
a *Grace Notes* course

Foundations 200

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Foundations 208

New Testament Survey: Acts to Colossians

Grace Notes

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Acts

(Spreading The Gospel)

AUTHOR AND NAME OF BOOK

Although the author is unnamed in Acts, the evidence leads to the conclusion that the author was Luke. Acts is the second volume of a two-part discourse written by Luke, the physician, to Theophilus about “all that Jesus began to do and teach.”

Regarding the title, all available Greek manuscripts designate it by the title, “Acts,” or by the title, “The Acts of the Apostles.” Just how or why it received this title is uncertain. Actually, “The Acts of the Apostles” is perhaps not the most accurate title since it does not contain the Acts of all the apostles. Only Peter and Paul are really emphasized, though the promise of the coming of the Spirit was made to all the apostles (1:2-8) who were then to go into all the world preaching the gospel in the power of the Spirit. Many have felt that the book would be more accurately titled, “The Acts of the Holy Spirit” since it describes the spread of Christianity from the time of the coming of the Spirit in Acts 2. The main people of Acts include: Peter, John, Stephen, Philip, James, Barnabas, Silas and Paul.

DATE OF WRITING

A.D. 61

The issues regarding the dating of the book are summarized by Stanley Toussaint as follows:

The writing of Acts must have taken place before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Certainly an event of such magnitude would not have been ignored. This is especially true in light of one of the basic themes of the book: God’s turning to the Gentiles from the Jews because of the Jews’ rejection of Jesus Christ.

Luke scarcely would have omitted an account of Paul’s death, traditionally dated from A.D. 66-68, if it had occurred before he wrote Acts.

Nor did Luke mention the Neronian (belonging to the emperor Nero)

persecutions which began after the great fire of Rome in A.D. 64.

Furthermore, a defense of Christianity before Nero by using the Book of Acts to appeal to what lower officials had ruled regarding Paul would have had little point at the time of the Neronian antagonism (persecutions). At that time Nero was so intent on destroying the church, the defense set forth in Acts would have had little effect in dissuading him (changing his mind).

The date usually accepted by conservative scholars for the writing of Acts is around A.D. 60-62. Accordingly the place of writing would be Rome or possibly both Caesarea and Rome. At the time of writing, Paul’s release was either imminent (near) or had just taken place.¹

THEME AND PURPOSE

The book of Acts is unique among the New Testament books for it alone provides a link for the other books of the New Testament. As Luke’s second book, Acts continues what Jesus “*began to do and to teach*” (1:1) as recorded in the Gospels. It begins with Christ’s Ascension and continues to the period of the New Testament Epistles. In it we have the continuation of the ministry of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit at work in the apostles who went forth preaching and establishing the church, the Body of Christ. Acts is the historical link between the Gospels and the Epistles.

Not only does it make this link for us, but it provides an account of the life of Paul and gives us the historical occasion for his letters. In the process, Acts recounts the first 30 years of the life of the church.

After summarizing various views on the purpose of Acts, Stanley Toussaint writes

The purpose of the Book of Acts may be stated as follows: To explain with the Gospel of Luke the orderly and sovereignly directed progress of the kingdom message from Jews to Gentiles, and from

¹ Walvoord/Zuck, electronic media.

Jerusalem to Rome. In Luke's Gospel the question is answered, "If Christianity has its roots in the Old Testament and in Judaism, how did it become a worldwide religion?" The Book of Acts continues in the vein of the Gospel of Luke to answer the same problem.²

Acts 1:8 expresses the theme of Acts—the indwelling Holy Spirit empowering God's people to be the Savior's witnesses both in Jerusalem (home base), and in all Judea and Samaria (the immediate and surrounding areas), and even to the remotest part of the earth (the world).

CHRIST AS SEEN IN ACTS

The resurrected Savior is the central theme of the sermons in Acts. The Old Testament Scriptures, the historical resurrection, the apostolic testimony, and the convicting power of the Holy Spirit all bear witness that Jesus is both Lord and Christ (2:22-36; 10:34-43). *"To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins"*(10:43). *"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved"* (4:12).³

OUTLINE

1. The Witness In Jerusalem. (1:1-6:7)

- A. The Expectation Of The Chosen. (1:1-2:47) Progress Report 1
- B. The Expansion Of The Church In Jerusalem. (3:1-6:7) Progress Report 2

2. The Witness In All Judea And Samaria. (6:8-9:31)

- A. The Martyrdom Of Stephen. (6:8-8:1a)
 - 1). The Arrest Of Stephen. (6:8-7:1)
 - 2). The Address Of Stephen. (7:2-53)
 - 3). The Attack On Stephen. (7:54-8:1a)
- B. The Ministry Of Philip. (8:1b-40)
- C. The Message Of Saul. (9:1-19a)
- D. The Conflicts Of Saul. (9:19b-31) Progress Report 3

² Ibid.

³ Wilkinson/Boa, p. 353.

3. The Witness To The Extremity Of The Earth. (9:32-28:31)

- A. The Extension Of The Church To Antioch. (9:32-12:24) Progress Report 4
- B. The Extension Of The Church In Asia Minor. (12:25-16:5) Progress Report 5
- C. The Extension Of The Church In The Aegean Area. (16:6-19:20) Progress Report 6
- D. The Extension Of The Church To Rome. (19:21-28:31) Progress Report 7

THE PAULINE EPISTLES

INTRODUCTION

Having finished the survey of the historical books (the Gospels and Acts), we now come to the twenty-one epistles of the New Testament, twenty-two if one includes Revelation as an epistle (which in reality it is [see Revelation 1:4]). Because of its unique apocalyptic nature, however, in this survey we are distinguishing it as The Prophetic Book of the New Testament. The Epistles are generally divided into the Pauline Epistles and the Non-Pauline (General) Epistles. Paul's epistles fall into two categories: nine epistles written to churches and four pastoral epistles. This is then followed by eight Hebrew Christian epistles. Naturally, many questions would arise as to the meaning and application of the gospel for Christians. Thus, the Epistles answer these questions, give the interpretation of the person and work of Christ, and apply the truth of the gospel to Believers.

