



- b. Conversion and Christian Life
    - i. Conversion records: Acts 9:3-19; 22:6-16; 26:12-18; read Gal 1:23.
    - ii. *Paul became a zealous Christian and apostle of the Christian Church.*
    - iii. (Next lesson: Paul's conversion. You may prepare by reading in Acts.)
2. What are the significant aspects of Paul's life for the spread of the gospel?
- a. Paul's sudden and radical conversion combined with his morality and zeal provides a strong apologetic argument against those who say that Christianity is based on mythology, i.e. the invention of the human mind.
  - b. Paul's background qualified him for his mission: he was a Jew among Jews and a Roman among Romans, grown up in Gentile Tarsus. He was well acquainted with the various cultures and languages (Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic; Acts 22:37.40; 26:14; Latin spoken in Spain; Rom 15:24). Read 1 Cor 9:19-22.
3. Read the 'Table of Contents' in your Bible: Which 'books' are from Paul?
- a. Missionary Epistles: Galatians, 1&2 Thessalonians, 1&2 Corinthians, Romans
  - b. Prison Epistles: Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, Philippians
  - c. Pastoral Epistles: 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus

4. Study the chart with the chronology of Paul. Compare Paul's life with yours:
- a. Are there similarities with Paul's life?
    - i. Did you also have a certain conversion experience like Paul?
    - ii. Are you as zealous as Paul? What are you zealous for?
  - b. What is so special about Paul's life?
    - i. How far does your Christian testimony or ministry reach?
    - ii. How much importance do you attach to Christian writings?
  - c. What can we learn from Paul's life?
    - i. Are you prepared for your ministry as Paul was for his?
    - ii. Can you wait and endure in your ministry as Paul did in his?
  - d. Do you find Paul's life attractive and exemplary?
    - i. Are you inspired or encouraged by Paul's biography?
    - ii. Read Phil 3:17. Can you follow Paul's example?

Optional Readings:

Bruce, Frederick Fyvie. *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000, pp. 1-73, 475.

Hawthorne, Gerald F., Ralph P. Martin and Daniel G. Reid. *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Downers Grove: InterVarsityPress, 1993, pp. 115-123, 681-687.

Ramsay, William M. *St. Paul the Traveler and Roman Citizen*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2001, pp. 34-49.

Next Lesson: Paul's Conversion. Prepare by reading Acts 9:3-19; 22:6-16; 26:12-18.

### Chronological Chart: Life and Letters of Paul

Year		~ Paul's Age
33	Conversion on the road to Damascus ...Lesson 2	35
33-36	Paul in Arabia and Damascus (Gal 1:17)	35-38
36	First visit to Jerusalem (Gal 1:18)	38
36-47	Paul in Cilicia and Syria (Gal 1:21)	38-49
47	Second visit to Jerusalem (Gal 2:1)	49
47-48	First missionary journey ...Lesson 3	49-50
48	<i>Letter to the Galatians</i> ...Lesson 4	50
49	Council at Jerusalem (Acts 15:2)	51
49-52	Second missionary journey ...Lesson 5	51-54
50	<i>Letters to the Thessalonians</i> ...Lesson 6	52
52	Third visit to Jerusalem (Acts 18:21f.)	54
52-57	Third missionary journey ...Lesson 7	54-59
54-56	<i>Letters to the Corinthians</i> ...Lesson 8	56-58
57	<i>Letter to the Romans</i> ...Lesson 9	59
57	Last visit to Jerusalem (Acts 21:15)	59
57-59	Imprisonment in Caesarea ...Lesson 10	59-61
60-62	House-arrest in Rome; <i>Prison Epistles</i> ...Lesson 11	62-64
63-65	<i>Pastoral Epistles</i> ...Lesson 12	65-67
~65	Second trial; execution	~67

## Lesson 2: Paul's Conversion

Objective: The second lesson recalls Paul's conversion experience. It upholds the event as vivid history and sets Paul on stage as an apostle.

Handout: Synopsis, Reference List

### Outline:

1. What exactly happened to Saul / Paul that converted him to Christ?
  - a. Study the synopsis and gather the information provided (~10 min.)
    - i. Appearance of Christ recorded in all accounts (1-3)

	Acts 9:	Acts 22:	Acts 26:
They were on the way to Damascus.	3	6	12
Saul saw the light and fell to the ground.	3-4	7	14
Dialog between Saul and the Lord.	4-6	7-8, 10	14-18

- ii. Ananias' service recorded in two accounts (1-2)

	Acts 9:	Acts 22:
Paul was blinded and led to Damascus.	8-9	11
Ananias was led to Paul to heal him.	17-19	12
Paul had a vision about Ananias.	12	-
Ananias had a vision about Paul.	10-16	-
Ananias was respected by the Jews.	-	12

iii. Records of Paul's apostolic call (1-3)

1 – The Lord told Ananias that Saul is his “chosen instrument”. (Acts 9:15)

2 – Ananias told Saul that he is God's “chosen witness”. (Acts 22:14-15)

3 – The Lord told Saul that he is his “appointed servant and witness”. (Acts 26:16)

=> *Paul's apostolic call is reinforced from three different perspectives.*

b. Divide into 3 groups (i-iii). Prepare (~5 min.) and retell in your own words:

i. Retell what happened to Saul until they arrived in Damascus.

ii. Summarize or even recite the dialogue between Saul and Jesus.

iii. Retell about Ananias' visit, healing service and words to Paul.

c. How do you explain the differences between the 3 accounts?

i. Luke records the event as a historical narrative. He gathered information from both Paul *and* Ananias. He mentions the two visions to Paul and Ananias and so shows the reader how God brought them together.

ii. Paul defends himself before the Jewish crowd in Jerusalem. His emphasis is on Ananias, a Jew who is respected among the Jews. Ananias is introduced as a witness whom the crowd may believe.

iii. Paul defends himself before King Agrippa. His emphasis is on the divine revelation and so he appeals to an even higher authority than Agrippa.

How can he disobey God or even “kick against him”? (Acts 26:14)

2. Reread the dialogue between Saul / Paul and the Lord Jesus (1-3):

Jesus: “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?”

Saul: “Who are you, Lord?”

Jesus: “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.”

- a. Whom did Paul persecute and why does Jesus say ‘me’? Read Luke 10:16.
  - b. Did Paul then learn about the ‘body of Christ’? (cf. Rom 12:5; Eph 1:23)
3. Reconsider the light (and the voice) that appeared to Saul and blinded him:
- a. When (and why) did Paul refer to the appearance? Read 1 Cor 9:1; 15:8f.
  - b. Did Paul then learn that God lives in ‘unapproachable light’? (cf. 1 Tim 6:16)
4. What impact does Paul’s experience have on your own Christian life?
- a. Do you accept Paul’s defense when he says that he is an apostle? (Why?)
  - b. (If yes...) what is your attitude towards Paul’s letters? Do you read them?
  - c. Do you think that a call experience is a must for Christian ministry today?
  - d. Do you think that experience complements (or adds to) biblical revelation?

Optional Readings:

Bruce, Frederick Fyvie. *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000, pp. 74-94.

Hawthorne, Gerald F., Ralph P. Martin and Daniel G. Reid. *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Downers Grove: InterVarsityPress, 1993, pp. 156-163.

Next Lesson: First Missionary Journey. Read Acts 13:1-14:27 in preparation.

1 – Luke’s Narrative (Acts 9:3-19)	2 – Paul to the Crowd (Acts 22:6-16)	3 – Paul before Agrippa (Acts 26:12-18)
<p>3 As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. 4 He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” 5 “Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked. “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” he replied. 6 “Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.” 7 The men travelling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. 8 Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. 9 For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything. 10 In Damascus there was a disciple named <b>Ananias</b>. The Lord called to him in a vision, “Ananias!” “Yes, Lord,” he answered. 11 The Lord told him, “Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named</p>	<p>6 “About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. 7 I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, ‘Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?’ 8 ‘Who are you, Lord?’ I asked. ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,’ he replied. 9 My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me. 10 ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ I asked. ‘Get up,’ the Lord said, ‘and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.’ 11 My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me. 12 A man named <b>Ananias</b> came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there. 13 He stood beside me and said, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ And at that very moment I was able to</p>	<p>12 “On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. 13 About noon, O King, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. 14 We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ 15 Then I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,’ the Lord replied. 16 ‘Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. 17 I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them 18 to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that</p>

<p>Saul, for he is praying. 12 In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.” 13 “Lord,” Ananias answered, “I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. 14 And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.” 15 But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. 16 I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.” 17 Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord – Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here – has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” 18 Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptised, 19 and after taking some food, he regained his strength.</p>	<p>see him. 14 Then he said: ‘The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. 15 You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. 16 And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptised and wash your sins away, calling on his name.’”</p>	<p>they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.””</p>
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### **Lesson 3: First Missionary Journey**

Objective: The student should become familiar with the steps and places of Paul's first missionary journey. The events described may develop our understanding of the Christian mission today.

Handouts: Bible Map 1, Reference List

#### **Outline:**

1. Read or scan briefly Acts 13:1-14:27; trace the journey in the map and describe:

e. **Syrian Antioch**                      Acts 13:1-3

In Antioch was Paul's home church; it was the established church beside Jerusalem.

The city was the Roman administration center of the province of Syria.

f. **Seleucia**                              Acts 13:4

Paul, Barnabas and John Mark set sail for Cyprus from the harbor of Seleucia to...

g. **Salamis**                              Acts 13:5

... on the east coast of Cyprus, where they preached in the Jewish synagogues.

h. **Paphos**                              Acts 13:6-12

They went through 'whole' Cyprus (= to all synagogues?) until they reached Paphos at the southwestern coast. Here they met Elymas the sorcerer, a friend of the Roman governor Sergius Paulus. They rebuked (and blinded) Elymas and so the governor believed. From the harbor of Paphos, they sailed northwards to...

i. **Perga** Acts 13:13

... in the Roman province of Pamphylia, southern part of modern Turkey. John Mark left Paul and Barnabas and returned to Jerusalem. Luke records no preaching activity, instead they went northwards to...

j. **Pisidian Antioch** Acts 13:14-50

Here they preached (13:16-40) in the synagogue, again. The Jews rejected them and so they turned to the Gentiles. Eventually, the first (Jewish-Gentile) church outside the synagogue was planted. Antioch was a Roman colony and the administrative center of Phrygia in southern Galatia, and so the gospel could spread “through the whole region.” (13:49) After some time, they finally fled from persecution to...

k. **Iconium** Acts 13:51-14:5

The city was located in Phrygia but close to the border of the new region Lycaonia. Again, Paul and Barnabas preached in the synagogue and “a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed.” (14:1) And again, they were expelled and went further to...

l. **Lystra** Acts 14:6-20

Lystra (and Derbe) belonged to the region of Lycaonia in the province of Galatia. Paul healed a lame person and so the people thought they are gods, but Paul preached about the real God (14:15-17). Jews came from Phrygia and won the crowd over to persecute them. Paul was stoned but survived. They finally fled to...

m. **Derbe** Acts 14:20-21

They preached and “won a large number of disciples.” (14:21) They returned to...

n. **Lystra** Acts 14:21

... and...

o. **Iconium** Acts 14:21

... and...

p. **Pisidian Antioch** Acts 14:21

... and ministered to the churches they had planted.

q. **Perga** Acts 14:25

This time they also preached in Perga of Pamphylia.

r. **Attalia** Acts 14:25

From the harbor of Attalia they sailed back to...

s. **Syrian Antioch** Acts 14:26

In their home church they reported about the journey and stayed.

t. Summary: The Galatian Churches

Paul and Barnabas went to Cyprus and the two Roman provinces of Pamphylia and

Galatia. In Galatia they went to the regions of Phrygia and (the Roman part of)

Lycaonia, where they planted churches in Antioch, Iconium, Derbe and Lystra. The

churches were established when they appointed elders in each church. (14:23)

2. What can we learn from Paul's missionary experience for our mission today?

**a. The call for mission and the sending of the missionaries**

- i. Who was sent? Paul and Barnabas, but not John Mark. (Acts 13:2-4)
- ii. Who sent? The Holy Spirit sent 'the two'. (Acts 13:4; cf. Mt 9:38)
- iii. Why did John Mark leave 'the two' later? Because he was not sent?
- iv. Do you think a sending (and praying) church is important? (Acts 13:3)
- v. Do you see how Paul's sending church acted as one 'body of Christ'?

