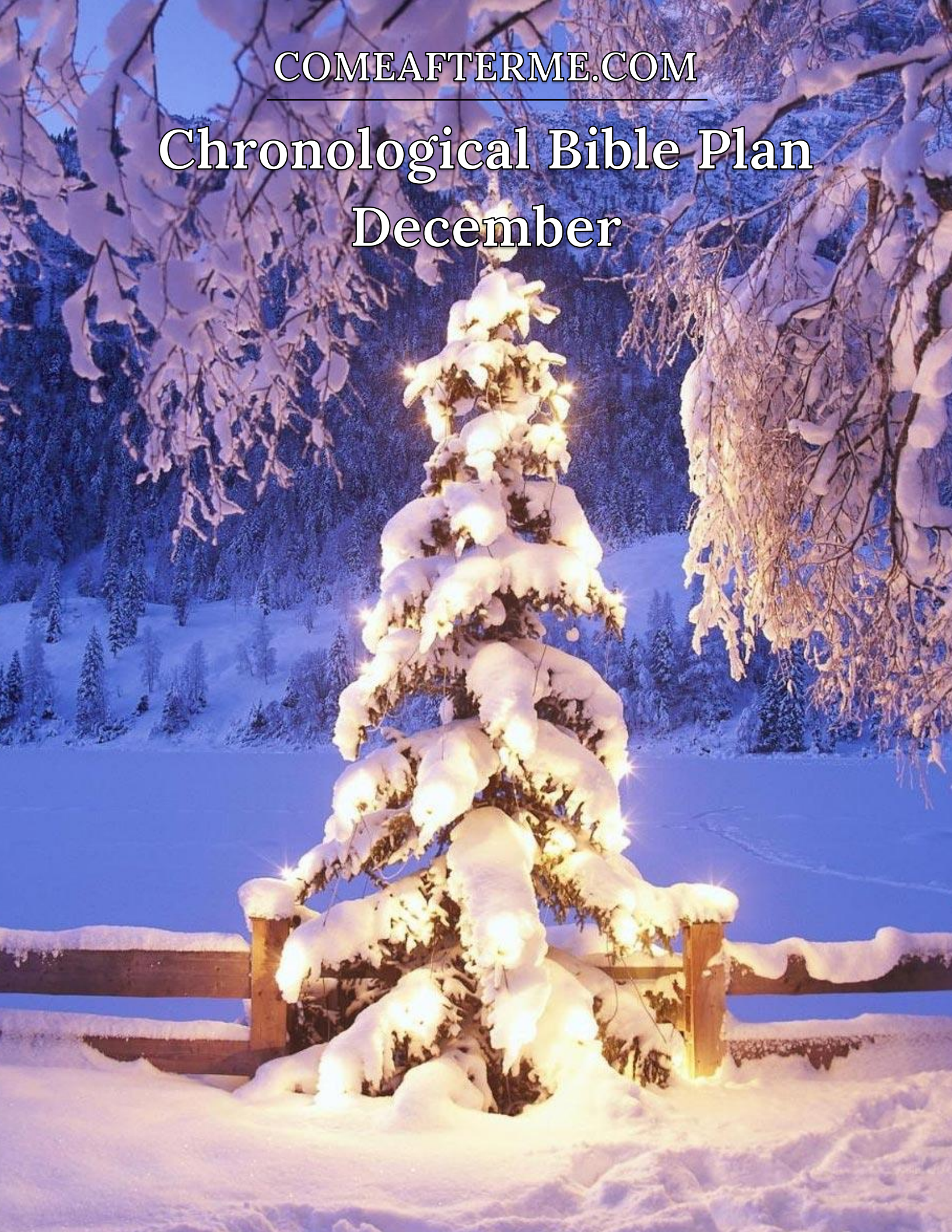


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Chronological Bible Plan December



DECEMBER

**“Every day I will bless you and praise
your name forever and ever” (Ps 145:2)**

December 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Bible Reading	<input type="checkbox"/> Prayer
December 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Bible Reading	<input type="checkbox"/> Prayer
December 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Bible Reading	<input type="checkbox"/> Prayer
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December 30	<input type="checkbox"/> Bible Reading	<input type="checkbox"/> Prayer
December 31	<input type="checkbox"/> Bible Reading	<input type="checkbox"/> Prayer

Paul's Third Missionary Journey—Emergency Visit to Corinth (brief and painful) (c. Summer 54)

2 Corinthians 2:1; 12:14; 13:1–3

2:1 But I determined this for my own sake, that I would not come to you in sorrow again.

12:14 Here for this third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not be a burden to you; for I do not seek what is yours, but you; for children are not responsible to save up for *their* parents, but parents for *their* children.

13:1 This is the third time I am coming to you. EVERY FACT IS TO BE CONFIRMED BY THE TESTIMONY OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES. [\[Deut 19:15\]](#)
 2 I have previously said when present the second time, and though now absent I say in advance to those who have sinned in the past and to all the rest *as well*, that if I come again I will not spare *anyone*,
 3 since you are seeking for proof of the Christ who speaks in me, and who is not weak toward you, but mighty in you.

Paul's Third Letter to the Corinthians (now lost) / Paul Sends Titus to Corinth (c. Summer 54)

2 Corinthians 2:4; 7:8; 12:17–18

2:4 For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears; not so that you would be made sorrowful, but that you might know the love which I have especially for you.

7:8 For though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it—*for* I see that that letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while—

12:17 *Certainly* I have not taken advantage of you through any of those whom I have sent to you, have I?

18 I urged Titus *to go*, and I sent the brother with him. Titus did not take any advantage of you, did he? Did we not conduct ourselves in the same spirit *and walk* in the same steps?

Paul's Third Missionary Journey—The Great Disturbance in Ephesus (Fall 54)

Acts 19:23–41

Demetrius Incites a Riot

23 About that time there occurred no small disturbance concerning the Way.

24 For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, was bringing no little business to the craftsmen; 25 these he gathered together with the workmen of similar *trades*, and said, "Men, you know that our prosperity depends upon this business.

26 You see and hear that not only in Ephesus, but in almost all of Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away a considerable number of people, saying that gods made with hands are no gods *at all*.

27 Not only is there danger that this trade of ours fall into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis be regarded as worthless and that she whom all of Asia and the world worship will even be dethroned from her magnificence."

28 When they heard *this* and were filled with rage, they *began* crying out, saying, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

Paul's Friends Prevent Him from Intervening

29 The city was filled with the confusion, and they rushed with one accord into the theater, dragging along Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia.

30 And when Paul wanted to go into the assembly, the disciples would not let him.

31 Also some of the Asiarchs who were friends of his sent to him and repeatedly urged him not to venture into the theater.

"Great is Artemis of the Ephesians"

32 So then, some were shouting one thing and some another, for the assembly was in confusion and the majority did not know for what reason they had come together.

33 Some of the crowd concluded *it was* Alexander, since the Jews had put him forward; and having motioned with his hand, Alexander was intending to make a defense to the assembly.

34 But when they recognized that he was a Jew, a *single* outcry arose from them all as they shouted for about two hours, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

The City Clerk Quiets the Crowd

35 After quieting the crowd, the town clerk said, "Men of Ephesus, what man is there after all who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of the *image* which fell down from heaven?

36 So, since these are undeniable facts, you ought to keep calm and to do nothing rash.

37 For you have brought these men *here* who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of our goddess.
 38 So then, if Demetrius and the craftsmen who are with him have a complaint against any man, the courts are in session and proconsuls are *available*; let them bring charges against one another.
 39 But if you want anything beyond this, it shall be settled in the lawful assembly.
 40 For indeed we are in danger of being accused of a riot in connection with today's events, since there is no *real cause for it*, and in this connection we will be unable to account for this disorderly gathering."
 41 After saying this he dismissed the assembly.

