Interval of Fourteen Years (Gal 2:1)

- The 14 years could be counted from
 - (1) Paul’s conversion (A.D. 33)
 - (2) Paul’s first visit (A.D. 35-36)
- Since a NT year could include any part of a year, the time interval could be 12 to 14 actual years
- Most likely, Paul is still referring to his conversion experience (A.D. 33)
- Paul is referring to his second visit as a believer—which took place 12 to 14 years after his conversion
 - (1) The “famine visit” (Acts 11:29-30)
 - (2) Dated at about A.D. 45-46

III. Four Hundred and Thirty Years Later (Gal 3:17)

- The number 430 can be confusing
- Abraham first received the patriarchal promise in 2091 B. C.
 - *at 75 years of age
 - *645 years before the Law of Moses (in 1446 B. C.)
- But Abraham received the promise several times
- And Abraham’s sons (Isaac and Jacob) received the promise as well
- “Essentially these later covenant renewals were identical with the original pronouncements in Genesis 12” (Gleason Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*, 403)
- The last confirmation—as Jacob entered Egypt—took place in 1876 B.C.
- This was exactly 430 years before the Exodus and Mount Sinai
- “Paul may well have based his figures on the last confirmation of

the promise, recorded in Genesis 46:2-4. If so, Paul's figures are exact, for it is 430 years from 1876 to 1446" (Creason, *Lessons from the Early Church*, 220)

IV. Born of a Woman (Gal 4:4)

- Jesus is fully God and fully Man
- “Born of a woman” teaches Jesus’ full humanity
- It also intimates Jesus’ Virgin Birth, taught elsewhere in scripture

V. Paul’s Bodily Illness (4:13-15)

- Scholars debate what kind of bodily illness was troubling Paul as he preached to the Galatians, on his First Missionary Journey
- The phrase in 4:15 may be instructive
“if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me”
- The phrase in 6:1 may be instructive as well
“See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand”
- Perhaps Paul was suffering from a painful and disfiguring eye disease
- This may have been Paul’s “thorn in the flesh” as well (2 Cor 12:7)

Galatians—The Message

- Legalists are everywhere
- People who try to enforce their ways on others
 - (1) They come into our churches
 - (2) They claim to have special insights and understandings
 - (3) They gain a following
 - (4) They take control
 - (5) They destroy
- They take control—because good people
 - (1) Let them have their way
 - (2) Refuse to take a stand
- They try to force you to use their translation of Scripture
- They try to force you to sing their kinds of songs
- They try to force you to educate your children the way they educate their children
- They demand that you get rebaptized, because your immersion was not as good as theirs
- They try to control your diet—what you can eat, what you can't eat
- They talk about “keeping the Sabbath”
- They tell you what you can do, and what you can't do, on Sunday
- The Judaizers were Jewish “believers,” who tried to force Gentile believers to adopt Jewish laws and traditions
- They taught that Gentiles must become Jews, if they are to be acceptable to God
- They seemed to follow Paul everywhere
 - (1) Confusing believers
 - (2) Upsetting churches
- They implied that Paul was right, so far as he went
- But Paul's gospel was incomplete
 - (1) Grace was important
 - (2) Faith was important
 - (3) But lawkeeping was essential too
- Paul knew what was at stake
 - *salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone
- So he fought back in “warlike” tones (Tenney, 269)

I. The Gospel of Grace—Perverted (1:6-9)

- The Galatians were in danger of “deserting” God
- They were listening to false teachers who preached a perverted gospel

- Anyone—man or angel—who preached a gospel, contrary to what Paul had preached, was “to be accursed”
- “Accursed” is the strongest possible word
- It depicts God’s eternal judgment
- We could translate it—“Let him be condemned to hell”
- Paul’s implications are clear
- Paul’s warnings are timeless
- We better preach salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone
- We better not add anything to the gospel
- We better not preach our traditions as if they are gospel
- If we pervert the gospel, we stand worthy of eternal judgment

II. The Gospel of Grace—Defended (1:11-5:12)

A. From Personal Experience (1:11-2:21)

- Paul was under personal attack
- His enemies implied that
 - (1) Paul had a faulty understanding of the gospel
 - (2) Because he—unlike the other apostles—had not followed Christ during his earthly ministry
- Paul sets the record straight
 - (1) *Paul defends his gospel (1:11-12)*
 - Paul’s gospel was as good as any of the apostles
 - He had not received his gospel message from men, but directly from Jesus Christ
 - (2) *Paul defends his gospel by describing his call (1:11-15)*
 - Paul’s call was as good as any of the apostles
 - He had been a strict Pharisee
 - He had been a successful Pharisee—advancing beyond many of his contemporaries
 - He had been “zealous” for the Jewish “traditions”
 - But God had chosen him as an apostle—from his “mother’s womb”
 - And God had given him a special task—to preach Jesus to the Gentiles
 - (3) *Paul defends his gospel by describing his training (1:16-24)*
 - Paul’s training was as good as any of the apostles
 - Following his baptism in Damascus, Paul spent three years in the Arabian desert

-There he communed with Christ, and gained his gospel message

-Paul then traveled to Jerusalem

(1) Spent 15 days

(2) Met Peter and James

(3) Headed off for Syria and Cilicia

-Paul was in no way answerable to the other apostles

-Paul was in no way inferior to the other apostles

(1) He was taught by Jesus, not by the apostles

(2) He received his message from Jesus, not from the apostles

(4) Paul defends his gospel, by describing the other apostle's response to his message (2:1-10)

-Paul had faced Judaizers before

-Some had tried to sneak into the church at Antioch to enslave the Gentile believers to Jewish laws and traditions (2:4)

-Paul and Barnabas had resisted these teachers

-Paul and Barnabas had journeyed to Jerusalem

(1) Shared their message with the apostles

(2) Received full acceptance from the apostles

-The other apostles had not demanded that Titus, a Gentile be circumcised

-The other apostles had not added anything to Paul's message

-The other apostles had recognized Paul's call to the Gentiles

*the "uncircumcised" Gentiles (v. 7)

-The other apostles had given the "right hand of fellowship"

-Some have concluded that this was the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15)

-Most likely, this was another trip (Acts 11:30) (the "famine trip")

-Where Paul and Barnabas brought a special offering to the Jewish believers

-The apostles supported Paul's ministry

-The apostles supported Paul's message

-But, at this time, they did not issue the "decree" to be carried to the Gentile churches

(5) Paul defends his gospel, by describing his rebuke of one of the other apostles (2:11-21)

- Peter had come to Antioch
- He had eaten freely with the Gentile believers
- He—and Barnabas—had become intimidated by some Jerusalem Jews, sent by the Apostle James (the Lord’s brother)
- He—and Barnabas—had withdrawn from their Gentile brothers
- Paul had condemned Peter
 - (1) Personally
 - (2) Publicly
 - (3) For all involved to see
- By refusing table fellowship
 - (1) Peter was insulting Gentile brothers
 - (2) Peter was supporting the Judaizers’ message
- Peter accepted Paul’s rebuke—proving that he accepted Paul’s
 - (1) authority
 - (2) message
- What can we learn from this incident
 - (1) Even great men can make mistakes
 - (2) Even great men can give way to peer pressure
 - (3) Great men are willing to listen to rebuke
 - (4) Great men are willing to admit their mistakes

B. From Theological Argument (3:1-4:31)

-Paul defends his gospel—from theological argument (3:1-4:31)

(1) The Galatians had received the Holy Spirit through faith (3:1-5)

-Not through circumcision, and other works of the Law

(2) Abraham had been justified (declared righteous) by faith (3:7-9)

-Not through circumcision, and other works of the Law

(3) The true descendants of Abraham, Jew and Gentile, are justified (declared righteous) by faith (3:7-9)

-Not through circumcision, and other works of the Law

(4) Those who claim to keep the Law cannot keep the whole Law (3:10)

(5) Those who claim to keep the Law are cursed by the Law, because they cannot keep it all (3:10-12)

(6) The Old Testament believers who tried to keep the Law had to admit their inability, and look to God in saving faith (3:11)

(7) Only Messiah could keep the Law, so only Jesus can redeem believing Jews and Gentiles from the curse of the Law (3:13-14)

(8) The Law was not given to bring salvation (3:21)

(9) The Law was given to show man his sinful condition (3:22)

“The law accomplished this purpose by making people keenly aware of their inability to make themselves righteous” (Gundry, 358)

(10) The Law was given to show man his need of Jesus Christ (3:22-29)

-The word “tutor” (*paidagogos*) describes a trusted slave who took care of the slave master’s children

(1) Training

(2) Disciplining

(3) Counseling

(4) Walking them to and from school

-The tutor was essential, but temporary

-It prepared the Jews for Jesus’ coming

(11) The Law is no longer needed now that Jesus Christ has come (3:25)

-Those who put themselves under the Law are reverting to an inferior status

-They are putting themselves under a “tutor”

-They are behaving like children, not adults

(12) All earthly distinctions, treasured by those who keep the Law, are abolished now that Jesus Christ has come (3:26-29)

(13) Christ has done away with the Law, so that those who believe in him may be called “sons,” not “slaves” (4:1-7)

(14) Any people who would put themselves under the Law are choosing “bondage” to “freedom” (4:8-11)

-The Galatians may have escaped slavery to pagan gods and pagan behaviors

-But slavery to Law observance—with its “days, months, seasons, and years” was just as bad

-Jesus Christ alone is sufficient for salvation

-We dare not add anything to Jesus, to gain God’s favor

-We must evaluate everything we do, based on

(1) Our Bibles—“Is it taught in Scripture?”

(2) Our Motives—“Are we seeking to earn God’s acceptance?”

-We find God’s acceptance—through Jesus alone

-We dare not seek God’s acceptance anywhere else

(15) Any who see Lawkeeping as essential to salvation are outside the Christian faith (4:11)

-Paul feared that he had wasted his time with the Galatians

-He feared that perhaps—though they had looked good to him at the time, their faith had not been genuine

“Paul did not claim to possess infallible knowledge of the spiritual status of his readers. He therefore had to entertain the possibility that at least some of them may have feigned repentance, received water baptism, and even ‘tasted the goodness of the word of God and of the powers of the age to come’ (Heb 6:5), without being savingly converted” (Timothy George, *Galatians*, 316).

(16) Any who would listen to Legalists, who cannot see that the Legalists are using them for personal gain, are in grave danger spiritually (4:12-20)

-They may be flattered by the attention they receive

-They may be flattered by all the praise they receive

-But they are ignorant of the false teachers’ true motives

(17) Any who would listen to Legalists, and see Lawkeeping as essential to salvation do not understand the purposes of God, past and present (4:21-31)

-They may claim superior knowledge

-They may seem to be “super religious”

- But they are ignorant of God’s ways and God’s demands
- There is now—and has always been—but one way of salvation
 - (1) In Old Testament times
 - (2) In New Testament times
- Salvation has always been by grace through faith
 - (1) Many OT “believers” did not understand that
 - (2) Many NT “believers” do not understand that
- People tend to measure their spiritual standing by their works
- They fail to understand that
 - (1) Nobody is good enough to please God
 - (2) No amount of religious effort is sufficient to please God
- Faith salvation and works salvation are not compatible—in any way
 - (1) We do not work—to gain God’s acceptance
 - *Leads to spiritual pride
 - (2) We do not work—to gain man’s acceptance
 - *Leads to spiritual abuse
 - (3) We work—to demonstrate our love for Jesus

C. The Immediate Application (5:1-13)

- Controllers despise freedom
- There’s lots of people, lots of groups that want to take your freedom away
 - (1) To enslave you to man-made rules
 - (2) To confuse you as to what is scripture and what is tradition
- They will enslave you—if they can
- Paul says, “Don’t let them!”
- “Christ has liberated us into freedom. Therefore stand firm and don’t submit again to a yoke of slavery” (5:1, HCSB)
- The Judaizers demanded circumcision

-They said that Gentiles had to keep the Law of Moses, to be fully accepted by God

-Some of the Gentile “believers” were paying attention to their words

-Paul warns them

“If you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you” (5:2)

“You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law” (5:4)

“You have fallen from grace” (5:4)

-Paul is not implying that you can lose your salvation

-He is implying that you cannot follow the

- (1) grace route of salvation and the
- (2) law route of salvation at the same time

-He is implying that those who follow the law route of salvation, and trust their works to lead them to heaven, are outside the faith

- (1) They may have their works
- (2) They may feel good about their works
- (3) They do not have Jesus Christ
- (4) They do not have salvation through faith in Jesus Christ

-Paul’s words are applicable—collectively and individually

- (1) The religious group that adds works to faith—is outside the faith
- (2) The church that adds work to faith—is outside the faith
- (3) The teacher who adds work to faith—is outside the faith
- (4) The “believer” who adds work to faith—is outside the faith

-You can’t be saved by works and faith—at the same time

-If you are seeking to work your way into heaven—you have

- (1) Cut yourself off from Jesus Christ
- (2) Fallen away from the gospel of grace

-If you are seeking to work your way into heaven—you have never understood the gospel message

-If you are listening to those who would have you work your way into heaven—you have never understood the gospel message

-Paul encourages them

“I have confidence in you in the Lord that you will adopt no other view” (5:10)

-The Galatians are being “seduced” by a false message

-But Paul is convinced that they—as a whole—will not fall prey to that message

- (1) They will hold to the truth
- (2) They will reject and condemn the error
- Paul's confidence is "in the Lord"
- The truly saved would persevere in the faith
 - (1) Because Jesus dwelt within them
 - (2) Because Jesus would teach them
 - (3) Because Jesus would enable them to distinguish truth from error
- Paul condemns the false teachers*
- "I wish that those who are troubling you would even mutilate themselves" (5:12—NASB)
- "I wish those who are disturbing you might also get themselves castrated" (5:12—HCSB)
- A Jew could not use stronger words
- We must remember that Paul
 - (1) Is attacking false teachers
 - (2) Is seeking to protect the churches of Jesus Christ
- These are not Paul's enemies
 - *but Christ's enemies
- We must remember that Paul
 - (1) Is writing God's word
 - (2) Is sharing God's message
- Jesus condemned legalists—in strongest terms
- We must condemn legalists—in strongest terms
- We dare not let legalists—enslave our churches

III. The Gospel of Grace—Perverted (5:13-15)

- You can't preach God's grace without being accused of "Easy-believism"
- Some will say that you're preaching *antinomianism* or *libertinism*
- Some will say that you are "giving people a license to sin" (Gundry, 359)
- Some will pervert your message and "turn freedom into an opportunity for the flesh" (Gal 5:13)
- People who attend movies, might be tempted to watch the wrong kinds of movies
 - *but do you condemn movies altogether?
- People who have TV's in their homes, might be tempted to watch the wrong kinds of programs
 - *but do you condemn TV's altogether?

-People who attend “secular” colleges might be tempted to adopt a secular mindset

*but do you condemn “secular” education altogether?

-Churches that allow some “contemporary” music might be tempted to extremes

*but do you condemn “contemporary” music altogether?

-We dare not enslave ourselves to man-made rules and traditions, just to protect ourselves from sin

-We dare not try to enslave others to man-made rules and traditions, just to protect ourselves from sin

-We dare not judge others based on man-made rules and traditions, just to prove to ourselves that we are superior to them

-Biblical “freedom” cannot function without biblical “love” (5:13-15)

(1) Service for Jesus must be motivated by love

(2) Service for other believers must be motivated by love

-But we dare not substitute law for love

-Because law never leads us to Jesus

IV. The Gospel of Grace—Defended (5:16-5:24)

-God really does care how we behave

-God really does tell us how we should behave

-However, rules don’t produce pure lives

(1) Only love for Jesus produces pure lives (5:12-15)

(2) Only the Holy Spirit’s power produces pure lives (5:16-5:24)

“walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh” (5:16)

-We all know that there’s a war inside us

(1) The “flesh” is our old nature

*fallen

*sin-cursed

*self-willed

(2) The “Spirit” is the Holy Spirit

*who saves us

*who regenerates us (gives us new life)

*who indwells

-The “flesh” and the “Spirit” have different “desires” for us

-The “flesh” and the “Spirit” produce different results in us

-We are totally dependent on the Holy Spirit for victory over the flesh

-A one-time commitment (or dedication) is not enough

-We must “walk in the Spirit” (v. 16)

- (1) Moment by moment
- (2) Day by day
- We must “yield” to the Spirit (v. 18)
 - (1) Moment by moment
 - (2) Day by day
- We do not have to surrender to sin
 - “Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (5:24)
 - Crucifixion was a long, agonizing death
 - Death to our passions and desires may be long and agonizing too
 - But we can experience increasing victory through the Holy Spirit’s
 - *presence
 - *power
- This verse tells us that the struggle will continue
 - (1) Sanctification begins at salvation
 - (2) Sanctification continues throughout life
- “This verse tells us that there is no shortcut to spiritual victory in the life of the Christian. No second blessing, or rededication, or spiritual quick fix” (George, 405)
- This verse tells us that law (with its works, rules, regulations) is powerless to give the victory
- Only Jesus, through the Holy Spirit can give the victory

V. From Immediate Application (5:25-6:10)

- The Spirit will change a believer’s life
- The Spirit will change a Christian community’s life
- Removing
 - (1) Pride
 - (2) Boasting
- Producing
 - (1) Humility
 - (2) Service
- Humble believers will restore fallen brothers and sisters (6:1)
 - “If anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of gentleness, looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted”
- Humble believers will support godly teachers and preachers (6:6)
 - “The one who is taught in the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him”
- Humble believers will continue on, sure that God will bring results (6:9)

“Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap, if we do not grow weary”

I Thessalonians—The Writer

I. Identity

- The Apostle Paul
- Strong internal evidence (in the book)
- Sufficient external evidence (from the early church)
- Few attacks from liberal scholars
- “It has been comparatively free from attack and is today accepted by practically all New Testament scholars” (Thiessen, p. 189)

II. Setting

A. Recipients

- (1) *The church at Thessalonica*
- (2) *Located in a key Macedonian city (see Gundry, p. 350, p. 317)*
 - *the capital city of Macedonia
 - *the largest and most important city in Macedonia
 - *on the *Via Egnatia*, the major Roman highway East-West
 - *a fine harbor
 - *a trade center
 - *a communications center
 - *a great place for a church
- (3) *Planted on Paul’s Second Missionary Journey*
 - *in Acts 17

B. Circumstances

- (1) *Paul’s brief ministry in Thessalonica*
 - *only 3 Sabbath days
 - *a major riot over Paul and his ministry
 - *forced to leave the city
 - *did not run away, as his enemies charged
 - *sent away by the believers
 - *to protect Paul and keep the peace
- (2) *The many dangers the Thessalonians faced*
 - *immature believers
 - *severe persecutions
 - *false teachers who were attacking Paul’s character
 - *doctrinal errors concerning the Second Coming
 - questions about believers who died before Christ returned

“But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve

as do the rest who have no hope” (1 Thess 4:13)

-a desire to know when Christ would return

*lifestyle errors by those who were focused on the
Second Coming

-a refusal to work while waiting for
the Second Coming

“attend to your own business and work with your
hands” (1 Thess 4:11)

(3) *Paul’s great concern for their spiritual warfare*

*forced to leave them so quickly

*fearful of what would happen to them

*sent Timothy to find out what had happened to them

“When I could endure it no longer, I also sent to find out
about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted
you, and our labor would be in vain” (1 Thess 3:5)

(4) *Paul’s great relief at their faithfulness*

*overjoyed at Timothy’s good report

“we were comforted about you through your faith” (3:7)

“we really live, if you stand firm in the Lord” (3:8)

(5) *Paul’s great desire to establish them in the faith*

I Thessalonians—The Date, Place, Purpose

I. The Date

- Written in A.D. 50
- One of Paul's earliest epistles

II. The Place

- Written from Corinth
- On Paul's Second Missionary Journey
- Not many weeks after he ministered at Thessalonica

III. The Purpose

- Written at a difficult time in Paul's life
- He had been forcefully removed from three preaching points
 - (1) Philippi
 - (2) Thessalonica
 - (3) Beroea
- He had been mocked and ridiculed in Athens
- He had arrived in Corinth, feeling lonely and discouraged
- Paul received the good news from Timothy and set down to write this letter
 - (1) He expresses his joy
 - (2) He defends his ministry
 - (3) He gives instruction about Jesus Second Coming
 - *seeking to correct errors and misconceptions
- Paul gives special attention to the Rapture of the Church
 - *the "catching up" of Christians in the air
- Paul assures troubled believers that their departed friends and loved ones
 - *will not miss out
 - *will be resurrected when Jesus comes
 - *will join living believers in the air

1 Thessalonians—The Message

-Paul shares the following truths:

I. A Secure Salvation (1 Thess 1:1-10)

(1) *Assurance of salvation is possible*

(2) *Assurance of salvation is conditional*

*we must hear the gospel (1:5)

*we must receive the gospel (1:6)

*we must live the gospel (1:9-10)

“How you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God”
(1:9)

II. A Faithful Minister (1 Thess 2:1-14)

-Paul defends his ministry against attack

-He gives a clear description of a “faithful minister”

(1) *Pure motives (2:1-6)*

*not seeking material gain (2:3, 5)

*not seeking human acceptance (2:4)

*not seeking earthly praise (2:6)

(2) *Pure actions (2:7-12)*

*gentle, not harsh (2:7)

*open, not closed (2:8)

(1) offering the message

(2) offering ourselves as well

“We were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel
of God but also our own lives”

*giving, not getting (2:9)

*leading, not pushing (2:10-12)

(3) *Pure Message (2:13-14)*

*not substituting human opinion (2:13)

*proclaiming God’s Word (2:13-14)

III. A Loving Minister (1 Thess 2:17-3:3)

-Paul loved the Thessalonians deeply

-He gives key insights into a minister’s heart

(1) *Longing for his people (2:17-20)*

(2) *Sacrificing for his people (3:1-2)*

*attentive to their needs (3:1)