BACKGROUND OF PAUL

Paul was known for many years as Saul of Tarsus. He was born of Jewish parents in the city of Tarsus of Cilicia. He was not only a Jew, but by his own testimony, he was a Pharisee, a son of a Pharisee (Acts 23:6), a Hebrew of Hebrews (spoke Hebrew or Aramaic), of the tribe of Benjamin (Philippians 3:4-5), and had evidently been taught the trade of tent-making as a youth (Acts 18:3). At a young age, he must have gone to Jerusalem, and according to his testimony, studied under the well known Gamaliel I, a noted teacher in the School of Hillel (Acts 22:3). In his studies, he had advanced in the religion of the Jews beyond many of his

fellows as one extremely zealous for his ancestral traditions (Galatians 1:14).

His zeal as a religious Jew was carried over into the way he zealously sought to persecute the church. As a young Pharisee, he was present and gave approval when Stephen was stoned and murdered (Acts 7:58-83). In his campaign against Christians, both men and women, he traveled with letters of arrest from the high priest and went to other cities to destroy the church of Jesus Christ (Acts 26:10-11; Galatians 1:13). It was on one of these missions that Paul was converted while on the road to Damascus (Acts 9).

Paul was also quite familiar with Greek culture having received a Greek education (Acts 17:28; Titus 1:12). This made him familiar with Greek thought. As such a student, he was familiar with many of the sayings of writers who had lived before him and those who were alive at the same time. In addition, Paul was a Roman citizen, being Roman born (Acts 22:28). Because of this, he could appeal to Caesar as a citizen of Rome while imprisoned in Philippi (Acts 16:37-39).

Consequently, Paul was uniquely qualified to be the one chosen to carry the message of the gospel to the Gentiles. Paul could easily say, ***“I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some”*** (1 Corinthians 9:22).

CONVERSION OF PAUL

Having actively and consistently persecuted the church of Jesus Christ, while on the road to Damascus, Paul had an encounter with the glorified resurrected Christ, which had revolutionary effects on his life (Acts 9:3-30).

He had denied the Christian claim that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God. Further, he did not believe that He had risen from the dead as Stephen had proclaimed when he cried, ***“Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God”*** (Acts 7:56). “Liar!” they cried and stoned him. Saul stood by ***“consenting unto his death.”*** But when the Lord Jesus spoke to Saul on the day of the great experience outside Damascus, he knew that Stephen had been right and he had been wrong. Jesus was alive after all! He also must be the Son of God. Thus, in the synagogues of Damascus, Saul (now Paul)

proclaimed Christ as Savior. While the experience was sudden and dramatic, the effects were lasting. The impact must have caused great psychological and intellectual readjustments. This may well account for the period spent in Arabia and Damascus before his first visit to Jerusalem (Galatians 1:16-19). Then he went back to his home territory and for a period of eight to ten years little is known of his activities.⁴

DISTINCTIVE EMPHASES OF PAUL’S EPISTLES

Before the overview of each of Paul’s epistles, let us notice some of the distinctive features of each of Paul’s epistles.⁵

The Prison Epistles

Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon are sometimes referred to as the “Prison Epistles” because they were each written while Paul was confined or in chains. Each of these letters contain references to this situation (Ephesians 3:1; 4:1; 6:20; Philippians 1:7, 13; Colossians 4:10, 18; Philemon 1, 9, 10).

The fact that these great epistles were written while Paul was imprisoned, either in a Roman barracks or chained daily to a Roman soldier in his own rented house (Acts 28:30), is a marvelous illustration of how God takes our apparent sufferings and uses them for His glory and the increase of our opportunities for ministry (Philippians 1:12-13). It shows how we may be chained and hindered, but that the Word of God is not imprisoned (2 Timothy 2:9).

The Pastoral Epistles

The other major group of Paul’s epistles have generally been called the “Pastoral Epistles,” a term used to designate the three letters addressed to Timothy and Titus (1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus). Originally, they were regarded as mere personal letters and were classified with Philemon, but because of their strong bearing on the life of the church, they began to be called the “Pastoral

⁴ Walter M. Dunnnett, *New Testament Survey*, Evangelical Teacher Training Association, Wheaton, 1967, p. 40.

⁵ J. Sidlow Baxter, *Explore the Book*, pp. 63-64.

Epistles.” Addressed to individuals, these books include personal and private communications, but information that is more official in character. Paul addressed them to Timothy and Titus to guide them in matters concerning the pastoral care of the church, which is the household of God (1 Timothy 3:14-15; 4:6-15 cf. 2 Timothy 2:2).

These epistles deal with church government, policies, and practice, all of which are concerns vital to the pastoral health of the church. In summary, these books were designed by God to aid us in our pastoral responsibilities and in development and guidance of local churches.

In this regard there is an important observation to be made. Of Paul’s thirteen letters, these were the very last books he wrote. What is so significant about that? Since these books deal with church order, ministry, and organization, why were they not first? If you or I were doing this (especially today) we would probably first try to get the administrative organization in order, the structure, and then worry about the doctrine.

So here are some suggestions to think about

Suggestion 1

Of course, organization and order is important. The church is a spiritual body and each believer is a member with special functions and tasks to carry out. The primary need that is essential to functioning is right theology (teaching) and understanding of the Word, along with its personal application for Christ-like living. This provides the Church with the spiritual and moral foundation on which we base our methods, strategy, and administration. So, while our methods will often vary, they must never contradict the moral or spiritual principles of the Word of God.

For example, giving to support the Church is both a corporate and individual responsibility, but the giving and collection of money must be done so that it does not violate certain Biblical principles. The Believer should give voluntarily and not be manipulated by methods that violate the principle (2 Corinthians 9:6-10).

Suggestion 2

Organization must be based on right teaching, which is grounded in rightly handling the Word (2 Timothy 2:15). God’s objective truth along with

application by spiritually qualified people (1 Timothy 3:1-10) are essential to the health of the Church. When Believers try to run a church based solely on tradition or background, they end up with an organization that is not Biblical and lacks the spiritual passion and capacity to function as God intends.