Paul's Third Missionary Journey—Return to Macedonia via Troas (Fall 54)

Acts 20:1

2 Corinthians 2:12–13

1 After the uproar had ceased, Paul sent for the disciples, and when he had exhorted them and taken his leave of them, he left to go to Macedonia.

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

Paul's Third Missionary Journey—Timothy and Titus Join Paul in Macedonia (Fall 54)

2 Corinthians 1:1; 7:5–7

1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy *our* brother, To the church of God which is at Corinth with all the saints who are throughout Achaia:

7:5 For even when we came into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted on every side: conflicts without, fears within.

6 But God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus;

7 and not only by his coming, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted in you, as he reported to us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced even more.

Paul's Third Missionary Journey—Paul's Ministry in Macedonia (Fall 54)

Acts 20:2a

2 Corinthians 8:1–5

2a When he had gone through those districts and had given them much exhortation,

1 Now, brethren, we *wish to* make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia,
 2 that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality.
 3 For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, *they gave* of their own accord,
 4 begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints,
 5 and *this*, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.

Paul's Fourth Letter to the Corinthians – Part 1 (Fall 54)

2 Corinthians 1:1–2:13

Greeting

1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy *our* brother, To the church of God which is at Corinth with all the saints who are throughout Achaia:

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Praise to God for His Provision of Comfort

3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,

4 who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

5 For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ.

6 But if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; or if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which is effective in the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer;
7 and our hope for you is firmly grounded, knowing that as you are sharers of our sufferings, so also you are *sharers* of our comfort.

Paul's Afflictions in the Province of Asia (Ephesus; see Acts 19:23–41)

8 For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came *to us* in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life;
9 indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead;
10 who delivered us from so great a *peril of death*, and will deliver *us*, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us,
11 you also joining in helping us through your prayers, so that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the favor bestowed on us through *the prayers of many*.

Theme Statement: A Proper Understanding of Paul's Ministry

12 For our proud confidence is this: the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you.
13 For we write nothing else to you than what you read and understand, and I hope you will understand until the end;
14 just as you also partially did understand us, that we are your reason to be proud as you also are ours, in the day of our Lord Jesus.

An Explanation of the Changes in Paul's Travel Plans

15 In this confidence I intended at first to come to you, so that you might twice receive a blessing;
16 that is, to pass your way into Macedonia, and again from Macedonia to come to you, and by you to be helped on my journey to Judea.
17 Therefore, I was not vacillating when I intended to do this, was I? Or what I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, so that with me there will be yes, yes and no, no *at the same time*?
18 But as God is faithful, our word to you is not yes and no.
19 For the Son of God, Christ Jesus, who was preached among you by us—by me and Silvanus and Timothy—was not yes and no, but is yes in Him.
20 For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us.
21 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God,
22 who also sealed us and gave *us* the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.

The Painful (Second) Visit and the Explanation for His Decision Not to Return

23 But I call God as witness to my soul, that to spare you I did not come again to Corinth.
24 Not that we lord it over your faith, but are workers with you for your joy; for in your faith you are standing firm.
2:1 But I determined this for my own sake, that I would not come to you in sorrow again.
2 For if I cause you sorrow, who then makes me glad but the one whom I made sorrowful?
3 This is the very thing I wrote you, so that when I came, I would not have sorrow from those who ought to make me rejoice; having confidence in you all that my joy would be *the joy* of you all.
4 For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears; not so that you would be made sorrowful, but that you might know the love which I have especially for you.

Forgiveness of the Offender

5 But if any has caused sorrow, he has caused sorrow not to me, but in some degree—in order not to say too much—to all of you.
6 Sufficient for such a one is this punishment which *was inflicted* by the majority,
7 so that on the contrary you should rather forgive and comfort *him*, otherwise such a one might be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.
8 Wherefore I urge you to reaffirm *your* love for him.
9 For to this end also I wrote, so that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things.
10 But one whom you forgive anything, I *forgive* also; for indeed what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, *I did it* for your sakes in the presence of Christ,
11 so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.
12 Now when I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ and when a door was opened for me in the Lord,
13 I had no rest for my spirit, not finding Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I went on to Macedonia.

Chronological Notes

- 1) Second Corinthians contains significant biographical information about Paul's varied hardships and revelatory visions that we otherwise would not know. The following outline of what happened after Paul left Corinth assumes that 2 Corinthians is a unity.¹
 - A) Paul's physical absence from Corinth apparently created a theological and administrative vacuum that others moved to fill. Paul may not have appointed specific leaders in the church since the Christians met in the houses of individuals who naturally tended to exert influence over others because of their wealth and social prominence. Paul argued that though they had a myriad of guardians in Christ, they had only one father in the gospel (1 Cor 4:15). This statement suggests that the church was inundated with would-be guides even before any interlopers arrived.
 - B) In two letters, a previous letter now lost (1 Cor 5:9–13) and 1 Corinthians, Paul challenged important persons in the community for their ethical misbehavior and their association with idolatry. Paul sent Timothy to Corinth from Ephesus with 1 Corinthians (1 Cor 4:17; 16:10–11). The guilty parties did not accept his discipline passively. His bold rebukes caused them to lose face and sparked deep resentment. They counterattacked by impugning his motives, methods, and person to undermine his authority in the church. The result: some members continued as avid supporters of Paul, some wavered, and some comprised a determined element of resistance to his leadership. Anyone who has held a leadership position in a church can probably identify with this scenario.
 - C) Paul ended up changing his plans from what he sketched out in 1 Corinthians 16:5–9. He intended to come to them after passing through Macedonia and perhaps spend the winter with them. Later, he says he wanted to go to Macedonia via Corinth and then return before setting sail for Jerusalem (2 Cor 1:15–16). Instead, Timothy may have returned from Corinth with bad news that caused Paul to make an emergency visit.
 - D) The visit turned out to be bitter and distressing for Paul (1:23; 2:1; 12:14; 13:1). He was the object of an attack by someone in the community (2:5–8; 7:11–12), and no one from the Corinthian congregation took up his defense.
 - E) Paul returned to Ephesus from Corinth and did not go on to Macedonia as previously planned.
 - F) He then wrote the sorrowful letter from Ephesus in lieu of another visit (1:23; 2:3–4; 7:8, 12) in which he sought to test their obedience (2:6). The letter apparently called on them to take action against the offender and to demonstrate their innocence in the matter and their zeal for him before God (7:12).
 - G) After this letter was written, Paul's life became so endangered in Asia that he attributed his survival to God's miraculous deliverance (most likely the great disturbance of Acts 19).
 - H) Titus probably delivered this severe letter to the Corinthians. He stayed to insure their repentance, to cement their renewed commitment to Paul, and to rejuvenate their dedication to the collection for the poor in Jerusalem. Paul had assured Titus of his confidence in the Corinthians' positive response to the letter (7:14) and expected to hear some word from Titus about the Corinthians' response to his letter.
 - I) Apparently, Paul planned to meet Titus in Troas (2:12–13). He had an evangelistic opportunity there, but his nagging worries about the situation in Corinth (see 11:28) caused him to leave this work. Presumably, when Paul realized that Titus was not on the last boat of the season (now autumn), he assumed that Titus would now have to travel by land through Macedonia. He left for Macedonia in hopes of meeting Titus there (2:12–13).
 - J) Titus's arrival with good news about the repentance of the majority (2:6) and their zeal for Paul greatly comforted him (7:6–7, 9, 11, 13, 15). His expression of joy in chapter seven indicates that the severe letter and Titus's visit had repaired the breach.
 - K) Healing a broken relationship takes time, as does complete ethical reformation. Paul responded by writing 2 Corinthians and sending Titus back with two brothers to complete the collection (8:6, 17–18, 22). He defends his activity as an apostle and makes a fervent appeal for the Corinthians to be receptive to him again. Their affection for him, however, had been alienated by the presence of boastful rivals, and he was still concerned that their former openness to him had diminished.