*putting their needs above his own (3:1-2)

(3) *Preparing his people (3:3-5)*

*alert to dangers (3:3-5)

*warning against dangers (3:4)

(4) *Encouraging his people (3:6-8)*

*praising them (v. 6)

*expressing affection for them (vv. 7-8)

(5) Interceding for his people (3:9-13)

IV. A Secure Future (4:1-18)

-Believers have much to look forward to

*in this life

*in the life to come

(1) God's Demands (4:1-12)

*God's promises come with God's demands

*sexual purity (4:3-8)

“For this is the will of God, your sanctification, that is, that you should abstain from sexual immorality” (4:3)

*brotherly love (4:9)

*workplace diligence (4:11-12)

“Attend to your own business and work with your own hands” (4:11)

(2) God's Promises (4:13-18)

*hope for the dead and dying

*the “rapture” of the church

*all believers with Christ forever

“Therefore comfort one another with these words” (4:18)

V. A Watchful Believer (1 Thess 5:1-11)

-Believers must be “on the lookout” for Christ's return

(1) The Day of the Lord is coming (5:1-2)

*the event is certain (5:1-2)

*the timing is uncertain (5:2)

(2) Unbelievers will be judged in that Day (5:3)

*will feel secure

*will be destroyed

*will not escape

(3) Believers will be spared in that Day (5:4-11)

*alert to God's plan (5:4-8)

“Let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober” (5:6)

*equipped with God's armor (5:8)

*comforted with God's promise (5:9-11)

“For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ” (5:9)

2 Thessalonians

I. The Writer

-The Apostle Paul

II. The Setting

A. Recipients

-The church at Thessalonica

B. Circumstances

-Great confusion in Thessalonica, over the coming of the Day of the Lord

-The church may have received a “forged” letter, claiming to be from Paul

-They were certainly listening to false prophets in their midst

-Some of the believers felt the Rapture had already come, and they had missed it

-Some of the believers felt that they were living in the Tribulation Period

-Paul comforts them and tells them what to look for

III. The Date

-A.D. 50-51

-A short time after 1 Thessalonians

IV. The Place

-From Corinth

-On Paul’s Second Missionary Journey

V. The Purpose

-To comfort the believers in their persecutions

-To instruct the believers on the “Day of the Lord”

VI. The Message

(1) *An Appeal for Perseverance (ch 1)*

*suffering matures believers

*suffering brings God’s rewards

*persecutors will be punished

(2) *A Request for Calmness (2:1-12)*

**believers must ignore fanciful speculations*

*that the Jesus had already returned

“our gathering together to him” (2:1)

*that the Day of the Lord had come

**believers must understand God’s timing*

*the “apostasy” must come before the Day of the Lord

*the “man of sin” (Antichrist) must appear before the Day of the Lord

*the “restrainer” must be “taken out of the way” before the Day of the Lord

**believers must trust God’s timing*

*Jesus will return

*Antichrist will be destroyed

(3) A *Command for Diligence (2:13-3:18)*

*diligence in prayer

*diligence in work

*believers dare not let their fascination with prophecy keep them from work

*believers must separate from church members who refused to work

*any believers who refused to work were to go unfed

“if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat” (3:10)

VII. The Problems

(1) *Identifying the Restrainer*

“For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way” (2:7)

*scholars have long debated the identity of the “restrainer”

*someone, or something is holding back the spread of corruption

*someone, or something is preventing the arrival of Antichrist

*interpretations include

*the Holy Spirit

*the Church

*government

*the government seems to be the best interpretation

(1) View of the early church

(2) Best fit in relation to the coming persecutions of the church under Nero

(3) Best fit under the persecution over the next 1900 years

(4) Best fit in relation to the present persecutions afflicting the church

1 Corinthians—The Writer

I. Identity

-The author—the Apostle Paul

- (1) Identifies himself as Paul (1:1; 16:21)
- (2) Calls himself an apostle (1:1; 4:9; 9:1; 15:8)
- (3) Claims to have seen the risen Lord (9:1; 15:8)
- (4) Views Timothy as his spiritual son (4:17)
- (5) Takes credit for founding the church at Corinth (3:10)

-The early church fathers—accepted Paul as author

-Clement of Rome

*around A. D. 95

*only 30 years after Paul's death

*in writing to the church at Corinth

“Take up the letter of Paul the blessed apostle. . . . He gave you spiritual direction regarding himself, Cephas, and Apollos, for even then you were dividing yourselves into parties”

-Liberal scholars—accept Paul as author

-Alfred Plummer, in the *International Critical Commentary*

“Both the external and internal evidence for the Pauline authorship are so strong that those who attempt to show that the Apostle was not the writer succeed chiefly in proving their own incompetence as critics” (*Acts*, [London: T & T Clark, 1911], xvi).

II. Setting

A. Recipients

(1) *Location of Corinth (p. 350)*

-Corinth had a strategic location

-On a narrow piece of land

(1) Called an isthmus

(2) About 4 ½ miles wide

(a) Connecting southern Greece with northern Greece

(b) Forming a land bridge between the Aegean and Adriatic seas

-Corinth was a leading trade center

(1) Land trade—passed from northern to southern Greece

(2) Sea trade—passed from the Aegean to the Adriatic

-It was extremely dangerous to sail around the south end of Achaia

- Larger ships would empty their cargo on one side
 - *and have it carried to another ship on the other side
- Smaller ships could be transported by land
 - *over a wooden tramway (or rollers) from one side to the other
- Nero began a canal—a few years after Paul arrived
- But it wasn't completed until 1893

(2) *History of Corinth*

- At one time (350-250 B.C.) one of the most important cities in Greece
- Destroyed by Rome in 146 B.C.
- Refounded in 46 B.C. by Julius Caesar
- The first colonists were poor
 - *freed slaves
 - *military veterans
- But the city prospered quickly
- By Paul's day
 - (1) Capital of the Roman province of Achaia
 - (2) Home to 100,000 to 700,000 people

(3) *Characteristics of Corinth*

- Corinth has been described as
 - (1) "The New York, Los Angeles, and Las Vegas of the ancient world" (Fee)
 - (2) "The city of vice par excellence in the Roman world" (ISBE)
 - (a) *A Wealthy City*
 - The trading center of the ancient world
 - The connector between Rome and the East
 - (b) *A Sporting City*
 - The fun and games center of the ancient world
 - Home to the *Isthmian games* (second only to the Olympics)
 - (c) *A Wicked City*
 - The worship of *Aphrodite*, the goddess of love
 - With 1,000 temple prostitutes

-The phrase—"to act a Corinthian"—
a synonym for immorality

"If ever a Corinthian was shown upon the stage in a Greek play he
was shown drunk" (Aelian)

(d) *A Cosmopolitan City*

-An excellent place for Paul to preach
the gospel

-Populated by Romans, Greeks, Jews

-With visitors from all parts of the
world

(e) *A Greek City*

-With all the strengths and
weaknesses of Greek culture

B. Circumstance

(1) Paul's initial ministry at Corinth

-Recorded in Acts 18

-Paul came to Corinth

(1) About A.D. 50

(2) On his Second Missionary Journey

-Paul arrived greatly discouraged

*after a frustrating ministry in Athens

(1) *He met new friends—Priscilla and Aquilla*

*the same occupation—leather workers

*the same heritage—Jewish

*the same Savior—Jesus

(2) *He preached in the synagogue*

*some believed

*most rejected

*began to preach next door, in a new
believer's house

(3) *He established a church*

(4) *He received a vision*

*from Jesus

*promising safety

(5) *He stayed 18 months*

*his second longest stay in any church

(6) *He gained an important legal victory*

-Two types of religions in the Roman Empire

(1) Legal religions—Could be practiced freely

(2) Illegal religions—Were subject to government persecution

-Judaism was a legal religion

-The status of Christianity was not yet determined

-The Jews challenged Paul's legal standing

(1) Dragged him before the Roman governor Gallio

(2) Accused him of preaching contrary to Roman law

-Gallio refused to hear the case—considering it

(1) A matter of Jewish interpretation

(2) Not subject to Roman law

-Gallio set a valuable legal precedent

(1) Christianity—but a sect of Judaism

(2) Christianity—a legal religion, protected by Roman law

-Paul, and the other missionaries, could continue traveling

-By the time Roman persecution broke out (in the early 60s)

(1) The church was well established

(2) Nothing could stop it

(2) Paul's ministry after departing from Corinth

-Recorded in Acts 18-19

(1) *He sailed with Priscilla and Aquilla to Ephesus*

(2) *He traveled to Jerusalem and Antioch (Syria)*

(3) *He headed out on his Third Missionary Journey*

(4) *He arrived in Ephesus*

*where he spent 3 years

*where he wrote the book of 1 Corinthians

(3) Paul's communications with Corinth

-While at Ephesus, Paul received lots of communication from Corinth

-The cities were close together

*about 200 miles across the Aegean Sea

(1) *From Apollos*

(2) *From the people of Chloe*

(3) *From an official church contingent*

*with a gift

*asking questions

(4) A previous letter

-1 Corinthians is probably not Paul's first letter to Corinth

-He wrote another letter

*now lost

*that dealt with the matter of immorality (1 Cor 5:9)

-This presents no problem for Bible-believing Christians

-Paul wrote many letters—letters that we do not have

-God preserved the ones—that he wanted us to have

1 Corinthians—Problems

I. Say I, Not the Lord (1 Cor 7:12, 40)

“But to the rest I say, not the Lord” (7:12)

“I have no command of the Lord, but I give an opinion” (7:25)

“But in my opinion. . . . And I think that I also have the Spirit of God” (7:40)

-Gleason Archer asks an important question,

“How can 1 Corinthians 7:12 and 7:40 be reconciled with the inerrant authority of Paul’s Epistles?” (*Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*, 397)

-Is Paul simply giving his opinion?

-If so, is his opinion of any more value than your opinion, or my opinion?

-Are we free to disagree with the Apostle Paul?

-If we are free to disagree with the Apostle Paul here, are we free to disagree with Paul elsewhere?

“Some have taken these verses to mean that Paul gave a personal opinion void of divine authority” (Fred Creason, *Lessons from the Early Church*, 150)

-Paul does not say he has no divine leading

-Paul does not say that he lacks divine authority

-Rather, Paul is dealing with a matter that Christ did not discuss during his earthly ministry

-Paul’s words have full authority as scripture, though he cannot “cite a recorded saying of Christ” (Archer, 397)

-In 7:10, Paul can quote Christ directly

-In 7:12, 25, Paul cannot quote Christ directly

“Paul’s indication that these instructions are his own rather than the Lord’s does not imply that they lack authority, but only that Jesus said nothing on these points” (Gundry, 380)

“Christ had given a clear mandate concerning the permanence of marriage for a believing couple (7:10; see Matt 19), but He had given no teaching concerning the departure of unsaved mates (7:12) nor the marriage of virgin daughters (7:25). Paul, under the guidance of God’s Spirit, now addressed these issues” (Creason, 150).

-The phrase, “I think that I have also the Spirit of God” (7:40) is an attack against Paul’s enemies at Corinth

-Apparently, they were attacking Paul’s teaching, claiming the Holy Spirit’s leading

-Paul says, in paraphrase,

“Wait a minute here! You think you’ve got the Spirit. You think

you're teaching is prompted by the Spirit. You better listen to me. If anybody has the Spirit, if anybody is illumined by the Spirit, then I am!"

II. A Look at Spiritual Gifts (1 Cor 12:1-31)

-Spiritual gifts are special "abilities," or "tools"

- (1) Given by the Holy Spirit
- (2) According to the Spirit's will
- (3) To enable us to serve Jesus
- (4) To benefit the church as a whole

-Spiritual gifts must be distinguished from talents

- (1) Talents (or natural abilities) can be used inside, or outside the church

*singing

*mechanics

*carpentry

- (2) Gifts (or spiritual abilities) are to be used within the church setting

-It seems that every believer has at least one spiritual gift

"But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills" (1 Cor 12:11)

"But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired" (1 Cor 12:18)

A. Source

-The Holy Spirit dispenses gifts

- (1) According to His will and purpose
- (2) Without regard for human merit

"just as He wills" (1 Cor 12:11)

"just as He desired" (1 Cor 12:18)

-No gift can be earned

-No gift is an evidence of spirituality

-The Corinthians—were spiritually gifted

-The Corinthians—were spiritually carnal

"So that you are not lacking in any gift" (1 Cor 1:7)

"And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ" (1 Cor 3:1)

-The modern emphasis on tongues—as an evidence of a second blessing—is unscriptural

-The modern division between "haves" and "have-nots" is unscriptural

-Those who pride themselves in their spiritual gifts are carnal—
just like the Corinthians

B. Purpose

- Spiritual gifts have a dual purpose
 - (1) To bring glory to Jesus Christ
 - (2) To build up Christ's church
- Spiritual gifts should never be used
 - (1) To profit the individual
 - (2) To bring glory to the individual

“for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry, to the building up of the body of Christ” (Eph 4:12)

C. Identification

- Several gifts lists in the New Testament
 - *Romans 12
 - *1 Corinthians 12
 - *Ephesians 4
- None complete
- Some overlap
- Likely none or all taken together are exhaustive
- Any gifting from the Holy Spirit that enters a person's life for the purpose of building of the church and bring glory to Christ is a spiritual gift

D. Discovery

- Believers may discover their gifts at various times in life
- Several tips for discovery
 - 1. Knowledge**
 - Know the gifts (scripturally)
 - 2. Prayer**
 - Seek God's direction
 - 3. Burden**
 - Evaluate your desires, inclinations
 - 4. Response**
 - Listen to what others say, sense about you
 - 5. Blessing**
 - Consider God's blessing on your efforts
 - 6. Service**
 - Get active, doing what God gives you to do
 - (1) Start where you are
 - (2) Do what you can
 - (3) Take every opportunity, small and big

- (4) Be faithful in “little things”
- (5) God will give you “greater things”

III. A Look at the Gift of “Tongues” (1 Cor 12-14)

- Some groups today would give the impression
 - (1) That tongues have always been a part of Christian worship
 - (2) That godly believers of all eras have spoken in tongues
- But history gives a much different story
- Montanus—and his followers claimed the gift of tongues in the 2nd century A. D.
- But we don’t hear about tongues again—for nearly 1500 years
 - (1) In the late 17th century—a group of Protestants—in the Cevennes region of southern France began to speak with tongues
 - (2) In the early 1700s—a group of Roman Catholics—called the Jansenists claimed the gift
 - (3) In the mid-1700s—the Shakers claimed the gift
 - *followers of Mother Ann Lee
 - *taught that sexual intercourse was sinful
 - *spoke with tongues while dancing and singing in a trancelike state
 - (4) In 1830—Edward Irving—with a little group of Irvingites (in London) claimed the gift
 - *but their prophecies failed to come to pass
 - *and their prophets confessed to falsifying their passage
 - (5) In 1901—the modern tongues movement began at Bethel Bible College in Topeka, Kansas
 - *when Agnes Ozman received—what she called—the baptism of the Holy Spirit
 - *and began to speak in tongues
- From that day onward—some groups have taught—that the baptism of the Holy Spirit
 - (1) Is a second blessing from God
 - (2) A blessing evidenced by speaking in tongues
- Those who possess the gift are baptized in the Spirit
- Those who lack the gift are not
- The implications are startling
 - (1) Only a handful of professing Christians—in all the centuries of the Christian Church—have claimed the gift of tongues

(2) So—only a handful of professing Christians—in all the centuries of the Christian Church—have been baptized in the Holy Spirit

(3) So—some modern-day groups—because they possess the gift of tongues, because they have been baptized in the Holy Spirit, are superior spiritually to the generations of believers who came before

-Several matters seem clear from a study of history and Scripture

(1) *God has used tongues very sparingly*

-So sparingly that Chrysostom—the great preacher who lived from 345-407 would write

“The whole place is very obscure; but that obscurity is produced by our ignorance of the facts referred to and by their cessation, being such as then used to occur but no longer take place.”

-So sparingly that Augustine—the great scholar who lived from 354-430 would write

“These were signs adapted to the time. For there behooved to be the betokening of the Holy Spirit in all tongues, to show that the Gospel of God was to run through all tongues over the whole earth. That thing was done for a betokening, and it passed away”

-So sparingly that Wesley, Whitefield, or Edwards—make no mention of tongues during the greatest revival in American History

*the Great Awakening (in the 18th century)

(2) *God has regulated tongues very carefully*

*far more carefully than the other spiritual gifts

(3) *Tongues are not the result of spirit baptism*

(4) *Most of what passes as tongues today is not the biblical gift of tongues*

-There are two views as to the nature of tongues

(1) Tongues is ecstatic speech, with little or no relation to real, human languages

(2) Tongues are actual, earthly languages, unknown by the persons who possess the gift

*you don't know Swahili—but you speak Swahili

*you don't know Russian—but you speak Russian

-There are several arguments for the human languages view

(1) *The Greek word “tongue” (glossa)*

*can describe the human instrument of speech

*most often refers to languages

(2) *The word “unknown,” supplied by the KJV translators*

*is absent from the Greek text

*should never have been placed in the English text

(3) *The context of Acts—the Day of Pentecost—demands human languages*

*the disciples speak 15 languages and dialects

*people from all over the world hear the gospel in their own language

-Linguists who’ve studied tongues in America say conclusively

(1) That the modern practice is not language

(2) That tongues speakers are repeating syllables

*similar to baby talk

*sha-sha, ba-ba, la-la, wa-wa

-Agnus Ozman claimed that she was speaking in foreign languages

-The early Pentecostals who followed here claimed to be speaking in foreign languages

-They were certain that the biblical gift was human languages

-They had no way of knowing whether or not they were speaking a language

-But the modern Charismatic movement makes no such claims

(1) They know what linguists have said

(2) They are content to practice what they call

(a) “Heavenly language”

(b) “Prayer language”

-What accounts for the modern practice of tongues, if the modern practice is not the biblical gift?

(1) *It could be Satanic deception but not likely*

(2) *More likely it could be learned behavior*

*the result of intense psychological pressure

*you are told that you must speak in tongues

*you want to feel special for speaking in tongues

*you are even taught how to speak in tongues

*so you speak in tongues

-Paul sets some clear guidelines for practicing the biblical gift

(1) Tongues are never demanded as an evidence of spirituality

“But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as he wills” (1 Cor 12:11)

(2) Those who lack the gift of tongues are never to be looked down on, as if they were spiritually inferior

“All do not have the gifts of healings do they? All do not speak with tongues do they?” (1 Cor 12:30)

(3) In a church setting, tongues are limited to men only (1 Cor 14:34)

*not in a ministry setting, but in a church worship setting

(4) In a church setting, tongues must never bring confusion (1 Cor 14:33)

*God does not bring chaos

*God does not bring church fights and splits

*Tongues speakers who destroy a church will be judged

-In summary, the church of Corinth was the most carnal of Paul's churches

-How strange that the church of Corinth seems to be the only New Testament church that focused on tongues

IV. Baptism for the Dead (1 Cor 15:29)

-Paul's questions in 1 Cor 15:29 seem puzzling

“What will those do who are baptized for the dead?”

“If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized for them?”

-It seems that some people in Corinth were allowing themselves to be baptized for friends who

(1) though converted

(2) had died before they were baptized

-Paul's mention of the practice does not mean that he approved of it
-He is simply illustrating the inconsistencies of the Corinthians actions

(1) baptizing for the dead

(2) while denying the bodily resurrection from the dead

-Gundry writes

“He is pointing out the inconsistency of those who undergo baptism for the very dead people whose future resurrection they deny” (384)

1 Corinthians—Message

I. Church Factions (1:10-17)

- Paul encourages church unity (1:10)
- He condemns “personality cults” (1:11-17)
 - *where church people polarize around men
- The Corinthians were divided into 4 groups
 - (1) The Paul group
 - (2) The Apollos group
 - (3) The Cephas group
 - (4) The Christ group
- Some leaders encourage people to worship them
- But Paul, Apollos, and Peter—were innocent
 - (1) They didn’t approve the personality cults
 - (2) They didn’t encourage the personality cults
 - (3) They wanted the personality cults to cease
- Jesus Christ is always primary (1:13)
- We dare not attach persons to self (1:14-17)
- Paul was careful to baptize very few converts
- He let others baptize them instead
- Paul wasn’t minimizing baptism
- He was minimizing the baptizer
- He didn’t want to “gain a personal following” (Gundry, 178)

II. Worldly Wisdom (1:18-2:16)

- The Corinthians were obsessed with human wisdom
- They were jealous of Athens
- They admired
 - (1) philosophers
 - (2) scholars
- They wanted to be known as philosophers and scholars too
- Paul condemns their focus on wisdom
- Bishop John Spong, a liberal Anglican, once wrote
 “The view of the cross as the sacrifice for the sins of the world is a barbarian idea based on primitive concepts of God and must be dismissed” (*12 Theses*)
- From the world’s perspective we preach a “foolish” gospel
 - (1) God in human flesh
 - (2) Savior of the world
 - (3) Dying on a cross
 - (4) Paying the penalty for our sins
- But God has a purpose for such a “foolish” gospel

- (1) To save men and women
- (2) To humble men and women
- (3) To show people—of all times and places—that all the glory belongs to Jesus Christ
- It's not the preaching that's foolish
- It's the gospel message that's foolish
- It just doesn't make sense to the unsaved world
 - (1) To the Jew—seeking a sign
 - (2) To the Greek—searching for wisdom
- Those who believe the gospel will always endure the stigma
- Celsus, a Roman scholar, and early enemy of the church, wrote (A.D. 175)

“Let no cultured person draw near, none wise, none sensible. . . ; but if any man is ignorant, if any is wanting in sense and culture, if any is a fool let him come boldly.”