**b. The reasonable choice of and God's guidance to the right mission field**

- i. Why did they go to Cyprus? It was Barnabas' homeland. (Acts 4:36)
- ii. Why did they go to the synagogues? They went as Jews to the Jews.
- iii. Why did they turn to the Gentiles? It was God's command. (Acts 13:47)
- iv. Why did they focus on the Roman provinces? Paul was a Roman citizen.
- v. Are you sensitive to find out God's 'open doors'? (1 Cor 16:9; 2 Cor 2:12)

**c. The role of miracles in preaching and apostolic missionary activity**

- i. Read Acts 13:6-12. Why did Paul strike Elymas with blindness?
  - 1. As a sign for the Roman governor that he could believe. (Acts 13:12)
  - 2. For discipline, that he could no longer oppose their work. (Acts 13:8)
- ii. Read Acts 14:8-18. What was the effect of Paul's healing the lame man?
  - 1. They had an opportunity to preach to the attracted crowd. (Acts 14:14)

2. The sign misled to faith in the apostles, not in the Lord. (Acts 14:18)

iii. Do you think that God still 'confirms the message' today? (Acts 14:3)

**d. How to deal with opposition or persecution like Paul and Barnabas**

i. They "shook the dust from their feet" and went. (Acts 13:51; cf. Mt 10:14)

ii. They were "filled with joy" in the Holy Spirit. (Acts 13:52; cf. Mt 5:12)

iii. Paul went back to the people who stoned him. (Acts 14:20; cf. Mt 5:44)

iv. Do you know persecution or persecuted Christians? Read 2 Tim 3:12.

v. How do you deal with opposition and conflicts? When do you leave?

3. What mission work do you support and how? Why do you support this mission?

a. Do you belong to a sending church? Do you act as 'one body'?

b. Where do you think are the 'open doors' for mission work today?

c. What do you think about local people as missionaries in their home regions?

d. Compare Acts 1:8 (→ regions) with Lk 4:24 (→ relationships).

e. What mission organizations do you know? Which one would you choose?

i. *New Tribes Mission*: The focus is on tribes; strong organization.

ii. *Operation Mobilisation*: The focus is on motivation; loose organization.

iii. *Gospel for Asia*: The focus is on mission by native missionaries in Asia.



Bible Map 1: Paul's First Missionary Journey.

Available from <<http://www.ccel.org/bible/phillips/CN092MAPS1.htm>>; Internet (accessed 10/29/2008).

Optional Readings:

Bruce, Frederick Fyvie. *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000, pp. 126-147.

Ramsay, William M. *St. Paul the Traveler and Roman Citizen*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2001, pp. 84-128.

Next Lesson: Galatians. You may prepare by reading the whole letter.

## **Lesson 4: Galatians**

Objective: The student may grasp the content of Galatians within its historical context and apply the Christian principle of 'faith and liberty' in his own life.

Handouts: Outline of the Epistle, Reference List

### **Outline:**

#### 1. Historical Background of Galatians

The epistle was written "to the churches in Galatia" (1:2) which were planted by Paul on his first missionary journey. Paul had to defend the gospel against the heresy of legalistic Judaism. Judaizers from Jerusalem came even to Paul's home church in Antioch and taught that circumcision would be necessary for salvation. (Gal 2:12; cf. Acts 15:1.24) The epistle can be dated around 48 A.D. prior to the Jerusalem Council, since Paul would otherwise have argued his point by recording its decision.

#### 2. With the historical background in mind, learn about Paul's opponents

- a. Read 1:7. 'Some people' came from outside to 'you' and preached.
- b. Read 1:7, 5:10.12. They perverted the gospel and produced confusion.
- c. Read 1:6. They were Jewish Christians, offering a 'different gospel'...
- d. Read 6:12. ...and trying to avoid persecution from the Jews.
- e. Read 3:2; 5:2-4. Their focus was on the Law, esp. circumcision.

3. Scan the outline and then recognize the central issue in Galatians
  - a. Read 1:1 and 6:17. Paul starts and ends with the claim of apostolic authority.
  - b. Read 6:15-16. Paul sums up with a rule and ends with a conditional blessing.
  - c. Read 1:4 and 6:14. The bracketing theme is 'deliverance' from the world.

The letter puts forth a *single* argument for defending the true gospel Paul preached against the false gospel of the Judaizers. The theme is 'deliverance', and the crucial question is whether such 'deliverance' is obtained by following the legalistic Judaism of the Judaizers, i.e. observance of the Law, or by faith in Christ as Paul preached.

4. Examples of Paul's threefold argument against the heresy (cf. outline)
  - a. His argument from apostolic authority – who is sent by God? (1-2)
    - i. The gospel is not man-made but received by revelation. (1:11-12)
    - ii. Only the gospel received (and confirmed) is the true gospel.
  - b. His argument from sound doctrine – what is written in the Scriptures? (3-4)
    - i. Abraham's righteousness was based on his faith, not his works. (3:6)
    - ii. Read 3:15-25. Promise → Law → Faith in Christ → 'deliverance'.
  - c. His argument from right conduct – compare the two ways of life! (5-6)
    - i. Read 5:15-21,26. Life in the Flesh brings dissension etc.
    - ii. Read 5:13-14,22-24. Life in the Spirit fulfills the 'Law of Love'.

The argument reaches its climax when Paul sets forth the antithesis between the two rival principles. Whereas the principle 'Life through the Law' or 'in the Flesh' actually does not impart life but leaves man in his bondage (3:21-23; 5:17-21), real 'Life by Faith' and 'in the Spirit' brings liberty and deliverance. The original audience may have seen the difference of conduct by themselves. (4:17; 6:13)

5. Think about the sermons in your church: What kind of gospel did you hear?
  - a. Was it 'man-made' or 'expository' preaching, based on Scriptural authority?
  - b. Was the theme "what man has to do" or "what God has done for man"?
  - c. Was the 'Law of Love' distinguished from 'Legalism'? (cf. 5:13)
  
6. Think about your own Christian life: What kind of principle do you follow?
  - a. Do you feel *oppressed* to fulfill regulations or *free* to serve in love?
  - b. Do you regard your actual conduct as 'God's gift' and a 'fruit of the Spirit'?
  - c. Do you think that 'right conduct' is an evangelistic argument? (cf. Jn 17:21)

## Galatians

1. Introduction
  - a. Salutation (1:1-5)
  - b. Occasion: Heresy (1:6-9)
2. Argument from Paul's Authority
  - a. Gospel received by Divine Revelation (1:10-17)
  - b. Gospel confirmed by the Apostles (1:18-2:10)
  - c. Gospel defended against Heresy (2:11-21)
3. Argument from Sound Doctrine
  - a. Reception of the Spirit by Faith (3:1-5)
  - b. The Example of Abraham's Faith (3:6-9)
  - c. Justification is by Faith not by the Law (3:10-14)
  - d. The Promise precedes the Law (3:15-25)
  - e. Redemption from Slavery to Liberty (3:26-5:1)
4. Argument from Right Conduct
  - a. No Circumcision but Faith and Love (5:2-15)
  - b. Life by the Flesh vs. Life by the Spirit (5:16-6:10)
5. Summary and Conclusion (6:11-18)

Optional Readings:

Bruce, Frederick Fyvie. *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000, pp. 173-211.

Hawthorne, Gerald F., Ralph P. Martin and Daniel G. Reid. *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993, pp. 323-334.

Ramsay, William M. *St. Paul the Traveler and Roman Citizen*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2001, pp. 129-144.

Russell, Walt. "The Apostle Paul's Redemptive-Historical Argumentation in Galatians 5:13-26." *Westminster Theological Journal* 57 (Fall 1995): 333-357.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Who Were Paul's Opponents in Galatia?" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 147 (July 1990): 329-350.

Wallace, Daniel B. *Galatians: Introduction, Argument, and Outline*. Available from <[http://www.bible.org/page.php?page\\_id=1237](http://www.bible.org/page.php?page_id=1237)>; Internet (accessed 11/10/2008).

Next Lesson: Second Missionary Journey. Read Acts 15:36-18:22.



e. **Phrygia and Galatia** Acts 16:6-7

Paul, Silas and Timothy went through the region of Phrygia in the Galatian province. On his first journey Paul visited the cities Iconium and Pisidian Antioch in this area. They went through the next Roman province of Asia but did not preach there. They also did not enter the Roman province of Bithynia in the north, but went to...

f. **Mysia and Troas** Acts 16:8-10

The land of Mysia was located in the west of the Asian province. They crossed Mysia and reached the city of Troas, where Paul had a vision to come to the Roman province of Macedonia. At Troas, Luke the physician (cf. Col 4:14) and author of Acts joined.

g. **Samothrace and Neapolis** Acts 16:11

From the harbor at Troas they sailed to the harbor of Samothrace and then further to the harbor of Neapolis that was nearby the inland city of...

h. **Philippi** Acts 16:12-40

Here Paul spent some time preaching, again. Lydia converted, a demon-possessed girl was healed, Paul and Silas were imprisoned, the jailer converted, and the next church was planted, where Luke stayed behind. Philippi was the chief city of Macedonia.

i. **Amphipolis and Apollonia** Acts 17:1

‘They’ (not: ‘we’) went along the Roman road through Amphipolis and Apollonia (without preaching), and finally reached their next destination...

j. **Thessalonica**

Acts 17:1-10

Here Paul preached first in the synagogue, again. Jews and many Greeks converted and the next church was planted. When jealous Jews persecuted them, they fled to...

k. **Berea**

Acts 17:10-14

In Berea they preached and many Jews and Greeks believed, and so the next church was planted, where Silas and Timothy stayed. Jews from Thessalonica came and persecuted them, and so the brothers escorted Paul to the coast and sailed to...

l. **Athens**

Acts 17:15-34

Paul preached (17:22-31) but only with little success (“A few men became followers”; 17:34). Timothy was sent to Thessalonica (cf. 1 Thess 3:1-2) so he must have joined Paul before, again. Paul himself could not go (cf. 1 Thess 2:18) but went further to...

m. **Corinth**

Acts 18:1-18

Paul stayed and taught in Corinth for 18 months. (18:11) He first worked as a tentmaker with Aquila and Priscilla, but when Silas and Timothy came back, he “devoted himself exclusively to preaching” (18:5), and the next church was planted. When the Jews opposed Paul, he turned to the Gentiles. From Corinth, Paul wrote the letters to the church in Thessalonica. (cf. next lesson) Paul “left the brothers” to...

n. **Cenchrea**

Acts 18:18

...where “he had his hair cut off ... because of a vow” (18:18) and then to...

o. **Ephesus**

Acts 18:19-21

With Aquila and Priscilla he sailed to Ephesus where he preached in the synagogue, but only for a short time. Whereas Aquila and Priscilla stayed, Paul sailed back to...

p. **Caesarea**

Acts 18:22

He arrived in Caesarea and then went to the church in...

q. **Jerusalem**

Acts 18:22

... possibly because of the vow that he had taken.

r. **Syrian Antioch**

Acts 18:22

In his home church, he spent 'some time' and probably reported about the journey.

s. **Summary**

Paul went with Silas to strengthen the established churches (Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Derbe and Lystra) and then to evangelize in new areas and cities. God led them to the Roman provinces of Macedonia (Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea) and Achaia (Athens, Corinth). Key persons joined him on his journey (Timothy, Luke, Aquila and Priscilla). In Ephesus he stayed only a short time. Special emphasis was laid on Corinth, a city of influence and important bridge to the Roman world.

2. What can we learn from Paul's missionary experience for our mission today?

**a. The formation of a mission team under the leadership of Paul**

- i. Paul chose Silas and Barnabas John Mark – why? (cf. Acts 15:36-40)
- ii. What do we know about **Mark**?
  - (a) With Paul and Barnabas he went to Cyprus... (13:4f.)
  - (b) ...but left them in Perga and went back to Jerusalem. (13:13)
  - (c) He was a cousin of Barnabas. (Col 4:10)
  - (d) With Barnabas he went to Cyprus, again. (15:39)
- iii. Do you think that 'wisdom' (15:38) may sometimes lead to separation?
- iv. How do you explain the eventually good relationship? (2 Tim 4:11)
- v. What do we know about **Silas**?
  - (a) Silas was a leader and prophet from the Jerusalem church. (15:22,32)
  - (b) Silas was even mentioned in the letter to the churches. (15:27)
  - (c) Thus he was apt to help Paul arguing against the Judaizers. (cf. Gal)
  - (d) Like Paul, Silas was also a respected Roman citizen. (16:37)
- vi. What do we know about **Timothy**?
  - (a) He was known and had a good reputation. (16:2-3; cf. 1 Tim 3:2,7)
  - (b) His mother was a Jewess who taught him about faith. (2 Tim 1:5)
- vii. Paul 'chose' Silas and Timothy. Do you think they somehow applied?