¹ Sourced from David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, The New American Commentary (Broadman & Holman, 1999): 27–30.

- L) At some point during this time, these interlopers arrived in Corinth. They apparently came off as “superapostles” who were more spiritual, eloquent, and compelling than Paul (11:5, 23; 12:11). It is likely that when they came to Corinth they made inroads with the group in Corinth already at odds with Paul and most receptive to alternative views. The presence of rivals forced Paul to address the issue of how they can discern a true apostle from a huckster, a true witness from an imposter, and true speech from foolishness.

- M) The letter appears to have resolved some issues. Paul spent three months in Greece (Acts 20:2–3) before leaving for Jerusalem with the collection, and, presumably, most of that time was spent in Corinth. The letter to the Romans was therefore probably written from Corinth on the eve of his departure.

Paul's Fourth Letter to the Corinthians – Part 2 (Fall 54)

2 Corinthians 2:14–7:16

The Fragrance of Paul's Ministry

2:14 But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.

15 For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing;

16 to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things?

17 For we are not like many, peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God.

The Corinthians are Paul's Letter

3:1 Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some, letters of commendation to you or from you?

2 You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men;

3 being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. [cf. [Exod 24:12](#)]

Paul as Minister of the New Covenant

4 Such confidence we have through Christ toward God.

5 Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as *coming* from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God,

6 who also made us adequate *as* servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

7 But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading *as* it was,

8 how will the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory?

9 For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory.

10 For indeed what had glory, in this case has no glory because of the glory that surpasses *it*.

11 For if that which fades away *was* with glory, much more that which remains *is* in glory.

12 Therefore having such a hope, we use great boldness in *our* speech,

13 and *are* not like Moses, *who* used to put a veil over his face so that the sons of Israel would not look intently at the end of what was fading away. [cf. [Exod 34:29–30](#)]

14 But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ.

15 But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart;

16 but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. [cf. [Exod 34:34](#)]

17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, *there* is liberty.

18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

Paul's Ministry of Proclaiming Christ Not Himself

4:1 Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart,

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

3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,

4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.

6 For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," [[Gen 1:3](#)] is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

List of Afflictions—Paul's Suffering Brings Glory to God

7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves;

8 *we are* afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing;

9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;

10 always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

11 For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

12 So death works in us, but life in you.

13 But having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I BELIEVED, THEREFORE I SPOKE," [[Ps 116:10](#)] we also believe, therefore we also speak,

14 knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you.

15 For all things *are* for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God.

The Hope of the Resurrection

16 Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.

17 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,

18 while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

5:1 For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

2 For indeed in this *house* we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven,

3 inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked.

4 For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life.

5 Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge.

6 Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord—

7 for we walk by faith, not by sight—

8 we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.

9 Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Ambassadors for Christ

11 Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences.

12 We are not again commending ourselves to you but *are* giving you an occasion to be proud of us, so that you will have *an answer* for those who take pride in appearance and not in heart.

13 For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are of sound mind, it is for you.

14 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died;

15 and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

16 Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know *Him in this way* no longer.

17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

18 Now *all these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation,

19 namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

21 He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Paul's Commendable Ministry

6:1 And working together *with Him*, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain—

2 for He says,

“AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I LISTENED TO YOU,
AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU.”

Behold, now is “THE ACCEPTABLE TIME,” behold, now is “THE DAY OF SALVATION”— [Isa 49:8]

3 giving no cause for offense in anything, so that the ministry will not be discredited,

4 but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses,

5 in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger,

6 in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love,

7 in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left,

8 by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; *regarded* as deceivers and yet true;

9 as unknown yet well-known, as dying yet behold, we live; as punished yet not put to death,

10 as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things.

Paul's Appeal for an Open Heart

11 Our mouth has spoken freely to you, O Corinthians, our heart is opened wide.

12 You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own affections.

13 Now in a like exchange—I speak as to children—open wide *to us* also.

14 Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?

15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?

16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said,

“I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM;

AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. [[Lev 26:11–12](#)]

17 “Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE,” says the Lord.

“AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; [[Isa 52:11](#)]

And I will welcome you. [[Ezek 20:41](#)]

18 “And I will be a father to you,

And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,”

Says the Lord Almighty. [[2 Sam 7:14](#); [Isa 43:6](#)]

7:1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

2 Make room for us *in your hearts*; we wronged no one, we corrupted no one, we took advantage of no one.

Titus' Good Report—Godly Sorrow Brings Repentance

3 I do not speak to condemn you, for I have said before that you are in our hearts to die together and to live together.

4 Great is my confidence in you; great is my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with comfort; I am overflowing with joy in all our affliction.

5 For even when we came into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted on every side: conflicts without, fears within.

6 But God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus;

7 and not only by his coming, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted in you, as he reported to us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced even more.

8 For though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it—for I see that that letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while—

9 I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to *the point of* repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to *the will of* God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us.

10 For the sorrow that is according to *the will of* God produces a repentance without regret, *leading* to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.

11 For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong! In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter.

12 So although I wrote to you, *it was* not for the sake of the offender nor for the sake of the one offended, but that your earnestness on our behalf might be made known to you in the sight of God.

13 For this reason we have been comforted. And besides our comfort, we rejoiced even much more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all.

14 For if in anything I have boasted to him about you, I was not put to shame; but as we spoke all things to you in truth, so also our boasting before Titus proved to be *the* truth.

15 His affection abounds all the more toward you, as he remembers the obedience of you all, how you received him with fear and trembling.

16 I rejoice that in everything I have confidence in you.

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Paul's Fourth Letter to the Corinthians – Part 3 (Fall 54)

2 Corinthians 8–9

The Generosity of the Macedonians

8:1 Now, brethren, we *wish* to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, 2 that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. 3 For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, *they gave* of their own accord, 4 begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, 5 and *this*, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God. 6 So we urged Titus that as he had previously made a beginning, so he would also complete in you this gracious work as well.

Paul Urges the Corinthians to Give Liberally

7 But just as you abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love we inspired in you, *see* that you abound in this gracious work also. 8 I am not speaking *this* as a command, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also. 9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich. 10 I give *my* opinion in this matter, for this is to your advantage, who were the first to begin a year ago not only to do *this*, but also to desire *to do it*. 11 But now finish doing it also, so that just as *there was* the readiness to desire it, so *there may be* also the completion of it by your ability. 12 For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what *a person* has, not according to what he does not have.

Paul's Desire for Equality

13 For *this* is not for the ease of others *and* for your affliction, but by way of equality— 14 at this present time your abundance *being a supply* for their need, so that their abundance also may become *a supply* for your need, that there may be equality; 15 as it is written, "HE WHO *gathered* MUCH DID NOT HAVE TOO MUCH, AND HE WHO *gathered* LITTLE HAD NO LACK." [[Exod 16:18](#)]

The Delegates and Their Credentials

16 But thanks be to God who puts the same earnestness on your behalf in the heart of Titus. 17 For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest, he has gone to you of his own accord. 18 We have sent along with him the brother whose fame in *the things of* the gospel *has spread* through all the churches; 19 and not only *this*, but he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us in this gracious work, which is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord Himself, and *to show* our readiness, 20 taking precaution so that no one will discredit us in our administration of this generous gift; 21 for we have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. [cf. [Prov 3:4](#)] 22 We have sent with them our brother, whom we have often tested and found diligent in many things, but now even more diligent because of *his* great confidence in you. 23 As for Titus, *he is* my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brethren, *they are* messengers of the churches, a glory to Christ. 24 Therefore openly before the churches, show them the proof of your love and of our reason for boasting about you.