“We see them in their houses, wool dressers, cobblers, and fullers, the most uneducated and vulgar persons. . . . Like a swarm of bats—or ants creeping out of their nests—or frogs holding a symposium round a swamp—or worms in conventicles in a corner of mud”
- What Celsus saw as the great shame of Christianity, Paul saw as its great glory
- God's message of salvation (1) exalts Christ and (2) humbles men
 - (1) We must admit that we're sinners
 - (2) We must admit that we need a Savior
 - (3) We must humble ourselves and reach out to Jesus

III. Ministers (3:1-4:21)

- The Corinthians were polarizing around men
 - (1) *They had a wrong view of Christ's ministers (3:5-15)*
 - Preachers are not celebrities
 - (1) But farmers in God's field (3:5-9)
 - (2) And builders in God's temple (3:10-15)
 - Preachers are fellow workers, all with a job to do
 - (1) We must remember that we are “servants” of God
 - (2) We must remember that we are dependent on God
 - (3) We must remember that we are accountable to God
 - (2) *They were destroying Christ's church (3:16-17)*

“Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the

Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are”

-The word “temple” describes the

- (1) Inner sanctuary
- (2) Holy of Holies
- (3) Place of God’s special presence

-Sometimes Paul uses the word temple—to describe the believer’s body

*1 Cor 6:19-20

-Here Paul uses the word to describe the local church

-And Paul gives us a big, big warning

-If we destroy the church, God will destroy us

(3) They were trying to evaluate Christ’s ministers’ effectiveness in Christ’s church (4:1-5)

-As preachers, we must understand who we are

“Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God” (4:1)

-The word *servant* describes “an under-rower on a ship”

- (1) A slave who works the lowest bank of oars
- (2) A slave who obeys his master completely

-The word *steward* describes an “overseer”

- (1) A slave who cares for his master’s estate
- (2) A slave with a great responsibility

-As preachers we must understand what God requires

“It is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy” (4:2)

-A man can pastor—without great intelligence

-A man can pastor—without great education

-A man can pastor—without great speaking skills, or leadership skills

-But nobody can pastor—without faithfulness

- (1) If you can’t set your own schedule
*stay out of the ministry
- (2) If you can’t force yourself to work
*stay out of the ministry
- (3) If you need someone to supervise you, tell you what to do, when to do it
*stay out of the ministry
- (4) If you tend to put things off—important things—essential things

*stay out of the ministry

(5) If you tend to run away in the tough times

*stay out of the ministry

-As preachers we must understand who judges us

“But to me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you, or by any human court” (4:3)

“The one who examines me is the Lord” (4:4)

-As believers we must leave that judgment to Christ

“Do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men’s hearts; and then each man’s praise will come to him from God (4:5)

-We look at externals

*Jesus looks at the heart

(1) Jesus knows the little things

(2) Jesus knows the hidden things

(3) Jesus knows the motives

(4) Jesus knows what he has called us to do

(5) Jesus knows how faithful we are at the task that he’s given us to do

IV. Immorality (5:1-13)

-A man is living immorally with his stepmother

-And the Corinthians are doing nothing about it

-It was a sin so great—that the heathen didn’t tolerate it

-But the Corinthians are “proud” of their open-mindedness

*of their ability to overlook such conduct

-Paul demands excommunication

(1) The believers must gather together

(2) The believers must remove this person from the fellowship of the church

-Only then can they be pure enough to reach out to their community

-A difficult verse

“deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus’ (v. 5)

-Most likely Paul is saying

(1) Remove him from the church

(2) Send him back to the world, where Satan reigns

(3) Give him over to physical judgment for his sin

(4) Long for spiritual restoration when the physical judgment is complete

- Tolerance destroys
 - (1) The sinner
 - (2) The congregation
- Excommunication is essential to restoration
- Only as this man
 - (1) Sees the greatness of his sin
 - (2) Experiences the judgment for his sin
 - (3) Will he ever turn from his sin
- When must we judge sin publicly—by removing a person from our midst?
 - (1) When the sin is known in the community
 - (2) When the sin is destroying the church's purity
 - (3) When the sin is destroying the church's reputation
- What should be our goal for judging publicly—for removing a person from our midst?
 - (1) The congregation's integrity
 - (2) The congregation's purity
 - (3) The congregation's ministry
 - (4) The sinner's restoration

V. Lawsuits (6:1-11)

- Lawsuits are everywhere in this country
 - (1) A little leaguer misses a pop fly—gets hit in the eye—and his parents sue the coach
 - (2) A high school player—sits the bench—and his parents sue the coach
 - *seems that the coach is costing their boy a chance to make a living, as a professional athlete
 - (3) A 16-year-old sniffs computer cleaner to get high—then drives his car into a lake and drowns—and his parents sue the store that sold him the stuff
 - (4) Two people from New York sue McDonalds for making them obese
 - *seems that they didn't understand that eating biggie size burgers and fries two meals a day would make them fat
- Lawsuits were everywhere in the church at Corinth too
- Believers were taking each other to court, before pagan judges
- And Paul tells them to stop
- We must clarify some things
- There's a big difference
 - (1) Between criminal law and civil law

- (2) Between criminal cases and civil cases
- In criminal matters—the state has compelling interest
 - (1) A murder takes place—we have to take the matter before state authorities
 - (2) A rape takes place—we have to take the matter before state authorities
 - (3) Sexual abuse takes place—we have to take the matter before authorities
- The state has every right to know about criminal acts
- The state has every right to judge criminal acts
- The state has every right to judge us if we cover up criminal acts
- There's a big difference between
 - (1) Church members taking other Christians to court
 - *where their Christian standing is known
 - (2) Church members taking other Christians to court
 - *where their Christian standing is incidental
- This passage does not say that one professing Christian cannot take another professing Christian to court
 - (1) I may work for WalMart—and my boss may be a professing Christian
 - *but unless we go to church together, the issue of our faith will probably never come before the court
 - (2) I may have surgery—and my doctor may be a professing Christian
 - *but unless we got to church together, the issue of our faith will probably never come before the court
- Paul is shocked by what he hears at Corinth
- The church members are taking their civil conflicts
 - *before unsaved judges
 - *in secular courts
- The unsaved judges may be honest
- The secular courts may offer a fair trial
- But the lawsuits are damaging the believers' reputations
- And the lawsuits are damaging the church's reputation
- The believers' should take care of themselves
- One day—God's people will judge the world
- One day—God's people will judge angels
 - *the evil angels
 - *the angels that rebelled with Satan
 - *the angels that will suffer with Satan forever

-Surely—God’s people can take care of smaller matters
 *matters that pertain to this life only

- (1) By appointing Christian judges (6:4-6)
- (2) By accepting ill treatment (6:7-8)

VI. Marriage (7:1-40)

-*Paul commends celibacy—for those who have the “gift” of celibacy (7:1)*

-*Paul recognizes marriage as the normal state (7:2-9)*

- (1) The wife must meet the sexual needs of the husband
- (2) The husband must meet the sexual needs of the wife
- (3) Believers don’t have to marry
- (4) Those who do should not deprive their mates, trying to live in celibacy

-*Paul encourages fidelity to the marriage bond (7:10-16)*

- (1) Christian mates should stay together
- (2) Christians are to try to stay with their pagan mates
- (3) Christians are not obligated to stay with pagan mates, if the pagan mates are determined to go

-We must remember the setting at Corinth

- (1) These are first generation Christians
- (2) These are not Christians who married unbelievers
 *and then struggled to live with them
- (3) These are Christians who got married before they got saved
 *and wonder whether they can keep their marriages together

-If the unbeliever demands divorce, the believer must comply

-He or she is free from the relationship

“not under bondage” (7:12)

- (1) From the marriage
- (2) From the marriage vows

“It is debatable whether this phrase means only that the Christian is not obligated to seek reconciliation, or also that the Christian is free to remarry within the Christian fellowship” (Gundry, 380)

-*Paul considers the virgin’s options (7:25-38)*

-In those days, parents arranged weddings for their children

-Some parents at Corinth were struggling—whether they should let their daughters marry

-There are advantages to remaining unmarried

- (1) Marriage may increase sufferings—in times of persecution

“I think that this is good in view of the present distress, that it is good for a man to remain as he is” (v. 26)

(2) Marriage will increase responsibilities—and decrease opportunities for Christian service

“But I want you to be free from concern” (v. 32)

(3) Marriage is acceptable, for those who have the gift of marriage

“It is better to marry than to burn with passion” (7:9)

“If it must be so, let him do what he wishes, he does not sin; let her marry” (7:36)

(4) Celibacy is better, for those who have the gift of celibacy

“So then both he who gives his own virgin daughter in marriage does well, and he who does not give her in marriage will do better” (7:38)

-Paul considers the widow's options as well (7:39-40)

-Death ends the marriage bond

-Widows are free to remarry

-But marriage—so often a blessing—can be a curse in times of persecution

-And marriage can take a widow away from many ministry opportunities

-The phrase “only in the Lord” (v. 39) is clear

-A believing widow must marry a believing man

*no exceptions

-In many cases, she will be “happier” to remain single

-Marriage arrangement is a cultural matter

-First century parents arranged marriages—Jew and Gentile

-Many people groups do the same today

-There is nothing unscriptural about the western practice of dating, courtship, and marriage

-The principles remain the same

(1) Those with the gift of celibacy should feel free to remain unmarried

(2) Those with the gift of celibacy should use their extra time for Christian ministry

(3) Those with the gift of marriage should feel free to marry

(4) Those with the gift of marriage should recognize the limitations involved, as to freedom for ministry

*fears in times of persecution

*responsibilities to mates and children

(5) Those who desire to marry should not feel compelled to remain single, so long as God gives them the opportunity to marry

-Gundry puts things in perspective

“Paul wishes that all might be free from marital responsibilities. . . . Nevertheless, Paul concedes that in this respect God’s will varies for different Christians” (379)

VII. Liberty (1 Cor 8:1-11:1)

-Christian liberty is one of the toughest topics for any teacher

-In every congregation you have several kinds of people

(1) *You have the legalist*

*who has a system of do’s and don’ts based on tradition, not scripture

*who tries to enforce that system on others

(2) *You have the libertinist (or antinomian)*

*who feels free to live as he pleases

*no matter what scripture says

(3) *You have the weaker brother (or sister)*

*who is immature in the faith

*who can be harmed spiritually, by another believer’s actions

(4) *You have the controller*

*who wants you to conform to his rules and regulations

*who will call you “liberal” if you don’t

-We must distinguish “liberties” from “absolutes”

(1) *Absolutes are clearly worded scriptural commands that exists for all generations*

*definite rights and wrongs

*with no room for disagreement

(2) *Liberties involve disputed areas, with no clear scriptural command*

*no definite rights and wrongs

*with lots of room for disagreement

-We must look at the historical setting of Corinth

-Corinth was filled with idolatry

-Pagan temples were everywhere

-Sacrifice to pagan gods—was a regular part of life

-The pagan temples had dual functions

(1) places of worship

- (2) community centers
- Worship and fellowship were merged together
 - (1) Where there were social functions—there were sacrifices
 - (2) Where there were sacrifices—there were social functions
 - (3) One who stayed away from temple gatherings, cut himself off from most of the city’s social opportunities
 - (4) You could not remain in the “in crowd”—and stay away from the temple
- Pagan worshipers offered a great deal of meat to their gods
 - (1) Some of the meat was burned in sacrifice
 - (2) Some of the meat was eaten by the worshiper
 - (3) Most of the meat was given to the pagan priest
- The priests could not eat all the meat they received
- So they took the excess meat to the market place
 - (1) Where they sold it to the merchants
 - (2) Who sold it to the general public
- The customer had no way of knowing—where the meat he purchased came from
 - (1) From the local farm?
 - (2) From the pagan temple?
- The Corinthians had two questions for Paul
 - (1) Could they take part in social gatherings in pagan temples?
 - *Paul says, “No!”
 - *They are not free to enter pagan temples, even for social events
 - (2) Could they eat meat that had been offered to idols
 - *Paul says, “Maybe”
 - *Sometimes it’s acceptable, sometimes it’s not
- We learn several things from Paul’s instructions
 - (1) Where there are absolutes, we must abide by God’s clear commands
 - (2) In matters of liberty, we must operate according to conscience
 - (3) In matters of liberty, our freedom is not absolute
 - (4) We are always responsible for the ramifications of our conduct
 - (5) We should look out for the weaker brother, whenever possible

A. A Matter of Controversy (8:1)

“Now concerning things sacrificed to idols”

- Some of the church members felt free to eat the meat
- Other church members weren't so sure

B. A Look at Knowledge (8:1-6)

- Paul contrasts knowledge with love (8:1-3)
- Paul concludes that knowledge of one's rights is incomplete without love for one's brethren
- Paul applies knowledge to idols (8:4-6)
- We know several things
 - (1) *That false gods do not really exist (v. 4)*
 - (2) *That God the Father is the source of all things (v. 6)*
 - (3) *That God the Son is the creator of all things (v. 6)*
 - (4) *That God the Son is the redeemer of all things (v. 6)*
 - (5) *That God has given us but one purpose for living (v. 6)*
- “we exist for him” (v. 6)
- We are to put God first in every way—even in matters of liberty

C. A Call for Sacrifice (8:7-13)

- Writes William Barclay

“Our conduct should always be guided not by the thought of our own superior knowledge, but by . . . love for our fellow man”

“What is safe for one man may be quite unsafe for another. . . . We may be strong enough to resist some temptation, but it may well be that someone else is not. . . . We must think not only of its effect on us, but of its effect on others as well”

“No one has the right to indulge in a pleasure or demand a liberty which may be the ruination of someone else.

(1) *Weak consciences do exist (8:7)*

- Some people could be hurt by what we do

(2) *Food has a minor significance (8:8)*

- Food does not commend us to God
- We're no better—for eating certain foods
- We're no better—for not eating certain foods

(3) *We have responsibilities to weaker brothers (8:9-11)*

- We must exercise caution
- We must recognize our influence
- We must value our weaker brothers above ourselves

“Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble” (v. 13)

- The word “stumble” (NASV) is *skandalon* in Greek
- It describes the trigger on a death trap

-If we set off the trigger that destroys another person,
God will hold us accountable

-In passing, we must distinguish between

- (1) A legalist
- (2) A controller
- (3) A weaker brother

-I should not surrender to legalists

-I should not surrender to controllers

-I should be willing to sacrifice for a weaker brother

D. A Positive Example (9:1-10:13)

-Paul is a positive example of Christian liberty

-He had lots of rights—as an apostle (9:1-14)

-But he was willing to give up those rights—for ministry’s sake (9:15-23)

-Paul’s famous words (vv. 19-23)

“I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more” (v. 19)

- (1) A slave to the Jew (v. 20)
- (2) A slave to the Gentile (v. 21)
- (3) A slave to the weak (v. 22)
- (4) A slave to all men (v. 23)

“I do all things for the gospel” (v. 23)

-We must be willing to follow Paul’s example

-To surrender our liberties for the gospel’s sake

- (1) Wearing a head covering in a Muslim land?
- (2) Wearing a veil in a Muslim land?
- (3) Wearing a robe in a Muslim land?
- (4) Wearing a beard in a Muslim land?
- (5) Watching our diet in a Muslim or Jewish land? (no pork! no lobster!)?
- (6) Using a KJV in a Mormon town?
- (7) Refraining from caffeine in a Mormon town?
- (8) Abstaining from meat sacrificed to idols in a Buddhist village?
- (9) Not slaughtering a cow for food in a Hindu village?
- (10) Not inviting friends over for steak in a Hindu village?
- (11) Not owning a television in an Amish village?
- (12) Not inviting the neighbor kids over for a movie in an Amish village?
- (13) Not eating lunch in a bar and grill in a small, southern town?

(14) Not playing cards in a small, southern town?

E. A Negative Example (10:1-13)

- Paul surrendered liberty—for ministry sake
- He gave up his “rights” so that the gospel would prosper
- The Corinthians—were at the other extreme
- Their focus on *liberty* was leading them to *license*
- By demanding their freedom—to do what they wanted to do—they were destroying themselves
- Just like the Israelites—in the wilderness—1500 years before (10:1-13)
- The Israelites had wonderful privileges (10:1-4)
- But they fell into sin and destroyed themselves (vv. 5-10)
- The Corinthians must learn from their example (vv. 11-13)
- They dare not become cocky
- “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall” (10:12)
- They dare not see how close they can get to sin, without being destroyed by sin

F. A Condemning of Idol’s Feasts (10:14-22)

- The Corinthians had two questions for Paul
 - (1) Could they take part in social gatherings in pagan temples?
 - *Paul says, No!
 - (2) Could they eat meat that had been offered to idols?
 - *Paul says, Maybe!
- Paul brings his discussion of liberty to a close
- By answering these questions clearly
 - (1) *Paul condemns the idol’s feasts (10:14-22)*
 - The pagan temples—may have been the “center” of Corinthian life
 - (1) Places of worship
 - (2) Community centers
 - By staying away from these temple gatherings, you may have cut yourself off from the community
 - (1) From the “in crowd”
 - (2) From the people you wanted to do business with
 - But Paul says “stay away”
 - Believers who took part in the idol’s feasts were actually communing with demons
- “The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons

and not to God” (v. 20)

- (1) They were taking part in demon worship
- (2) They were opening themselves up to demonic attack
- (3) They had better stay away

(2) *Paul calls for sacrifice with meat offered to idols (10:23-11:1)*

- There’s a big difference between
 - (1) Taking part in an idol’s feast
 - (2) Eating meat sacrificed to idols
- The feasts are condemned—Christians cannot take part
- The meat is a matter for liberty
 - (1) Christians can take part
 - (2) But they must be willing to sacrifice for weaker brothers
- We must distinguish
 - (1) A legalist
 - (2) A controller
 - (3) A weaker brother
- A weaker brother is immature in the faith
- He might be hurt by what we do
 - (1) We don’t have to sacrifice for legalists and controllers
 - (2) We better sacrifice for weaker brother

VIII. Lord’s Supper (11:17-34)

- Have you ever read a passage—again and again—only to find out that it doesn’t say what you thought it said?
- That happens so much when we read the same translation
- I know it happened to me reading the KJV of 1 Cor 11:27-29
- “Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord” (v. 27)
- “But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup” (v. 28)
- “For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body” (v. 29)
- That passage always scared me to death
- The messages preached from it always scared me to death
- I never felt good enough for the Lord’s Supper
- Then I began to study the passage for myself

A. Describing Abuses (11:17-22)

- The Church of Corinth had lots of problems
- One of their biggest problems was abusing the Lord's Supper
"you come together not for the better but for the worse" (v. 17)
- The Corinthians did things a bit different than we do
- They would gather together to hold "Love Feasts" in connection with the "Lord's Supper"
- The "Love Feast" was sort of a "pot-luck" dinner in which all the church members participated
 - (1) The rich were to bring enough for everyone
 - (2) The rich and poor were to eat and fellowship together
- After the "Love Feast" the "Lord's Supper" took place
- But the church members would have been better off just to stay home
 - (1) *There were divisions and factions (vv. 18-19)*
 - There were cliques in the church
 - (1) An "in crowd" and an "out crowd"
 - (2) Based largely on money, standing in the community
 - The prejudices of the community were playing out in the church
 - *making true worship impossible
 - (2) *There was gluttony and drunkenness (vv. 20-21)*
 - The rich brought plenty of food and drink
 - *but they refused to share with the poor
 - The rich ate and drank too much
 - The poor were left hungry with no food at all
 - (3) *Paul brings a deserved rebuke (v. 22)*
 - He is not saying that believers should never eat together in church
 - He is saying that the rich should never shame the poor
 - He is saying that nobody should
 - (1) Eat too much
 - (2) Drink too much
 - (3) Behave like drunkards and gluttons
 - (4) Then take part in the Lord's Supper

B. Discussing Significance (11:23-26)

- Paul discusses the significance of the Lord's Supper (11:23-26)
- Christ gave two ordinances to the church

(1) Baptism

(2) Lord's Supper

-The bread—symbolizes Christ's broken body

-The cup—symbolizes Christ's shed blood

-The body—is real bread

-The juice—is real juice

-But they picture Christ's death for us

-There is no specified frequency (v. 26)

“for as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup”

-Paul leaves the frequency up to the congregation

*daily

*weekly

*monthly

*quarterly

*yearly

-Every congregation has a right to choose

-The Lord's Supper should be a time of worship

“in remembrance of me” (vv. 24-25)

-The Lord's Supper should be a time of outreach

“you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes” (v. 26)

-It is an acted sermon

(1) To visitors

(2) To children

-It carries a message—that can have a greater impact than a sermon

C. Demanding Reverence (11:27-34)

-Paul demands reverence (vv. 27-34)

-All the modern translations read (v. 27)

“Whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord”

-We are to examine ourselves

-We are to focus on

(1) The manner in which we eat the Lord's Supper

*how we behave

(2) Not our spiritual standing in the Lord's Supper

*whether or not we are right with God

“Partaking of this meal in an unworthy manner is what the entire section is about. Unfortunately, this adverb was translated ‘unworthily’ in the KJV. Since that particular English adverb seems more applicable to the person doing the eating than to the manner in which it is being done, this word became a dire threat for generations

of English-speaking Christians” (Gordon Fee, *1 Corinthians*)

“It is not to eat and drink with consciousness of unworthiness. . . . Nor is it to eat with doubt and misgivings about our being duly prepared to come to the Lord’s table. . . . It is to come to the Lord’s table in a careless, irreverent spirit” (Charles Hodge, *1 Corinthians*)

-Believers should recognize the solemnity of this event as well as the joy of this event

-The KJV translation “damnation” (v. 29) is better translated “judgment”

-The focus is on earthly sufferings

(1) Illness

(2) Death

“For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep” (v. 30)

-Not on eternal judgment in hell

IX. Spiritual Gifts (1 Cor 12:1-14:40)

-The Corinthians were a carnal church

-Just imagine a church filled with

(1) Dennis Rodman

(2) Madonna

(3) James Carville

(4) Terrell Owens

-I think you get the picture!