These books, then, deal with matters of church order not previously addressed. Before God gave the church specific directions for church order, He gave us Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. Is this because organization is unimportant? No! It is because organization and administration are not primary, but are secondary to the growth of a church. It is also because sound teaching and spirituality are what ultimately produce ministries that are effective according to God’s standards and that manifest the spirit and character of Christ in ministry and outreach.

Each of Paul’s epistles contain a similar, yet distinct, emphasis on the Lord Jesus Christ, the Gospel message and the Believer’s union with Him. The following charts show the differences

The Emphasis on the Lord Jesus	
Romans	Christ the Power of God
1 Corinthians	Christ the Wisdom of God
2 Corinthians	Christ the Comfort of God
Galatians	Christ the Righteousness of God
Ephesians	Christ the Riches of God
Philippians	Christ the Sufficiency of God
Colossians	Christ the Fullness of God
1 Thessalonians	Christ the Promise of God
2 Thessalonians	Christ the Reward of God
1 Timothy	Christ the Mediator of God
2 Timothy	Christ the Judge of God
Titus	Christ the Kindness of God
Philemon	Christ the Confidence of God

The Emphasis on the Gospel Message	
Romans	The Gospel and its Message.
1 Corinthians	The Gospel and its Ministry.
2 Corinthians	The Gospel and its Ministers.
Galatians	The Gospel and its Mutilators.
Ephesians	The Gospel and its Heavens.
Philippians	The Gospel and its Earthlies.
Colossians	The Gospel and its Philosophies.
1 Thessalonians	The Gospel and the Church's future.
2 Thessalonians	The Gospel and the Antichrist.
1 Timothy	The Gospel and its Pastors.
2 Timothy	The Gospel and its Opposition.
Titus	The Gospel and its Applications.
Philemon	The Gospel and its Relevance.

The Emphasis of the Gospel on the Believer's Union with Christ	
Romans	In Christ is Justification.
1 Corinthians	In Christ is Sanctification.
2 Corinthians	In Christ is Consolation.
Galatians	In Christ is Liberation.
Ephesians	In Christ is Exaltation.
Philippians	In Christ is Exultation.
Colossians	In Christ is Completion.
1 Thessalonians	In Christ is Translation.
2 Thessalonians	In Christ is Compensation.
1 Timothy	In Christ is Aspiration.
2 Timothy	In Christ is Determination.
Titus	In Christ is Activation.
Philemon	In Christ is Motivation.

Romans

(Christ: The Power Of God To Us)

AUTHOR AND NAME OF BOOK

As the letter states, Paul is the author (1:1). Almost without exception, from the early church this epistle has been credited to Paul. The letter contains a number of historical references that agree with known facts of Paul's life. The doctrinal content of the book is also consistent with the other writings of the apostle, a fact quickly evident by a comparison with his other letters.

Romans, which has been called Paul's "greatest work," gets its title from the fact that it was written to the church in Rome (1:7, 15). Paul did not establish the church in Rome, but as the apostle to the Gentiles, he had longed for many years to visit the Believers in Rome (15:22-23) that he might further establish them in the faith and preach the gospel there as well (1:13-15).

Desiring to minister in Rome, he wrote Romans to prepare the way for his visit (15:14-17). It was written from Corinth, while completing the collection for the poor in Palestine. From there he went to Jerusalem to deliver the money, intending to continue on to Rome and Spain (15:24). Paul did eventually get to Rome, but as a prisoner. It appears that Phoebe, a woman who belonged to the church at Cenchrea near Corinth (16:1), carried the letter to Rome.

DATE OF WRITING

A.D. 57-58

Romans was written in around A.D. 57-58 most likely near the end of his third missionary journey (Acts 18:23-21:14; Romans 15:19). In view of Paul's statement in Romans 15:26, it appears Paul had already received contributions from the churches of Macedonia and Achaia (where Corinth was located). This means he had already been at Corinth and since he had not yet been at Corinth when he wrote to that church (cf. 1 Corinthians 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9), the writing of Romans must follow that of 1 and 2 Corinthians which is dated about A.D. 55.

THEME AND PURPOSE

Romans was not written to address specific problems, as were some of his other epistles. Three clear purposes unfold for the writing of Romans. The **first** was simply to announce Paul's plan to visit Rome after his return to Jerusalem and to prepare the church for his coming (15:24, 28-29 cf. Acts 19:21). Paul wanted to inform them of his plans and to have them anticipate and pray for their fulfillment (15:30-32). A **second** purpose was to present a complete and detailed statement of the gospel message God had called him to proclaim. The apostle was not only ready "*to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome*" (1:15), but he wanted them to have a clear understanding of its meaning and extensions into all of life, including: past (justification which means to declare one righteous), present (sanctification which means to set apart), and future (glorification which means to share Christ's glory). A **third** purpose is related to the questions that naturally arose among the Jewish and the Gentile Christians at Rome like, what does the gospel do to the Law and such Old Testament rites as circumcision? And what about the Jew? Has God set the Jew aside? Had He forgotten His promises to the Jews? Paul answers these questions and explains God's plan of salvation for Jews and Gentiles.

Paul's theme in Romans is clearly stated in 1:16-17. In this the apostle shows how God saves the sinner. In these verses, the great themes of the epistle are gathered together: the gospel, the power of God, salvation, everyone who believes, righteousness from God, Jew and Gentile. Charles Ryrie has an excellent summary of the theme and contents

More formal than Paul's other letters, Romans sets forth the doctrine of justification by faith in a systematic way. The theme of the epistle is the righteousness of God (1:16-17). A number of basic Christian doctrines are discussed: natural revelation (Romans 1:19-20), universality of sin (Romans 3:9-20), justification (Romans 3:24), propitiation (Romans 3:25), faith (Romans 4:1), original sin (Romans 5:12), union with Christ (Romans 6:1), the election and rejection of Israel

(Romans 9-11), spiritual gifts (Romans 12:3-8), and respect for government (Romans 13:1-7).⁶

Apart from the introduction (1:1-17) and Paul's closing comments (15:14-16:27), Romans easily divides into three sections

1. The first eight chapters are **doctrinal** and outline the basic doctrines of the gospel of righteousness (justification and sanctification) from God through faith.
2. The next three chapters (9-11) are **national** and describe God's dealings with Jews and Gentiles and the relationship of each to the gospel.
3. The remaining chapters (12-16) provide **practical applications** of the gospel in a Believer's daily life.