The Need for Readiness

9:1 For it is superfluous for me to write to you about this ministry to the saints; 2 for I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the Macedonians, *namely*, that Achaia has been prepared since last year, and your zeal has stirred up most of them. 3 But I have sent the brethren, in order that our boasting about you may not be made empty in this case, so that, as I was saying, you may be prepared; 4 otherwise if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we—not to speak of you—will be put to shame by this confidence. 5 So I thought it necessary to urge the brethren that they would go on ahead to you and arrange beforehand your previously promised bountiful gift, so that the same would be ready as a bountiful gift and not affected by covetousness.

Divine Principles of Giving

6 Now this *I say*, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 Each one *must do* just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed;

9 as it is written,

“HE SCATTERED ABROAD, HE GAVE TO THE POOR,
HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS ENDURES FOREVER.” [\[Ps 112:9\]](#)

10 Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness;

11 you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God.

12 For the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God.

13 Because of the proof given by this ministry, they will glorify God for *your* obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all,

14 while they also, by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you.

15 Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

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Paul's Fourth Letter to the Corinthians – Part 4 (Fall 54)

2 Corinthians 10–13

Paul's Appeal to the Corinthians Not to Force Him to Exercise His Apostolic Authority

10:1 Now I, Paul, myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—I who am meek when face to face with you, but bold toward you when absent!

2 I ask that when I am present I *need* not be bold with the confidence with which I propose to be courageous against some, who regard us as if we walked according to the flesh.

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh,

4 for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.

5 *We are* destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and *we are* taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,

6 and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.

7 You are looking at things as they are outwardly. If anyone is confident in himself that he is Christ's, let him consider this again within himself, that just as he is Christ's, so also are we.

8 For even if I boast somewhat further about our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I will not be put to shame,

9 for I do not wish to seem as if I would terrify you by my letters.

10 For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive and his speech contemptible."

11 Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when absent, such persons *we are* also in deed when present.

The Proper Limits of Boasting / What Constitutes Valid Commendation

12 For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding.

13 But we will not boast beyond *our* measure, but within the measure of the sphere which God apportioned to us as a measure, to reach even as far as you.

14 For we are not overextending ourselves, as if we did not reach to you, for we were the first to come even as far as you in the gospel of Christ;

15 not boasting beyond *our* measure, *that is*, in other men's labors, but with the hope that as your faith grows, we will be, within our sphere, enlarged even more by you,

16 so as to preach the gospel even to the regions beyond you, *and* not to boast in what has been accomplished in the sphere of another.

17 But HE WHO BOASTS IS TO BOAST IN THE LORD. [[Jer 9:24](#)]

18 For it is not he who commends himself that is approved, but he whom the Lord commends.

Paul's Defense of His Apostleship

11:1 I wish that you would bear with me in a little foolishness; but indeed you are bearing with me.

2 For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you *as* a pure virgin.

3 But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of *devotion* to Christ.

4 For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear *this* beautifully.

5 For I consider myself not in the least inferior to the most eminent apostles.

6 But even if I am unskilled in speech, yet I am not *so* in knowledge; in fact, in every way we have made *this* evident to you in all things.

Paul's Financial Independence During His Ministry Among the Corinthians

7 Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you without charge?

8 I robbed other churches by taking wages *from them* to serve you;

9 and when I was present with you and was in need, I was not a burden to anyone; for when the brethren came from Macedonia they fully supplied my need, and in everything I kept myself from being a burden to you, and will continue to do so.

10 As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be stopped in the regions of Achaia.

11 Why? Because I do not love you? God knows *I do!*

12 But what I am doing I will continue to do, so that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting.

The “Super-Apostles”

13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.

14 No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

15 Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

Justification for Foolish Boasting

16 Again I say, let no one think me foolish; but if *you do*, receive me even as foolish, so that I also may boast a little.

17 What I am saying, I am not saying as the Lord would, but as in foolishness, in this confidence of boasting.

18 Since many boast according to the flesh, I will boast also.

19 For you, being *so* wise, tolerate the foolish gladly.

20 For you tolerate it if anyone enslaves you, anyone devours you, anyone takes advantage of you, anyone exalts himself, anyone hits you in the face.

21a To *my* shame I *must* say that we have been weak *by comparison*.

Paul’s Heritage and Trials

21b But in whatever respect anyone *else* is bold—I speak in foolishness—I am just as bold myself.

22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I.

23 Are they servants of Christ?—I speak as if insane—I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death.

24 Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine *lashes*.

25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep.

26 *I have been* on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from *my* countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren;

27 *I have been* in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.

28 Apart from *such* external things, there is the daily pressure on me *of* concern for all the churches.

29 Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern?

Escape from Damascus

30 If I have to boast, I will boast of what pertains to my weakness.

31 The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, He who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying.

32 In Damascus the ethnarch under Aretas the king was guarding the city of the Damascenes in order to seize me,

33 and I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and *so* escaped his hands.

Paul’s Visions and Revelations

12:1 Boasting is necessary, though it is not profitable; but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord.

2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a man was caught up to the third heaven.

3 And I know how such a man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows—

4 was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.

5 On behalf of such a man I will boast; but on my own behalf I will not boast, except in regard to *my* weaknesses.

6 For if I do wish to boast I will not be foolish, for I will be speaking the truth; but I refrain *from this*, so that no one will credit me with more than he sees *in* me or hears from me.

Paul’s Thorn in the Flesh

7 Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself!

8 Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me.

9 And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

10 Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

Proof of Apostleship

11 I have become foolish; you yourselves compelled me. Actually I should have been commended by you, for in no respect was I inferior to the most eminent apostles, even though I am a nobody.

12 The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.

13 For in what respect were you treated as inferior to the rest of the churches, except that I myself did not become a burden to you?

Forgive me this wrong!

Paul's Plan to Visit the Corinthians for the Third Time

14 Here for this third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not be a burden to you; for I do not seek what is yours, but you; for children are not responsible to save up for *their* parents, but parents for *their* children.

15 I will most gladly spend and be expended for your souls. If I love you more, am I to be loved less?

16 But be that as it may, I did not burden you myself; nevertheless, crafty fellow that I am, I took you in by deceit.

17 *Certainly* I have not taken advantage of you through any of those whom I have sent to you, have I?

18 I urged Titus *to go*, and I sent the brother with him. Titus did not take any advantage of you, did he? Did we not conduct ourselves in the same spirit *and walk* in the same steps?

19 All this time you have been thinking that we are defending ourselves to you. *Actually*, it is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ; and all for your upbuilding, beloved.

20 For I am afraid that perhaps when I come I may find you to be not what I wish and may be found by you to be not what you wish; that perhaps *there will be* strife, jealousy, angry tempers, disputes, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances;

21 I am afraid that when I come again my God may humiliate me before you, and I may mourn over many of those who have sinned in the past and not repented of the impurity, immorality and sensuality which they have practiced.

Paul's Warning—I Will Use My Authority If I Must

13:1 This is the third time I am coming to you. EVERY FACT IS TO BE CONFIRMED BY THE TESTIMONY OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES. [[Deut 19:15](#)]

2 I have previously said when present the second time, and though now absent I say in advance to those who have sinned in the past and to all the rest *as well*, that if I come again I will not spare *anyone*,

3 since you are seeking for proof of the Christ who speaks in me, and who is not weak toward you, but mighty in you.

4 For indeed He was crucified because of weakness, yet He lives because of the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, yet we will live with Him because of the power of God *directed* toward you.

5 Test yourselves *to see* if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?

6 But I trust that you will realize that we ourselves do not fail the test.

7 Now we pray to God that you do no wrong; not that we ourselves may appear approved, but that you may do what is right, even though we may appear unapproved.