-The Corinthians were a gifted church as well

-But their gifts had become a source of

(1) pride

(2) confusion

(3) division

-There was an “in group” and an “out group” based on “tongues”

-Paul looks at these gifts from 4 perspectives

(1) *Variety (12:1-11)*

(2) *Unity (12:12-31)*

(3) *Love (13:1-13)*

(4) *Tongues (14:1-25)*

(5) *Conduct (14:26-40)*

-We can offer but a brief overview

A. Variety (12:1-11)

1. The “Same” Spirit (12:1-6)

-The Corinthians had to be careful

- They had been pagans—dominated by demonic powers
- The Corinthians need to understand the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives and in their church
 - (1) *The Holy Spirit exalts Christ (12:1-3)*
 - (2) *The Holy Spirit distributes gifts (12:4-6)*
- The word “gifts” comes from the Greek word *charismata*
- Gifts are “graces”
- They cannot be earned or deserved
- We receive our gifts—through no merit of our own
- We are to use our gifts—seeking no praise of our own

2. The “Many” Gifts (12:7-11)

(1) *The purpose (v. 7)*

- Gifts are not given for personal advancement
- They are given for the “common good” (NASV)
- They are given to profit the entire church—the body of Christ
 - (1) Are you using your gifts to bring glory to Jesus Christ?
 - (2) Are you using your gifts to serve the church of Jesus Christ?

(2) *A listing (vv. 8-10)*

(3) *The origin (v. 11)*

“But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills”

- Don’t listen to folks who tell you—to pray through
- Don’t listen to folks who tell you
 - (1) That one gift is special
 - (2) That one gift is evidence of a second blessing
- You can’t choose your gifts
- You can’t earn your gifts
- All you can do is recognize your gifts—and use them

B. Unity (12:12-31)

1. The body (12:12-18)

-We are one body

“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body” (v. 13)

2. The members (12:19-31)

-We are many members

-God places the members

-He decides what each member will be

-He decides where each member will function

(1) *Every member is needed* (vv. 19-21)

(2) *Every member is important* (vv. 22-26)

(3) *The members are diverse* (vv. 27-31)

(4) *No member is primary* (vv. 29-31)

-Paul closes this chapter with some instructive questions

-Some questions—that should bring an end to the modern tongues emphasis

-The Greek text reads

(1) “All are not apostles, are they?” NO

(2) “All are not prophets, are they?” NO

(3) “All are not teachers, are they?” NO

(4) “All are not workers of miracles, are they?” NO

(5) “All do not have gifts of healings, do they?” NO

(6) “All do not speak with tongues, do they?” NO

(7) “All do not interpret, do they?” NO

C. Love (13:1-13)

-There are two types of people in the world

(1) Those who come into a room and say, “Here I am”

(2) Those who come into a room and say, “There you are”

-The great “love” chapter in the Bible

-Right in the middle of spiritual gifts

-Tells us our gifts are worthless—without love

D. Tongues (14:1-25)

-In a church setting, prophecy is superior to tongues

(1) *Prophecy is superior in building up believers*
(vv. 2-5)

(2) *Prophecy is superior in communicating to believers* (vv. 6-19)

(3) *Most cases, prophecy is superior in evangelizing unbelievers* (vv. 20-25)

-Paul had the gift of tongues (v. 18)

-He knew that tongues had an important purpose

*as a sign to unbelievers

“So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers” (v. 22)

-A wonderful sign on the Day of Pentecost

-Can be a wonderful sign on mission fields today

-But in a church setting, can actually turn unbelievers away

“If the whole church assembles together and all speak in tongues, and ungifted men or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad?” (v. 23)

E. Conduct (14:26-40)

“No man in worship, whether he leads it or shares in it, has any right to direct it according to his own personal preferences. He must seek the good of the whole worshiping fellowship” (Barclay, *Corinthians*)

-The early church did not depend so much on professional ministry

*as we do today

-Attendees were invited to participate

*to share what God had taught them during the week

-But there were some dangers—in such a loosely structured service

(1) Some people—were speaking too much

(2) Some people—were competing with others

(3) Some people—when speaking in tongues—were creating mass confusion

-Paul demands orderly conduct (vv. 26-40)

-The Corinthians must get things under control

(1) *Paul states the purpose of worship* (v. 26)

“Let all things be done for edification”

(2) *Paul gives some rules for tongues speakers* (v. 27)

*a limited number

*one at a time

*with a known interpreter (known ahead of time!)

*with no interpreter present, must keep quiet

“We must not think of tongues as being the result of an irresistible impulse of the Spirit, driving the man willynilly into ecstatic speech. If he chose he could keep silence (Leon Morris, *Corinthians*)

(3) *Paul gives some rules for prophets (14:34-35)*

- *a limited number
- *evaluation by hearers
- *one at a time
- *under control

“for God is not a God of confusion but of peace”

(4) *Paul forbids female participation—with prophecy and tongues—in the church setting (14:34-45)*

“The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves” (v. 34)

“If they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home, for it is improper for a woman to speak in church” (v. 35)

-Paul’s words must be understood in context

(1) The Greek culture where

- *women did not instruct and question men in public

(2) The Corinthian women

- *who were scandalizing their Greek community
- *by throwing off their head coverings (1 Cor 11)
- *by speaking out as prophets and tongues speakers (1

Cor 12-14)

(3) The Corinthian church

- *in an uproar
- *with female participation in tongues speaking and

prophecy

- *with female questioning of male prophets and teachers

(a) something foreign to the culture

(b) something taboo in the culture

(c) something that would destroy outreach to the

culture

-Our context is not the same

(1) Our culture permits women to teach

- *just look at any university setting

(2) Our culture permits women to question male teachers

- *just look at any university setting

(3) Our culture encourages women to hold leadership roles

- world
- *just look at the educational, political, and business
 - (4) Our culture is not scandalized by female participation
 - *in a secular setting
 - *in a religious setting
 - We must consider Paul's attitude toward women
 - Paul valued women in ministry
 - Several played key roles--in his life and ministry
 - (1) Lydia--at Philippi (Acts 16)
 - *a wealthy businesswoman
 - *the first convert to Christianity in Europe
 - *who shared her home as a meeting place for the church
 - (2) Priscilla--at Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome (Acts 18-19; Rom 16:3)
 - *a partner to her husband Aquila
 - *a partner to the Apostle Paul
 - *a "discreet" instructor to Apollos

"But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately" (19:26)

 - *offered her home as a meeting place for church at Rome
 - *described as one of Paul's "fellow workers" (Rom 16:3)
 - (3) Euodia and Syntyche--at Philippi (Philippians 4)
 - *"fellow workers" with Paul
 - *women who had shared his struggles "in the gospel"
 - (4:3)
 - (4) Phoebe--at Cenchrea (Romans 16)

"I commend you to our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea; that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well" (16:1-2)
 - We must consider Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians 11:5

"But every woman who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying disgraces her head, for she is one and the same as the woman whose head is shaved"
 - Obviously, women could pray and prophecy in some settings
 - (1) So long as they wore the veil required in Greek culture
 - (2) So long as they did not come across as "scandals" in Greek culture
- culture
- We do not live in Greek (Roman) culture

-We must identify timeless principles here--and apply them to our setting

- (1) Paul does stress--the wife's submission to her husband
- (2) Paul does stress--the woman's submission to male spiritual leaders

-The principles are clear

-The applications may differ from culture to culture

- (1) Husbands are the spiritual leaders in the family
- (2) Male pastors are the spiritual leaders in the church
 - *scripturally, only men should be pastors
- (3) Men only should engage in prophecy or tongues in a church

setting

(4) *Paul demands that women evidence a submissive spirit toward male spiritual leaders (vv. 34-35)*

“they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves” (v. 34)

-In context, I do not believe that Paul is demanding silence

*in every place

*in every culture

-In our culture

(1) A woman who sings—with her pastor's approval

*is not behaving arrogantly in church

(2) A woman who shares a testimony—with her pastor's approval

*is not behaving arrogantly in church

(3) A woman who takes part in a business meeting

*while showing respect to male leadership

*is not behaving arrogantly in church

(4) A woman who asks a question in Bible study

*in a respectful way

*is not behaving arrogantly in church

-Paul is demanding submission

*something the Corinthian church women seemed

to be lacking

-Paul is demanding respect for cultural mores

*something the Corinthian church women seemed

to lack

(5) *Paul closes with a call for orderly conduct (vv. 39-40)*

“all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner”

-Confusion does not come from God

X. Resurrection (15:1-58)

- The great resurrection chapter in scripture
- The gospel includes the
 - (1) death,
 - (2) burial,
 - (3) resurrection of Jesus Christ
- Jesus' bodily resurrection is an historical fact
 - *lots of eyewitnesses saw him
- Without Jesus bodily resurrection, believers have no hope
 - (1) in this life
 - (2) in the life to come
- Jesus resurrected body is a physical body (not a spiritual one)
- Because Jesus is resurrected, we will be resurrected too

2 Corinthians—The Writer

I. Identity

-Never any debate as to authorship

- (1) Claims to be written by Paul
- (2) The vocabulary and writing style are Paul's
- (3) The most personal of Paul's letters

-Even accepted by liberal scholars

“It is strange criticism that can see in all this the imagination of an anonymous inventor” (Plummer)

II. Setting

-Much debate as to background

- (1) Number of visits to Corinth
- (2) Number of letters to Corinth

-Did Paul make a painful visit to Corinth, not recorded in Acts?

“But I determined this for my own sake, that I would not come to you in sorrow again” (2 Cor 2:1)

-Did Paul write a painful letter to Corinth, that we do not have in our canon?

“For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears” (2 Cor 2:4)

-A likely scenario

A. The Painful Visit

-Increasing anti-Paul sentiment

-Some Judaizers from Jerusalem arrive in Corinth

- (1) Depict themselves as apostles of Christ
- (2) Attack Paul viciously

-Paul travels to Corinth to straighten things out

- (1) A rude, abusive reception (especially by one person)
- (2) No support from the congregation as a whole

-Paul is run out of town, forced to leave in terrible anguish

“But I determined this for my own sake, that I would not come to you in sorrow again” (2 Cor 2:1)

“But if any has caused sorrow, he has caused sorrow not to me, but in some degree—in order not to say too much—to all of you” (2:5)

“This third time I am ready to come to you” (2 Cor 12:14)

“This is the third time I am coming to you” (2 Cor 13:1)

B. The Lost (or “Sorrowful”) Letter

-Paul went back to Ephesus and wrote a

- (1) Severe, or sorrowful letter
- (2) Now lost

- Paul sent the letter by Titus
- Some identify this with 1 Corinthians
- But Paul's description seems against it

“For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears” (2:4)

“For though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it” (7:8)

C. The Thankful Apostle

- Paul was much concerned
- Would the Corinthians respond with (1) repentance, (2) rebellion?
- He traveled north to Troas—and found an open door to preach
- But he was so concerned that he headed northwest to Macedonia

*looking for Titus

- He found Titus, and got an encouraging report
 - (1) The majority had repented
 - (2) They had punished the offender severely
 - (3) But there was still a rebellious minority
- The thankful Paul penned 2 Corinthians
 - (1) Rejoicing at the repentant majority
 - (2) Attacking the offending minority

“Now when I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ and when a door was opened for me in the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit, not finding Titus my brother; but taking leave of them, I went on to Macedonia” (2 Cor 2:12-13)

“For when we came into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted on every side. . . . But God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus; and not only by his coming, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted in you, as he reported to us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced even more” (2 Cor 7:5-7)

“But if any has caused sorrow, he has caused sorrow not to me, but in some degree—in order not to say too much—to all of you. Sufficient for such a one is the punishment which was inflicted by the majority” (2 Cor 2:5-6)

2 Corinthians—The Date, Place, Purpose, Structure

I. The Date

-Shortly after 1 Corinthians

-A.D. 56

II. The Place

-From *Macedonia*, perhaps *Philippi*

-On Paul's Third Missionary Journey

III. The Purpose

-Two-fold purpose

A. Paul's Defends Himself

-A wonderful book for a Christian leader under attack

-Brings great comfort in times of crisis

(1) His integrity as Christ's minister

"We are not like many, peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God"

(2 Cor 2:17)

"But we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (4:2)

"Giving no cause for offense in anything, so that the ministry will not be discredited" (6:3)

"Make room for us in your hearts; we wronged no one, we corrupted no one, we took advantage of no one" (7:2)

"We do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh" (10:3-4)

(2) His authority as Christ's minister

-Paul is an apostle, with all the authority of an apostle

-Paul is called and equipped by Jesus Christ

"But our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant" (2 Cor 3:5-6)

"For even if I boast somewhat further about our authority, which the Lord gave" (2 Cor 10:8)

"For I consider myself not the least inferior to the most eminent apostles" (2 Cor 11:5)

-Paul has proven his calling through suffering (2 Cor 11)

"Are they servants of Christ?—I speak as if insane—I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without

number, often in danger of death” (v. 23)

B. Paul Challenges His Enemies

-Paul wants them to repent, get things right

-But he will come again, and he will punish the disobedient

“If I come again, I will not spare anyone, since you are seeking for proof of the Christ who speaks in me” (2 Cor 13:2-3)

IV. The Structure

-The structure is easy to determine

-Paul spends much of the book defending himself

-In Part One—Paul stresses his integrity as a minister (1:12-7:16)

-In Part Three—Paul stresses his authority as a minister (10:1-13:10)

-Paul looks at giving as well

-In Part Two—Paul stresses the collection from the Gentile churches for the poor believers at Jerusalem (8:1-9:15)

-So we have a three-fold division

(1) Paul defends his integrity (1:12-7:16)

(2) Paul promotes his collection (8:1-9:15)

(3) Paul defends his authority (10:1-13:10)

2 Corinthians—The Problems

I. Paul's Vision (2 Cor 12:1-6)

- Paul regularly received “visions” and revelations”
 - *direct communications from God
- But this one was very special
- So special that Paul starts out in the 3rd person (v. 2)
 - “I know a man in Christ”
- So special that Paul remembers the exact time (v. 2)
 - “Fourteen years ago”
- Much debate as to what Paul is talking about
 - (1) Not Paul's conversion experience (Acts 9)
 - *was saved several years too early
 - (2) Not Paul's stoning in Lystra (Acts 14)
 - *was stoned several years too late
- Took place A. D. 41-42, while Paul was still in Tarsus
 - (1) Not recorded in Acts
 - (2) Several years before Paul's First Missionary Journey
- Paul's vision was too wonderful to understand, describe
 - (1) *Paul's condition* (vv. 2-3)
 - Paul didn't know whether he was transported
 - *in his natural body
 - *in a spiritual state
 - (2) *Paul's location* (vv. 2-4)
 - Paul knew where God took him
 - *the “third heaven”
 - *“paradise”
 - Into the very presence of God
 - (3) *Paul's message* (v. 4)
 - Paul couldn't communicate what he heard
 - The message was “inexpressible”
 - Beyond Paul's power to share with words

II. Paul's Thorn (2 Cor 12:7-10)

- Great privilege can lead to great pride
- Paul had received a very special vision
- So Paul would receive a very special thorn
 - “To keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh” (12:7)
 - (1) *This thorn was Satanic*
 - “a messenger of Satan to buffet me” (v. 7)
 - Satan can operate in a believer's life

- Satan can attack a believer, sometimes viciously
- But Satan's power is limited
- He can do no more than God allows
- What he does accomplishes God's purpose

(2) *This thorn was spiritual or physical*

- The old scholars saw this as a spiritual affliction
 - *a demonic oppression
 - *a temptation
- The modern scholars see this as a physical problem
 - "a thorn in the flesh"
- There are several theories as to Paul's "thorn"
 - (1) Partial blindness
 - (2) Epilepsy
 - (3) Malaria
 - (4) Migraine headaches
- We should be very suspicious of epilepsy, malaria, migraines
- These are put forth by liberal scholars, who want to explain away
 - (1) Paul's salvation experience
 - (2) Paul's vision of heaven
- The partial blindness theory is most widely accepted today (Gal 4:13-15)
- Paul had some kind of disfiguring, and frustrating eye disease

"If possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me" (Gal 4:15)

(3) *The thorn was permanent*

- Paul prayed three times, and Christ said "No"
- Jesus would not remove the thorn
- Jesus would give the grace and power to endure it (v. 9)

"My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness"

- Here we learn some wonderful lessons
 - (1) It is not always God's will to remove suffering
 - (2) Christ can overcome any limitations we have
 - (3) Christ works best through weak vessels
 - (4) Christ uses those who need him most

(4) *Paul's thorn was accepted*

- He would rather suffer and experience God's power (vv. 9-10)

2 Corinthians—The Message

-2 Corinthians—one of the most neglected books in the New Testament

-Sadly, we must neglect it again

-We will look briefly at the following themes

I. The Apostle's Pain

-I guarantee you—if you've been in any kind of ministry—you've experienced some pain

-The longer you minister, the more pain you will endure

-We can be thankful that Paul was honest in sharing in his pain

(1) The apostle hurt—because he loved his people

*2 Cor 2:4

*2 Cor 6:11

*2 Cor 12:14-16

*We are so tempted to lose our love

*We are so tempted to numb our hearts

*But we can't minister without love

(2) The apostle hurt—because he had expectations for his people

*2 Cor 2:12-13

*2 Cor 5:20

*2 Cor 6:1

*2 Cor 7:5

*2 Cor 7:8-9

*2 Cor 11:2-3

*2 Cor 13:5

*We are so tempted to give up

*We are so tempted to expect little

*We are so tempted to go through the motions

*But we can't minister without expectations

(3) The apostle hurt—because he saw how inadequate he was to minister to his people

*2 Cor 2:15-16

*2 Cor 3:5

*We can share the truth, but we can't make people

believe

*We can try to lead, but we can't make people follow

*We can get depressed, because we don't feel good

enough

*We can give up, because we don't feel good enough

- adequate
- *Feeling inadequate can be a good thing
 - *When we feel inadequate, we find God more than
- (4) *The apostle hurt—when he endured attacks from his people*
- *2 Cor 10:10
 - *We can give, only to be attacked in return
 - *We can sacrifice, only to be attacked in return
 - *We are so tempted to become bitter
 - *We are so tempted to lash out in return
 - *But we can't minister with a bitter heart
- (5) *The apostle hurt—when he sought affirmation from his people*
- *2 Cor 5:12
 - *2 Cor 11:5-6
 - *2 Cor 12:11
 - *There's so little praise in ministry
 - *The longer we serve the less often we hear the praise
 - *We can give up because we don't appreciate
 - *But we can't minister when we're seeking praise from
- people
- *Our source of worth must come from God, not people
- (6) *When the apostle hurt—he comprehended his weakness*
- *2 Cor 1:9
 - *2 Cor 4:7
 - *It's so easy to be cocky—when you first start out
 - *It's so easy to get cocky—when things are going well
 - *It's so easy to listen to people who tell us how great we
- are
- *We need to comprehend our weakness
 - *God will make sure that we comprehend our weakness
- (7) *When the apostle hurt—he appropriated God's strength*
- *2 Cor 1:9
 - *2 Cor 3:5-6
 - *2 Cor 4:7
 - *2 Cor 4:16
 - *2 Cor 10:4
 - *2 Cor 12:9-10
 - *God must break us in different ways
 - *God breaks us for a purpose
 - *We can't minister until we know how little we can do

- God
- *We can't minister until we know how much we need
 - (8) *When the apostle hurt—he was equipped to comfort others*
 - *2 Cor 1:4
- ourselves
- *We can't minister until we've been hurt
 - *We can't be there for others if we've never been there
 - (9) *When the apostle hurt—he appreciated the prayers of others*
 - *2 Cor 1:11
 - *We give “lip service” to prayer when things are going
- well
- *We long for prayer when we hurt
 - (10) *When the apostle hurt—he focused on eternal things*
 - *2 Cor 4:17-18
 - *Pain shows how brief life really is
 - *Pain shows us how limited our earthly treasures really
- are
- *Pain focuses us on the life to come
 - *Eternal focus is essential to earthly ministry

II. The Apostle's Collection

- Paul was concerned for the poor believers at Jerusalem
- He encouraged the Gentile churches to give to help their Jewish brethren
- Paul mentions this offering in 1 Cor 16
- Where he commands the Corinthians to
 - (1) Lay aside a bit every week
 - (2) Have a good offering when he comes
- Paul encourages them to complete the offering
- He gives the New Testament's most in-depth look at Christian giving (8:1-9:15)

A. Some Examples of Giving (8:1-10)

- The Macedonians proved their love through giving
- They were poor and persecuted
- Humanly speaking, they didn't have much to offer
- But they gave
 - (1) From a willing heart (vv. 2-4)
 - (2) With a proper motive (v. 5)
- “they first gave themselves to the Lord”
- The only acceptable pattern

- (1) Inward dedication
- (2) Outward manifestation

B. A Standard for Giving (8:10-12)

-Based on our ability to give
 “acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have”

- (1) Those with much—give much
- (2) Those with little—give little

C. Rationale for Giving (8:13-15)

“that there may be an equality” (v. 14)

-Paul does not demand a communization of wealth

- (1) That believers pool resources
- (2) That believers “eat out of the same pot”

-Paul demands that

- (1) We help others in their time of need
- (2) Others help us in our time of need

-Situations can be reversed very quickly

- (1) Jerusalem Christians suffering today
- (2) Corinthians Christians suffering tomorrow

D. Precaution in Giving (8:16-24)

-Unquestioned honesty

“that no one will discredit us in our administration of this generous gift” (v. 20)

“not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men” (v. 21)

-It is not enough to be honest

*we must appear honest as well

-It is not enough for God to know that we’re honest

*men must know that we’re honest as well

-Paul took every precaution

-He never handled money himself

-We must be careful too

E. Encouragement for Giving (9:1-15)

1. Reputation (vv. 1-5)

2. Reward (vv. 6-14)

-God rewards

- (1) When we give generously (v. 6)

“he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully”

- (2) When we give with proper motives (v. 7)

“not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful

giver”

11)

(3) When we trust God to meet our needs (vv. 8-

“and God is able to make all grace abound to you” (v. 8)

3. Remembrance (v. 15)

-God has already given far more than we could ever give

“Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift”

-God gave his all for us

-We should give our all in return

Romans—The Writer

I. Identity

-Written by the Apostle Paul

-Proven by

(1) internal

(2) external evidence

-A few people have tried to deny Pauline authorship

-But their views have been rejected by “sane” scholars

*conservative

*liberal

“The few who have objected have not been able to convince many that their arguments have weight. The style and contents are what we expect of Paul, and the tradition of the church has always accepted this letter as a genuine work of the great apostle” (Leon Morris, *Romans* [Grand Rapids: InterVarsity, 1988], 2).