CHRIST AS SEEN IN ROMANS

Paul presents Jesus Christ as the Second Adam whose righteousness and substitutionary death have provided justification for all who place their faith in Him. He offers His righteousness as a gracious gift to sinful men, having borne God's condemnation and wrath for their sinfulness. His death and resurrection are the basis for the Believer's redemption, justification, reconciliation, salvation, and glorification.⁷

OUTLINE

1. **Introduction. (1:1-17)**
2. **Condemnation: The Need Of Righteousness Because Of Sin In All. (1:18-3:20)**
 - A. The Condemnation Of The Immoral Man (The Gentile). (1:18-32)
 - B. The Condemnation Of The Moral Man. (2:1-16)
 - C. The Condemnation Of The Religious Man (The Jew). (2:17-3:8)
 - D. The Condemnation Of All Men. (3:9-20)
3. **Justification: The Imputation Of God's Righteousness Through Christ. (3:21-5:21)**
 - A. The Description Of Righteousness. (3:21-31)
 - B. The Illustration Of Righteousness. (4:1-25)

⁶ Ryrie, p. 1786.

⁷ Wilkinson/Boa, p. 374.

C. The Blessings Of Righteousness. (5:1-11)

D. The Contrast Of Righteousness And Condemnation. (5:12-21)

4. Sanctification: Righteousness Imparted And Demonstrated. (6:1–8:39)

A. Sanctification And Sin. (6:1-23)

B. Sanctification And The Law. (7:1-25)

C. Sanctification And The Holy Spirit. (8:1-39)

5. Vindication: Jew And Gentile, The Scope Of God's Righteousness. (9:1–11:36)

A. Israel's Past: Election Of God. (9:1-29)

B. Israel's Present: Rejection Of God. (9:30–10:21)

C. Israel's Future: Restoration By God. (11:1-36)

6. Application: The Practice Of Righteousness In Service. (12:1–15:13)

A. In Relation To God. (12:1-2)

B. In Relation To Self. (12:3)

C. In Relation To The Church. (12:4-8)

D. In Relation To Society. (12:9-21)

E. In Relation To Government. (13:1-14)

F. In Relation To Other Christians. (14:1–15:13)

7. Personal Messages And Benediction. (15:14–16:27)

A. Paul's Plans. (15:14-33)

B. Paul's Personal Greetings. (16:1-16)

C. Paul's Conclusion And Benediction. (16:17-27)

First Corinthians

(Christ: The Wisdom of God To Us.)

AUTHOR AND NAME OF BOOK

Paul is the author of this epistle. This is supported by both external and internal evidence. From the first century onward (A.D. 96), there is continuous and abundant evidence that Paul is the author. Clement of Rome (a second century pastor) wrote of 1 Corinthians as "the Epistle of the blessed Apostle Paul," in his own Epistle to the Corinthians and even cited 1 Corinthians in regard to their continuing factions. The internal evidence is obvious. The writer calls himself Paul in several places (1:1; 16:21 cf. 1:12-17; 3:4, 6, 22).

A careful study of the book of Acts and the several epistles reveal the following summary of Paul's involvement with the Corinthian church: (1) there was his first visit to Corinth followed by, (2) the first letter to Corinth (now lost). This was then followed by (3) the second letter to Corinth (1 Corinthians). (4) This was then followed by his second visit to Corinth (the "painful visit," 2 Corinthians 2:1). (5) Then there was a third letter to Corinth (now also lost). (6) This was followed by 2 Corinthians, the fourth letter to Corinth. (7) Finally, there was a third visit to Corinth (Acts 20:2-3). It should be pointed out that the two lost letters were lost only because they were not intended by God to be part of the Biblical canon.

DATE OF WRITING

A.D. 55

Paul first preached the gospel in Corinth while on his second missionary journey, about A.D. 50. While there he lived and worked with Aquila and Priscilla who were of the same trade, tent-makers (Acts 18:3). As was his custom, Paul first preached in the synagogue but was eventually forced out by Jewish opposition. However, he simply moved next door to the house of Titius Justus where he continued his ministry (Acts 18:7). Though accused by the Jews before the Roman governor Gallio (a charge that was dismissed) Paul remained 18 months in Corinth (Acts 18:1-17; 1 Corinthians 2:3). This letter was written about A.D. 55 toward the end of Paul's three-year residency in Ephesus (16:5-9; Acts 20:31). From his reference that he stayed at Ephesus until Pentecost (16:8), it appears he intended to remain there somewhat less than a year when he wrote this epistle.

THEME AND PURPOSE

To help understand the theme and purpose, a little background is necessary. Corinth was a large metropolis (approximately 700,000 population; about two-thirds of whom were slaves) located on a narrow isthmus (a piece of land that extends into a body of water) between the Aegean Sea and the Adriatic Sea that connected the Peloponnesus with Northern Greece. And though prosperous, from man's point of view, Paul and his associates may have wondered what kind of success the gospel of

God's righteousness would have in a city like Corinth. As a city, it had a reputation for gross materialism and deep sinfulness. The city was filled with shrines and temples with the most prominent being the temple of Aphrodite which sat on top of an 1800-foot (550 meters) peak called the Acrocorinthus. In the earliest Greek literature it was linked with wealth and immorality. The expression "Corinthian girl" came to mean a prostitute. The phrase, "to act as a Corinthian," came to mean, "to practice fornication." Much of the wealth and vice in Corinth centered around the temple of Aphrodite and its thousand temple prostitutes. For this reason a proverb warned, "Not for every man is the voyage to Corinth."