**b. The mission principle of ‘being a Jew to the Jews’. Read 1 Cor 9:19-22.**

- i. Paul found it necessary to circumcise Timothy.
  - (a) But not for his salvation which would be against the teachings!
  - (b) Because Timothy’s background was Jewish except circumcision.
- ii. In Athens, he considered the religious ideas of his audience.
  - (a) Paul knew and addressed their religious background. (17:22)
  - (b) But only a few people believed. (17:34)
- iii. Consider the limits of this mission principle. Read 1 Cor 1:18,22f.
- iv. Paul’s sermon in Corinth was different from that in Athens. (1 Cor 2:1f.)
- v. In which culture do you live and serve? How do you adjust?

[Whereas we should know the world, we do not belong to the world. (Jn 15:19; 17:14)

In fact we should hate the world. (1 Jn 2:15; Jam 4:4) Probably a good complement to the mission principle of ‘being a Jew to the Jews’ is Paul’s image of ‘child-bearing’ in Gal 4:19. Also Jesus ‘became flesh’ (Jn 1:14; Phil 2:7) to reach and save man.]

**3. (As time allows...) divide into 3 groups (i-iii), discuss and report (~15 min.)**

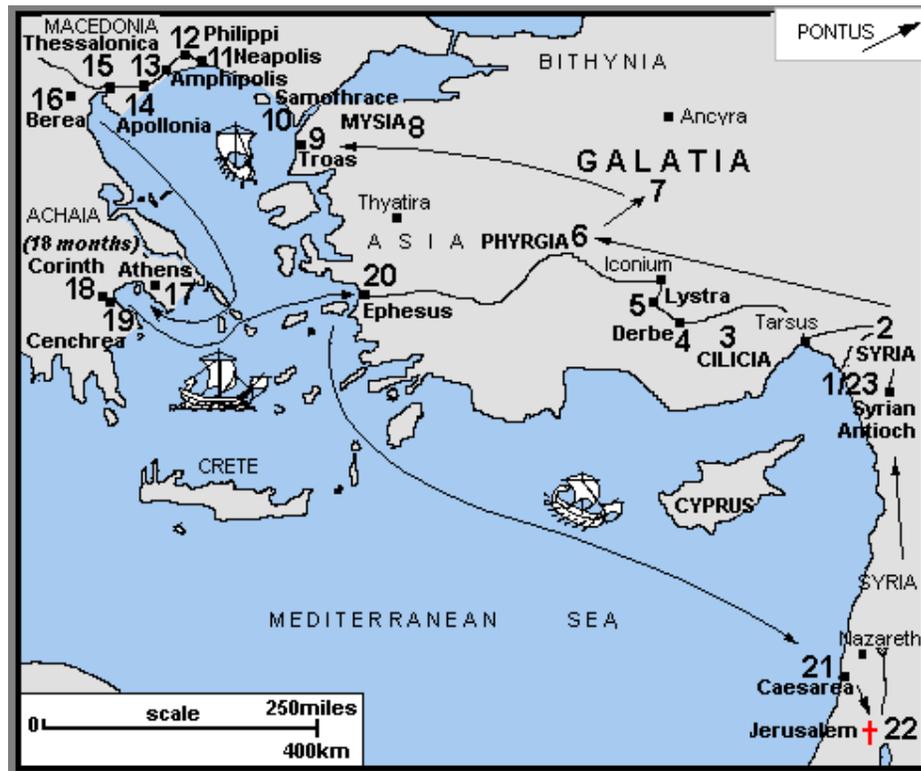
- a. The ministry in Philippi. Reread Acts 16:12-40.
  - i. Think of those who believed (Lydia, jailor) and why they believed.
  - ii. Think of the persecution Paul and Silas suffered and how they reacted.

- b. The ministry in Thessalonica. Reread Acts 17:1-10.
  - i. Think of the sermon Paul preached (“from the Scriptures”) and its result.
  - ii. Think of the persecution (cf. 1 Thess 2:17f.) and how the brothers reacted.
- c. The ministry in Corinth. Reread Acts 18:1-18.
  - i. Think of the fruitful cooperation between Paul and his coworkers.
  - ii. Think of the opposition, the vision, Gallio’s reaction and its impact.

**4. Think of the life in ancient times and imagine Paul in our modern world.**

- a. Does Paul use a cell phone and computer, writing SMS and emails?
- b. Does Paul watch certain Television programs or use it for preaching?
- c. Paul also preached in public. Where are the communal centers today?
- d. Does Paul have insurances? Old-age provisions? Labor agreement?
- e. Is Paul a member of a denomination or mission organization? Which? ☺

[Whereas Paul’s coworkers submitted and were loyal to him, Paul the leader himself was blessed in his flexibility and autonomy. Both sides are important to note. The coworkers were guided by Paul, but Paul was guided only by God. (cf. Acts 16:6-10)]



Bible Map 2: Paul's Second Missionary Journey.

Available from <<http://www.ccel.org/bible/phillips/CN092MAPS1.htm>>; Internet (accessed 10/29/2008).

Optional Readings:

Bruce, Frederick Fyvie. *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000, pp. 212-263.

Ramsay, William M. *St. Paul the Traveler and Roman Citizen*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2001, pp. 145-200.

Next Lesson: 1 & 2 Thessalonians. You may prepare by reading the whole letters.

## **Lesson 6: 1 & 2 Thessalonians**

Objective: The student may grasp the content of 1 & 2 Thessalonians within its historical context and apply the prophecies and exhortations in his own life.

Handouts: Outlines of each Epistle, Extract, Reference List

### **Outline:**

#### 1. Historical Background of Thessalonians

##### a. The city of Thessalonica

- i. It was the capital city of the province of Macedonia with a population of about 200.000 people, mostly Greeks but also many Jews.
- ii. The 'Egnatian Way' passed through the city; it was the main road connecting Rome with the eastern Roman provinces.
- iii. It was a free city, not under Roman control. No Roman garrison was stationed there but they had their own 'city officials'. (Acts 17:6.8)

##### b. Paul's Ministry in Thessalonica

- i. Paul planted the church on his second missionary journey. After three weeks (i.e. three Sabbaths; 17:2), jealousy arose among the Jews and so Paul had to flee to Berea. Brother Jason was released for a bail. (17:9)
- ii. The church members were mostly Greeks but the appointed leaders were probably Jews who converted from Paul's preaching in the synagogue.

c. Occasion for Writing the Letters

- i. The first letter was written from Corinth shortly after Paul's stay in Thessalonica. After Timothy came back from his visit, Paul responded to his report and the questions he received. (3:6; cf. Acts 18:5)
- ii. The second letter was written shortly after the first. The theme is similar ('eschatology') and a follow-up of the first. Paul also had to react after a letter was sent to the church alleging to be from Paul. (2:2)

2. Briefly study the outlines of the two letters and recognize the three themes (3-5):

**3. Thanksgiving for the Faith of the Thessalonians**

- a. Consider the short stay of Paul in Thessalonica and...
  - i. ...their attitude towards Paul's preaching (1 Thess 1:5-6; 2:13)
  - ii. ...their perseverance and spiritual growth (1 Thess 1:3; 2 Thess 1:3)
  - iii. ...the persecution they suffered (1 Thess 1:6; 2:14; 3:4; 2 Thess 1:4)
- b. What makes the difference between the Thessalonians and others?
  - i. [Briefly recall the Parable of the Sower. (cf. Mt 13:3-8.18-23)]
  - ii. (Today's) temptation is as dangerous as persecution – no fruit!
  - iii. The attitude of the 'soil' towards the 'seed' (word) is important! (3.a.i.)

- c. Read the extract “Another Mission Principle” and talk about it:
  - i. Do you know similar examples of spiritual growth in your ministry?
  - ii. What importance do you attach to the Holy Bible in your ministry?
  - iii. What importance do you attach to the Holy Spirit in your ministry?

#### **4. Eschatological Prophecy about the Day of the Lord**

- a. Paul may have preached in the synagogue on Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays, therefore 8-9 times within the 3 weeks. He probably arrived at his teachings about the kingdom of Jesus when he was expelled. (cf. Acts 17:7)
- b. The remaining questions from the Thessalonian church as reported by Timothy were:
  - (i) Do the brothers who have died share in Christ’s Coming?
  - (ii) When does the Second Coming of Christ take place?
    - i. The dead in Christ will raise first. (1 Thess 4:13-18)
    - ii. Christ comes like a thief in the night. (1 Thess 5:1-11; cf. Mt 24:43)
    - iii. The teachings are for encouragement. (1 Thess 4:18; 5:11)
- c. Now if the Day comes soon “like a thief in the night”, why shall we still work?  
  
Some even say the Day has already come. (2 Thess 2:2) Paul responded to the misrepresentations of his teachings: Unbelievers are unprepared, but believers are prepared for the Day. The Day of the Lord comes not before:

- i. The man of lawlessness is revealed. (2 Thess 2:3-12)
  - ii. [About the cryptic verses (e.g. vv. 6-7) see references.]
  - iii. Therefore “hold to the teachings” (2:15), e.g. do not be idle...
- d. Are you ‘encouraged’ and do you ‘hold to the teachings’ in view of the Day?
- i. Do you expect the Second Coming of Christ in your own life?
  - ii. (If yes...) does it make a difference for your actual life conduct?
  - iii. (If not...) don’t you expect the Day even if you think you die before?

#### **5. Instructions for Sanctification motivated by the Lord’s Return**

Scan the relevant passages (cf. outlines) and collect by writing on the board:

- a. Instructions given in 1 Thess 4:1-12
- b. Instructions given in 1 Thess 5:12-22
- c. Instructions given in 2 Thess 2:15-3:15

Choose 2-3 aspects that you think are relevant for your personal life situation.

## 1 Thessalonians

1. Salutation (1:1)
2. Paul's Ministry and Relation to the Church of Thessalonica
  - a. Thanksgiving for the Faith of the Thessalonians (1:2-10)
  - b. The Apostle's blameless and paternal Conduct (2:1-12)
  - c. Thanksgiving for the Faith of the Thessalonians (2:13-16)
  - d. Paul's Desire to See the Thessalonians (2:17-3:13)
3. Eschatological Prophecy framed by Exhortations
  - a. Instructions for Sanctification (4:1-12)
  - b. Paraousia, Resurrection and Rapture (4:13-5:11)**
  - c. Final Instructions (5:12-22)
4. Benediction and Greetings (5:23-28)

## 2 Thessalonians

1. Salutation (1:1-2)
2. Thanksgiving for the Faith of the Thessalonians (1:3-4)
3. Eschatological Prophecy about the Day of the Lord
  - a. Vindication of the Thessalonians (1:5-12)
  - b. The Day comes not before the Antichrist (2:1-12)**
4. Thanksgiving for the Faith of the Thessalonians (2:13-14)
5. Exhortations in light of Eschatological Prophecy
  - a. Instructions for Perseverance (2:15-3:5)
  - b. Instructions for Discipline (3:6-15)
6. Final Greetings (3:16-18)

## Another Mission Principle

“I now believe that *no* missionary ought to be a church planter. I believe a missionary ought to be the guide, the leader, the encourager, and the spiritual strengthener of the local people. The local people should start the churches while the missionary stays in the background and simply encourages their leadership.

...

If we believe Paul could ordain elders in every place after a little while, we also would believe that the Holy Spirit will raise them up in our day.

Let me underscore that conviction with a report on what happened in Ethiopia as told in the book by Raymond Davis, *Fire on the Mountains*. It has an enormous lesson for what I am trying to share today. Sudan Interior missionaries went into Ethiopia and had about nine years to reduce the language of the Wallamo tribe into written form, put into it a little bit of Scripture for those who had learned to read, and a few small tracts about how to live the Christian life. After nine years there were forty-eight believers in the Wallamo region.