II. Setting

-Paul wrote this book

(1) From Corinth

(2) On his Third Missionary Journey

(3) As he was preparing to journey to Jerusalem, with the collection from the Gentile churches

-Paul did not establish the church at Rome

-He had never been to Rome

-He had always wanted to go to Rome

-So he is making plans

(1) to visit the city and the church

(2) to gain support from the church for his missionary trip to Spain

“But now, with no further place for me in these regions, and since I have had for many years a longing to come to you, whenever I go to Spain—for I hope to see you in passing, and to be helped on my way there by you, when I have enjoyed your company for a while” (15:23-24)

-Paul is headed for Jerusalem

-He has a fear that

(1) He will not be received by the Jerusalem church

(2) His offering will not be well received by the Jerusalem church

-He desires that the Romans pray for his trip to Jerusalem

“Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the

love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me, that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints” (15:30-31)

-He desires that the Romans pray for his safe arrival in Rome

“So that I may come to you in joy by the will of God and find refreshing rest in your company” (15:32)

-He would not arrive in Rome for four years—as a prisoner of the Roman government

Romans—The Date, Place, Purpose, Structure

I. The Date

-In A. D. 57

-At the end of Paul's Third Missionary Journey

II. The Place

-From *Corinth*

-As Paul was preparing for his trip to Jerusalem

III. The Purpose

-Scholars debate Paul's purpose for writing

(1) Missionally, Paul seeks support for his trip to Spain

(2) Theologically, Paul seeks to establish his readers in the faith

*by focusing on the message of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ

IV. The Structure

-Romans is divided into two parts

(1) The doctrinal (1:1-11:36): The Truth Explained

(2) The practical (12:1-16:27): The Truth Applied

-The two parts may be subdivided into five sections

(1) Man's Plight—Sin (chaps 1-3)

*All men are sinners

(2) God's Remedy—Justification (chaps 4-5)

*All men must be saved the same way, by grace through faith in Jesus Christ

(3) God's Expectation—Sanctification (chaps 6-8)

*The truly saved will not excuse sin, but will seek victory through the Holy Spirit's power

(4) God's Plan—Restoration (chaps 9-11)

*God's rejection of Israel is temporary, not final, and accomplishes God's purpose of bringing Gentiles into his kingdom

(5) The Believer's Responsibility—Obedience (chaps 12-16)

*Believers will live out their faith in practical ways

Romans—The Problems

I. Founders of the Church at Rome (Rom 1:7)

- Who founded the church at Rome?
- Roman Catholics say that Peter founded the church
 - *and served as the first Pastor (Pope)
- This is unlikely—for several reasons
 - (1) Peter was still in Jerusalem—at the Jerusalem Council (A.D. 49)
 - (2) The gospel was already well established in Rome, by A.D. 49-50
 - *The Roman historian Suetonius records a Jewish riot in the city instigated by “Chrestus”
 - *Suetonius says that the Emperor Claudius banished all Jews from Rome
 - *Most likely, Chrestus is a corrupted form of Christos (or Christ)
 - *Most likely, the Jews were rioting over the gospel message, whether or not Jesus was the Christ
 - (3) Paul gives no reference or greeting to Peter in his letter to the Romans
 - *Truly remarkable if Peter were “pastoring” the church
 - *Especially since Paul makes mention of many others (chap 16)
- The Roman church was established by *Jewish believers, who were saved on the Day of Pentecost, and took the gospel back home*
 - *The early Roman church—Jewish in nature
 - *After the banishment of Jews (A.D. 49-50)—Gentile in nature
 - *With the return of Jews to the city, after Claudius’ death (A.D. 54)— a *Gentile majority with a Jewish minority*
 - *The church of Paul’s letter—possibly struggling a bit, with how Gentile and Jewish believers are to relate to each other
 - *Paul’s letter—possibly designed to deal with this struggle, to help the two groups understand their standing in Christ, to help them get along more effectively

II. General and Special Revelation (Rom 1:19-20)

- God has revealed himself “generally” through nature
- By looking at creation, people can see that
 - (1) God exists
 - (2) God is powerful
- God has revealed himself “specially” in multiple ways
 - (1) Dreams

- (2) Visions
- (3) Angels
- (4) Prophets
- (5) Jesus
- (6) Scripture
- General revelation—cannot save
- Only the gospel message—of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ—can save
- General revelation should prompt people to seek God
- Those who seek God—truly wanting to know God—will be found by God
- God will reveal himself to them
 - (1) The Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8)
 - (2) The Gentile centurion, Cornelius (Acts 10)
- God can choose to speak directly—in a dream, vision, etc.
- God can choose to speak through persons—such as Philip, Peter
- We can be sure that
 - (1) God sees the seeking heart
 - (2) God will reach out to the seeking heart

III. The Spiritual Condition of the Heathen (Rom 2:12-15)

- “For it is not the hearers of the Law who are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified” (Rom 2:13)
- “For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves” (Rom 2:14)
- Is Paul teaching that
 - (1) Jews who have the written Law—and keep it—are justified?
 - (2) Gentiles who have the unwritten Law—in their hearts—and keep it are justified?
- Is Paul teaching that Gentiles can be saved—so long as they live up to the standards of God’s moral Law?
- Is Paul teaching that the “noble heathen” are saved without the gospel message?
- In context, NO!
- Paul is teaching that none can keep God’s Law—written or unwritten
- “We have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, not even one” (Rom 3:9-10)
- “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23)

-Paul is teaching that all—Jew and Gentile—must be saved by faith in Jesus

“Even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe” (Rom 3:22)

“Since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one” (Rom 3:30)

-We dare not conclude that the “heathen” are saved by living up to the light that is given them

(1) If so, salvation is by works

(2) If so, Christ is mistaken (John 14:6)

(3) If so, Peter is mistaken (Acts 4:12)

(4) If so, John is mistaken (1 John 5:11-12)

(5) If so, the Great Commission is foolish (Matt 28:19-20)

-All people are saved the same way

-All must hear the gospel, respond to the gospel, to be saved

IV. God over All (Rom 9:5)

-The NIV, HCSV, NKJV read

“Christ, who is *God over all*, forever praised!” (NIV)

“The Messiah, who is *God over all*, blessed forever.” (HCSV)

“Christ came, who is over all, *the eternally blessed God.*” (NKJV)

-Most likely, this is a superior reading to the KJV, NASV

“Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever” (KJV)

“Who is over all, God blessed for ever” (NASV)

-In reality, there is no textual problem here

-The Greek text had little punctuation

-Interpreters must decide where to place the comma

-The comma placement determines whether this is

(1) A description of Christ’s deity (“over all God”)

(2) An ascription of praise (“God blessed for ever”)

-The early church fathers saw this as a proof-text for Christ’s deity

-Most conservative scholars of modern times agree

-Writes Charles Hodge,

“This passage shows that Christ is God in the fullest sense of the term” (*Romans* [Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1886], 301).

-Writes John A. Witmer,

“This is a clear affirmation of the deity of Messiah” (*Romans*, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, II, 476).

V. God’s Hardening of Pharaoh (Rom 9:17-18)

-Some have struggled with the statements

“For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate my power in

you” (Rom 9:17)

“So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires” (Rom 9:18)

-How could God harden Pharaoh’s heart?

-Was Pharaoh responsible for his actions, if God hardened his heart?

-Several matters are clear here

(1) God did not begin to harden Pharaoh’s heart, until Pharaoh had first rejected God’s demands to let Israel go (Exod 5:2)

“Who is the LORD that I should obey His voice to let Israel go?”

(2) God hardened Pharaoh’s heart, by giving him increased light (or insight into God’s person and power) and opportunities to repent (Exod 7:3; 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8)

(3) Pharaoh was not a passive instrument, but was active in the hardening process (Exod 8:15, 32; 9:34)

(4) Pharaoh was responsible for his actions, because he rejected the light given to him

(5) God accomplished his purpose in Pharaoh, by increasing the light given to him

-The same light that melts wax hardens clay

-Clay becomes harder and harder, the longer the light shines on it

-We had best be careful

-Our increasing familiarity with the things of God will either

(1) Soften us—bring us closer to Christ

(2) Harden us—turn us away from Christ

-The harder we get, the less likely we are to respond to the gospel message

V. Buying on Credit (Rom 13:8)

-The phrase, “owe nothing to anyone” has been much discussed

-Does Paul rule out buying on credit?

-Scripture does caution against borrowing money

“And the borrower becomes the lender’s slave” (Prov 22:7)

-Scripture does not prohibit borrowing money

-The Life Application Bible puts things in perspective

“A loan we can handle is enabling; a loan we can’t handle is enslaving. The borrower must realize that until the loan is paid, he or she is servant to the individual or institution that made it”

-Borrowing money can become sin

(1) If it prevents us from paying our tithe

- (2) If it hinders us from obeying God's call to ministry
- (3) If it robs us of time and energy needed in pursuing ministry
- (4) If it robs us of the freedom to respond to God's will
- The context really has nothing to do with debt
- Verses 6- 7 deals with relationship with government
 - *paying taxes
 - *paying tolls or customs
 - *giving honor
- Romans 13:8 could be translated, "Stop owing anything to anyone, except to be loving one another"
- As believers we have a debt to government (vv. 6-7)
- We are to pay that debt to government
- As believers we have a debt to people as well (vv. 9-10)
 - (1) to love them
 - (2) to love them by not sinning against them
- The "love debt" is never paid
 - *believers must keep on paying as long as we live

Romans—The Message

-The importance of the book of Romans cannot be overstated

(1) It has impacted world history more than any other book of the Bible

(2) It has impacted world history more than any other written communication, religious or secular

-Augustine's life was changed through the book of Romans

"I had no wish to read further; there was no need to. For . . . it was as though my heart was filled with a light of confidence and all the shadows of my doubts were swept away"

-Martin Luther's life was changed through the book of Romans

"I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. The whole of Scripture took on a new meaning. This passage of Paul became to me a gate of heaven"

-John Wesley's life was changed through the book of Romans

"I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt that I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for my salvation: And an assurance was given me, that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death"

-Has the book of Romans changed your life?

-If not, why not?

I. Man's Plight—Sin (1:1-3:31)

-All are sinners before God

A. The Gentile World (1:1-32)

(1) Paul had a message for the Gentile world (1:1-4)

(2) Paul had a calling to the Gentile world (1:5-6)

*as "apostle to the Gentiles"

(3) Paul had a great desire to visit the church at Rome, and to minister to the believers there (1:7-13)

(4) Paul had a great desire to visit the city of Rome, and to preach the gospel to the unbelievers there (1:14-15)

(5) Paul recognized the importance of the gospel to the Gentile world (1:16-17)

*the gospel is God's power

*the gospel brings God's salvation

*the gospel is open to all people

*the gospel must be received in faith

(6) Paul condemned the sinful condition of the Gentile world (1:18-32)

*sinful Gentiles are under God's wrath (1:18)

(1:19-20) *sinful Gentiles have received God's general revelation

(1:21-32) *sinful Gentiles have rejected God's general revelation

(1) darkened hearts (v. 21)

(2) foolish minds (v. 22)

(3) worshiping idols (v. 23)

(4) degrading passions (vv. 24-27)

(5) depraved minds (vv. 28-31)

(6) defiant spirits (v. 32)

-Note the progression

(1) Man's rebellion

"they did not honor him" (v. 21)

"they exchanged the truth of God for a lie" (v. 25)

"they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer" (v. 28)

(2) God's reprobation

"God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity" (v. 24)

"God gave them over to degrading passions" (v. 26)

"God gave them over to a depraved mind" (v. 28)

-Note the focus on homosexuality (vv. 26-27)

(1) Homosexuality is sin

(2) Homosexuality brings God's judgment

"receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error" (v. 27)

-Note the focus on societal approval (vv. 32)

"not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them"

(1) Society approves sin

(2) Society applauds sin

-Some fearful applications

(1) Be fearful—if you want to do as you please

(2) Be fearful—because God might turn you loose

(3) Be fearful—because God might let you fall

(4) Be fearful—because God might let you fall far lower than you ever dreamed

B. The Jewish World (2:1-29)

-Maybe you've heard of the dear lady, who praised her pastor every Sunday

"Good sermon, preacher, you really got them this time"

-Until the day that the dear brother preached against dipping snuff

-The little lady walked by quickly, and barely shook the preacher's hand

-But everybody close by heard her mutter these words

“Now preacher, you done quit preaching and gone to meddling”

-The Jews were quite happy to point out the sins of the Gentiles

-No doubt they were sitting back and saying “amen” to chapter 1

-No doubt they were shocked when they heard chapter 2

(1) The Gentile world is guilty before God

(2) The Jewish world is just as guilty—in its own way

(a) The Jewish people have no right to condemn the Gentile world (2:1)

(b) The Jewish people have no right to condemn the Gentile world, because they are just as guilty as the Gentiles (2:2-3)

(c) The Jewish people have no right to condemn the Gentile world, because they are just as needy as the Gentiles (2:4)

(d) The Jewish people must understand that God is an impartial judge, who will judge Jews and Gentiles by the same standards (2:5-16)

*Jews may sin—with the Law

*Gentiles may sin—without the Law

*Both are equally sinful

(e) The Jewish people must understand that they are hypocrites who, while claiming to serve God, actually bring reproach to God (2:17-24)

“For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you” (Rom 2:24)

(f) The Jewish people must understand that they are external religionists who, while claiming God, actually had no relationship with God (2:25-29)

(g) The Jewish people must understand that external religion, without heart religion, is worthless (2:25-29)

“For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly. . . . But he is a Jew who is one inwardly” (Rom 2:28-29)

-Some fearful applications for the Jewish community of Paul's day, and the Christian community of our day

(1) When we judge others, we must understand that God judges us by the same standards

- (2) When we condemn others, we must understand that God measures us by the same standards
- (3) When we judge others, we must understand that the world judges us by the same standards
- (4) When we condemn others, we must understand that the world measures us by the same standards
- (5) We deserve condemnation when we say one thing and do another
- (6) We bring reproach to God when we say one thing and do another
- (7) We risk eternal judgment when we maximize externals and minimize internals

“Circumcision, the sign of admission to the covenant, was regarded by the Jews as having the utmost importance. It was unthinkable that a man, duly circumcised and admitted to the covenant, should fail of his salvation. Paul now takes this central ceremony and points out that it is completely ineffective if the spiritual state to which it points is not a reality. The inward is more important than the outward”

(Leon Morris, *Romans*, 139)

-Our heart is more important than our

- (1) Baptism
- (2) Church membership
- (3) Sunday School attendance
- (4) Committee memberships
- (5) Mission trips

-We can be busy—doing kingdom work—and still not be part of the kingdom

C. The Whole World (3:1-31))

-The progression

- (1) Gentiles are sinful (chap 1)
 - (2) Jews are sinful (chap 2)
 - (3) All people—Gentile and Jew—are sinful (chap 3)
 - “both Jews and Greeks are all under sin” (v. 9)
 - “there is none righteous, not even one” (v. 10)
 - “there is none who does good, there is not even one” (v. 12)
 - “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (v. 23)
 - (4) All people—Gentile and Jew—are accountable to God (chap 3)
 - *people without the Law are condemned without the Law
 - *people with the Law are condemned by the Law
- “by the works of the Law no flesh shall be justified in His sight;

- for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin” (v. 20)
- The Law shows us that we are sinners
 - The Law cannot make us acceptable to God
 - Because nobody (but Jesus) can keep the Law
- II. God’s Remedy—Justification (4:1-5:21)**
- In the early 1500s, the western world was controlled by the Roman Catholic church
 - Most people would call themselves Roman Catholics
 - Most people were looking for salvation through the Roman Catholic system
 - (1) Baptism
 - (2) Church membership
 - (3) Works and rituals
 - One man could find no peace in his heart
 - “His moral conduct was unblemished” (Schaff, *History*, 110)
 - “He went regularly to mass and observed the daily devotions of a sincere Catholic” (110)
 - “He was much concerned about his personal salvation and given to gloomy reflections over his sinful condition” (110)
 - He surrendered to the monastery and the ministry, but out of a sense of fear
 - “His monastic vow was forced from him by terror and the fear of death and the judgment to come” (113)
 - He was perhaps the most earnest monk who ever lived
 - “No one surpassed him in prayer, fasting, night watches, self-mortification. He was . . . held up as a model of sanctity” (116)
 - He once confessed
 - “If ever a monk got to heaven by monkery, I would have gotten there” (116)
 - But he could find no freedom from the burden of sin
 - “He saw sin everywhere, even in the smallest trifles” (116)
 - Martin Luther went on to the priesthood, to a Doctor of Divinity degree, and to a life of preaching and teaching
 - But his despair remained, until he discovered the truth of justification by faith in Jesus Christ
 - We are declared righteous by God
 - (1) Not because of what we do
 - (2) But because of what Christ has done for us
 - We are accepted by God
 - (1) Not for our works
 - (2) But for our faith in Jesus
 - We obey God

- (1) Not to gain God's love
- (2) But to evidence our love for God
- This teaching freed Luther's soul
- It became the spark that lit the fires of the Protestant Reformation
- The spark that still burns brightly in the hearts of godly believers around this world
- Paul begins his discussion of justification by faith in Romans 3
 - (1) *God is the author (3:21-23)*
 - *God took the initiative
 - *God established the conditions
 - “apart from the Law” (v. 21)
 - “through faith in Jesus Christ” (v. 22)
 - (2) *Jesus is the agent (3:24-26)*
 - *Only Jesus could pay the price for sin
 - *Only Jesus can deliver people from bondage to sin
 - “through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus” (v. 24)
 - (3) *Man is the recipient (3:27-30)*
 - *Through faith
 - *Receiving what Christ has done for us
- Paul develops his discussion of justification by faith in chapters 4-5
 - (1) *Abraham was justified by faith (4:1-8)*
 - (2) *Abraham was justified by faith—before circumcision (4:9-12)*
 - (3) *Abraham was justified by faith—long before the Law (4:13-25)*
 - (4) *Only those who are justified by faith can have peace with God (5:1)*
 - “Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (5:1)
 - *we are born at war with God
 - *without Jesus, we will die at war with God
 - *only with Jesus, can we be righteous in God's eyes
 - *only with Jesus, can we have fellowship with God
 - (5) *Only those who are justified by faith can have access to God (5:2)*
 - (6) *Only those who are justified by faith can have hope in times of struggle (5:3-8)*
 - (7) *Only those who are justified by faith are delivered from God's wrath on an unbelieving world (5:9)*
 - (8) *Only those who are justified by faith are reconciled (our broken relationships with God restored) to God (5:10-11)*
 - (9) *Justification by faith is necessary because of Adam's sin (5:12-14)*
 - *Adam sinned and brought death into the world

(1) Physical death

(2) Spiritual death

*We are deserving of death because of our own sin which finds its roots in Adam's sin

“and death spread to all men, because all sinned” (5:12)

(10) Justification by faith is possible because of Christ's sacrifice (5:15-21)

*The first Adam brought sin and judgment into the world

*As a result, all (“the many”) who descended from Adam are condemned

*The second Adam (Jesus) brought deliverance from sin and judgment

*As a result, all (“the many”) who belong to Jesus are delivered from condemnation

III. God's Expectation—Sanctification (6:1-8:39)

-Legalists pervert justification by faith

*by adding law

“We are saved by what we do”

-Libertinists pervert justification by faith

*by subtracting obedience

“We are free to do what we want to do”

-Paul struggled with both groups of people

-He condemned Legalism in chapters 4-5

-He condemns Libertinism in chapters 6-8

“Are we to continue in sin that grace may increase?” (v. 1)

“May it never be!” (v. 2)

-If God is gracious, why should we worry about sin?