8 For we can do nothing against the truth, but *only* for the truth.

9 For we rejoice when we ourselves are weak but you are strong; this we also pray for, that you be made complete.

10 For this reason I am writing these things while absent, so that when present I *need* not use severity, in accordance with the authority which the Lord gave me for building up and not for tearing down.

Benediction

11 Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

12 Greet one another with a holy kiss.

13 All the saints greet you.

14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

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Paul's Third Missionary Journey – Third Visit to Corinth (Winter 54/55)

Acts 20:2b–3a

2b he [*Paul*] came to Greece,
3a And *there* he spent three months, [*at Corinth*].

Paul's Letter to the Church in Rome – Part 1 (Winter 54/55)

Romans 1–4

Introduction and Greeting

1:1 Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called *as* an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,
2 which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures,
3 concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh,
4 who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,
5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about *the* obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake,
6 among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ;
7 to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called *as* saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving and Occasion—Paul's Burden for Rome

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world.
9 For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the *preaching of the* gospel of His Son, is my witness *as to* how unceasingly I make mention of you,
10 always in my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you.
11 For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established;
12 that is, that I may be encouraged together with you *while* among you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine.
13 I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that often I have planned to come to you (and have been prevented so far) so that I may obtain some fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles.
14 I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.
15 So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

Theme Statement

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
17 For in it *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS *man* SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." [[Hab 2:4](#)]

The Gentiles are Without Excuse

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,
19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.
20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.
21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.
22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,
23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.
24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.
25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.
26 For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural,
27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.
28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,
29 being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; *they are* gossips,

30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,
 31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful;
 32 and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.

The Jews are Also Accountable—There Is No Partiality With God

2:1 Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.
 2 And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things.
 3 But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same *yourself*, that you will escape the judgment of God?
 4 Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?
 5 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,
 6 who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: [[Ps 62:12](#)]
 7 to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life;
 8 but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.
 9 *There will be* tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek,
 10 but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
 11 For there is no partiality with God.
 12 For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law;
 13 for *it is* not the hearers of the Law *who* are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified.
 14 For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves,
 15 in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them,
 16 on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.

The Jews' Misplaced Trust in Their Heritage

17 But if you bear the name "Jew " and rely upon the Law and boast in God,
 18 and know *His* will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law,
 19 and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,
 20 a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth,
 21 you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal?
 22 You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?
 23 You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God?
 24 For "THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU," just as it is written. [[Isa 52:5](#)]
 25 For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.
 26 So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?
 27 And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter *of the Law* and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law?
 28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.
 29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

Paul Answers the Objections of the Jews

3:1 Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision?
 2 Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God.
 3 What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?
 4 May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man *be found* a liar, as it is written,

"THAT YOU MAY BE JUSTIFIED IN YOUR WORDS,
 AND PREVAIL WHEN YOU ARE JUDGED." [[Ps 51:4](#)]

5 But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not

unrighteous, is He? (I am speaking in human terms.)

6 May it never be! For otherwise, how will God judge the world?

7 But if through my lie the truth of God abounded to His glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner?

8 And why not *say* (as we are slanderously reported and as some claim that we say), “Let us do evil that good may come”? Their condemnation is just.

The Scriptures Confirm That Both Jew and Gentile Are Guilty Before God

9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin;
10 as it is written,

“THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;

11 THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS,
THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;

12 ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS;
THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD,
THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE.” [\[Ps 14:1–3\]](#)

13 “THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE,
WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING,” [\[Ps 5:9\]](#)

“THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS”; [\[Ps 140:3\]](#)

14 “WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS”; [\[Ps 10:7\]](#)

15 “THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD,

16 DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS,

17 AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN.” [\[Isa 59:7–8\]](#)

18 “THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES.” [\[Ps 36:1\]](#)

19 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God;

20 because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; [\[Ps 143:2\]](#) for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin.

God’s Righteousness is Available to All Who Have Faith in Jesus Christ

21 But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,

22 even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

25 whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was* to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;

26 for the demonstration, *I say*, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Claim—We are Justified by Faith Apart from Works

27 Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.

28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.

29 Or is God *the God* of Jews only? Is He not *the God* of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also,

30 since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one.

31 Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.

Supporting Argument—Abraham was Justified by Faith, Not Works

4:1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?

2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

3 For what does the Scripture say? “ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.” [\[Gen 15:6\]](#)

4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due.

5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,

6 just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

7 “BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN,
AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED.

8 “BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT.” [\[Ps 32:1–2\]](#)

Supporting Argument—Abraham was Justified by Grace, Not Law

9 Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, “FAITH WAS CREDITED TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

[[Gen 15:6](#)]

10 How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised;

11 and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them, [cf. [Gen 17](#)]

12 and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised.

13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.

14 For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified;

15 for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation.

16 For this reason *it is* by faith, in order that *it may be* in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,

17 (as it is written, “A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU”) [[Gen 17:5](#)] in the presence of Him whom he believed, *even* God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.

Supporting Argument—Abraham was Justified by Divine Power, Not Human Effort

18 In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, “SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE.” [[Gen 15:5](#)]

19 Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah’s womb;

20 yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God,

21 and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.

22 Therefore IT WAS ALSO CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.

23 Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him,

24 but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead,

25 *He* who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.

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Chronological Notes

- 1) Luke tells us that Paul spent three months in Greece before beginning his homeward journey (Acts 20:2b–3a). We surmise that during his stay in Greece (most likely at Corinth, see 2 Cor 13:1, 10), Paul wrote his letter to the Romans. This is suggested by the fact that Paul commends to the Romans a woman, Phoebe, from Cenchrea, a seaport adjacent to Corinth (Rom 16:1–2). Moreover, the Gaius with whom Paul is apparently staying (Rom 16:23) is probably the same Gaius whom Paul baptized at Corinth (1 Cor 1:14). It is also likely (while by no means certain) that “Erastus the city treasurer” (*polis oikonomos*) is the same Erastus who is identified in an inscription as an *aedile* [city commissioner] at Corinth (Rom 16:23).¹

¹ Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996): pp. 2–3.

Paul's Letter to the Church in Rome – Part 2 (Winter 54/55)

Romans 5–8

Peace and Reconciliation Through Jesus Christ

5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.
 3 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance;
 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope;
 5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.
 6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.
 7 For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die.
 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.
 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.
 11 And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

Adam's Sin Contrasted With God's Gracious Gift

12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—
 13 for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.
 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.
 15 But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.
 16 The gift is not like *that which came* through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment *arose* from one *transgression* resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift *arose* from many transgressions resulting in justification.
 17 For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.
 18 So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.
 19 For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.
 20 The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,
 21 so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Paul Explains Who We Are In Christ

6:1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?
 2 May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?
 3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?
 4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.
 5 For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection,
 6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;
 7 for he who has died is freed from sin.
 8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,
 9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.
 10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.

Paul Exhorts Us to Live Out in Practice What is True of Us in Spirit

11 Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.
 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts,
 13 and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.
 14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

Illustration of Master and Slave—We are the Slave of Whatever We Obey

15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!

16 Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone *as* slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?

17 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed,

18 and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

19 I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in *further* lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.

20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.

21 Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death.

22 But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Illustration of Husband and Wife—We are Released from the Law by Our Death in Christ

7:1 Or do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives?

2 For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband.

3 So then, if while her husband is living she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress though she is joined to another man.

4 Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.

5 For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were *aroused* by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death.

6 But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

The Nature of the Relationship Between the Law and Sin (as seen in Paul's life prior to conversion)

7 What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "YOU SHALL NOT COVET." [[Exod 20:17](#)]

8 But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin *is* dead.

9 I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died;

10 and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me;

11 for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.

12 So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

13 Therefore did that which is good become *a cause of* death for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good, so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful.