Mussolini invaded Ethiopia at that time and expelled all the missionaries. Systematic persecution of the believers began. The Italians beat them with whips; they made them tear down their church buildings and put them under enormous pressure. No missionary was on the field; no contact with missionaries was made. There was no source of money from outside. This state of affairs continued for five years. World War II progressed to the point that the Italians were run out of Ethiopia, and the missionaries went back, wondering what had happened to those forty-eight believers.

They did not find forty-eight believers. Under severe persecution those simple people, who could not have passed a third-grade arithmetic test, had won ten thousand of their neighbors to Christ! In five years, under persecution, the local leadership, raised up by the Holy Spirit, sacrificially accomplished the incredible. The sequel to that book, *The Winds of God*, tells of their moving out to witness to the Gallo people, whom the Wallamo had always feared. They were spreading the good news to their neighbors through a home-grown missions movement.

We were discussing that book in class one day when a student raised a fascinating question: “If the missionaries had not left, do you think that great expansion would have happened?” I don’t know the answer, but I fear that the missionaries would have been looked to for the initiative, and the locals would not have taken it.”

Guy, R. Calvin, “Apologia pro Vita Mea”, *Faith and Mission* 15 (Fall 1997): 19f.

Optional Readings:

Dixon, Paul S. "The Evil Restraint In 2 Thess 2:6." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 33 (December 1990): 445-449.

Bruce, Frederick Fyvie. *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000, pp. 228-234, 305f.

Hawthorne, Gerald F., Ralph P. Martin and Daniel G. Reid. *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Downers Grove: InterVarsityPress, 1993, pp. 932-939.

Powell, Charles E. "The Identity of the 'Restrainer' in 2 Thessalonians 2:6-7." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 154 (July 1997): 320-332.

Ramsay, William M. *St. Paul the Traveler and Roman Citizen*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2001, pp. 179-183.

Unger, Merrill F. "Historical Research and the Church at Thessalonica." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 119 (January 1962): 38-44.

Wallace, Daniel B. *1 Thessalonians: Introduction, Outline, and Argument*. Available from <[http://www.bible.org/page.php?page\\_id=1335](http://www.bible.org/page.php?page_id=1335)>; Internet (accessed 11/10/2008).

\_\_\_\_\_. *2 Thessalonians: Introduction, Argument, Outline*. Available from <[http://www.bible.org/page.php?page\\_id=1336](http://www.bible.org/page.php?page_id=1336)>; Internet (accessed 11/10/2008).

Next Lesson: Third Missionary Journey. Read Acts 18:23-21:17.



d. **Macedonia**

Acts 20:1

Not in Troas but in Macedonia Paul found Titus who brought him news from Corinth. (2 Cor 7:5f.) Timothy rejoined Paul and they wrote 2 Corinthians. Titus went to Corinth, again, and probably delivered the letter. (2 Cor 8:17) Paul preached throughout the area (probably also in Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea), collected money for the Jerusalem church (2 Cor 8:1-5) and then went to...

e. **Achaia (Greece)**

Acts 20:2-3

Paul spent there three months and visited Corinth. (2 Cor 12:14) During his stay there he also wrote his letter to the Romans. (Rom 15:25f.) Paul collected money as he did in Macedonia and headed for Jerusalem but could not sail because of a plot against him, thus he went back through...

f. **Macedonia**

Acts 20:3-4

Paul went with seven companions who went ahead to Troas. Paul sailed from Philippi, where Luke joined him (note 'us' and 'we' in 20:5f.), to...

g. **Troas**

Acts 20:5-12

Here Paul met his coworkers. They stayed for about seven days and before Paul departed, he preached and raised Eutychus from the dead. Paul then walked to...

h. **Assos**

Acts 20:13-15

The others joined and they sailed via Mitylene, Chios, Samos and Trogyllium to...

i. **Miletus** Acts 20:15-21:2

At Miletus Paul met the Ephesian elders, again. He instructed them and sailed via Cos, Rhodes, Patara to...

j. **Tyre** Acts 21:3-6

In Tyre they stayed for seven days with some disciples from Troas who warned Paul not to go to Jerusalem, but Paul and his companions sailed further to...

k. **Ptolemais** Acts 21:7

In Ptolemais they stayed with the brothers for one day.

l. **Caesarea** Acts 21:8-14

In Caesarea they stayed "a number of days" (21:10) in the house of Philip and his four daughters who prophesied. The prophet Agabus from Judea came and warned Paul not to go to Jerusalem, but Paul went.

m. **Jerusalem** Acts 21:15-17

Together with his companions and some disciples from Caesarea they came to the home of Mnason, a disciple from Cyprus. The brothers in Jerusalem welcomed them.

n. **Summary**

Paul went first for his main ministry at Ephesus and then ahead to Corinth. He wrote the letters to Corinth and Rome and preached in the provinces of Galatia, Macedonia and Achaia, again. Paul collected money, and many brothers accompanied him.

2. What can we learn from Paul’s missionary experience for our mission today?

**a. Learn from Paul’s ministry of strengthening the brothers he knew**

- i. Paul went back to “all the disciples” in Galatia and Phrygia (18:23)
- ii. Paul went back and encouraged “the people” in Macedonia (20:1)
- iii. Paul corresponded with the church in Corinth (by letters and visits)
- iv. Do you stay in contact with the brothers you met in your life? How?
- v. Do keep in contact by letters or emails? How much time do you take?
- vi. Are you interested in reports from brothers about churches or missions?

**b. Learn from the brothers’ strengthening Paul and the Jerusalem church**

- i. List the coworkers as they were involved in Paul’s third mission journey

Ephesus	Aquila, Priscilla (18:26; 1 Cor 16:19)	Teachers, Hosts
Corinth	Apollos (18:27f.)	Teacher
Ephesus	Tyrannus (19:9)	Provided lecture hall
Ephesus	Timothy, Erastus (19:22)	Sent to Macedonia
Ephesus	Gaius, Aristarchus (19:29)	Companions
Ephesus	Titus, a brother (2 Cor 12:18)	Sent to Corinth
Ephesus	Sosthenes (1 Cor 1:1)	Writer with Paul
Ephesus	Stephanas, Fortunatus, Achaicus (1 Cor 16:17)	Sent from Corinth
Macedonia	Timothy (2 Cor 1:1)	Writer with Paul

Macedonia	Titus, two brothers (2 Cor 8:17f.22)	Sent to Corinth
Corinth	Sister Phoebe (Rom 16:1)	Servant of the church
Corinth	Timothy, Lucius, Jason, Sosipater (Rom 16:21)	Companions
Corinth	Tertius (Rom 16:22)	Writer with Paul
Corinth	Gaius (Rom 16:23)	Host
Corinth	Erastus, Quartus (Rom 16:23)	Companions
Travel	So(si)pater from Berea (20:4)	Companions
Travel	Aristarchus, Secundus from Thessalonica (20:4)	Companions
Travel	Gaius from Derbe (20:4)	Companions
Travel	Timothy (20:4)	Companion
Travel	Tychicus, Trophimus from Asia (20:4)	Companions
Travel	Luke (20:5-6)	Companion, Writer
Tyre	Disciples (21:4)	Fellowship
Ptolemais	Brothers (21:7)	Fellowship
Caesarea	Philip, four daughters (21:8)	Host, prophecy
Caesarea	Agabus from Judea (21:10)	Prophecy
Travel	Disciples from Caesarea (21:16)	Companions
Jerusalem	Mnason from Cyprus (21:16)	Host
Jerusalem	Brothers (21:17)	Welcoming

- ii. Do you have ‘coworkers’? Whom? Are you a ‘coworker’? Whose?

Think about the relationships within your Christian community.

What is your Christian culture – individualism or collectivism?

- iii. Consider the listed examples and learn about cooperation in practice:

Hospitality, Teaching, Correspondence, Encouragement...

What can you do? How does God want you to serve?

- iv. Consider Paul’s collection of money for Jerusalem and apply in your life:

Rom 15:25-27. “The Gentiles owe it to the Jews!” (v. 27; cf. 1 Cor 9:11)

1 Cor 16:1-4. Each one should save weekly, according to his income.

2 Cor 8:1-5. The churches in Macedonia were a model of generosity.

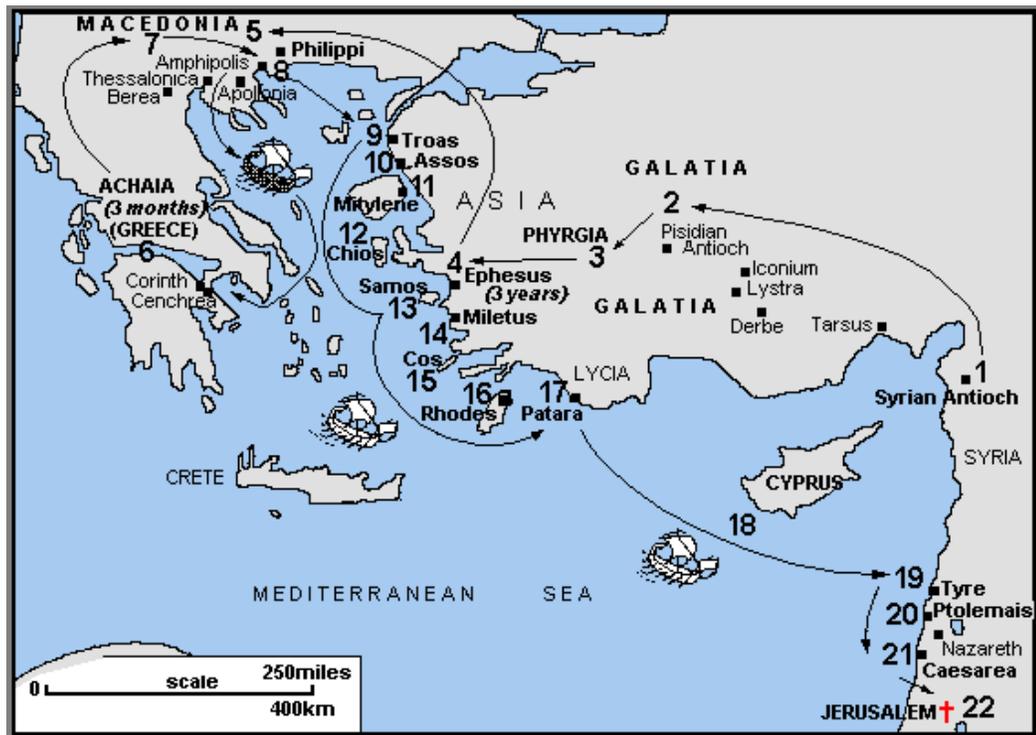
2 Cor 8:6-12. Paul asked in his letter and Titus helped being present!

2 Cor 8:13-15. The collection (‘for the poor’; Gal 2:10) is for *equality*!

Learn that the record about Paul’s missionary journey is not only about Paul but also much about his coworkers. Both sides are important, the church acted as ‘one body’!

3. Aspects of Paul's extensive ministry in Ephesus that reached whole Asia
  - a. **"There is a time for everything" – e.g. the 'open door' in Ephesus**
    - i. On Paul's first journey he did not go beyond the Galatian province
    - ii. On Paul's second journey the Spirit led him straight to Macedonia and on the way back Paul soon had to leave Ephesus to visit Jerusalem
    - iii. Finally, on his third journey Paul stayed 3 years with remarkable success:
  - b. **"I will build my church" – the Lord's building in Paul's ministry**
    - i. "God did extraordinary miracles through Paul" – 19:11-12
    - ii. "...the name of the Lord was held in high honor" – 19:13-17
    - iii. "...many of those who believed ... confessed ..." – 19:18-20
  - c. **"I am with you always" – the Lord's unexpected deliverance of Paul**
    - i. The riot (19:23-34) was so strong that Paul despaired (2 Cor 1:8-10)
    - ii. Also Aquila and Priscilla "risked their lives" for Paul (Rom 16:4)
    - iii. The disciples protected him; the city clerk spoke an apologia (19:30.35)
  - d. **"All Scripture is God-breathed" – Paul preached the 'whole will of God'**
    - i. Recall the weight of preaching during the short ministry in Thessalonica
    - ii. Consider Paul's farewell speech: he preached *everything* in 3 years (20:27)
    - iii. The same approach is followed by Calvary Chapel ministries:

<http://www.twft.com/?page=c2000>



Bible Map 3: Paul's Third Missionary Journey.