From the account in Acts it would appear as if Paul had few converts among the Jews and that nearly all converts were Gentiles. Most of these came from the humbler ranks, although there may have also been some members of the nobler class (1:26-31). Marked social and economic differences existed among them (7:20-24; 11:21-34); some of them had even been steeped in pagan immoralities (6:9-11). Yet as Greeks they prided themselves on their intellectualism, although in their case it had degenerated (1:17; 2:1-5).⁸

One can certainly see, then, how the immoral and religious conditions of Corinth had negatively impacted the life of the church spiritually and morally. The basic theme of the letter is how the Christian's new life, sanctified in Christ and saints by calling, is to be applied to every situation of life. This new life in Christ calls for a new way of living through the Holy Spirit (3:16, 17; 6:11, 19-20). God's wisdom manifested to us in Christ is to change Believers on both the individual and social level.

Thus, 1 Corinthians was written as a pastoral corrective to the news he had received concerning the many problems and disorders in the church there. The problems included divisions in the church (1:11), trust in man's wisdom or that of the world rather than God's (1:21-30), immorality

(5:1-13; 6:9-20), and a number of questions regarding marriage and divorce, food, worship, spiritual gifts, and the resurrection. Undoubtedly, because of their religious and immoral background, false beliefs and practices characterized this church.

CHRIST AS SEEN IN 1 CORINTHIANS

The importance of Christ as the essence, source, and means of the Christian life is stated in 1:30, "*But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.*"

OUTLINE

1. Introduction. (1:1-9)

- A. The Salutation. (1:1-3)
- B. The Prayer Of Thanks. (1:4-9)

2. Divisions In The Church. (1:10-4:21)

- A. The Report Of Divisions. (1:10-17)
- B. The Reasons For Divisions. (1:18-2:16)
 - 1). Misunderstanding Of God's Message Of The Cross. (1:18-2:5)
 - 2). Misunderstanding Of The Spirit's Ministry. (2:6-16)
- C. The Result Of Divisions. (3:1-4:5)
 - 1). Spiritual Growth Is Hampered. (3:1-9)
 - 2). Rewards Are Lost. (3:10-4:5)
- D. The Design And Example Of Paul. (4:6-21)

3. Moral Disorders In The Church. (5:1-6:20)

- A. The Case Of Incest. (5:1-13)
- B. The Problem Of Litigation In Heathen Courts. (6:1-8)
- C. The Warning Against Moral Laxity. (6:9-20)

4. Instructions Concerning Marriage. (7:1-40)

- A. Marriage And Celibacy. (7:1-9)
- B. Marriage And Divorce. (7:10-24)
- C. Marriage And Christian Service. (7:25-38)
- D. Marriage And Remarriage. (7:39-40)

5. Instructions Concerning Food Offered To Idols. (8:1-11:1)

⁸ Henry Clarence Thiessen, *Introduction to the New Testament*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1943, pp. 202-03.

A. Question: May A Christian Eat Food Consecrated To A Pagan God? (8:1-13)

B. Example Of Paul. (9:1-27)

C. Exhortations. (10:1–11:1)

6. Instructions Concerning Public Worship. (11:2–14:40)

A. The Covering Of Women. (11:2-16)

B. The Lord's Supper. (11:17-34)

C. The Use Of Spiritual Gifts. (12:1–14:40)

1). The Varieties Of Gifts. (12:1-11)

2). The Purpose Of Gifts: Unity In Diversity. (12:12-31)

3). The Supremacy Of Love Over Gifts. (13:1-13)

4). The Superiority Of Prophecy Over Tongues. (14:1-25)

5). The Regulations For The Use Of Gifts. (14:26-40)

7. The Doctrine Of The Resurrection. (15:1-58)

A. The Importance Of The Resurrection. (15:1-11)

B. The Consequences Of Denying The Resurrection. (15:12-19)

C. The Christian Hope. (15:20-34)

D. The Resurrection Body. (15:35-50)

E. The Christian's Victory Through Christ. (15:51-58)

8. The Collection For Jerusalem. (16:1-4)

9. Conclusion. (16:5-24)

Second Corinthians

(Christ: The Comfort of God To Us)

AUTHOR AND NAME OF BOOK

Again as indicated in the opening salutation, Paul is the author of this letter. Both external and internal evidence is very strong in support of Pauline authorship. In fact, "it is stamped with his style and it contains more autobiographical material than any of his other writings."⁹

DATE OF WRITING

A.D. 56

Because of the riot caused by silversmiths (Acts 19:23-41) Paul departed from Ephesus for Macedonia (Acts 20:1) in the spring of A.D. 56. In the process, he made a stop at Troas hoping to meet Titus (2 Corinthians 2:13) and receive news about conditions in Corinth. Not finding Titus there, he pushed on to Macedonia, with obvious concern about Titus' safety (7:5-6). There he met Titus, who brought good news about the general well-being of the Corinthian church but bad news about a group who were standing in opposition to Paul and his apostleship. From Macedonia Paul wrote a fourth letter, 2 Corinthians. Paul then made his third visit to Corinth during the winter of A.D. 56-57 (Acts 20:2-3).

THEME AND PURPOSE

Of all Paul's letters, 2 Corinthians is the most personal and intimate. In it he opened his heart and declared his steadfast love for the Corinthians even though some had been extremely critical and very changeable in their affection for him. The major theme is summoned by James K. Lowery in the Bible Knowledge Commentary

What mainly concerned Paul was the presence of false teachers, claiming to be apostles, who had entered the church. They promoted their own ideas and at the same time sought to discredit (harm the reputation of) both the person and message of the apostle. Second Corinthians was written to defend the authenticity of both his apostleship and his message. This was not carried out in a self-protecting spirit but because Paul knew that acceptance of his ministry and message were intimately bound with the Corinthian church's own spiritual well-being.¹⁰

In the process of Paul's defense, three key purposes emerge: (1) Paul expressed his joy at the favorable response of the church to Paul's ministry (1:1-7:16); (2) he sought to remind the Believers of their commitment to the offering for the Christians in Judea (8:1-9:15); and (3) he sought to defend his apostolic authority (10:1-13:14).