The Law's Inability to Deliver from the Bondage of Sin (as seen in Paul's life prior to conversion)

14 For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.

15 For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I *would* like to *do*, but I am doing the very thing I hate.

16 But if I do the very thing I do not want *to do*, I agree with the Law, *confessing* that the Law is good.

17 So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good *is* not.

19 For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want.

20 But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good.

22 For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,

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

24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?

25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

Life in the Spirit (union with Christ) Contrasted With Life in the Flesh

8:1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,

4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

5 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,

7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able *to do so*,

8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

10 If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.

11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

12 So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—

13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Our Adoption as Sons of God

14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!”

16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,

17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him* so that we may also be glorified with *Him*.

Present Suffering and Future Glory

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

19 For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.

20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope

21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

24 For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he *already* sees?

25 But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

26 In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings too deep for words;

27 and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to *the will of* God.

28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;

30 and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

“If God is for us, who can be against us?”

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us?

32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

33 Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies;

34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 Just as it is written,

“FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG;
WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED.” [\[Ps 44:22\]](#)

37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,
39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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Paul's Letter to the Church in Rome – Part 3 (Winter 54/55)

Romans 9–11

Paul's Anguish Over Israel's Failure to Believe

9:1 I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit,

2 that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart.

3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed, *separated* from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, 4 who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the *temple* service and the promises,

5 whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

God's Word Has Not Failed—His Promise Was to the Israel of Faith, Not Ethnic Israel (physical descent does not equal participation in the promised blessing)

6 But *it is* not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are *descended* from Israel;

7 nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED." [[Gen 21:12](#)]

8 That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

9 For this is the word of promise: "AT THIS TIME I WILL COME, AND SARAH SHALL HAVE A SON." [[Gen 18:10, 14](#)]

10 And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived *twins* by one man, our father Isaac;

11 for though *the twins* were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to *His* choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls,

12 it was said to her, "THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER." [[Gen 25:23](#)]

13 Just as it is written, "JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED." [[Mal 1:2–3](#)]

God Is Not Unjust—He Is Free to Grant Mercy as He Chooses (participation in the promised blessing has nothing to do with human effort)

14 What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be!

15 For He says to Moses, "I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION." [[Exod 33:19](#)]

16 So then it *does* not *depend* on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.

17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH." [[Exod 9:16](#)]

18 So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.

God Is the Creator—We are Accountable to Him

(the fact that we cannot merit participation in the promised blessing does *not* mean that we are not accountable for our sin)

19 You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?"

20 On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? [[Isa 29:16; 45:9](#)]

21 Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?

22 What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?

23 And *He did so* to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory,

God has Called Both Jews and Gentiles to Participate in the Promised Blessing

24 *even* us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.

25 As He says also in Hosea,

"I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, 'MY PEOPLE,'
AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, 'BELOVED.'" [[Hos 2:23](#)]

26 "AND IT SHALL BE THAT IN THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM, 'YOU ARE NOT MY PEOPLE,'
THERE THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF THE LIVING GOD." [[Hos 1:10](#)]

27 Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL BE LIKE THE SAND OF THE SEA, IT IS THE REMNANT THAT WILL BE SAVED;

28 FOR THE LORD WILL EXECUTE HIS WORD ON THE EARTH, THOROUGHLY AND QUICKLY." [[Isa 10:22–23](#)]

29 And just as Isaiah foretold,

"UNLESS THE LORD OF SABAOTH HAD LEFT TO US A POSTERITY,

WE WOULD HAVE BECOME LIKE SODOM, AND WOULD HAVE RESEMBLED GOMORRAH.” [\[Isa 1:9\]](#)

Participation in the Promised Blessing Is through Faith, Not Works

30 What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith;

31 but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at *that* law.

32 Why? Because *they did not pursue it* by faith, but as though *it were* by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone,

33 just as it is written,

“BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE,
AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.” [\[Isa 28:16; 8:14\]](#)

Paul Explains Where the Jews Went Wrong

10:1 Brethren, my heart’s desire and my prayer to God for them is for *their* salvation.

2 For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge.

3 For not knowing about God’s righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.

4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

The Law Described the Life to Be Lived by a Righteous People—But Righteousness Itself Comes by Faith

5 For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness. [\[Lev 18:5\]](#)

6 But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: “DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, [\[Deut 9:4\]](#) ‘WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?’ [\[Deut 30:12\]](#) (that is, to bring Christ down),

7 or ‘WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?’ [\[Deut 30:13\]](#) (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).”

8 But what does it say? “THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART” [\[Deut 30:14\]](#) —that is, the word of faith which we are preaching,

9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;

10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

11 For the Scripture says, “WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.” [\[Isa 28:16\]](#)

12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same *Lord* is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him;

13 for “WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.” [\[Joel 2:32\]](#)

Israel Cannot Plead Ignorance—the Gospel was Proclaimed to Them by the Prophets, Christ and the Apostles

14 How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?

15 How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, “HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!” [\[Isa 52:7\]](#)

16 However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, “LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?” [\[Isa 53:1\]](#)

17 So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

18 But I say, surely they have never heard, have they? Indeed they have;

“THEIR VOICE HAS GONE OUT INTO ALL THE EARTH,
AND THEIR WORDS TO THE ENDS OF THE WORLD.” [\[Ps 19:4\]](#)

19 But I say, surely Israel did not know, did they? First Moses says,

“I WILL MAKE YOU JEALOUS BY THAT WHICH IS NOT A NATION,
BY A NATION WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING WILL I ANGER YOU.” [\[Deut 32:21\]](#)

20 And Isaiah is very bold and says,

“I WAS FOUND BY THOSE WHO DID NOT SEEK ME,
I BECAME MANIFEST TO THOSE WHO DID NOT ASK FOR ME.” [\[Isa 65:1\]](#)

21 But as for Israel He says, “ALL THE DAY LONG I HAVE STRETCHED OUT MY HANDS TO A DISOBEDIENT AND OBSTINATE PEOPLE.” [\[Isa 65:2\]](#)

God Has Not Rejected True Israel**(there is always a remnant which participates in the promised blessing by grace through faith)**

11:1 I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

2 God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in *the passage about Elijah*, how he pleads with God against Israel?

3 “Lord, THEY HAVE KILLED YOUR PROPHETS, THEY HAVE TORN DOWN YOUR ALTARS, AND I ALONE AM LEFT, AND THEY ARE SEEKING MY LIFE.” [1 Kgs 19:10]

4 But what is the divine response to him? “I HAVE KEPT for Myself SEVEN THOUSAND MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL.” [1 Kgs 19:18]

5 In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to *God’s* gracious choice.

6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.

7 What then? What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened;

8 just as it is written,

“GOD GAVE THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR,
EYES TO SEE NOT AND EARS TO HEAR NOT,
DOWN TO THIS VERY DAY.” [Deut 29:4; Isa 29:10]

9 And David says,

“LET THEIR TABLE BECOME A SNARE AND A TRAP,
AND A STUMBLING BLOCK AND A RETRIBUTION TO THEM.

10 “LET THEIR EYES BE DARKENED TO SEE NOT,
AND BEND THEIR BACKS FOREVER.” [Ps 69:22–23]

The Gentiles Received Salvation in Spite of Israel’s Rejection of Christ—Paul Wants This to Provoke the Jews to Jealousy

11 I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation *has come* to the Gentiles, to make them jealous.

12 Now if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be!

13 But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry,

14 if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them.

15 For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will *their* acceptance be but life from the dead?

Paul Cautions the Gentiles Not to Be Arrogant of Their Inclusion in the Promised Blessing

16 If the first piece of *dough* is holy, the lump is also; and if the root is holy, the branches are too.

17 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree,

18 do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, *remember that* it is not you who supports the root, but the root *supports* you.