Available from <<http://www.ccel.org/bible/phillips/CN092MAPS1.htm>>; Internet (accessed 10/29/2008).

Optional Readings:

Bruce, Frederick Fyvie. *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000, pp. 286-324.

Ramsay, William M. *St. Paul the Traveler and Roman Citizen*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2001, pp. 201-230.

Next Lesson: 1 & 2 Corinthians. You may prepare by reading the whole letters.

## **Lesson 8: 1 & 2 Corinthians**

Objective: The student may grasp the content of 1 & 2 Corinthians within its historical context and learn about church life and Christian ministry.

Handouts: Outlines of each Epistle, Topical Bibliography, Reference List

### **Outline:**

#### 1. Historical Background of Corinthians

##### a. The city of Corinth

- i. It was the capital city of the province of Achaia. Its harbors made it a center of travel and trade. The Romans were the leading minority in the city. Most inhabitants were Greek, some were Jews. About half of the people were slaves. Many traders and travelers visited the city.
- ii. Most significant for the life of the Corinthians was the worship of the Greek goddess Aphrodite. Her temple housed about a thousand prostitutes. Other temples (Apollo, Hermes, Isis) added to the idolatry. (1 Cor 8:5)

##### b. Paul's Ministry in Corinth

- i. Paul founded the church on his second missionary journey when he stayed there for 18 months and spent most of the time on preaching. (Acts 18:5)
- ii. The church members were also Jews but mostly Greek, since Paul turned early to the Gentiles. (Acts 18:6) Their Corinthian background was marked

by (Hellenistic) cultural diversity and the immoral Aphrodite worship.

c. Occasion for Writing the Letters

i. Paul wrote his first – unpreserved – letter to Corinth on his third journey when he was in Ephesus. (1 Cor 5:9) The church responded by sending a letter to Paul delivered by their members. (1 Cor 16:17) In Paul’s second letter – 1 Corinthians – he taught on the issues raised. (1 Cor 1:11, 7:1)

ii. From Ephesus Paul wrote another – unpreserved – letter to the church after his “painful visit”. (2 Cor 2:1) This “severe letter” (2 Cor 2:3-4; 7:8) was delivered by Titus (2 Cor 7:5-8), whom Paul afterwards met in Macedonia.

In Paul’s fourth letter – 2 Corinthians – Paul responded to Titus’ news.

2. Briefly study the outlines of the two letters and recognize the overall situation:

a. Confusion in the Corinthian Church (cf. 1 Cor)

b. Opposition against the Apostle Paul (cf. 2 Cor)

### 3. The Nature of Division and Disorder in the Church (cf. 1 Cor)

- a. Following men brings disunity, believing in Christ leads to unity
  - i. Read 1 Cor 1:10-12. Some followed Paul, Apollos, Cephas – and today...?
  - ii. Apostles are nothing (servants - 3:5; fools - 4:10), *Christ* is everything
  - iii. Note that Paul mentions ‘Christ’ ten times in the first ten verses of 1 Cor!
  - iv. Recognize that *baptism* ‘in Christ’ is a bond of unity (1:13-17; cf. Eph 4:5)
  - v. Do you follow someone? Does your model refer you to Christ like Paul?
- b. Worldly wisdom brings disunity, spiritual wisdom leads to unity
  - i. “Greeks look for wisdom, but we (Paul, Apollos...) preach Christ” (1:23)
  - ii. Unity is in Christ Jesus, because he is our ‘wisdom from God’ (1:30)
  - iii. Paul did not come with worldly wisdom but preached only Christ (2:2)
  - iv. Wisdom is received by the *Spirit* (2:10-14), a bond of unity (cf. Eph 4:4)
  - v. Are you wise/spiritual or foolish? Or maybe still ‘worldly’? (3:1)

[See that Paul’s key teaching of ‘one body’ is now seriously challenged in Corinth!]

Note Paul’s points of unity: Christ, Baptism and the Spirit.]

- c. Abuse of liberty brings disorder, church discipline restores order
  - i. Consider 1 Cor 5:1-13. Paul commands excommunication! (vv. 5,7,11,13)
  - ii. Consider 1 Cor 6:1-11. Paul commands intra-church lawsuits! (vv. 1-2)

- d. Selected teachings from Paul's letter useful for church **purity**
  - i. Sexual sins are – different from other sins – against the body (6:18)
  - ii. The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, belongs to Christ (6:19f.; 3:16)
  - iii. (Sexual) sin affects the 'one body' of Christ – like yeast (5:6; 2 Cor 6:16)
- e. Selected teachings from Paul's letter useful for church **unity**
  - i. Consider the 'weaker brother' according to 1 Cor 8:9-13; 10:23-33.
  - ii. Consider you and your brothers as parts of 'one body' (1 Cor 12:12-31)
  - iii. Consider the nature of *love* (1 Cor 13:4-7), a bond of unity (cf. Col 3:14)
- f. What is the condition of your church in regard to purity and unity?
  - i. Does your church practice church discipline? (cf. 2 Cor 6:14-18)
  - ii. What is the proper relation between church unity and purity?

[Church discipline aims for repentance of the sinner and the protection of the church.]

- g. Pros and contras of denominations – unity within vs. division from outside
  - i. How many denominations? Collect those that you know...
  - ii. 39.000 according to the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 31
  - iii. Do you think church discipline may be better practiced in a denomination?
  - iv. Do you think that denominations may divide the 'one body' of Christ?

**4. The Nature of (apostolic) Ministry in the Church** (cf. 2 Cor)

- a. Compare the two Thanksgiving sections of 1 & 2 Corinthians
  - i. Read 1 Cor 1:4-9. Paul's thanksgiving is for the Corinthians' faith.
  - ii. Read 2 Cor 1:3-7. Paul's thanksgiving is for God's comfort.
  - iii. Paul's emotional stress increased because of the tense relationship.
- b. Read 2 Cor 4:7. Compare the 'treasure' with the 'jars of clay'
  - i. Scan the 'treasure' passages: 2 Cor 3:7-18; (5:11-6:2)
  - ii. Scan the 'jars of clay' passages: 2 Cor 4:8-12; (6:3-10); 11:23-28
  - iii. Key verse: 2 Cor 12:9. God's power is made perfect in weakness (clay).
- c. Think of Paul's responsibility for the Corinthians (and yours in your ministry)
  - i. What was the effect of the opposition against Paul? (e.g. 2 Cor 2:5; 7:12)
  - ii. How did Paul react when his authority was questioned? (And you?)
  - iii. Paul defends his apostleship by revealing its nature. (see 4.b.)
- d. How do you understand and experience God-given authority in the church?
  - i. Read 2 Cor 10:4-6. Responsibility for sound doctrine and obedience.
  - ii. Read 2 Cor 10:8. Authority for building up, not pulling down (abuse).

## 1 Corinthians

1. Introduction
  - a. Salutation (1:1-3)
  - b. Thanksgiving (1:4-9)
2. Response to the Report from Chloe's household (cf. 1:11)
  - a. On Divisions in the Church (1:10-4:21)
  - b. On Disorders in the Church (5:1-6:20)
3. Response to the Letter from the Corinthian Church (cf. 7:1; 16:17)
  - a. On Christian Marriage (7:1-40)
  - b. On Christian Liberty (8:1-11:1)
  - c. On Christian Worship (11:2-14:40)
  - d. On the Resurrection Doctrine (15:1-58)
4. Final Matters (16:1-24)

## 2 Corinthians

1. Introduction
  - a. Salutation (1:1-2)
  - b. Thanksgiving (1:3-11)
2. Defense of Paul's Apostolic Ministry (1:12-7:16)
3. The Collection for Jerusalem (8:1-9:15)
4. Defense of Paul's Apostolic Authority (10:1-13:10)
5. Final Greetings (13:11-14)

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Next Lesson: Romans. You may prepare by reading the whole letter.

## **Lesson 9: Romans**

Objective: The student may grasp the systematic argument of Romans and understand, put his faith in and learn how to teach the doctrine of salvation.

Handouts: Outline of the Epistle, Character Test, Wordless Booklet, Reference List

### **Outline:**

#### 1. Historical Background of Romans

##### a. The city and church of Rome

- i. Rome was the imperial city of that time with about 1 million inhabitants, half of them slaves. Nero ruled in a stable society. His persecution was later in 64 A.D., Claudius' before in 49 A.D. (cf. Acts 18:2)
- ii. Neither Paul nor another apostle founded the Roman church, but converts who returned from Jerusalem after Pentecost. (Acts 2:10; Rom 15:20)  
Probably most church members were Gentiles. (Rom 1:5f.13; 11:13)

##### b. Date and Place of Romans

- i. Paul wrote his letter ~57 A.D., after his collection for Jerusalem in Macedonia and Achaia on his third missionary journey. (Rom 15:26)
- ii. Paul probably wrote from Corinth, where Paul stayed in Gaius' house. (Rom 16:23; 1 Cor 1:14) Sister Phoebe of the neighboring church of Cenchrea brought the letter to Rome. (Rom 16:1-2)

2. Briefly study the outline of the letter and get an overview of its structure
  
3. The theme of the letter is written in Romans 1:16-17.
  - a. Read 1:17 and learn that the doctrine is not 'new' (but from the OT).
  - b. Read Gal 3:11 and remember that Galatians has the same theme.
  - c. Learn Rom 1:16-17 by heart and then try to recite. (~5 min.)
  
4. Justification – Righteousness imputed by Faith in Christ
  - a. Why do we need 'righteousness'? Because of sin or '*unrighteousness*'.
    - i. What is sin?
      - (a) ungodliness: they knew God but did not glorify Him (1:21)
      - (b) idolatry: they exchanged God's glory for images (1:23)
      - (c) captivity: therefore 'God gave them over' (1:24.26.28)
    - ii. How is sin revealed?
      - (a) By our conscience (2:15)
      - (b) Through the law (3:20)
  - b. How do we get righteousness?
    - i. Provided by Jesus Christ (atonement). (3:25)
    - ii. Imputed by personal faith in Jesus Christ. (3:26)

- c. What is 'faith'? The example of Abraham:
    - i. Read 4:3 and learn again that the doctrine is not 'new'.
    - ii. Read 4:23-24 and learn that Abraham is our model of faith.
    - iii. Read 4:18-22. What did Abraham believe, even though...?
    - iv. Do you believe in the promise of God – (eternal) life in Christ?
  - d. See how the doctrine of justification is bracketed by...
    - i. Before: God's wrath against sinners is revealed (1:18)
    - ii. Now: The believer is saved from God's wrath (5:9)
5. Sanctification – Righteousness imparted by Union with Christ
- a. (As time allows...) briefly study the 'Character Building Questions'
    - i. Have you ever used such questions to 'build your character'?
    - ii. Do you find the list helpful or legalistic and oppressive?
    - iii. Which of the questions actually struck your heart?
    - iv. Think of questions 4 and 14. Do you know 'slavery to sin'?
  - b. Read Rom 7:14-24. Do you also struggle with sin as Paul wrote?
    - i. Do you then understand that "nothing good lives in me"? (7:18)
    - ii. Recall Galatians 5:22; good conduct is a "fruit of the Spirit".
    - iii. So "who will rescue me"? (7:24) The triune God...

- c. Recognize first *your responsibility* for sanctification:
  - i. “Count yourself dead to sin but alive to God.” (6:11)
 

“Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body.” (6:12)
  - ii. “Offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life ... as instruments of righteousness.” (6:13; cf. 12:1)
  - iii. “We have an obligation – but it is not to the sinful nature...” (8:12)
 

“...by the Spirit put to death the misdeeds of the body” (8:13)
- d. Recognize *God’s promise* for your sanctification:
  - i. “Sin shall not be your master, because you are ... under grace.” (6:14)
  - ii. “You are controlled by the Spirit of Christ.” (8:9)
 

“And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.” (8:11)
- e. Thus God’s Spirit *works* in us for our sanctification, but he does *not force* us.