-At salvation—a miracle takes place

(1) We are changed on the inside

(2) We have a new Master

(3) We have a new purpose

(4) We have a new attitude toward sin

-A Christian can sin

-A Christian cannot enjoy sin

-Any “believers” who continue in sin—with a flippant attitude toward sin—had better be careful

(1) They do not understand God's salvation

(2) They may never have experienced God's salvation

A. Delivered from Sin (6:1-11)

-Believers' baptism symbolizes

- (1) Christ's
 - *death
 - *burial
 - *resurrection
- (2) The believer's
 - *death to sin
 - *burial to sin
 - *resurrection to new life
- This is best depicted by immersion
- This should be understood when we are baptized by immersion
- Positionally, believers are delivered from the power of sin (v. 6)
 - *we do not have to sin
 - “our old man was crucified”
 - “we are no longer slaves to sin”
- Practically, believers are not delivered from the presence of sin
 - *we do sin
- “Crucifixion” may depict a slow and painful process
 - *a process of sanctification
 - *a process that begins at salvation and continues through life
- Several lessons are clear
 - (1) Believers are changed dramatically in Christ
 - (2) Believers do not have to live as they did before they experienced Christ
 - (3) Believers dare not live as they did before they experienced Christ
- “The power of sin is broken in the believer. To come to Christ means the complete end of a whole way of life. There may be slips, but they are uncharacteristic” (Leon Morris, 251)
- B. Departing from Sin (6:12-23)**
- Behaviorally, believers should be departing from sin (6:12-23)
 - “do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts” (v. 12)
 - “do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin” (v. 13)
- Sin is our old master
- Christ is our new Master
- Sin says—“Obey me, give your members to me”
- Christ says—“Obey me, give your members to me”
- All people are *slaves* to a master
- When we come to Christ, we trade one master for another
- When we come to Christ, we surrender our
 - (1) Bodies to Christ

- (2) Minds to Christ
- (3) Wills to Christ
- We dare not say, “It’s my body, I’ll do what I want with it”
- Our bodies, and all that we are and have, do not belong to us
- We are not free to live as we please
- All people are *requited* by a master
- Scripturally, we are all slaves
 - (1) To sin and Satan
 - (2) To obedience and Christ
- Sin destroys its slaves
- The world stresses the freedom of sin
- The Bible stresses the bondage of sin
 - (1) The alcoholic—a slave to sin
 - (2) The drug addict—a slave to sin
 - (3) The pornographer—a slave to sin
 - (4) The gambler—a slave to sin
- As believers, we must stop presenting ourselves as slaves to sin
- As believers, we must start presenting ourselves as slaves to God
- We must choose whom we will serve
 - “For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification” (v. 19)
- Unbelievers have no choice
 - *they will serve sin
 - *because they are slaves to sin
 - *they will experience the “wages” of sin
 - *because they are slaves to sin
- Believers have a choice
- Believers no longer have to experience the “wages” of sin
 - “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (v. 23)
 - (1) Sinners get what they “earn”
 - (2) Believers get what Christ “gives”
 - “Eternal life comes as God’s free gift or it does not come at all” (Morris, 267)
- Some of us understand Satan’s lie
- We know what it’s like to serve sin
- We know that
 - (1) sin is a cruel master
 - (2) sin destroys its slaves

- Many of our children do not
 - (1) they are turned off by the “bondage” of the Christian life
 - (2) they have never understood the “freedom” they have in Jesus
 - (3) they are allured by the “freedom” of sin
 - (4) they have never experienced the “bondage” of sin

-Why do our children have such a warped perspective?

- (1) Do they get it from us?
- (2) Do they get it from our culture?

-How can we help our children get a more balanced perspective?

- (1) Should we take them out into the world?
- (2) Should we show them the cruel bondage of sin?
- (3) Should we give them opportunity to minister to those who are experiencing the “wages” of sin?

C. Struggling with Sin (7:1-25)

-This chapter is one of the most difficult in Scripture

- (1) Is Paul setting forth his experience—before he became a Christian?
- (2) Is Paul setting forth his experience—after he became a Christian?
- (3) Is Paul setting forth the Legalists frustration?
 - *without Christ
- (4) Is Paul setting forth the believers frustration?
 - *in Christ

-This is a matter of much debate

-Augustine is typical

- (1) Early in his life he held that Paul was referring to the unregenerate state
- (2) Later in his life he held that Paul had reference to the regenerate state as well

-The Reformers—including Luther and Calvin—agreed with Augustine’s later views

-Most Evangelical scholars hold this view as well

-Paul’s words describe the believer’s experience

“For surely this is the experience of the believer. No believer is completely sinless. He is still a sinner. . . . What happens when he does sin? He feels dreadful about it. Then why does he do it? He simply does not understand” (Leon Morris, 288)

-Even godly believers struggle to obey God’s demands

- (1) Longing to do right
- (2) Failing so very often to do right
- (3) Getting totally frustrated with our failure

- We do not have to sin
- Why do we still struggle with sin?
- We have powerful enemies
 - (1) The world around us
 - (2) The flesh within us
 - (3) The devil about us
- How long will we struggle with sin?
 - (1) Until Jesus returns
 - (2) Until Jesus takes us home
- We will look at Romans 7 from 4 perspectives
 - (1) *God's Law is good (vv. 7, 12)*
 - Scripture condemns the Oral Law, the Jewish traditions, developed over many centuries, designed to help people obey the Law
 - Scripture does not condemn the Law, however
 - “Is the Law sin? May it never be!” (v. 7)
 - “The Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good” (v. 12)
 - (2) *God's Law shows us our sin (7:7, 13)*
 - It had a purpose
 - (1) Not to enable us to do right
 - (2) But to show us that we can never do right
 - To show man his sinful condition
 - To show man that he can never earn God's favor
 - To show man that he can never be good enough to please God
 - “I would not have come to know sin except through the Law” (v. 7)
 - “So that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful” (v. 13)
 - (3) *God's Law can never produce obedience (7:5, 8)*
 - “The sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law” (v. 5)
 - “But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind” (v. 8)
 - The Law was important
 - It showed man his sinful condition
 - But it did not give him victory over sin
 - Bible based rules can be important today
 - Parents must have rules (boundaries) for their children
 - But rules alone will not produce obedience
 - (1) Rules without Christ produce rebellion
 - (2) Rules without Spirit produce rebellion

- Lifeless Judaism produced rebels of the basest sort
- Lifeless Christianity produces rebels of the basest sort
- Your children will turn quickly from your rules
 - (1) If they do not love your Savior
 - (2) If they are not empowered by the Spirit
- Your children will turn quickly from your rules
 - (1) If you do not love your Savior
 - (2) If you are not empowered by the Spirit

(4) Attempts at keeping God's Law lead to total frustration (7:5-6, 14-25)

-Paul longed to live by God's commandments

"I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good" (v. 16)

"For the willing is present in me" (v. 18)

"For the good that I want, I do not do" (v. 19)

"I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man" (v. 22)

-Paul struggled to keep God's commandments

"I am not practicing what I would like to do" (v. 15)

"I am doing the very thing I hate" (v. 15)

"I do the very thing I do not want to do" (v. 16)

"For the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not" (v. 18)

"But I practice the very evil that I do not want" (v. 19)

"I am doing the very thing that I do not want" (v. 20)

-Paul grieved over his failures

"Wretched man that I am" (v. 24)

-Paul tells us why he failed

"I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin" (v. 14)

"But sin which dwells in me" (v. 17)

"For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh" (v. 18)

"I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members" (v. 23)

"with the flesh the law of sin" (v. 25)

-Paul's struggles give insights into the believer's life

- (1) A battle rages in every believer's soul
- (2) The Holy Spirit prompts the believer to godly living
- (3) Indwelling sin prompts the believer to sinful living
- (4) Believers sin even when they do not want to sin
- (5) Believers are miserable in their sin

- Paul is not excusing sin
- Paul is sharing his extreme frustration with sin
- Believers will never achieve perfection in this life
- Believers dare not excuse, and tolerate sin
- Any who sin—and truly enjoy it—had best beware
 - *they may be unsaved
- Any who sin—and feel no struggle—had best beware
 - *they may be unsaved
- Any attempts at keeping God’s law must lead us to Jesus Christ

“Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (vv. 24-25)

D. Gaining Victory over Sin (8:1-39)

- Paul’s frustration gives way to hope
 - (1) As he looks to Christ (7:25)
 - “Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!”
 - (2) As he looks to the Holy Spirit (8:1-39)
- We struggle—to defeat sin
- But we do not struggle alone
 - “In chapter 8, Paul described the ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit of God who is the source of divine power for sanctification and the secret for spiritual victory in daily living” (Witmer)

1. The Spirit’s Work—Delivering God’s People (8:1-14)

- Sometimes the Christian life seems easy
- We seem to be gaining the victory over sin
 - (1) We’re happy
 - (2) We enjoy church
 - (3) We enjoy ministry
 - (4) We can’t understand why everybody doesn’t feel the same

way

- Sometimes the Christian life seems tough
- We seem to be losing the victory over sin
- I struggle with Romans 7
 - *I have a tough time understanding the message
- I struggle with Romans 8 too
 - *I understand the message
 - *I have a tough time applying the message
- I want to depend on me
- I want to gain the victory over sin—through my own strength
 - *working harder than everybody else

- *being more disciplined than everybody else
- Paul gives us a much different picture
- We are “not condemned” in Jesus (8:1)
- We are “set free” through the “Spirit of life” (8:2)
- We are “set free” because the Holy Spirit dwells in us (8:9-11)
- “But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him” (v. 9)
- We experience that freedom as we yield to the Holy Spirit’s power (vv. 5-8)
 - (1) Changing our minds
 - (2) Changing our actions
- We experience that freedom as the Holy Spirit purifies our lives (v. 13)
- “By the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body”
- Discipline can be a wonderful thing
- But discipline will not give us victory over sin
- It’s not enough to say
 - (1) “I’m not going to drink again”
 - (2) “I’m not going to curse again”
 - (3) “I’m not going to lose my temper again”
 - (4) “I’m not going to look at pornography again”
 - (5) “I’m not going to fall into sexual sin again”
 - (6) “I’m not going to spend too much money again”
- We must always say
 - (1) “I want to do right”
 - (2) “I’ll make every effort to do right”
 - (3) “Dear God, I can’t do right without you”

2. The Spirit’s Work—Assuring God’s People (8:15-39)

- We enter God’s family—through the Holy Spirit (v. 15)
- We can know that we are part of God’s family—through the Holy Spirit (v. 16)
- “The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God”
- We can know that we are part of God’s family forever—through the Holy Spirit (vv. 18-39)
 - (1) Helping us
 - (2) Interceding for us
 - (3) Working God’s purpose through us
 - (4) Assuring us
- If we are truly born again, we cannot lose our salvation

- We cannot lose our salvation, because a miracle has taken place in our souls
- Jesus lives there—through the person of the Holy Spirit
- God the Father loves us—for who we are “in Christ”

IV. God’s Plan—Restoration (9:1-11:36)

- Paul is grieved with Israel’s unbelief
- So grieved that he would be willing to take his people’s place
 - (1) Suffering punishment
 - (2) In hell, forever
- Israel’s unbelief did not take God by surprise
 - (1) *Paul grieves over Israel’s plight (9:1-5)*
 - (2) *God’s Word has not failed (9: 6)*
 - (3) *God’s purpose is being fulfilled (9: 6-29)*
 - (4) *Paul longs for Israel’s salvation (10:1)*
 - (5) *Paul commends Israel’s zeal (10:2)*
 - (6) *Paul condemns Israel’s ignorance (10:2-4)*

“For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge” (v. 2)

“For not knowing about God’s righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they do not subject themselves to the righteousness of God” (v. 2)

 - *zeal is not enough
 - *sincerity is not enough
 - *nobody, through their own efforts, can make themselves acceptable to God

*we must be saved God’s way—through faith in Jesus Christ

 - (7) *Paul reveals God’s message (10:5-13)*
 - There are no exceptions with God’s message (vv. 5-11)
 - *all must be saved the same way
 - There are no distinctions with God’s message (v. 12)
 - *all can be saved the same way
 - There are no refusals with God’s message (v. 13)

“Whoever will call on the name of the LORD will be saved”

 - We must remember several truths, essential to understanding Romans 9-11
 - (1) God gives believers the responsibility of sharing the Gospel
 - (2) God gives unbelievers the responsibility of responding to the Gospel
 - (3) God desires that unbelievers respond to the Gospel

(4) God assures any unbelievers who respond that they will be saved

(8) Paul commends God's messenger (10:14-15)

“How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent?”

*the one who proclaims God's message

*the one who proclaims it clearly and contextually

(9) Paul condemns Israel for rejecting God's message and messenger (10:16-21)

-They had heard the message repeatedly (vv. 16-20)

-They had refused the message repeatedly (v. 21)

-Israel's actions would have a lasting impact

*on the nation

*on the world

-God was moving on to the Gentile peoples

-God was leaving Israel behind

-Israel's unbelief is not forever

“for the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable” (11:29)

(10) Paul tells us that God has not rejected his people (11:1)

(11) Paul tells us that God continues to save a remnant of his people (11:1-6)

(12) Paul tells us that God has temporarily hardened the majority of his people (11:7-10)

-They are not hardened against their wills

-They are hardened because they are willfully seeking God in the wrong way

“Those who failed God did not do so because they had been hardened, but they were hardened because they had failed him” (Morris, 403)

-Repeatedly we see a pattern in Romans—and Scripture

*God chooses and man chooses

*God wills and man wills

-We cannot understand how these truths fit together

*we are not supposed to understand how these truths fit together

together

*we are not equipped to understand how these truths fit together

together

-We don't have an “either”, “or” mindset

-We have a “both”, “and” mindset

-We must accept them both

(13) Paul tells us that God has temporarily hardened the majority of his people to reach out to the Gentile peoples (11:11-25)

(14) Paul tells us that God will one day save his people (11:25-32)

-One day Israel will be restored, and reach out in faith to her Messiah

“All Israel will yet be saved; that is, those Jews who are still living at the return of Christ will accept his messiahship and, as a result, receive salvation” (Gundry, 404)

-We should look forward to that day

V. The Believer’s Responsibility—Obedience (12:1-16:27)

A. As Living Sacrifices (12:1-2)

B. As Members of Christ’s Body (12:3-8)

C. In Obeying Governing Authorities (13:1-7)

-Acknowledging God’s sovereignty

*we have the leaders God gives us

“For there is no authority except from God, and those who exist are established by God” (13:1)

-Respecting leaders

-Obeying leaders and laws

-Paying taxes

-The only exception to obedience: when government leaders and laws demand disobedience to God

-Then we must

(1) Obey God

(2) Accept the consequences

(3) Rejoice in the opportunity to suffer for Jesus

“We must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:8)

D. In Caring for Weaker Brothers and Sisters (14:1-15:13)

-We dare not surrender to legalists, controllers

-We dare not judge those who disagree with us

(1) On matters of liberty

(2) On matters where godly believers differ

(3) On matters where there is no clear command of Scripture

-We must be willing to sacrifice for weaker brothers and sisters

-We dare not let our liberties destroy others

“For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself” (14:7)

“Not to put an obstacle or stumbling block in a brother’s way”
(14:13)

“Do not destroy with your food for whom Christ died” (14:15)

“Pursue the things that make for peace and the building up of
one another” (14:19)

“It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do anything
by which your brother stumbles” (14:21)

“Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those
without strength and not just please ourselves” (15:1)

Philemon—The Writer**I. Identity**

- Written by the Apostle Paul
- Internal, external evidence agree
- Little question among scholars—past or present

II. Setting

- Paul is in prison
- Some have theorized
 - (1) Ephesus
 - *on Third Missionary Journey
 - *but no biblical record of such imprisonment
 - (2) Caesarea
 - *under Felix and Festus
 - *before the journey to Rome
 - (3) Rome
 - Under house arrest (Acts 28:30-31)
 - Awaiting to see Caesar
- Most likely Caesarea or Rome

Philemon—The Date, Place, Purpose, Structure

I. The Date

-About A.D. 58

II. The Place

-From *Prison*

-Most likely to *Colossae*

-The home of

(1) Onesimus—the runaway slave

“and with him Onesimus, our faithful brother, who is one of your number” (Col 4:25)

(2) Philemon—the slave owner

III. The Purpose

-To *reconcile broken relationship between Christians*

-Onesimus

*who had escaped from his owner

*who had run away to Rome

*who had come into contact with Paul and become converted

*who had showed real promise in ministry

“Onesimus proved to be a valuable helper to Paul. But Paul, recognizing that Onesimus needed to make restitution for his past sins, sent him back to Philemon” (Creason, 39).

-To *“plant the seed of emancipation”* (Melick, Jr., 339).

(1) Slavery was endemic to the Roman Empire

*up to 60 million slaves

*from a third, to a half of the population

(2) Overt attacks on slavery would have doomed the gospel message

“For the church to have encouraged slaves to revolt against their masters would have been fatal. It would simply have caused civil war, mass murder, and the complete discredit of the church”

(Barclay, 122)

(3) So Paul used covert attacks on slavery, by stressing “equality in Christ”

*slavery cannot continue in a Christian community—when believers understand equality in Christ

*slavery cannot continue in a culture influenced by Christian principles—when people understand equality in Christ

“What this letter does is to bring us into an atmosphere in which the institution could only wilt and die” (F. F. Bruce, 401).

IV. The Structure

-The shortest of Paul’s epistles

-A deeply personal letter

-Four Parts

(1) Greeting vs.1-3

(2) Thanksgiving vs.4-7

(3) Body vs. 8-20

(4) Closing vs.21-25

Philemon—The Message

I. Greeting vs.1-3

-From

*Paul

*Timothy

-To Philemon

II. Thanksgiving vs.4-7

III. Body vs. 8-20

-Paul makes an appeal to Philemon's Faith and Love

(1) Where God's Love is Present Legalism Is Not Needed (8-9)

(2) Total Transformation of One's Character is Possible in Jesus (10-14)

(3) The Heart of the Christian is For Reconciliation of Broken Relationships (15-17)

(4) The Christian Loves (Has Mercy) Because He Has Been Loved (Shown Mercy) (18-20)

IV. Closing 21-25

-*Paul is Requesting Release (v. 21)*

-We can debate the phrase

“Since I know that you will do even more than what I say”

-What more could Philemon do?

*beside forgiving Onesimus and receiving him back without punishment?

(1) Perhaps, he could “loan him out” for missionary work (Gundry, 415)

(2) Most likely, he could release him for missionary work

-The New Testament does not record what happened with Philemon and Onesimus

-We can assume that Philemon released his slave

-Why else would the letter have been preserved by the early church?

-The early church father, Ignatius (early 2nd century), identified a certain Onesimus as bishop of Ephesus

-We cannot prove that the bishop and the slave are the same persons

-But we can certainly rejoice at the possibility

-An ancient inscription was discovered at Laodicea, a small town near to Colossae

-It was dedicated by a slave to the master who freed him

-The master's name was Marcus Sestius Philemon

-We cannot be sure that this is our Philemon

-But again, we can rejoice at the possibility

Ephesians—The Writer

I. The Writer

- Written by the Apostle Paul, from prison in Rome
- Supported by strong internal and external evidence
- Close affinity with Colossians

*about 50% of the verses are similar

“This is, no doubt, due to the fact that Paul had just written the Epistle to the Colossians and the ideas of that Epistle were still in his mind” (Thiessen, 240)

II. The Setting

- Some debate as to the destination
- Three early manuscripts lack the phrase, “in Ephesus” (v. 1)
- This may mean that Ephesians is a “*circular letter*,” addressed to various churches around Ephesus
- The letter soon became attached to Ephesus because
 - (1) Paul spent from 2 to 3 years ministering in Ephesus
 - (2) Ephesus was the primary city in Asia Minor
 - (3) Ephesus was likely the “mother church” for the surrounding churches
 - (4) The neighboring churches were likely planted by disciples from Ephesus
 - (5) This letter was likely distributed from Ephesus to the surrounding cities
- The Apostle Paul was well known in Ephesus and the surrounding area
 - (1) He visited the city briefly on his Second Missionary Journey (Acts 18:19-21)
 - (2) He spent up to 3 years in the city on his Third Missionary Journey (Acts 19)
 - *teaching 2 years in the school of Tyrannus
 - *working “extraordinary miracles”
 - *winning multitudes to Jesus
 - *encouraging occultists (“black magic” practitioners) to turn away from their practice

“and many of those who practiced magic brought their books together and began burning them in the sight of everyone” (Acts 19:19)

 - *endangering the worship of the Ephesian goddess Artemis
 - *causing a riot of the craftsmen in town, who made their living producing images of the goddess

“Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”

(3) He met briefly with the Ephesian pastors on his way back to Jerusalem (Acts 20)

(4) He stationed Timothy in the city (1 Tim 1:3), at least for a time, to care for the needs of the local churches

Ephesians—The Date, Place, Purpose, Structure

I. The Date

- Shortly after the book of Colossians
- In Prison
- About *A.D.* 58

II. The Place

- From Caesarea or Rome
- To Ephesus and the surrounding cities of Asia Minor
 - (1) Laodicea
 - (2) Colossae
 - (3) Hierapolis
 - (4) Smyrna
 - (5) Philadelphia
 - (6) Sardis
 - (7) Thyatira
 - (8) Pergamum
- Many of the churches written to by John (in Revelation 2-3)
- Ephesus was one of the great cities of the 1st century
 - (1) A port city on the Aegean Sea
 - (2) Capital of the Roman province of Asia
 - (3) Perhaps up to 500,000 people
 - (4) A “market” city
 - (5) Center for the worship of Artemis (Diana)
 - (6) A center for occult practices (“black magic”)
- Ephesus was famous for the “Ephesian Letters”

“Charms and spells . . . guaranteed to bring safety on a journey, to bring children to the childless, to bring success in love and business enterprise. From all over the world people came to buy these magic parchments which they wore as amulets” (Barclay, *Acts*, 140)
- Ephesus was most famous for her worship of Artemis
 - *a fertility goddess
 - *Greek name, Artemis
 - *Latin name, Diana
- The temple to Artemis was considered one of the “seven wonders of the ancient world”
- It is estimated that up to 1,000 temple prostitutes “serviced” worshipers from all over the ancient world
- Lots of artisans made their living—carving images of the goddess

“When pilgrims came to Ephesus, they liked to take souvenirs home,

such as the little model shrines which the silversmiths made”
(Barclay, 146)

-Christianity presented a real threat to the city of Ephesus

(1) Religiously

(2) Economically

-But business interests were the major cause of the “riot” in Acts 19

-Demetrius and his fellow silversmiths

“declared that they were jealous for the honour of Artemis; but they were more worried about their incomes” (Barclay, 146).