19 You will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.”

20 Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear;

21 for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either.

22 Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God’s kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.

23 And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.

24 For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural *branches* be grafted into their own olive tree?

Paul Reveals a Mystery—The Eschatological Salvation of All Israel**(Israel and the Gentiles take turns on the center stage of God’s salvation-historical drama)**

25 For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;

26 and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written,

“THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION,
HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.”

27 “THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM,

WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS.” [[Isa 59:20–21; 27:9](#)]

28 From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of *God's* choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers;

29 for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

30 For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience,

31 so these also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy.

32 For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all.

Paul Bursts into Praise to God for His Great Wisdom

33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!

34 For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR? [[Isa 40:13](#)]

35 Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN? [[Job 41:11](#)]

36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him *be* the glory forever. Amen.

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Paul's Letter to the Church in Rome – Part 4 (Winter 54/55)

Romans 12:1–15:13

Consecration and Transformation

12:1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship.
 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Spiritual Gifts for Humble Service

3 For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.
 4 For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function,
 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
 6 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, *each of us is to exercise them accordingly*: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith;
 7 if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching;
 8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

Devotion to Love and Goodness

9 *Let love be* without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.
 10 *Be* devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;
 11 not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;
 12 rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer,
 13 contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.
 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.
 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.
 16 Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.

Treatment of Irritations and Enemies

17 Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.
 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.
 19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath *of God*, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord. [[Deut 32:35](#)]
 20 "BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD." [[Prov 25:21–22](#)]
 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Submission to Governing Authorities

13:1 Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.
 2 Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.
 3 For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same;
 4 for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.
 5 Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake.
 6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for *rulers* are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing.
 7 Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

Love Fulfills the Requirements of the Law

8 Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled *the* law.
 9 For this, "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET," [[Exod 20:13–15, 17](#)] and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." [[Lev 19:18](#)]
 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of *the* law.

Live Carefully—The Day of the Lord is Near

11 *Do* this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed.

12 The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.

13 Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy.

14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to *its* lusts.

Do Not Judge a Weaker Brother or Sister—We Will All Give Account to God

14:1 Now accept the one who is weak in faith, *but* not for *the purpose of* passing judgment on his opinions.

2 One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables *only*.

3 The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him.

4 Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

5 One person regards one day above another, another regards every day *alike*. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind.

6 He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God.

7 For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself;

8 for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

9 For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

10 But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.

11 For it is written,

“AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME,
AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD.” [\[Isa 45:23\]](#)

12 So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.

Do Not Cause a Weaker Brother or Sister to Stumble—Live to Encourage and Edify Others

13 Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this—not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way.

14 I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

15 For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died.

16 Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil;

17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

18 For he who in this *way* serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men.

19 So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.

20 Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense.

21 It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or *to do anything* by which your brother stumbles.

22 The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.

23 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because *his eating* is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.

Focus on Pleasing Others, Not Yourself

15:1 Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not *just* please ourselves.

2 Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification.

3 For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, “THE REPROACHES OF THOSE WHO REPROACHED YOU FELL ON ME.” [\[Ps 69:9\]](#)

4 For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

5 Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus,

6 so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A Call for Jews and Gentiles to Accept Each Other—Scripture Confirms that Gentiles Participate in the Promised Blessing

7 Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.

8 For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises *given* to the fathers,

9 and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written,

“THEREFORE I WILL GIVE PRAISE TO YOU AMONG THE GENTILES,
AND I WILL SING TO YOUR NAME.” [2 Sam 22:50; Ps 18:49]

10 Again he says,

“REJOICE, O GENTILES, WITH HIS PEOPLE.” [Deut 32:43]

11 And again,

“PRAISE THE LORD ALL YOU GENTILES,
AND LET ALL THE PEOPLES PRAISE HIM.” [Ps 117:1]

12 Again Isaiah says,

“THERE SHALL COME THE ROOT OF JESSE,
AND HE WHO ARISES TO RULE OVER THE GENTILES,
IN HIM SHALL THE GENTILES HOPE.” [Isa 11:10]

13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

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Paul's Letter to the Church in Rome – Part 5 (Winter 54/55)

Romans 15:14–16:27

Looking Back—Paul's Ministry in the East

15:14 And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another.

15 But I have written very boldly to you on some points so as to remind you again, because of the grace that was given me from God,

16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that *my* offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

17 Therefore in Christ Jesus I have found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God.

18 For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed,

19 in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

20 And thus I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was *already* named, so that I would not build on another man's foundation;

21 but as it is written,

“THEY WHO HAD NO NEWS OF HIM SHALL SEE,
AND THEY WHO HAVE NOT HEARD SHALL UNDERSTAND.” [\[Isa 52:15\]](#)

Looking Ahead—Paul's Plans for Jerusalem, Rome and Spain

22 For this reason I have often been prevented from coming to you;

23 but now, with no further place for me in these regions, and since I have had for many years a longing to come to you

24 whenever I go to Spain—for I hope to see you in passing, and to be helped on my way there by you, when I have first enjoyed your company for a while—

25 but now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints.

26 For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.

27 Yes, they were pleased *to do so*, and they are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things.

28 Therefore, when I have finished this, and have put my seal on this fruit of theirs, I will go on by way of you to Spain.

29 I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

A Request for Prayer

30 Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me,

31 that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea, and *that* my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints;

32 so that I may come to you in joy by the will of God and find *refreshing* rest in your company.

33 Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

Commendation of Phoebe

16:1 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea;

2 that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well.

Greetings to Roman Brothers and Sisters

3 Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus,

4 who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles;

5 also *greet* the church that is in their house. Greet Epaenetus, my beloved, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia.

6 Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you.

7 Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

8 Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord.

9 Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.

10 Greet Apelles, the approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the *household* of Aristobulus.

11 Greet Herodion, my kinsman. Greet those of the *household* of Narcissus, who are in the Lord.

12 Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, workers in the Lord. Greet Persis the beloved, who has worked hard in the Lord.

13 Greet Rufus, a choice man in the Lord, also his mother and mine.

14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the brethren with them.

15 Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.

16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

A Warning, a Promise and a Prayer for Grace

17 Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.

18 For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

19 For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil.

20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

Greetings from Paul's Companions

21 Timothy my fellow worker greets you, and *so do* Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen.

22 I, Tertius, who write this letter, greet you in the Lord.

23 Gaius, host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer greets you, and Quartus, the brother.

24 [The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.]

Closing Doxology

25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past,

26 but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, *leading* to obedience of faith;

27 to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.

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Paul's Third Missionary Journey—Back Through Macedonia (Spring 55)

Acts 20:3b–5

3b and when a plot was formed against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia.

4 And he was accompanied by Sopater of Berea, *the son* of Pyrrhus, and by Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.

5 But these had gone on ahead and were waiting for us at Troas.

Paul's Third Missionary Journey—Troas (Spring 55)

Acts 20:6–12

6 We sailed from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and came to them at Troas within five days; and there we stayed seven days.

7 On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul *began* talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight.

8 There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered together.

9 And there was a young man named Eutychus sitting on the window sill, sinking into a deep sleep; and as Paul kept on talking, he was overcome by sleep and fell down from the third floor and was picked up dead.

10 But Paul went down and fell upon him, and after embracing him, he said, "Do not be troubled, for his life is in him."

11 When he had gone *back* up and had broken the bread and eaten, he talked with them a long while until daybreak, and then left.

12 They took away the boy alive, and were greatly comforted.

Paul's Third Missionary Journey—Miletus (Spring 55)

Acts 20:13–38

From Troas to Assos to Mitylene to Miletus

13 But we, going ahead to the ship, set sail for Assos, intending from there to take Paul on board; for so he had arranged it, intending himself to go by land.