6. Eschatology – God’s Righteousness in regard to Israel

- a. Read Rom 11:25-26a. God still has a plan for Israel – revival.
- b. Paul probably responded to anti-Semitism after Claudius’ persecution.
- c. For deeper study of chapters 9-11 see John Murray, vol. 2, pp. 1-104.

7. Practice – Righteousness shown in Proper Conduct

a. Like in the other letters, Paul ends with practical exhortations

i. cf. Gal 6:1-10

ii. cf. 1 Thess 5:12-22; 2 Thess 3:6-15

iii. cf. 1 Cor 16:13; 2 Cor 13:11

b. Paul teaches again on ‘love’ (12:9-21; 13:8-10) and ‘unity’ (14:1-15:13)

i. Brotherly and enemy love (cf. 1 Cor 13; cf. Gal 5:14)

ii. The weaker brother (cf. 1 Cor 8:7-13; 10:23-33)

c. Do you think Paul may have asked you ‘Character Building Questions’?

8. Conclude the lesson with the teaching of the five-color wordless booklet.

## Romans

1. Introduction (1:1-17)
2. Justification: Righteousness imputed by Faith in Christ
  - a. The Need of Righteousness
    - i. God's Wrath against Sinners (1:18)
    - ii. All People are Sinners (1:19-3:20)
  - b. The Provision of Righteousness
    - i. Jesus Christ the Atonement Sacrifice (3:21-26)
    - ii. Imputation by Faith in Jesus Christ (3:27-4:25)
  - c. The Implications of Justification
    - i. Peace with God and Hope of Glory (5:1-5)
    - ii. Salvation from God's Wrath (5:6-11)
3. Sanctification: Righteousness imparted by Union with Christ
  - a. Death through Adam vs. Life through Christ (5:12-6:14)
  - b. Slavery to Sin vs. Slavery to Righteousness (6:15-7:6)
  - c. Sinful Nature vs. Ministry of the Spirit (7:7-8:17)
  - d. Glorification: the goal of sanctification (8:18-39)
4. Eschatology: God's Righteousness in regard to Israel
  - a. Election of Israel (9:1-29)
  - b. Unbelief of Israel (9:30-10:21)
  - c. Remnant of Israel (11:1-10)
  - d. Revival of Israel (11:11-36)
5. Practice: Righteousness shown in Proper Conduct
  - a. Life in the Church (12:1-21)
  - b. Life in the State (13:1-7)
  - c. Life in Relationships (13:8-15:13)
6. Conclusion (15:14-16:27)

## John Wesley's Small Group Questions

1. Am I consciously or unconsciously creating the impression that I am better than I am? In other words, am I a hypocrite?
2. Am I honest in all my acts and words, or do I exaggerate?
3. Do I confidentially pass onto another what was told me in confidence?
4. Am I a slave to dress, friends, work, or habits?
5. Am I self-conscious, self-pitying, or self-justifying?
6. Did the Bible live in me today?
7. Do I give it time to speak to me everyday?
8. Am I enjoying prayer?
9. When did I last speak to someone about my faith?
10. Do I pray about the money I spend?
11. Do I get to bed on time and get up on time?
12. Do I disobey God in anything?
13. Do I insist upon doing something about which my conscience is uneasy?
14. Am I defeated in any part of my life?
15. Am I jealous, impure, critical, irritable, touchy or distrustful?
16. How do I spend my spare time?
17. Am I proud?
18. Do I thank God that I am not as other people, especially as the Pharisee who despised the publican?
19. Is there anyone whom I fear, dislike, disown, criticize, hold resentment toward or disregard? If so, what am I going to do about it?
20. Do I grumble and complain constantly?
21. Is Christ real to me?

### Romans illustrated in five colors

**Black** - represents sin.

“Who can say, I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin?” (Prov 20:9)

*“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Rom 3:23)*

**Red** - represents the blood of Christ.

“The blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.” (1 John 1:7)

*“Christ died for us”, so we are “justified by his blood.” (Rom 5:8b-9a)*

**White** - represents the cleansing of our sins.

“Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.” (Is 1:18)

*God sent his Son “...to be a sin offering ... that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us.” (Rom 8:3b-4a)*

**Green** - represents Christian growth.

“Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2 Pet 3:18)

*“Offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life.” (Rom 6:13)* *“Offer your bodies as living sacrifices.” (Rom 12:1)*

**Gold** - represents eternal life in heaven.

“The great street of the city was of pure gold.” (Rev 21:21)

*“I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.” (Rom 8:18)*

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Next Lesson: From Jerusalem to Rome. You may read Acts 21:18-28:31.

## **Lesson 10: From Jerusalem to Rome**

Objective: The student may learn about the last days of Paul from his last visit in Jerusalem until his execution in Rome. As the last chapters in Acts record his trials and defense, the student may grow mature in his own faith.

Handouts: Bible Map 4, Chronological Outline, Reference List

### **Outline:**

#### 1. Introduction

From his third missionary journey Paul went to Jerusalem though he was warned by way of prophecy not to go because he would face opposition and arrest. (Acts 20:23; 21:4; 21:11) At arrival they met the elders, reported about the ministry and handed over the relief fund to the Jerusalem church. They were ‘warmly received’ but also warned that the Jewish believers are ‘zealous for the law’. (Acts 21:17.20) Like in Corinth before (cf. Acts 18:18), Paul took a vow and so again followed the mission principle of ‘being a Jew to the Jews’. (Acts 21:24; 1 Cor 9:20) But when Jews from Asia came and opposed Paul, he was arrested for the next four years as prophesied. He finally came to Rome as planned. (cf. Acts 19:21; Rom 1:10f.15; 15:23f.28) During his years of arrest, Paul wrote the Prison and Pastoral Epistles.

#### 2. Study the chronological chart that outlines the last years of Paul’s life

3. The importance of Paul's origin, education and his standing in society
  - a. Paul was born in Tarsus, thus he could speak fluent Greek (21:37)
  - b. Paul was educated in Jerusalem, thus he knew fluent Aramaic (21:40)
  - c. Paul was born a Roman citizen, thus he enjoyed privileges (22:29; 25:11)
  - d. Paul was apparently wealthy (21:23f.; 24:26); he was treated with respect and even brought to Caesar; the long line of trial he chose was expensive.
  
4. Paul's many defenses, Roman law and a comparison with the trials of Christ
  - a. Paul stood before kings and governors as predicted. (Acts 9:15; Lk 21:12)
  - b. Paul defended himself (at least) six times; Jesus also had six trials.
  - c. Like with Jesus (Mt 26:59f.), there was no witness against Paul (24:13; 25:7)
  - d. As Jesus (Lk 23:4,14,22), Paul was found innocent (24:23; 25:25; 26:32)
  - e. As in Jesus' case (Jn 19:12ff.), the governors gave in to the Jews (24:27; 25:9)
  - f. But Paul appealed to Caesar and so prevented the mob justice (25:11)
  - g. In Corinth, the Romans already decided in favor of Paul (18:12ff.)
  - h. Roman neutrality (and even protection) allowed Paul to preach. (28:30f.)
  - i. Only later Paul was executed in Rome, which Luke does not record.
  - j. How is your attitude towards the state and how was Paul's? (cf. Rom 13:1-7)

5. Reasons that Acts itself was a defense for Paul's upcoming trial (cf. Wallace, 11f.)
  - a. The address "most excellent" refers to an official (Lk 1:3; cf. Acts 1:1; 24:3).
  - b. The open ending of Acts means that the first trial of Paul was not yet decided.
  - c. The open ending of Acts encourages Theophilus to act in defense of Paul.
  - d. The parallels between Peter and Paul in Acts vindicate Paul as an apostle.
  - e. Most amount of space in Acts is given to Paul's last four years. (ch. 21-28)
  - f. Pagans believed that those who survived shipwreck were innocent. (ch. 27)  
  
(Paul wrote before that he survived shipwreck three times; cf. 2 Cor 11:25)

[Acts ends (cf. 28:17-31) with the theme: the beginning of the church and the spread of the gospel to the Gentiles. It shows again the usual pattern "the Jew first..."]

6. Read Acts 24:1-21. Study the arguments of Paul and his opponents before Felix
  - a. The orator Tertullus – an eloquent lawyer – accuses Paul that he...
    - i. ...is a troublemaker who stirs up riots – true?
    - ii. ...is a ringleader of the Nazarene sect – true?
    - iii. ...even tried to desecrate the temple – true? (cf. 21:27-29)

[Profaning the temple was "the one type of offence for which the Romans allowed the Jewish authorities to retain capital jurisdiction." (F.F. Bruce, 349)]

- b. Tertullus has no proof but says: “By examining him yourself...” (v.8)
- c. Thus how important was Paul’s conduct apart from his argument?
- d. Paul defends himself with respect and courtesy that...
  - i. ...there is no witness that Paul stirred up a riot.
  - ii. ...he believes in the Law and the Prophets.
  - iii. ...he believes in the resurrection. (cf. 23:6)
  - iv. ...he strives to keep his conscience clear.
  - v. ...he brought gifts for the poor and offerings.
  - vi. ...he was even found ceremonially clean.
  - vii. ...even the Sanhedrin did not find any proof.
- e. If you were accused today, could you defend yourself similarly?
- f. Who gave Paul the proper words according to Luke 21:15?

7. The release of Paul after two years of arrest in Rome – three theories:

a. As prophesied, Paul was heard by Caesar who then released him.

[Eusebius, in his *Hist. Eccl.* ii. 22.2, records this tradition.]

b. The case never came to trial because no prosecutors appeared. (cf. 25:16)

[cf. F.F. Bruce, 376f. who refers to W.M. Ramsay]

c. He may have been exiled (to Spain?), according to Clement of Rome.

[cf. F.F. Bruce, 446f. who refers to 1 Clement 5:1-7]

[Throughout Acts Luke lays emphasis on the friendly relationship between the new teachings and the Romans, e.g. Cornelius the centurion (10:1-48), the proconsul on Cyprus (13:12), Gallio the proconsul of Achaia (18:14-17) and the many acquittals of Paul (and Jesus in Luke, see 4.d. above). The importance of Luke's trial record is intelligible only if Paul was found 'not guilty' at the end (of the first trial). We will learn more about Paul's last years between his first and second trial when we study his epistles that were written during this time. (cf. next two lessons)]

### Chronology from Jerusalem to Rome

Jerusalem (57)	Meeting of James and the elders	Acts 21:18-25
	Paul's vow and arrest at the temple	Acts 21:26-33
	Paul's defense before the Jews	Acts 21:34-22:21
	Riot against Paul the Roman citizen	Acts 22:22-29
	Paul's defense before the Sanhedrin	Acts 22:30-23:10
	The Lord appeared to Paul in a vision	Acts 23:11
	The conspiracy against Paul	Acts 23:12-22
Caesarea (57-59)	Paul's defense before Felix in Caesarea	Acts 23:23-24:21
	Paul arrested for two years	Acts 24:22-26
	Paul's defense before Festus in Caesarea	Acts 24:27-25:8
	Paul's appeal to Caesar	Acts 25:9-12
	Paul's defense before Agrippa in Caesarea	Acts 25:13-26:32
Journey to Rome	Paul, prisoners and the centurion Julius	Acts 27:1
	With Aristarchus (cf. Col 4:10) and Luke	Acts 27:2
	They sailed to Sidon and then Myra	Acts 27:3-6
	They arrived at Fair Havens but sailed on	Acts 27:7-12
	A storm drove them to the open sea	Acts 27:13-20
	The Lord appeared to Paul in a vision	Acts 27:21-26

	They shipwrecked and landed at Malta	Acts 27:27-44
	Paul cured many and was honored	Acts 28:1-10
	After three months they sailed to Rome	Acts 28:11-13
Rome (60-62)	At Puteoli they stayed with some brothers	Acts 28:14-15
	Paul lived by himself under guard	Acts 28:16
	Paul's preaching before the Jews	Acts 28:17-24
	Paul turns to the Gentiles	Acts 28:25-29
	Paul taught and preached for 2 years	Acts 28:30-31
	Arrest period probably ended with release	Eusebius
Spain (??)	Paul's mission goal in the west was Spain	Rom 15:24.28
Crete (?)	Paul left Titus in Crete to appoint elders	Tit 1:5
Ephesus (?)	Paul was served by Onesiphoros	2 Tim 1:18
Macedonia (?)	Paul went and left Timothy in Ephesus	1 Tim 1:3
Philippi (?)	It was Paul's intention to go there.	Phil 2:24
Corinth (?)	"Erastus stayed in Corinth..."	2 Tim 4:20
Troas (?)	Paul arrested; left his cloak and scrolls	2 Tim 4:13
Rome (64-?)	Persecution and in result Paul's execution	Clement



## **Lesson 11: The Prison Epistles**

Objective: The student may learn to place the letters in their historical context and (self-) study the epistles based on a solid understanding of their theological messages in general. For the study of Philemon reference is provided.