⁹ Gaebelein, electronic media.

¹⁰ Walvoord/Zuck, electronic media.

CHRIST AS SEEN IN 2 CORINTHIANS

In this epistle, we see Him as our comfort (1:5), triumph (2:14), Lord (2:4), liberty or freedom for a new life (3:17), light (4:6), judge (5:10), reconciliation (5:19), gift (9:15), owner (10:7), and power (12:9).

OUTLINE:¹¹

1. Explanation Of Paul's Conduct And Apostolic Ministry. (1:1-7:16)

- A. Salutation. (1:1-2)
- B. Thanksgiving For Divine Comfort In Affliction. (1:3-11)
- C. The Integrity Of Paul's Motives And Conduct. (1:12-2:4)
- D. Forgiving The Offender At Corinth. (2:5-11)
- E. God's Direction In The Ministry. (2:12-17)
- F. The Corinthian Believers-A Letter From Christ. (3:1-11)
- G. Seeing The Glory Of God With Unveiled Faces. (3:12-4:6)
- H. Treasure In Clay Jars. (4:7-16a)
- I. The Prospect Of Death And What It Means For The Christian. (4:16b-5:10)
- J. The Ministry Of Reconciliation. (5:11-6:10)
- K. A Spiritual Father's Appeal To His Children. (6:11-7:4)
- L. The Meeting With Titus. (7:5-16)

2. Hortatory (Urging): The Collection For The Christians At Jerusalem. (8:1-9:15)

- A. Generosity Encouraged. (8:1-15)
- B. Titus And His Companions Sent To Corinth. (8:16-9:5)
- C. Results Of Generous Giving. (9:6-15)

3. Paul's Vindication Of His Apostolic Authority. (10:1-13:14)

- A. Paul's Defense Of His Apostolic Authority And The Area Of His Mission. (10:1-18)

B. Paul Forced Into Foolish Boasting. (11:1-12:21)

C. Final Warnings. (13:1-10)

D. Conclusion. (13:11-14)

Galatians

(Christ: The Righteousness of God To Us)

AUTHOR AND NAME OF BOOK

Paul identifies himself as the author of this epistle with the words, "Paul an apostle."

DATE OF WRITING

A.D. 49 or 55

The letter was written to Christians in South Galatia. These churches were founded on Paul's first missionary journey. This letter was written after the end of the journey (probably from Antioch around A.D. 49, making it the earliest of Paul's epistles) just prior to the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15).

THEME AND PURPOSE

The Epistle to the Galatians has been called by many theologians "The Charter of Christian Liberty (Freedom)." Galatians stands as a powerful challenge to the Judaizers and their teachings of legalism (living under law instead of grace). They taught, among other things, that a number of the ceremonial practices of the Old Testament were still binding on the church. Thus, the apostle writes to refute their false gospel of works and demonstrates the superiority of justification by faith and sanctification by the Holy Spirit.

In addition, these Judaizers not only proclaimed a false gospel, but also sought to discredit Paul's apostleship. In the first two chapters Paul defended his apostleship and message which came by revelation from the risen Christ. Then, in Chapters 3 and 4 he argued for the true doctrine of grace, the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Some, however, would immediately claim such a doctrine leads to a license (to sin), so the apostle demonstrates that Christian liberty (freedom) does not mean a license to sin. Thus, Chapters 5 and 6 show that Christians must learn to live by the power of the Spirit and that the Spirit controlled

¹¹ Frank E. Gaebelin, General Editor, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, New Testament*, , Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1976-1992, electronic media.

walk will manifest not the works of the flesh but rather the fruit of the Spirit.

CHRIST AS SEEN IN GALATIANS

Through His death by which Believers have died to the Law and through the life conformed to Christ (2:20), Believers have been freed from bondage (5:1f.) and brought into a position of liberty. The power of the cross provides deliverance from the curse of the law, from the power of sin, and from self (1:4; 2:20; 3:13; 4:5; 5:16, 24; 6:14).

OUTLINE

1. Personal: The Gospel Of Grace, Justification By Faith Defended. (1:1-2:21)

A. Introduction. (1:1-9)

B. The Gospel Of Grace Came By Revelation. (1:10-24)

C. The Gospel Of Grace Was Approved By The Church In Jerusalem. (2:1-10)

D. The Gospel Of Grace Was Vindicated In The Rebuke Of Peter. (2:11-21)

2. Doctrinal: The Gospel Of Grace, Justification By Faith Explained. (3:1-4:31)

A. The Experience Of The Galatians: The Spirit Is Given By Faith. (3:1-5)

B. The Example Of Abraham: He Was Justified By Faith, Not By Works. (3:6-9)

C. Justification Is By Faith, Not By The Law. (3:10-4:11)

D. The Galatians Received Their Blessings By Faith, Not By Law. (4:12-20)

E. Law And Grace Are Mutually Exclusive. (4:21-31)

3. Practical: The Gospel Of Grace, Justification By Faith Applied. (5:1-6:18)

A. The Position Of Liberty: Stand Fast. (5:1-12)

B. The Practice Of Liberty: Serve And Love One Another. (5:13-15)

C. The Power Of Liberty: Walk By The Spirit. (5:16-26)

D. The Performance Of Liberty: Do Good To All Men. (6:1-10)

E. The Conclusion. (6:11-18)

Ephesians

(Christ: The Riches of God To Us)

AUTHOR AND NAME OF BOOK

As clearly stated in the opening verse of each of the prison epistles, Paul is declared to be the author. The traditional title is, "To the Ephesians."

DATE OF WRITING

A.D. 60-61

Paul was a prisoner when he wrote this epistle (Ephesians 3:1; 4:1; 6:20). Though scholars differ on whether Paul wrote Ephesians while he was imprisoned at Caesarea (Acts 24:27) in A.D. 57-59, or in Rome (28:30) in A.D. 60-62, the evidence favors the Roman imprisonment. It is believed that Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon were also written during the same time period (Philippians 1:7; Colossians 4:10; Philemon 9). Because Ephesians gives no hint of Paul's release from prison, as in Philippians (1:19-26) and Philemon (1:22), many believe that Ephesians was written in the early part of his imprisonment in Rome about A.D. 60, while he was kept under house guard in his rented quarters (Acts 28:30). After Paul was released he wrote 1 Timothy and Titus, was arrested again, wrote 2 Timothy, and then was martyred in Rome.