-No doubt artisans in Japan, China, etc. would respond the same way if Buddha, and related religious figures were threatened

III. Purpose

-Ephesians is far less polemic than Colossians

-Paul seems far more focused on setting forth truth than in attacking error

-The Church of the Christ, is the primary theme

-The purpose is

“to strengthen the believers . . . in their Christian faith by explaining the nature and purpose of the church, the body of Christ” (Life Application Bible, 2069)

IV. The Structure

-Ephesians can be divided into 2 parts

(1) Part 1—doctrinal (theory)

(2) Part 2—exhortation (application)

-We can identify these two parts as follows

I. Our Spiritual Privilege: What God Has Done for His Church

(1:1-3:21)

II. Our Spiritual Responsibility: What God is Doing in His Church (4:1-6:24)

-In passing, we should remember that

(1) Doctrine is foundational to application

(2) We can’t teach without exhortation

(3) We can’t exhort without explanation

-You haven’t started until you have laid a doctrinal foundation

“the so”

-You haven’t finished until you have made a practical application

“the so what”

-Good preaching and teaching tells us how to live

-Good preaching and teaching tells us why we should live that way

-Your students have every right to ask, “why?”

- (1) Why is homosexuality wrong?
 - (2) Why is abortion wrong?
 - (3) Why is premarital sex wrong?
 - (4) Why is living together before marriage wrong?
 - (5) Why is smoking, or drinking wrong?
 - (6) Why is the occult wrong?
 - (7) Why are the cults wrong?
- We condemn these things—constantly
 - We condemn our young people for asking the question, “Why?”
 - We have taken so little time to tell them, “Why”
 - Twenty to thirty years ago, nobody wanted to study doctrine
 - Twenty to thirty years ago,
 - (1) Our seminaries just about stopped teaching doctrine
 - (2) Our publishers just about stopped publishing doctrine
 - And we wonder why our people know so little doctrine
 - Godly behavior must be based on doctrine
 - *or you have shallow believers who will abandon their behavior
 - Practical preaching will always include doctrine
 - We must always answer the question, “Why?”

Ephesians—The Message

I. Our Spiritual Privilege: What God Has Done for His Church

(1:1-3:21)

A. Salvation

(1) *Our salvation was planned by God the Father (1:3-5)*

(2) *Our salvation was accomplished by God the Son (1:5-12)*

(3) *Our salvation was applied by God the Spirit (1:13-14)*

-The Holy Spirit is the believer's *seal*

*Important documents were sealed by the owner

*The seal was formed by pressing a signet ring on

soft wax

*The ring left a discernible mark, signifying

authority, ownership

-The Holy Spirit is God's *pledge*

*A term taken from the business world

*A down payment given as a guarantee of the

entire sum

B. Salvation by Grace through Faith (2:1-10)

(1) *When we were unsaved, we were spiritually dead (2:1-3)*

(2) *When we were unsaved, we were under the wrath of God (2:3)*

(3) *When we were unsaved, we were totally dependent on God (2:4-7)*

(4) *We were saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ (2:8-9)*

(5) *We were saved to obey Jesus Christ with good works (2:10)*

-Some essential lessons

(1) Good works cannot save us

(2) Good works are to result from salvation

(3) Where there are no good works, there can be no assurance of salvation

C. Salvation for Jew and Gentile (2:11-3:21)

-The old barriers between Jews and Gentiles are gone

-Jesus "made both groups into one" (2:14)

-Jesus "broke down the barrier of the dividing wall" (2:14)

*a barrier in the Jerusalem temple, separating the Jewish area from the Gentile area

*on this wall, Greek and Latin inscriptions, warning the Gentiles to proceed no farther

*one of these inscriptions was recovered

“No foreigner may enter within the barricade which surrounds the sanctuary and enclosure. Anyone who is caught doing so will have himself to blame for his ensuing death”

*the wall is gone forever—in Christ

-Jesus abolished “the enmity” (2:15)

*the Mosaic Law, with its civil, ceremonial, sacrificial

elements

*done away with in Christ--forever

-Jesus made “the two into one new man” (2:15)

-Jesus called Paul to preach this wonderful message

“that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel” (3:6)

-There is no “in group” and “out group” in God’s kingdom

-We are all equal in standing, privilege, responsibility, opportunity

II. Our Spiritual Responsibility: What God Is Doing through His Church (4:1-6:24)

-Doctrinally, we are one in Christ

-Behaviorally, we are to live out our oneness

A. Attitudes (4:1-3)

B. Gifts (4:4-16)

C. Conduct (4:17-5:21)

D. Relationships (5:22-6:9)

E. Armor (6:10-24)

(1) We are engaged in spiritual warfare

-There are two extremes when it comes to spiritual warfare

(a) The first—is a cockiness that says

*the devil, demons are in the Bible

*but we don’t have to worry about them today

(b) The second—is a fear that says

*the devil, demons are everywhere

*and everything bad that happens is caused by

them

-We must beware of both extremes

-We dare not be fearful or cocky

-We are fighting against—the devil

-We are fighting against—an untold number of spirit beings

- (1) Fallen angels
- (2) Who do not have bodies
- (3) Who cannot be seen
- (4) Who travel through the air
- (5) Who are active in our world today

-We must be confident of

- (1) Who we are in Jesus Christ
- (2) What we have in Jesus Christ

(2) We must “put on” spiritual armor

(a) The Belt—The Truth (6:14)

-The first thing a soldier put on

*to tie up his loose, flowing garments

-We must know

*what we believe

*why we believe it

-We must know it so well

*that we can distinguish truth from error

*no matter how Satan packages the error

(b) The Breastplate—Righteousness (6:14)

-The soldier’s heart protector

-How do we respond—when Satan says?

“You’re not good enough to go to church”

“You’re not good enough to teach a Sunday

School class”

“You’re not good enough to be a preacher”

“You’re not good enough to be a Christian”

-We must look to Jesus

*we are not good enough—but Jesus is

*we are accepted by God—because Jesus is

-We must look within

*we confess our sin

*we experience God’s forgiveness

-Satan cannot destroy our salvation

-Satan can destroy the joy of our salvation

*by taking our eyes off Jesus

*by focusing our eyes on ourselves

(c) The Shoes—The Gospel of Peace (v. 15)

-The Roman soldier’s shoes—were studded with short nails

*gripped the earth

- *brought stability
- The soldier could stand firm
 - *because he wasn't worried about slipping down before the enemy
- The gospel message brings peace
 - *to the poor believer
 - *to the suffering believer
 - *to the aging believer
 - *to the believer under Satan's attack
- The gospel message brings peace
 - *in a frustrating world
 - *in an uncertain world
- Even the grandest dreams—will come crashing down
- Even the strongest of earthly bodies—will give way to illness
- The passing years can leave us
 - *bitter
 - *angry
 - *longing for the past
 - *peaceful
 - *content
 - *looking forward to the future
- The gospel message brings peace
 - *because it assures us of another kingdom
 - *because it assures us of a better future, in a better place

(d) *The Shield—Faith (v. 16)*

- Roman shields covered the entire body
- Flaming arrows were no danger
 - *would bounce off harmlessly to the ground
- Satan is a master at throwing flaming arrows
- He'll put things in our heads
 - "God isn't fair"
 - "You're poor, the guy down the street is wealthy"
 - "You're sick, the guy down the street is healthy"
 - "You're neighbor got a raise, and look at you"

- at you”
- “You’re friend got the big church, and look
- He’ll bring people across our paths
- *bitter people
 - *grippers and complainers
 - *people who say the wrong things and
- wound us deeply
- If you’re not careful, the fiery darts will begin to stick
- *you’ll begin to doubt God’s goodness
 - *you’ll begin to wonder if God is doing you
- wrong
- Faith looks beyond the circumstances and sees God
- *God’s love
 - *God’s goodness
- (e) *The Helmet—Salvation (v. 17)*
- Doubts can be good—sometimes
 - Every now and then—we should examine ourselves—to see if we are saved
 - But I’ve run into Christians who are consumed with doubts
 - *they get “saved” every revival service
 - *they’ve been baptized so many times
- they’re wrinkled
- The soldier’s helmet protected his head
- If we don’t know we’re saved—we are vulnerable to a mortal wound
- *a wound that takes us out of the battle for
- good
- If we don’t know we’re saved—we should make sure right now
- (f) *The Sword of the Spirit—The Word of God (v. 17)*
- The Roman soldier had but one offensive weapon
 - *the short, two-edged sword
 - *used to thrust at the enemy - As believers we have but two offensive weapons
 - *the first is the Sword of the Spirit
 - *the written Word of God
 - *empowered by the Holy Spirit

(g) Ultimately the spiritual armor is found in the Word of God

- We cannot battle Satan in our own strength
- Even Jesus did not battle Satan in his own strength
- We must spend time in the word of God
- We must know the word of God
- We must use the word of God
- Or we will fall victim to the enemy of God
- Defeated “Christians” are everywhere
- Defecting “Christians” are everywhere
- Christians who have left the battle field, to live for self and sin

(h) The Weapon of prayer

- Prayer is constant
- Prayer is empowered by the Holy Spirit
- Prayer is a crucial offensive weapon in spiritual warfare

Colossians—The Writer

I. Identity

- The writer is the Apostle Paul
- Some have questioned Pauline authorship on two grounds
 - (1) Writing style, vocabulary
 - (2) Subject matter
- Their arguments are silly, however
- “There is not a shred of evidence that the Pauline authorship of the whole or any part of this epistle was ever disputed until the nineteenth century” (Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 576).
 - (1) Every writer varies his subject matter
 - *according to the situation
 - (2) Every writer varies his writing style and vocabulary
 - *according to the subject matter
- The differences are not striking
- They are more than overcome by
 - (1) Internal evidence
 - *Paul claims to write the letter
 - (2) External evidence
 - *The early church fathers uniformly accepted Paul as the author

II. Setting

- Paul wrote this letter from Caesarea or Rome
- Paul was not the “father,” but the “grandfather” of the church at Colossae
- Most likely, Epaphras planted the church (Col 1:7)
- Most likely, Epaphras had been a student of Paul—in nearby Ephesus
 - (1) He was won to Christ through Paul’s preaching
 - (2) He was disciplined in Christ through Paul’s teaching
 - (3) He went back to his home town, and preached the gospel message
 - *starting the church
 - *serving the church as pastor
- Most likely Epaphras traveled to Paul
 - (1) To visit with Paul
 - (2) To ask Paul some doctrinal questions
 - (3) To get Paul’s help in dealing with some heretical teachings
- “We may surmise that Epaphras became a Christian through Paul’s Ephesian ministry, evangelized the neighboring region of Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis, and is now visiting Paul in prison to solicit his advice concerning a dangerous heresy threatening

the Colossian church” (Gundry, 418)

-Paul then wrote the letter—seeking to “counter the false teaching and to teach orthodox theology” (Melick, *Colossians*, 162)

-Scholars have long debated the nature of the “Colossian Heresy”

-It seems to be a strange blend of

(1) Early Gnostic speculation

(2) Jewish legalism

-The following characteristics seem clear

(1) An emphasis on “knowledge”

(2) A diminishing of Jesus’ person and work

(3) An attention to Jewish traditions and rituals

(4) A focus on angels

(5) Some engagement in ascetic practices

(6) A great deal of elitism (feelings of superiority)

-More than anything the syncretism of the Colossians was Paul’s chief concern

-All the teachings threatened the church’s doctrinal stability

-But the attacks on Jesus’ person and work were especially dangerous

-So Paul focuses his letter on the “centrality of Christ” (Melick, 162)

Colossians—The Date, Place, Purpose, Structure

I. The Date

-A.D. 58

II. The Place

-From Caesarea or *Rome*

-To *Colossae*

-Located about 100 miles east of Ephesus

-(See Gundry, p. 317)

-A fairly small city, compared to neighboring cities

*Laodicea

*Hierapolis

-But located on a main East-West road

III. The Purpose

-Paul's purpose is clear

(1) To quash a major heresy

(2) To affirm "the preeminence of Christ" in doctrine and practice

IV. The Structure

-We may divide Colossians into two major sections

(1) Doctrinal (1:1-2:23)

(2) Ethical (3:1-4:18)

-In part 1, Paul looks at

I. The Preeminence of Christ in Christian Theology (1:1-2:23)

-In part 2, Paul looks at

II. The Preeminence of Christ in Christian Living (3:1-4:18)

-The applications of Paul's outline are clear

(1) We must know what we believe

*and be able to defend it against false doctrine

(2) We must live what we believe

*and show the world that Jesus has changed our lives

Colossians—The Problems

I. A Created Being? (Col 1:15)

-The Apostle Paul writes

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation”

-Cultists have long used the word “firstborn” (*prototokos*) to attack Christ’s deity

-They argue that “firstborn” demands a “beginning”, a time when Christ actually came into existence

-They argue that Christ may be the primary creature in God’s universe, the first creature that God created, but he is still a creature

-Note these words from a Jehovah’s Witness publication

“According to the customary meaning of ‘firstborn,’ it indicates that Jesus is the eldest in Jehovah’s family of sons” (*Reasoning from the Scriptures*)

-Two matters are important here

(1) Clear passages of scripture should always be used to interpret difficult ones

*and there are many clear passages that teach Christ’s full deity

(2) The term “firstborn” (*prototokos*) has a much fuller meaning than the cultists admit

*it can mean “first in rank” as well as “first in time”

-Note these words from Wilhelm Michaelis (a liberal scholar)

“If the expression refers to the mediation of creation through Christ, it cannot be saying at the same time that He was created as the first creature. . . . What is meant is the unique supremacy of Christ over all creatures” (*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 6:878-879)

-Context supports “first in rank” as well

-Col 1:18 describes Christ as the “firstborn from the dead”

-Jesus is not the first to be resurrected—in time

-Jesus is the first to be resurrected—in rank

-He is far “superior” to all who were resurrected before him

-Note the following quotes

“*Firstborn* was a Hebraic-Jewish way of saying “specially honored” (Elwell and Yarbrough, *Encountering the New Testament*, 318)

“The expression ‘first-born’ does not primarily mean first in time, but in rank or preeminent” (Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 697)

“It is clear that the word is used here in the sense of ‘supreme over’” (Moo, 120)

-In context, “firstborn” stresses Christ’s supremacy over all creatures
 -He is the “Preeminent One,”

(1) Who brought all things into existence

(2) Who rules over all creation

II. An Incomplete Atonement? (Col 1:24)

-Paul writes,

“In my flesh I do my share on behalf of his body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions”

-Does Paul teach that Christ’s sufferings on Calvary were not enough?

-Does Paul teach that believers must in some way supplement Christ’s sufferings?

-The noun *thlipsis*, used here to describe Christ’s sufferings, does not refer to his sacrificial death on the cross

-Paul did not suffer redemptively—for himself or for the church

“It is significant that the term is never used of Christ’s redemptive work” (Melick, 239)

-Christ’s afflictions continue—in the sufferings of his people

“Christ does continue to suffer when Christians suffer for him”

(Norman Geisler, *Colossians*, The Bible Knowledge Commentary, II, 675).

-When any part of his body (the church) suffers, he suffers

“It is called Christ’s suffering, because all Christians are related to Christ. When we suffer, Christ feels it with us” (Life Application Bible, 2101)

Colossians—The Message

-The “preeminence of Christ” dominates Colossians’ message

I. The Preeminence of Christ in Christian Theology (1:1-2:23)

A. Jesus Is God (1:15)

-We can know God only as God reveals himself

-Jesus is the “image of the invisible God”

“In Christ the invisible became visible” (Melick, 215)

-Jesus is the visible expression of God

-Jesus can reveal God perfectly, because he is God

B. Jesus Is Creator (1:16)

-Jesus made all things

C. Jesus Is Sustainer (1:17)

-Jesus holds all things together

D. Jesus Is Reconciler (1:18-23)

-Jesus is “head” of his church

-Jesus alone can bring together sinful man and Holy God

-By nature—the sinner is at war with God

-Through Christ’s blood—the sinner can be at peace with God

-Believers are to “continue in the faith”

(1) Not captured by false teaching

(2) But holding on to the true gospel

E. Jesus Is the Substance of Paul’s Message (1:24-2:7)

-Paul’s ministry is a “stewardship” from God (1:25)

-God entrusted Paul with a message—to share with God’s people

-That message focused on Jesus

“Christ in you, the hope of glory” (1:27)

-Paul desired that the Colossians have

(1) “full assurance of understanding” (2:2)

(2) “true knowledge” (2:2)

(3) “stability” of faith (2:5)

-To do so, they must be “firmly rooted” and “built up” in Jesus (2:7)

-Stable believers are not troubled by false doctrine

-Stable believers are not troubled by false teachers

-Stable believers are not running around—looking for some new thing to make them special

-Stable believers

(1) Know what they believe

(2) Know who they believe

F. Jesus Is the Answer to Every Heresy (2:8-23)

-Two dangers plagued the Colossian church

(1) *Legalism* equates human traditions with scriptural truth

*tries to enforce those traditions on others

*judges those who do not abide by those traditions

(2) *Syncretism* is the “mixing of incompatible religious ideas and practices” (Dean Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament*, 215).

*a syncretist—will equate the “Great Spirit” and the Holy Spirit

*a syncretist—will incorporate Buddhist chants into Christian worship

*a syncretist—will pray to Jesus and use traditional spells

-(Note that much of the below is adapted from Rodney Webb and Fred Creason, *Missional Congregations in Wyoming*, 97-105)

-Paul was willing to compromise on nonessentials

-But Paul “draws a line in the sand” on essential matters

-He confronts the Colossian heresy, with its legalism and syncretism

(1) Most likely, there were Jewish elements

(2) Most likely, there were Gnostic elements

(3) Most likely, there were Christian elements

(4) Most likely there was a “syncretistic stew” (Flemming, 215)

-The Colossians were similar to post-modern America

(1) They felt free to pick and choose

(2) They felt comfortable with a religion of their own making

(3) They were quite happy to mix in a little Christianity, so long as it didn’t cramp their style

1. Paul’s Fear

-Paul shares his fear of the Colossian heresy (2:8)

“See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ”

-False teachers capture the unsuspecting

- (1) We all want to be healthy, so let's eat a "Christian diet"
- (2) We all want our kids to turn out well, so let's educate God's way
- (3) We all want to worship God, so let's go to church on the right day
- (4) We all want to know the future, so let's listen to the super prophets
- (5) We all want to know the truth, so let's listen to the super teachers

- We can be feasting at God's table one moment
- We can be sifting through Satan's trash the next
 - (1) Wanting to feel special
 - (2) Looking for something more
 - (3) We are captured by false teaching

2. Paul's message

- (1) *Jesus is God (2:9)*
- (2) *Jesus is Man (2:9)*
- (3) *Jesus is Lord (2:10)*
- (4) *Jesus is Risen—Bodily (2:12)*
- (5) *Jesus is Savior (2:13-14)*
- (6) *Jesus is Conqueror (2:15)*
- (7) *We are complete in Jesus (2:10)*
- (8) *We are regenerated—born again—in Jesus (2:11-13)*
- (9) *We are forgiven in Jesus (2:13)*
- (10) *We are free in Jesus (2:14)*

*Jesus has canceled our spiritual debts

*We dare not look for anything else to free our souls

-Why do people turn to religious rites and rituals?

-Why do people search for "works religions"?