Handouts: Outline of the Epistles, Christological Creeds, Reference List

### **Outline:**

1. Introduction(s) – Learn about the letters and study the outlines handed out.

### Ephesians

The letter was written by Paul during his imprisonment in Rome before the end of his first trial and release. Similar to Romans, it is a systematic letter that contains a summary of Paul's theology, in particular ecclesiology. As a circular letter it addressed the churches in Asia Minor and not only the church of Ephesus. Paul served three years in Ephesus, but no personal tone is found in the letter. The general theme is the church as the one body of Christ. Tychicus delivered the letter together with Colossians and Philemon. (Eph 6:21f.; Col 4:7-9; Phm 10-12)

## Colossians

Colossae was located east of Ephesus. Its church was founded by Epaphras (Col 1:7), probably when Paul served in Ephesus and the word spread from there. (Acts 19:10)

Unlike the Ephesian letter, Colossians was written in defense of right doctrine and in particular Christology against all kinds of false teachings. (Col 2:8-23) An influential heresy of that time was 'Gnosticism', which basically taught (1) that spirit is good but matter is evil and therefore Christ could not have become 'flesh' and (2) salvation is not by faith (alone) but by superior knowledge ('gnosis'). Against the Judaizers Paul argued against 'legalism'. Forms of 'mysticism' completed the confusion.

## Philippians

The letter was written and sent from Rome after the other epistles and just before his upcoming release. (Phil 1:25; 2:24) Paul founded the church on his second missionary journey and bishops and deacons were already appointed in the church. (Phil 1:1) Epaphroditus was sent from Philippi to Paul in Rome to deliver a gift and bring news about the church. (Phil 4:18) Paul sent him back together with the letter. (Phil 2:25ff.)

It contains doctrine and exhortation, but especially joy and thankfulness.

*Divide into three groups. With the help of the teacher each group studies one epistle on its own and later presents the insight they gained at the end of the lesson.*

2. Read **Ephesians** 1:3-14 and outline the argument of the passage along its grammatical structure:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ,

in accordance with his pleasure and will –

to the praise of his glorious grace,

which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

In him we have redemption through his blood,

the forgiveness of sins, ...

And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure,

which he purposed in Christ,

to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment –

to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head,

even Christ.

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined...

in order that we...might be

for the praise of his glory.

And you also were included in Christ...

Having believed, you were marked... –

to the praise of his glory.

- a. Summarize Paul's teaching in Ephesians 1:3-14 in one sentence:

*Praise be to God, for he has elected you and me in Christ for the praise of his glory!*

- b. Read Eph 2:1-10 and learn how it complements chapter 1:
  - i. Before you were dead (v.1) and now you are *made* alive (v.5).
  - ii. We were 'objects of wrath' (v.3), but now we are saved. (cf. Rom 5:9)
  - iii. We are saved by God's sovereign grace alone, not by any human work.
- c. What is your understanding of election? How does it relate to faith? (v.8)

3. Read the two prayer sections in Ephesians 1:15-23 and 3:14-21.

- a. What does Paul pray for in 1:15-23?
  - i. ...the Spirit of wisdom and revelation that we know Christ.
  - ii. ...enlightenment to know the hope of our inheritance in Christ.
  - iii. ...enlightenment to know Christ's (resurrection) power for us.
- b. What does Paul pray for in 3:14-21?
  - i. ...that God strengthens us through his Spirit in our inner being.
  - ii. ...that we are rooted and established in love to have power...
  - iii. ...that we understand God's love in Christ and grow to the fullness.
- c. Compare Paul's prayer with your prayer life. What do *you* pray for?

4. Learn that the church is by nature 'one' (in unity) and has to keep that unity.
  - a. Christ *created* 'one' out of 'two' – the one church in unity. (2:15)
    - i. No more barrier between Jew and Gentile. (2:14; cf. Rom 9-11)
    - ii. The church is 'one body'. (1:23; 2:16; 4:4.16; cf. 1 Cor 12:12-31)
    - iii. The church is also described as 'one building' or 'temple'. (2:21)
  - b. *Because* the church is one, its members should live together accordingly
    - i. Key verse: Eph 4:3 – make every effort... Do we make effort?
    - ii. Principles: Humility, Gentleness, Patience (4:2); Submission (5:21-6:9)
    - iii. Living as a 'new self' (4:24) different from the Gentiles (4:17-5:20)
  
5. Why does Paul conclude with his teaching on the 'armor of God'? (6:10-18)
  - i. How does it relate to the theme of church unity?
  - ii. How does the 'armor' help in your church practice?

6. Read the prayer section in **Colossians** 1:9-14.

a. What does Paul pray for?

i. ...the knowledge of God's will through spiritual wisdom.

ii. ...bearing fruit and growing in the knowledge of God.

iii. ...strength and power for endurance and patience.

b. Compare Paul's prayer with your prayer life. What do *you* pray for?

7. Learn about the person and work of Christ in Colossians 1:15-23.

a. Who is Jesus Christ?

i. The 'image' of the invisible God – He is the visible God. (v.15)

ii. The Creator of all things – He is uncreated, eternal. (vv.15-17)

iii. The supreme head of the church and risen 'firstborn'. (v.18)

b. What has He done?

i. Reconciliation of *all* things to himself through his blood. (v.20)

ii. Reconciliation and justification of *us* through Christ's death. (v.21f.)

c. Discuss the 'Christological Creeds' in light of Colossians.

8. Scan Colossians 2:6-3:17 and gather the Do's (3:1-17) and Don'ts (2:6-23).

Don't be captured by philosophies.	Set your mind on things above.
Don't be judged by what you eat or drink.	Put to death the 'misdeeds'. (Rom 8:13)
Don't be judged in regard to festivals.	Put on the 'new self'. (Eph 4:24)
Don't submit to worldly rules.	Be thankful.
...	...

See that all those exhortations are saturated with Christology, e.g.

- a. "Live in him..." (2:6)
- b. "For in Christ..." (2:9-15)
- c. "Therefore..." (2:16)
- d. "Since you..." (2:20)
- e. "Since, then, you..." (3:1)
- f. "For you..." (3:2)
- g. "therefore" (3:5)
- h. "Christ is all" (3:11)
- i. "Therefore..." (3:12)
- ...

Does your understanding of Christology affect your personal life in practice?

9. In **Philippians** Paul writes much about joy, though he is imprisoned.

a. How many times do you find 'joy' in this epistle?

i. (1:4) – Paul prays with joy because of their partnership.

ii. (1:25) – Paul will remain for their joy in the faith.

iii. (2:2) – Paul asks to make his joy complete by their unity.

iv. (2:29) – Paul asks to welcome Epaphroditus with joy.

v. (4:1) – The brothers in Philippi are Paul's joy.

b. How many times do you find 'rejoice' in the letter?

i. (1:18) – Paul rejoices because Christ is preached.

ii. (2:17) – Paul may rejoice about the fruit of his labor.

iii. (2:18) – The Philippians may rejoice for their faith.

iv. (3:1) – Paul exhorts them to rejoice in the Lord. (cf. 1 Thess 5:16)

v. (4:4) – Paul exhorts them to rejoice in the Lord *always*.

vi. (4:10) – Paul rejoices greatly because of their concern for him.

c. Philippians is a personal letter full of joy about their relationship.

i. Do you have joyful relationships? Are you a joy for others?

ii. Are you aware that we should rejoice always (even in prison)?

10. Read the prayer section in Philippians 1:9-11.

- a. What does Paul pray for?
  - i. ...that our love abounds more in knowledge.
  - ii. ...that we can discern what is good.
  - iii. ...that we are pure and blameless.
- b. Compare Paul's prayer with your prayer life. What do *you* pray for?

11. Learn about the person and work of Christ in Philippians 2:6-11.

- a. He is God. (v.6)
- b. He made himself nothing – by adding human nature. (v.7)
- c. He humbled himself and became obedient. (v.8)

12. Learn about humility and obedience based on the doctrine of Christ.

- a. Are you God? (No, but...) Do you make yourself nothing?
- b. We should humble ourselves and become obedient.
- c. As God exalted Jesus (v.9), He will also exalt his followers.

13. Paul distinguished between his brothers and his opponents:

- a. (1:15-17) – believers in Rome who preach with wrong motives.
- b. (1:27-28) – opposing outsiders in Philippi, Gentiles or Jews.
- c. (3:2) – Judaizers in Philippi who preach circumcision.
- d. (3:18-19) – Antinomians who live as enemies of the cross.
- e. What is Paul's attitude towards these people?

14. What kinds of people live 'in' your church and how do you treat them?

- a. Are you 'one' with everyone in humility?
- b. How do you deal with opponents? Why?

15. Learn that the Philippians were Paul's 'partners in the gospel'. (1:5)

- a. In 4:16 Paul recalls their support when he was in Thessalonica.
- b. Remember the short but fruitful ministry in Thessalonica!
- c. *Do you have* such supporters and 'partners in the gospel'?
- d. *Are you* such a supporter and 'partner in the gospel'?

## Ephesians

1. Salutation (1:1-2)
- 2. The Election of the Church**
  - a. Election based on Christ (1:3-14)
  - b. Prayer for Understanding (1:15-23)
  - c. Election based on Grace (2:1-10)
  - d. Election into one Church (2:11-22)
  - e. The Mystery revealed to Paul (3:1-13)
- 3. The Life of the Church**
  - a. Prayer for Understanding (3:14-21)
  - b. Keeping the Unity in Diversity (4:1-16)
  - c. Living in Righteousness (4:17-5:20)
  - d. Living in Submission (5:21-6:9)
  - e. Spiritual Warfare (6:10-18)
4. Conclusion (6:19-24)

## Colossians

1. Introduction (1:1-14)
- 2. The Doctrine of Christology**
  - a. The Person of Christ (1:15-18)
  - b. The Work of Christ (1:19-23)
3. Paul's apostolic Ministry
  - a. For the global Church (1:24-29)
  - b. For the Colossians (2:1-5)
- 4. Defense based on Christology (2:6-23)**
  - a. Against Philosophies
  - b. Against Legalism
- 5. Exhortations based on Christology**
  - a. For Sanctification (3:1-17)
  - b. For Relationships (3:18-4:1)
6. Conclusion (4:2-18)

## Philippians

1. Introduction
  - a. Salutation and Thanksgiving (1:1-8)
  - b. Prayer for the Church (1:9-11)
2. Paul's Circumstances at Rome
  - a. The Advance of the Gospel (1:12-17)
  - b. Paul's Joy and Commitment (1:18-26)
- 3. Exhortations for Sanctification**
  - a. Standing firm against Opposition (1:27-30)
  - b. Maintaining Unity through Humility (2:1-11)
  - c. Living in Obedience that results in Joy (2:12-18)
  - d. The Examples of Timothy and Epaphroditus (2:19-30)
- 4. Right Conduct based on Sound Doctrine**
  - a. No Legalism but Faith in Christ (3:1-9)
  - b. The Example of Paul (3:10-4:1)
  - c. Final Exhortations (4:2-9)
5. Conclusion
  - a. Their Gifts and God's Provision (4:10-20)
  - b. Greetings (4:21-23)

## Christological Creeds

### *Nicene Creed (325 A.D.)*

“We believe in one God, the FATHER Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord JESUS CHRIST, the Son of God, begotten of the Father [the only-begotten; that is, of the essence of the Father, God of God], Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of **one substance** (*‘homoousious’*) **with the Father**; by whom all things were made [both in heaven and on earth]; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down and was incarnate and was made man; he suffered, and the third day he rose again, ascended into heaven; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. And in the HOLY GHOST.

[But for those who say: “There was a time when he was not;” and “He was not before he was made;” and “He was made out of nothing,” or “He is of another substance (*‘hypostasis’*) or essence (*‘ousia’*),” or “The Son of God is created,” or “changeable,” or “alterable” – they are condemned by the holy catholic and apostolic church.]”