THEME AND PURPOSE

In Ephesians, Paul sets forth the glorious mystery, "the church which is Christ's body," Christ as the head of the Church (1:22, 23), and Believers as co-members of one another and blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ (1:3; 2:11-22). Clearly, Paul's purpose is to expand the Believer's horizons regarding the limitless wealth of his blessings in Christ who is the head of the church, the body of Christ. Out of this, two great purposes emerge in the epistle. The first is to describe some of the wealth of blessings that Believers have in Christ, and how, through them, the eternal purposes of God are summed up in the person of Christ, the things in heaven and on earth (1:3-12). The second theme flows out of the first, namely, the Believer's responsibility to know, grasp, and walk in a manner that is fitting with his heavenly

position and calling in Christ (1:18-23; 3:14-21; 4:1).

While not written to correct any specific errors, Paul designed this epistle as a prevention against those problems that so often occur because of a lack of maturity or a failure in understanding and application of what Believers have in Christ. Closely associated with this is a short section on the Believer's warfare with Satan (6:10-18). Thus, Paul writes about the Believer's wealth, walk, and warfare.

CHRIST AS SEEN IN EPHESIANS

Phrases in Ephesians like "in Christ" or "with Christ" appear some 35 times. These are common Pauline expressions, but they appear in this epistle more than in any other. By this, we see much of what Believers have through their position in the Savior. They are in Christ (1:1), blessed with every blessing in Christ (1:3), chosen in Him (1:4), adopted through Christ (1:5), in the Beloved (1:6), redeemed in Him (1:7), given an inheritance in Him (1:11), have a hope that is to the praise of His glory in Christ (1:12), sealed with the Spirit through Him as an earnest installment of their inheritance (1:13-14), made alive, raised, and seated with Him in the heavenlies (2:5-6), created in Christ for good works (2:10), partakers of the promise in Christ (3:6), and given access to God through faith in Christ (3:12).

OUTLINE

1. Salutation Or Greeting. (1:1-2)

2. The Doctrinal Portion Of The Epistle: The Calling Of The Church. (1:3-3:21)

A. Praise For Redemption. (1:4-14)

- 1). Chosen By The Father. (1:4-6)
- 2). Redemption By The Son. (1:7-12)
- 3). Sealed With The Spirit. (1:13-14)

B. Prayer For Wisdom A Revelation. (1:15-23)

- 1). The Cause Of The Prayer. (1:15-18a)
- 2). The Content Of The Prayer. (1:18b-23)

C. Positional Relocation. (2:1-22)

- 1). The New Position In The Heavenlies. (2:1-10)
- 2). The New Position In The Household. (2:11-22)

D. Parenthetical Explanation. (3:1-13)

1). The Mystery, The Product Of Revelation. (3:1-6)

2). The Minister, Appointed To Proclamation. (3:7-13)

E. Prayer For Realization. (3:14-21)

3. The Practical Portion Of The Epistle: The Walk Of The Church. (4:1-6:24)

A. The Believer's Walk In Unity. (4:1-16)

- 1). The Appeal To Preserve Unity. (4:1-3)
- 2). The Basis For Unity. (4:4-6)
- 3). The Means Of Unity. (4:7-16)

B. The Believer's Walk In Righteousness. (4:17-5:18)

- 1). The Previous Walk Of The Old Life. (4:17-19)
- 2). The Present Walk Of The New Life. (4:20-32)
- 3). The Pattern For Our Walk. (5:1-7)
- 4). The Proof And Reason For Our Walk. (5:8-13)
- 5). The Power And Provision For Our Walk. (5:14-18)

C. The Believer's Walk In The World. (5:19-6:9)

- 1). As To One's Self And The Church. (5:19-21)
- 2). As To One's Home. (5:22-6:4)
- 3). As To One's Profession. (6:5-9)

D. The Believer's Walk In Warfare. (6:10-20)

- 1). The Exhortation To Arms. (6:10-13)
- 2). The Explanation Of Our Armor. (6:14-17)
- 3). The Employment Of Our Armor. (6:18-20)

E. Conclusion. (6:21-24)

Philippians

(Christ: The Sufficiency of God To Us)

AUTHOR AND NAME OF BOOK

Paul is the author. The epistle was written to the church at Philippi, the first church Paul established in Macedonia, and is titled, "To the Philippians."

DATE OF WRITING

A.D. 60-61

As with Ephesians, this epistle was written while Paul was imprisoned. His reference to the Praetorian guard (Philippians 1:13) along with the

possibility of death (1:20-26) suggest he was writing from Rome. Though death was possible, Paul also seemed confident of his release. This suggests Philippians was written after Ephesians later in A.D. 60 or 61.

THEME AND PURPOSE

Whereas Ephesians sets forth the glorious mystery, “the church which is Christ’s body,” Christ as the head of the Church (1:22-23), and Believers as co-members of one another who are equally blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ (1:3; 2:11-22), Philippians applies the book of Ephesians. Philippians guards against the failure to practice Christ-provided unity and against the failure of Believers to rejoice in their blessings and position in Christ (Philippians 1:27; 2:2; 4:1f.). The theme of Philippians might well be “joy and unity in Christ.”

Paul had several obvious purposes in writing this letter to the Philippians: (1) He sought to express his love and gratitude for the gift they had sent him (1:5; 4:10-19); (2) to give a report about his own circumstances (1:12-26; 4:10-19); (3) to encourage the Philippians to stand firm in the face of persecution and rejoice regardless of circumstances (1:27-30; 4:4); (4) to exhort them to live in humility and unity (2:1-11; 4:2-5); (5) to commend Timothy and Epaphroditus to the Philippian church (2:19-30); and (6) to warn the Philippians against the legalistic Judaizers and the libertarian antinomians (lawless/immoral people) who had slipped in among them (Ch. 3).