-They cannot believe that they are free from the debt of sin

-They are looking for some other way to satisfy God's demands

3. Paul's Challenge

- (1) *Don't let others judge you (2:16-17)*

*you are free to eat what you want

*you are free to worship when you want

(2) *Don't let others defraud you (2:18-19)*

*through ascetic practices

*through angel worship

*through visions and dreams

(3) *Don't let others intimidate you (2:20-23)*

*with their man-made rules and regulations

-Works religion looks good to men

-Ascetic practices look good to men

-But they are powerless to defeat sin

“but are of no value against fleshly indulgence” (v. 23)

-Religious rules cannot change your heart

-Acts of self-discipline cannot change your heart

-Only Jesus can do that

II. The Preeminence of Christ in Christian Living (3:1-4:18)

-We are to live like we belong to Jesus

A. Believers Are New Persons in Christ (3:1-4)

-We are “dead” to sin

-We are “alive” in Christ

-This does not mean that we are sinless

“For Paul, being dead to sin did not mean that persons did not sin”
(Melick, 287)

-It does mean that we are changed dramatically

(1) with new life

(2) with new power

-It does mean that we are no longer helpless slaves to sin

-It does mean that we are no longer headed to hell (eternal judgment) for sin

B. Believers Are to Live as New Persons in Christ (3:5-4:6)

-In one sense, the “old self” is dead

-In another sense, the “old self” must be laid aside on a daily basis

“much as one would strip off a filthy, tattered garment” (Creason, 35)

-In one sense, the “new self” is alive

-In another sense, the “new self” must be renewed on a daily basis

“Christians must choose to live consistently with their spiritual experience” (Melick, 288)

-If we are born again

- (1) Christ lives within us
- (2) We have a new nature, with new life and new power
- If we are living in this world
 - (1) Sin lives within us
 - (2) We have the old nature, with its old desires
- A battle rages in our souls
- A battle that will not end until we put off this old body—for good
 - (1) At death
 - (2) At Christ's return
- As believers, we are to live as new persons in Christ
 - (1) In our sex life
 - (2) With our temper
 - (3) With our tongue
 - (4) In our relationships (at home, in the community)
- “Wives, be subject to your husbands” (3:18)
- “Husbands, love your wives” (3:19)
- “Children, be obedient to your parents” (3:20)
- “Fathers, do not exasperate your children” (3:21)
- “Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters” (3:22)
- “Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness” (4:1)
- “Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity” (4:5)

Philippians—The Writer, Date, Place, Purpose, Structure

I. The Writer

-The Apostle Paul

II. The Date

-About *A.D.* 58

III. The Place

-From Rome or Caesarea

-To the church at Philippi

-In the Roman province of Macedonia

-Where Paul had planted a church, in Acts 16

*on his Second Missionary Journey

-Where Paul was beaten and imprisoned

-Where Paul had led his jailor to Christ

IV. The Purpose

-A *very personal letter* from Paul to his favorite church

“The church was in a sense his best-loved church, for it entered more sympathetically into his sufferings and needs than any other church”

(Thiessen, *Introduction to the N.T.*, 247)

-A thank-you for a financial gift

-A warning against

(1) The tendency to division

(2) The danger of Judaizers

V. The Structure

-A very intimate letter

-In the beginning—personal matters (1:1-26)

-In the middle—personal matters (2:19-30)

-In the conclusion—personal matters (4:4-20)

-In between, some

(1) *Warnings against pride (2:1-18)*

*using Christ as example of humility

(2) *Warnings against Judaizers (3:1-21)*

*using Paul as example of biblical faith

Philippians—the Message

I. Some Personal Matters (Phil 1:1-26)

(1) *Paul's confidence in the Philippians (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”

(2) *Paul's desire to exalt Christ, in life or death (1:20-21)*

“Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death” (1:20)

“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain” (1:21)

II. Warnings against Pride (2:1-18)

-The Philippians besetting sin—pride

(1) A pride that led to selfishness

(2) A selfishness that led to disunity

(1) *Paul's desire for the Philippians—unselfish humility (2:1-4)*

“being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose” (2:2)

“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves”

(2:3)

(2) *Paul's example for the Philippians—Jesus Christ (2:5-12)*

-Stressing Christ's humiliation (2:6-8)

*The phrase, “but emptied himself” has been much discussed

*Comes from the Greek word *kenoo* (from which we get *kenosis*)

*Does not mean that Christ forfeited his divine nature

(1) He was God—before he became man

(2) He remained God—after he became man

*Does mean that Christ gave up much of his divine glory

*Does mean that Christ gave up the exercise of much of his divine power

*Christ veiled his glory—by taking on human flesh

*Christ limited his power—by taking on human flesh

*Christ did his miracles through the Holy Spirit's power

*not his own power

-Stressing Christ's exaltation (2:9-11)

“so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow . . . and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord”

*a moment of great joy for those who worship Jesus

*a moment of great (and eternal) defeat for those who refuse to worship Jesus

III. Some Personal Matters (2:19-30)

(1) *Paul's praise of Timothy (2:19-23)*

*who Paul hoped to send shortly

*a truly humble man

*a truly unselfish man

*a truly good example for the Philippians to follow

“For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus” (vv. 20-21)

(2) *Paul's gratitude for Epaphroditus (2:25-30)*

*who Paul would send with this letter

*who had gotten sick in delivering the Philippians gift to Paul

*who was spared by God, much to Paul's joy

IV. Warnings against Judaizers (3:1-21)

(1) *Paul's description of the Judaizers (3:1-3)*

*proud of their Jewish credentials

*strongest possible attacks

“beware of the dogs”

“beware of the evil workers”

“beware of the false circumcision”

(2) *Paul's description of himself (3:4-16)*

*shares his Jewish credentials

*surrenders all his Jewish credentials for Christ

“But whatever things were gain to me, those I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ” (v. 7)

(3) *Paul's description of the Judaizers (3:18-21)*

*focused on earthly things

*when they should be focused on eternal things

V. Some Personal Matters (4:1-20)

(1) *Urging friends to get along (vv. 1-3)*

“I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. Yes, I ask you also true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life”

*Paul's respect for these women

*Paul's grief that they are feuding with each other

*Paul's longing that they get back together—a unity in Christ

(2) *Encouraging friends not to worry (vv. 4-9)*

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God (v. 6)

“And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (v. 7)

(3) Thanking friends for their generous gift (4:10-23)

“Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am” (v. 11)

1 Timothy—The Writer

I. Identity

-The Apostle Paul

-Many liberal “scholars” attack Pauline authorship

- (1) Say 1 Timothy was written by a pseudonymous writer (a writer using a false name)
- (2) Say 1 Timothy was written in the later first or early second century A.D., long after Paul’s death
- (3) Say 1 Timothy was written by a second century Christian, who sought to use Paul’s name and authority to attack Gnosticism

-These liberal scholars use the following arguments

- (1) The vocabulary is different from Paul’s vocabulary
- (2) The writing style is different from Paul’s writing style
- (3) The Gnosticism described developed much later than Paul’s day
*the late first and second centuries A. D.
- (4) The historical setting does not fit the book of Acts
- (5) The church structure described is far too advanced for the first century church

-These liberal charges must be rejected

- (1) The letter claims to be Pauline
“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ” (1 Tim 1:1)
- (2) The early church fathers viewed the book as Pauline
“The testimony of the church fathers, beginning with Irenaeus in the late second century, uniformly attributes these epistles to Paul” (Blomberg, *From Pentecost to Patmos*, 346)
*the only exceptions—Marcion and Tatian—who rejected the books because they did not like their “orthodox” content
*both Marcion and Tatian were Gnostics, whose views were rejected by the church
- (3) All of the liberal objections can be explained
 - (1) *Changes in writing style*
*a change in subject matter
 - (1) what Paul is writing about
 - (2) who Paul is writing to
 - (3) the apostle’s purpose
 *a change in *amanuenses*—the person who wrote down Paul’s words
 - (1) the apostle would have dictated the message
 - (2) the amanuenses would have written down Paul’s message

- (3) the apostle would have approved the letters
- (4) the apostle would have given more freedom to some writers than to others
- (5) the apostle would have especially trusted someone like Luke

(2) *Attacks on Gnosticism*

- *Paul was battling early Gnosticism
- *Paul saw the dangers long before they developed fully
- *Paul's insights were aided by the Holy Spirit
- *Paul's insights were shared by Peter, Jude, John
- *Paul's insights would come to pass, in another generation

(3) *Historical setting*

- *The Book of Acts focuses on the work of Jesus in the expansion of his church
- *Acts does not address every doctrinal conflict or administrative decision that is made during its coverage period

(4) *Church structure and organization*

- *we know little of church organization, outside the Pastoral Epistles (1, 2 Timothy, Titus)
- *the Pastorals focused on church structure, Paul's other epistles did not
- *Paul was nearing the end of his life
- *Paul knew that church structure was essential to church health
- *Paul, quite naturally, turned his attention from planting to organizing
- *the structure is remarkably simple compared to second century developments

II. Setting

A. Circumstances

- This is best guess
- Paul left Timothy for a short time at Ephesus to strengthen the local church

B. Recipient

- Paul wrote to Timothy, his "son in the faith"
- Timothy may have been converted under Paul's ministry
"but the evidence is not clear" (Lea and Griffin, p. 51)
- Timothy had traveled with Paul

- Timothy could be timid at times
- But he had proven himself loyal to the apostle, and faithful to Christ
- Timothy would have preferred to travel with Paul
- But Paul had different plans—to leave Timothy at Ephesus for a short time

III. Date

- Traditionally, A.D. 64-65
- Late 55-Early 56 A.D. during the 3rd Missionary Journey

IV. Place

- No certainty

V. Destination

- A personal letter
- Written to Timothy at Ephesus

V. Purpose

To encourage and direct Timothy in his Assignment at Ephesus

- The key passages: 1 Timothy 1:5 and 3:15

“Now the goal of our instruction is love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith.”

“I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth”

- The key theme: Developing a Loving Church: How Believer’s Are to Conduct Themselves in the Household of God

1 Timothy—The Message

I. The Minister's Duty (1:1-11)

(1) *The godly minister must condemn the false* (vv. 1-7)

*those who are seeking something new (vv. 3-4)

*those who are focusing on useless things (vv. 4-6)

*those who are minimizing purity (vv. 5-6)

*those who are seeking earthly praise (v. 7)

(2) *The godly minister must affirm the true* (vv. 8-11)

II. The Minister's Privilege (1:12-20)

(1) *The godly minister must be thankful for his call* (vv. 12-17)

(2) *The godly minister must continue in his call* (vv. 18-20)

III. Behavior in the Church—Prayer (2:1-8)

(1) *We should pray for the ruling classes* (vv. 1-2)

“for kings and all who are in high positions” (v. 2)

(2) *We should pray for freedom to worship* (v. 2)

“that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way”

(3) *We should pray for people to get saved* (vv. 3-7)

(4) *We should pray in purity and unity* (v. 8)

IV. Behavior in the Church—Women (2:9-15)

(1) *Godly women are modest in appearance* (vv. 9-10)

*women should minimize the external

(1) not saying that women should ignore the external

(2) is saying that women should not focus on the external

(3) godly women try to give the right impression

(4) godly women do not seek to flaunt their wealth

“not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire”

(5) godly women do not seek to attract the lust of men

“in respectful apparel, with modesty and self-control”

“with what is proper for women who profess godliness”

*women should maximize the internal

(1) developing their inner character

(2) giving more attention to who they are than to what they look like

(2) *Godly women are submissive to authorities* (vv. 11-14)

*men and women play different roles in the church setting

*scripture mandates male authority in the local church

*godly women acknowledge male authority in the church

“Women are not to hold the authoritative church teaching role because that is not a role for which they were created”

(Blomberg, p. 363)

- *there is a contextual element to what Paul is saying
- *Greek and Roman culture differs greatly from American culture
- *many things that were scandalous in Greek and Roman culture are not scandalous in American culture
- *in some NT settings—women prophesied
 - “Every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head” (1 Cor 11:5)
 - “On the next day we departed and came to Caesarea, and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied” (Acts 21:8-9)
- *in some NT settings—women taught
 - “He (Apollos) began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately” (Acts 18:26-27)
- *the applications will differ from culture to culture
 - “Paul consistently refrained from appointing a woman to a place of authoritative teaching responsibility in a congregation” (Lea and Griffin, 99)
 - “The best evidence suggests that it refers to the authority a teacher has over those who are learning” (Lea and Griffin, 99)
 - “There is no intent by Paul to ban all teaching by all women at all times. . . . The teaching Paul commended for women is more informal and less official” (Lea and Griffin, 99)
- *the principles are timeless--to be practiced in every culture
 - There seems to be a difference between teaching under authority, and teaching with authority
 - Women can certainly teach women and children
 - A woman can even teach in a mixed group, in my opinion, so long as she is teaching under male authority

(3) *Godly women are content with circumstances (v. 15)*

“But women will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self restraint”

- *one of the toughest passages in scripture
- *several possible interpretations
 - (1) “She will be saved, though she must bear children”
 - *pain in childbearing is part of the curse

curse *for Christian women, there is hope beyond the

(2) “She will be saved, through her childbearing”

*woman would bring the Messiah into the world

*for Christian women, there is hope beyond this

life

(3) “She will be saved, in her childbearing”

*woman would be most responsible for bearing

and rearing children

*for Christian woman, there is fulfillment in this

life

“Most likely Paul references childbearing because it is a universal example of the God-given difference in the roles of men and women” (Hughes and Chapel, p. 72)

*in context, women should not hold the office of

pastor

*godly women find contentment in who they are

(in the roles that God has given them)

*godly women do not chafe under male leadership

in the church

V. Leaders in the Church—Pastors (3:1-7)

(1) *The pastorate is a privileged position (3:1)*

*a desired office

*a good work

(2) *The pastorate is a responsible position (3:2-7)*

*those who seek it should have a good reputation (v. 2)

-inside the church

*those who seek it should have a good marriage (v. 2)

(1) the phrase, “the husband of one wife”

(2) the meaning, “a one-woman kind of man”

(3) the many interpretations

*a pastor must be a married man

single men need not apply

*a pastor cannot be married to more than one woman at a time

polygamist men need not apply

*a pastor can only marry one woman in a lifetime

widowers need not apply

*a pastor must be married to one woman for as long as she

lives

- divorced and remarried men need not apply
- *a pastor should be faithful to his wife
 - sexually immoral men need not apply
 - (4) some concluding thoughts
 - *clearly forbids polygamy
 - *clearly forbids immorality
 - “The man is truly a one-woman man. There are no other women in his life. He is totally faithful. He does not flirt. There are no dalliances” (Hughes)
 - *may forbid divorce and remarriage
 - if so, the wording is unclear
 - when the wording is unclear, we must be careful
 - when the wording is unclear, we must show grace
 - “While this can be Paul’s meaning, the language is too general in its statement to make the interpretation certain” (Lea and Griffin, p. 109)
 - “Had Paul clearly meant to prohibit divorce, he could have said it unmistakably by using the Greek word for divorce” (Lea and Griffin, p. 110)
 - *those who seek it should have the proper gifting
 - (v. 2)
 - *those who seek it should have the proper character (vv. 2-4)
 - *those who seek it should have the proper family life (vv. 4-5)
 - *those who seek it should have the proper experience (v. 6)
 - (1) men with a “track record”
 - (2) no new converts
 - (3) the ever-present danger of pride
 - *those who seek it should have a good reputation
 - (v. 7)
 - outside the church

VI. Leaders in the Church—Deacons (3:8-13)

(1) *The Deaconate is a responsible position (vv. 8-12)*

*deacons must have proper character (v. 8)

(1) a special focus on the “tongue”

- (2) a special focus on finances
- *deacons must have proper doctrine (v. 9)
- *deacons must have proper experience (v. 10)
- *deacons must have a proper reputation (v. 10)
- *deacons must have a proper marriage (vv. 11-12)
- *deacons must have a proper family (v. 12)
- (2) *The Deaconate is a privileged position (v. 13)*
 - *it brings “high standing” before men
 - *it brings “great confidence” before God
 - The deacon role is a “servant” role
 - Deacons “serve” the pastor and the church
 - Deacons must understand the truths of scripture
- “hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience” (v. 9)
 - Deacons are not required to possess the gift of teaching
 - They are not required to exercise a teaching role in the church

VII. Beliefs in the Church--Doctrine (4:1-10)

- (1) *Sound doctrine is imperiled (vv. 1-5)*
- (2) *Sound doctrine must be preserved (vv. 6-10)*

VIII. The Minister’s Relationships (5:1-16)

- (1) *The minister must relate well to older men (v. 1)*
- (2) *The minister must relate well to younger men (v. 1)*
- (3) *The minister must relate well to older women (v. 2)*
- (4) *The minister must relate well to younger women (v. 2)*
 - “with all purity”
- (5) *The minister must relate well to needy widows (vv. 3-16)*

IX. The Minister’s Protections (5:17-25)

- (1) *The minister should be provided for financially (vv. 17-19)*
- (2) *The minister should be protected from false accusations (vv.19-20)*
 - “Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses”
- (3) *The minister should be protected from hasty ordination (vv. 21-25)*
 - “Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands” (v. 22)

IX. The Minister’s Behavior (6:1-25)

- (1) *The minister should serve others (vv. 1-2)*
- (2) *The minister should not be greedy (vv. 3-10)*
 - “But godliness with contentment is great gain” (v. 6)
 - “If we have food and clothing, with these we will be content” (v. 8)
 - “Those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and

- destruction” (v. 9)
- (3) *The minister should flee evil (v. 11)*
 - (4) *The minister should pursue good (v. 12)*
 - (5) *The minister should endure to the end (vv. 12-16)*
 - (6) *The minister should preach hard (vv. 17-19)*
 - (7) *The minister should stand guard (vv. 20-21)*
 - “guard the deposit that is entrusted to you” (v. 20)

2 Timothy

I. The Writer

- The Apostle Paul
- Attacked by liberals
- Able defended by conservatives
- (See 1 Timothy discussion)

II. The Date

- 2 Timothy was likely written A.D. 60-62
- *shortly before Paul's martyrdom under Nero

III. The Place

- Written from a prison cell in Rome
- Written in bleak conditions
 - *chained
 - *cold and damp
 - *hard to find
- Perhaps written from the Mamertine Prison
- “a wretched dungeon even by ancient standards” (Blomberg, 375)

IV. The Circumstances

- Relationally
 - *Timothy is in Asia and is discouraged in the Ministry
 - *Paul desires to encourage Timothy in the Ministry
- Socially
 - *Paul's Roman imprisonment may have Timothy questioning his association with Paul
 - *Chapter 1:8 and 1:5 may indicate Timothy's present situation
 - *Anyone associated with Paul may be charged and convicted of Treason
- Congregationally
 - *False teaching continues its widespread action within the local church

V. The Purpose

- 2 Timothy is a very personal letter
- Paul wrote to Timothy, his “son in the faith,” seeking to strengthen Timothy for ministry
- “The purpose of the letter is to charge Timothy to persevere in the ministry of the gospel” (Hughes, p. 170)
- Paul has seen Timothy's gifting
- Paul has prepared Timothy for the ministry
- Paul is writing to encourage Timothy to continue faithful in the service of sound teaching in the Lord

VI. Message

-Faithfulness in the Face of Suffering is the main Theme of 2 Timothy

-The Gospel is never more than a generation from extinction

-Suffering is the reality for of faithfulness to the Lord

I. Greeting (1:1-2)

II. Thanksgiving (1:3-5)

III. Body (1:6-4:18)

A. Rekindle the Spiritual Gift (1:6-18)

a. Reminder on Salvation (1:9-12)

i. Teaches about God

- 1. God saved us**
- 2. God called us in Christ**

ii. Teaches about Christ

- 1. Christ abolished death**
- 2. Christ revealed life and immortality through the Gospel**

iii. Teaches about Paul's Relationship to the Gospel

- 1. He was appointed as**
 - a. Preacher**
 - b. Apostle**
 - c. Teacher**
- 2. He suffers because of the Gospel and is not ashamed**

iv. Teaches about not being ashamed

- 1. Not ashamed because Paul knows Christ**
- 2. Not ashamed because he is convinced that God is able to keep that which has been entrusted to him.**

b. How not to be Ashamed (1:13-15)

i. Retain the Standard of Sound Teaching

ii. Guard the Treasure Entrusted to You

- 1. Gift of the Spirit**
- 2. His Ministry**

c. Examples of Faithfulness (1:15-18)

i. Negative

- 1. Phygelus**
- 2. Hermogenes**

ii. Positive-Onesiphorus

1. Refreshed Paul
2. Sought Paul Out

B. Suffering for Christ (2:1-13)

- a. Be Strong
 - i. Command
 - ii. Seeks him to allow himself to be strengthened
 1. In the grace of Jesus
 2. In the Apostles Doctrine
- b. Entrust the Truth to Faithful Teachers
- c. Take Your Share in Suffering (2:3)
- d. Teach Suffering and Self-Discipline (2:4-13)
 - i. The Practice of Suffering and Self Discipline
 - ii. The Reward of Suffering
 - iii. The Example of Suffering: Paul
 1. Not to be avoided
 2. To be emulated
 - iv. The Confession of Self Discipline and Suffering (2:11-13)

C. Timothy's Responsibilities (2:14-26)

- a. Teach Sound Doctrine
- b. Present Himself Approved of God
- c. Avoid Empty Teaching (2:16-18)
- d. Abstain from Wickedness (2:19-22)
- e. Refuse Ignorant Speculation (2:23)
- f. Abstain from Quarreling
- g. Be Kind to Everyone (2:24-26)

D. The Minister and the Last Days (3:1-17)

- a. Realize Difficult Times will Come
- b. The Activities of People in the Last Days (3:5-8)
- c. The Result of Evil Activities (3:9)
- d. The Man of God's Response to Evil
 - i. Follow Sound Apostolic Teaching
 - ii. Continue to be Faithful in Persecution
 - iii. Equip Himself for Good Works

E. Paul's Final Charge to Timothy (4:1-5)

- a. Preach the Word
 - i. Be Prepared
 - ii. Correct People
 - iii. Rebuke Wrongdoing
 - iv. Encourage and Exhort

- b. Do All with Great Patience and Careful Instruction**
- c. Recognize**
 - i. Men will not put up with sound doctrine**
 - ii. Men will gather teachers who say what they want to hear**
 - iii. Men will turn from the truth**
- d. So...**
 - i. Keep your head in all situations**
 - ii. Endure Hardships**
 - iii. Do the work of an evangelist**
 - iv. Discharge your duties**

F. Paul's Belief in His End (4:6-8)

IV. Closing (4:9-22)

Titus

I. The Writer

- The Apostle Paul
- Attacked by liberals
- Able defended by conservatives
- (See 1 Timothy discussion)

II. The Date

- Likely on the return trip from the 3rd Missionary Journey
- Around A.D. Mid 57

III. Place

- Anywhere along the return trip of the 3rd Missionary Journey

IV. Destination

- To Titus, Paul's apostolic "representative"
 - (1) a Greek
 - (2) a likely convert of Paul's
 - (3) a close companion of Paul's
 - (4) a trusted partner in ministry
 - (5) a much stronger personality than Timothy
 - *not needing the encouragement
 - *better able to deal with conflict
- On the island of Crete
 - (1) a tough group of people
 - (2) a tough place to minister
- "One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, 'Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons'" (1:12)
- "This testimony is true. For this reason reprove them severely" (1:13)

V. Purpose

- A "Pastoral Epistle"
- Titus has been described as "a manual on church order"
- The key passage: Titus 1:5
- "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you"
- The purpose: to "order" the church

VI. The Message

- (1) *An orderly church must have qualified leaders (1:1-9)*
- "The overseer must be above reproach as God's steward" (1:7)
- (2) *An orderly church must have sound doctrine (1:10-16)*
- "Reprove them severely so that they may be sound in the faith" (1:7)
- (3) *In an orderly church, members must fulfill their God-ordained roles (2:1-15)*

- *older men
- *older women
- *younger women
- *younger men
- *slaves

(4) In an orderly church, members must live in a godly manner (3:1-15)

“So that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds” (3:8)