### *Chalcedonian Creed (451 A.D.)*

“We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhood and also perfect in Manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable [rational] soul and body; consubstantial [coessential] with the Father according to the Godhood, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhood, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in **two natures**, *inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably*; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in **one Person** (*‘prosopon’*) and one Subsistence (*‘hypostasis’*), not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets from the beginning [have declared] concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.”

Optional Readings:

Bruce, Frederick Fyvie. "Colossian Problems, Parts 1-4." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 141 (July 1984): 3-13, 99-110, 195-206, 291-301.

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\_\_\_\_\_. *Philemon: Introduction, Argument, Outline*. Available from <[http://www.bible.org/page.php?page\\_id=1344](http://www.bible.org/page.php?page_id=1344)>; Internet (accessed 11/24/2008).

\_\_\_\_\_. *Philippians: Introduction, Argument, and Outline*. Available from <[http://www.bible.org/page.php?page\\_id=1333](http://www.bible.org/page.php?page_id=1333)>; Internet (accessed 11/24/2008).

Wright, N.T. *The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians and to Philemon*. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986.

Next Lesson: The Pastoral Epistles. You may prepare by reading the letters.

## **Lesson 12: The Pastoral Epistles**

Objective: The student may learn to place the letters in their historical context and (self-) study the epistles based on a solid understanding of their theological messages in general. The focus is on pastoral leadership.

Handouts: Outline of the Epistles, Reference List

### **Outline:**

1. Introduction(s) – Learn about the letters and study the outlines handed out.

### 1 Timothy

The letter was written by Paul after his release and shortly before his second imprisonment in Rome. Together with Timothy Paul went to Ephesus and found the church in crisis. He excommunicated Hymenaeus and Alexander (1:19f.) and left Timothy there to reestablish order. (1:3) The letter contains detailed instructions for Timothy on how to maintain church order and discipline.

### 2 Timothy

His second letter to Timothy Paul must have written during his second imprisonment in Rome after his 'first defense' (4:16) and shortly before his death. (4:6) In face of his execution, he wanted to encourage his closest coworker to persevere. (4:1-8)

## Titus

After his release in Rome, Paul went with Titus to Crete, where he left him to minister to the planted church. Some time later, possibly from Ephesus, Paul wrote Titus and instructed him to ordain elders and ensure sound doctrine and righteous conduct. The situation is similar to Timothy's in Ephesus, though not that urgent. Both had to deal with false teachers who put themselves on stage as leaders. (1:5.10)

### 2. Study the many traditions and creedal statements contained in the letters

- a. Read the two doxologies: 1 Tim 1:17 and 6:15-16.
  - i. Paul preserves a high and exalted view of God.
  - ii. His view of God is the basis for his teachings.
- b. The doctrine to be defended: Seven passages about salvation.
  - i. Read 1 Tim 1:15 – Christ's incarnation for salvation.
  - ii. Read 1 Tim 2:5-6 – Christ is the one God and Mediator.
  - iii. Read 1 Tim 3:16 – Christ the mystery of godliness.
  - iv. Read 2 Tim 1:9-10 – God's grace given us in Christ.
  - v. Read 2 Tim 2:8-13 – Christ the resurrection of the elect.
  - vi. Read Tit 2:11-14 – God's grace leads to holiness.
  - vii. Read Tit 3:3-7 – God's love leads to devotion.

- c. Paul's teaching about conduct is interwoven with doctrine. (1 Tim 3:15)
    - i. The church is God's household.
    - ii. It is the church (household) of the *living* God.
    - iii. The church is the foundation of the truth.
    - iv. Members have to conduct themselves accordingly.
  - d. Our view of God and understanding of doctrine shape our conduct.
    - i. "The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom." (Prov 1:7)
    - ii. Salvation *and* sanctification is by faith, not by the law. (cf. Gal)
3. Therefore sound doctrine has to be defended against false teachers
- a. The character of the false teachers: read the 'vice list' in 2 Tim 3:1-9.
    - i. Lovers of themselves, money, pleasure but not God.
    - ii. Self-centered and unrighteous but not holy.
    - iii. Opposing their true leaders just as Jannes and Jambres.
  - b. Compare with the false teachers in Ephesus described in 1 Tim 6:3-10.
    - i. Looking for financial gain out of love for money. (6:5.10)
    - ii. Discussing with the result of rivalry and friction. (6:4f.)

- c. How to treat them – Paul’s drastic actions against the false teachers:
  - i. The true leaders must stand firm. (1 Tim 1:3; 2 Tim 2:14; Tit 1:11.13)
  - ii. The church members should avoid them. (2 Tim 2:16.23; 3:5)
  - iii. Ultimately the person must be shunned. (Tit 3:10; cf. Mt 18:15-17)
  
- 4. Replacing false teachers, true leaders (bishops/elders, deacons) must be appointed.
  - a. The life and character of leaders as written in 1 Tim 3:2-13 (cf. Tit 1:6-9)
    - i. True leaders have a good reputation in- and outside the church.
    - ii. They manage their family well as they would manage the church.
    - iii. They are not lovers of money and not quarrelsome but temperate etc.
  - b. How to treat them – Paul’s instructions to honor and care:
    - i. They should receive ‘double honor’ (1 Tim 5:17; cf. 1 Cor 9)
    - ii. They should ‘lack nothing’ but ‘have everything they need’ (Tit 3:13)
    - iii. Accusations against them should be verified by witnesses. (1 Tim 5:19)
  
- 5. Above all, leaders must be “able to teach” (1 Tim 2:15; 3:2; 2 Tim 2:24; Tit 1:9)
  - a. What are Paul’s last words to Timothy? “Preach the Word!” (2 Tim 4:2)
  - b. What is his view of Scripture? “God-breathed” (2 Tim 3:16; cf. 1 Thess 2:13)
  - c. How did Paul preach? “From the Scriptures” (Acts 17:2; 17:11)

6. Paul's last days in loneliness – read 2 Tim 4:9-18.
  - a. Paul asks Timothy to come 'quickly'.
  - b. Demas has deserted him. (cf. Col 4:14; Phm 24)
  - c. Crescens has gone to Galatia.
  - d. Titus has gone to Dalmatia.
  - e. Only Luke is with him.
  - f. Paul also asks for John Mark. (cf. Acts 15:37f.)
  - g. Tychicus is sent to Ephesus.
  - h. Everyone deserted him.

“Most likely, Timothy never saw Paul alive again. [FN: In fact we may conjecture that he was unable to avoid Alexander the metalworker when he arrived in Troas, for a year later he too is in a Roman prison, though just getting released (cf. Heb 13:23).] Thus Paul's life ends in service to his Lord and in emulation of his Lord, for the Lord Jesus, too, was all alone in his death, his friends having deserted him.”

[Daniel B. Wallace, *2 Timothy*, p. 3.]

## 1 Timothy

1. Salutation (1:1-2)
2. Instructions for Church Discipline
  - a. Warning against False Teachers (1:3-11)
  - b. Good and Bad Examples (1:12-20)
3. Instructions for Church Order
  - a. Proper Worship (2:1-15)
  - b. Proper Leadership (3:1-16)
5. Instructions for Sound Doctrine
  - a. The Exposure of Error (4:1-5)
  - b. The Antidote to Error (4:6-16)
6. Instructions about Relationships
  - a. Everyone (5:1-2)
  - b. Widows (5:3-16)
  - c. Elders (5:17-25)
  - d. Slaves (6:1-2)
  - e. False Teachers (6:3-10)
7. Paul's Charge to Timothy (6:11-21)

## 2 Timothy

1. Salutation (1:1-2)
2. Encouragement for Faithful Ministry
  - a. Suffering is for the Gospel (1:3-10)
  - b. The Example of Paul (1:11-14)
  - c. Good and Bad Examples (1:15-18)
3. Exhortations for Faithful Ministry
  - a. With Discipline and Endurance (2:1-13)
  - b. In regard to Doctrine and Conduct (2:14-26)
5. Prophecy for Faithful Ministry
  - a. Coming Godlessness (3:1-9)
  - b. Coming Persecution (3:10-13)
6. Commission for Faithful Ministry
  - a. Ministry of the Word (3:14-4:2)
  - b. Different from the Apostates (4:3-5)
  - c. As a Successor of Paul (4:6-8)
7. Personal Instructions (4:9-18)
8. Greetings (4:19-22)

## Titus

1. Salutation (1:1-4)
2. Instructions for Church Order
  - a. Appointing Qualified Elders (1:5-9)
  - b. Dealing with False Teachers (1:10-16)
3. Instructions for Right Conduct
  - a. Within the Church (2:1-15)
  - b. Before Outsiders (3:1-8)
4. Instructions for Church Order
  - a. Dealing with False Teachers (3:9-11)
  - b. Taking Care of Leaders (3:12-14)
5. Greetings (3:15)

Optional Readings:

Hawthorne, Gerald F., Ralph P. Martin and Daniel G. Reid. *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1993, pp. 658-666.

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Zuck, Roy B. *A Biblical Theology of the New Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1994, pp. 333-367.

Next Lesson: Review. You may prepare by reconsidering the lessons.

### Lesson 13: Review and Discussion

Objective: The student may review the previous studies, think about the extent of Paul's ministry and conclude about possible applications for his personal life and the life of his church. Time is provided for discussion.

#### Outline:

1. Recall the Biography of Paul – his Life and his Epistles (cf. Lesson 1)
  - a. Read Acts 9:19-30 and 11:19-30. Paul's ministry before the journeys
    - i. In Damascus after his conversion and later again. (9:20; Gal 1:17)
    - ii. In Jerusalem, preaching and serving the church (9:28; 11:30)
    - iii. In Arabia, Syria, and Cilicia (his home town Tarsus) (11:25; Gal 1:17-21)
    - iv. In his home church Antioch for some years with Barnabas (11:26)
  - b. Recall the mission field covered during the three missionary journeys.

Journey	Region	Church	Letter
1 <sup>st</sup>	Cyprus		
	Galatia	Pisidian Antioch	Galatians
		Iconium	
		Lystra	
		Derbe	

2 <sup>nd</sup>	Syria		
	Cilicia		
	Galatia	(cf. 1 <sup>st</sup> )	
	Macedonia	Philippi	Philippians
		Thessalonica	1 & 2 Thessalonians
		Berea	
	Achaia	Corinth	1 & 2 Corinthians
	Asia	Ephesus	Ephesians
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Galatia	(cf. 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> )	
	Asia	(cf. 2 <sup>nd</sup> )	(Colossians)
	Macedonia	(cf. 2 <sup>nd</sup> )	
	Achaia	(cf. 2 <sup>nd</sup> )	

- c. Paul was imprisoned, came to Rome, wrote letters, was released, went on...
- i. He defended himself and testified before governors and kings.
  - ii. He wrote about half of his epistles during the last years of his life.
  - iii. He probably was released and went on his 4<sup>th</sup> missionary journey...
  - iv. Paul was “prepared in season and out of season.” (cf. 2 Tim 4:2)
  - v. He entrusted the gospel to others and got his crown. (2 Tim 2:2; 4:8)

2. With the review in mind, discuss how you and your church may apply...
  - a. In retrospect, do you find Paul's life attractive and exemplary?
    - i. Are you inspired or encouraged by Paul's biography?
    - ii. Read Phil 3:17. Can you follow Paul's example?
  - b. Think about your personal life. What does your life make a 'life well lived'?
    - i. How old are you? Paul started with ~35 and finished with ~67!
    - ii. What is your gift and ministry? Are you satisfied? (Already retired?)
  - c. Think about your church life. What mission ministry do you support?
    - i. Do you have contact with missionaries? Did you even send some?
    - ii. If not, would you like to? What are you going to do about it? Who?
    - iii. If yes, do you regularly pray for them, support them, contact them?
    - iv. Did you set aside special Sundays for mission? A mission committee?

[Paul's over 30 years of ministry was surely a 'life well lived'. He set an example for us personally and for the church as a whole. He did not act alone but together with his churches and coworkers. During the studies we got many inspirations of how to improve spreading the gospel still today. This last lesson provides the time for review and discussion. The group is also encouraged to proceed with additional meetings in which concrete practical steps are suggested, discussed and followed.]