CHRIST AS SEEN IN PHILIPPIANS

No passage of Scripture is clearer and more declarative regarding the nature, fact, and purpose of the incarnation of Christ than is found in this book (2:5-8). In view of all Christ was, is, has done and will accomplish, Paul declares Christ as the Believer’s: (1) life (1:21); (2) perfect model of humility and sacrificing love (2:4-5); (3) the one who will transform our humble bodies into the likeness of His glorious body at the resurrection (3:21); and (4) our means of strength in any and all circumstances of life (4:12).

OUTLINE:¹²

¹² Ryrie, pp. 1886-1887.

1. Salutation And Thanksgiving For The Philippians. (1:1-11)

2. The Personal Circumstances Of Paul In Rome: Preaching Christ. (1:12-30)

3. The Pattern Of The Christian Life: Having The Mind Of Christ. (2:1-30)

A. The Exhortation To Humility. (2:1-4)

B. The Epitome Of Humility. (2:5-11)

C. The Exercise Of Humility. (2:12-18)

D. The Examples Of Humility Seen In Timothy And Epaphroditus. (2:19-30)

4. The Prize Of The Christian Life: Having The Knowledge Of Christ. (3:1-21)

A. The Warning Against Legalistic Judaizers. (3:1-4a)

B. The Example Of Paul. (3:4b-14)

C. The Exhortation To Others. (3:15-21)

5. The Peace Of The Christian Life: Knowing The Presence Of Christ. (4:1-23)

A. Peace With Others. (4:1-3)

B. Peace With Self. (4:4-9)

C. Peace With Circumstances. (4:10-23)

Colossians

(Christ: The Fullness of God To Us)

AUTHOR AND NAME OF BOOK

Because of Paul’s greetings in 1:2, Colossians became known as “To the Colossians.”

DATE OF WRITING

A.D. 61

Paul wrote all four prison epistles during his first Roman imprisonment. This means he wrote it in A.D. 60-61 (see the discussion on the date of Ephesians and Philippians).

THEME AND PURPOSE

The theme is the fruitful power of the gospel message which heralds (proclaims) the supremacy, headship, and the utter (total) sufficiency of Christ to the church which is His body. In this little

epistle, we see Paul's "full portrait of Christ."¹³ Colossians demonstrates that because of all that Jesus Christ is in His person and has accomplished in His work, He, as the object of the Believer's faith, is all we need for in Him we are complete (2:10). In scope, Colossians presents the all supremacy, all sufficiency, uniqueness, and the fullness of the person and work of Jesus Christ as the God-man Savior, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, and the total solution for man's needs both for time and eternity. It presents Christ as the Creator/Sustainer and Redeemer/Reconciler of man and all the universe.

CHRIST AS SEEN IN COLOSSIANS

Wilkinson and Boa point out

This singularly Christological book is centered on Christ, "the head of all principality and power" (2:10), the Lord of creation (1:16-17), the Author of reconciliation (1:20-22; 2:13-15). He is the basis for the Believer's hope (1:5, 23, 27), the source of the Believer's power for a new life (1:11, 29), the Believer's Redeemer and Reconciler (1:14, 20-22; 2:11-15), the embodiment of full Deity (1:15, 19; 2:9), the Creator and Sustainer of all things (1:16-17), the Head of the church (1:18), the resurrected God-Man (1:18; 3:1), and the all-sufficient Savior (1:28; 2:3, 20; 3:1ff).¹⁴

OUTLINE:¹⁵

1. Doctrinal: The Person And Work Of Christ. (1:1-2:3)

A. Introduction. (1:1-14)

- 1). Paul's Greeting To The Colossians. (1:1-2)
- 2). Paul's Gratitude For The Colossians' Faith. (1:3-8)

¹³ A.T. Robertson, *Paul and the Intellectuals*, Revelation. and ed. W. C. Strickland (Nashville: Broadman, 1959), p. 12.

¹⁴ Wilkinson/Boa, p. 413.

¹⁵ Dr. S. Lewis Johnson in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, "Studies in the Epistle to the Colossians," beginning Vol. 118, # 471.

3). Paul's Prayer For The Colossians' Growth. (1:9-14)

B. The Person Of Christ. (1:15-18)

- 1). In Relation To The Father. (1:15)
- 2). In Relation To The Creation. (1:16-17)
- 3). In Relation To The New Creation. (1:18)

C. The Work Of Christ. (1:19-2:3)

- 1). The Description Of His Work. (1:19-20)
- 2). The Application Of His Work. (1:21-23)
- 3). The Propagation Of His Work. (1:24-2:3)

2. Polemical: The Heretical Problems In Light Of Union With Christ. (2:4-3:4a)

A. The Exhortation Against False Teaching. (2:4-8)

- 1). Exhortation Regarding The Methods Of False Teachers. (2:4-5)
- 2). Exhortation To Progress In The Life Of Faith. (2:6-7)
- 3). Exhortation Regarding The Philosophy Of The False Teachers. (2:8)

B. The Instruction Of The True Teaching. (2:9-15)

- 1). The Believer's Position In Christ. (2:9-10)
- 2). The Believer's Circumcision. (2:11-12)
- 3). The Believer's Benefits. (2:13-15)

C. The Obligations Of The True Teaching. (2:16-3:4)

1). Negative: Freedom From Legalistic Practices. (2:16-19)

2). Negative: Freedom From Religious Ordinances. (2:20-23)

3). Positive: Aspirations For The Heavenly Life. (3:1-4)

3. Practical: The Practice Of The Believer In Christ. (3:5-4:6)

A. In The Inward Life. (3:5-17)

B. In The Home And Household Life. (3:18-4:1)

C. In The Outward Life. (4:2-6)

4. Personal: The Private Plans And Affairs Of The Apostle. (4:7-18)

A. His Special Representatives. (4:7-9)

B. His Personal Salutations. (4:10-18)