14 And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and came to Mitylene.

15 Sailing from there, we arrived the following day opposite Chios; and the next day we crossed over to Samos; and the day following we came to Miletus.

16 For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be in Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost.

Paul's Farewell Speech to the Ephesian Elders

17 From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church.

18 And when they had come to him, he said to them, "You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time,

19 serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews;

20 how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house,

21 solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

22 And now, behold, bound in spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there,

23 except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me.

24 But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.

25 "And now, behold, I know that all of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will no longer see my face.

26 Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men.

27 For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.

28 Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

29 I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock;

30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.

31 Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.

32 And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build *you* up and to give *you* the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

33 I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes.

34 You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my *own* needs and to the men who were with me.
 35 In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'
 36 When he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all.
 37 And they *began* to weep aloud and embraced Paul, and repeatedly kissed him,
 38 grieving especially over the word which he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they were accompanying him to the ship.

Paul's Third Missionary Journey—Syria (Spring 55)

Acts 21:1–6

1 When we had parted from them and had set sail, we ran a straight course to Cos and the next day to Rhodes and from there to Patara;
 2 and having found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail.
 3 When we came in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left, we kept sailing to Syria and landed at Tyre; for there the ship was to unload its cargo.
 4 After looking up the disciples, we stayed there seven days; and they kept telling Paul through the Spirit not to set foot in Jerusalem.
 5 When our days there were ended, we left and started on our journey, while they all, with wives and children, escorted us until we were out of the city. After kneeling down on the beach and praying, we said farewell to one another.
 6 Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home again.

Paul's Journey to Jerusalem (May/June 55)

Acts 21:7–17

7 When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais, and after greeting the brethren, we stayed with them for a day.
 8 On the next day we left and came to Caesarea, and entering the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we stayed with him.
 9 Now this man had four virgin daughters who were prophetesses.
 10 As we were staying there for some days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea.
 11 And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands, and said, "This is what the Holy Spirit says: 'In this way the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'"
 12 When we had heard this, we as well as the local residents *began* begging him not to go up to Jerusalem.
 13 Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."
 14 And since he would not be persuaded, we fell silent, remarking, "The will of the Lord be done!"
 15 After these days we got ready and started on our way up to Jerusalem.
 16 *Some* of the disciples from Caesarea also came with us, taking us to Mnason of Cyprus, a disciple of long standing with whom we were to lodge.
 17 After we arrived in Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

"To the Jews I became a Jew in order to win the Jews" (Summer 55)

Acts 21:18–26

18 And the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present.
 19 After he had greeted them, he *began* to relate one by one the things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.
 20 And when they heard it they *began* glorifying God; and they said to him, "You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law;
 21 and they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.
 22 What, then, is *to be done*? They will certainly hear that you have come.
 23 Therefore do this that we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow;
 24 take them and purify yourself along with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads; and all will know that there is nothing to the things which they have been told about you, but that you yourself also walk orderly, keeping the Law.
 25 But concerning the Gentiles who have believed, we wrote, having decided that they should abstain from meat sacrificed to idols

and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication.”

26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day, purifying himself along with them, went into the temple giving notice of the completion of the days of purification, until the sacrifice was offered for each one of them.

The Riot and Paul's Arrest at the Temple (Summer 55)

Acts 21:27–36

27 When the seven days were almost over, the Jews from Asia, upon seeing him in the temple, *began* to stir up all the crowd and laid hands on him,

28 crying out, “Men of Israel, come to our aid! This is the man who preaches to all men everywhere against our people and the Law and this place; and besides he has even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.”

29 For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple.

30 Then all the city was provoked, and the people rushed together, and taking hold of Paul they dragged him out of the temple, and immediately the doors were shut.

31 While they were seeking to kill him, a report came up to the commander of the *Roman* cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion.

32 At once he took along *some* soldiers and centurions and ran down to them; and when they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.

33 Then the commander came up and took hold of him, and ordered him to be bound with two chains; and he *began* asking who he was and what he had done.

34 But among the crowd some were shouting one thing *and* some another, and when he could not find out the facts because of the uproar, he ordered him to be brought into the barracks.

35 When he got to the stairs, he was carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob;

36 for the multitude of the people kept following them, shouting, “Away with him!”

Paul's Defense (Summer 55)

Acts 21:37–22:29

Paul Asks the Roman Officer for Permission to Speak

21:37 As Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to the commander, “May I say something to you?” And he said, “Do you know Greek?”

38 Then you are not the Egyptian who some time ago stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand men of the Assassins out into the wilderness?”

39 But Paul said, “I am a Jew of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no insignificant city; and I beg you, allow me to speak to the people.”

40 When he had given him permission, Paul, standing on the stairs, motioned to the people with his hand; and when there was a great hush, he spoke to them in the Hebrew dialect, saying,

Paul Addresses the Crowd in Aramaic

22:1 “Brethren and fathers, hear my defense which I now *offer* to you.”

2 And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew dialect, they became even more quiet; and he said,

3 “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God just as you all are today.

4 I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and putting both men and women into prisons,

5 as also the high priest and all the Council of the elders can testify. From them I also received letters to the brethren, and started off for Damascus in order to bring even those who were there to Jerusalem as prisoners to be punished.

6 “But it happened that as I was on my way, approaching Damascus about noontime, a very bright light suddenly flashed from heaven all around me,

7 and I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’

8 And I answered, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said to me, ‘I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you are persecuting.’

9 And those who were with me saw the light, to be sure, but did not understand the voice of the One who was speaking to me.

10 And I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ And the Lord said to me, ‘Get up and go on into Damascus, and there you will be told of all that has been appointed for you to do.’

11 But since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me and came into Damascus.

12 “A certain Ananias, a man who was devout by the standard of the Law, *and* well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there,

13 came to me, and standing near said to me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ And at that very time I looked up at him.

14 And he said, ‘The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will and to see the Righteous One and to hear an utterance

from His mouth.

15 For you will be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard.

16 Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.’

17 “It happened when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I fell into a trance,

18 and I saw Him saying to me, ‘Make haste, and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about Me.’ [cf. [Acts 9:26–30](#)]

19 And I said, ‘Lord, they themselves understand that in one synagogue after another I used to imprison and beat those who believed in You.

20 And when the blood of Your witness Stephen was being shed, I also was standing by approving, and watching out for the coats of those who were slaying him.’

21 And He said to me, ‘Go! For I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’”

22 They listened to him up to this statement, and *then* they raised their voices and said, “Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he should not be allowed to live!”

23 And as they were crying out and throwing off their cloaks and tossing dust into the air,

24 the commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks,

Paul the Roman Citizen

24b stating that he should be examined by scourging so that he might find out the reason why they were shouting against him that way.

25 But when they stretched him out with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, “Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman and uncondemned?”

26 When the centurion heard *this*, he went to the commander and told him, saying, “What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman.”

27 The commander came and said to him, “Tell me, are you a Roman?” And he said, “Yes.”

28 The commander answered, “I acquired this citizenship with a large sum of money.” And Paul said, “But I was actually born a *citizen*.”

29 Therefore those who were about to examine him immediately let go of him; and the commander also was afraid when he found out that he was a Roman, and because he had put him in chains.

Paul Before the Jewish Council (Summer 55)

Acts 22:30–23:11

22:30 But on the next day, wishing to know for certain why he had been accused by the Jews, he released him and ordered the chief priests and all the Council to assemble, and brought Paul down and set him before them.

23:1 Paul, looking intently at the Council, said, “Brethren, I have lived my life with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day.”

2 The high priest Ananias commanded those standing beside him to strike him on the mouth.

3 Then Paul said to him, “God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall! [cf. [Ezek 13:1–13](#)] Do you sit to try me according to the Law, and in violation of the Law order me to be struck?”

4 But the bystanders said, “Do you revile God’s high priest?”

5 And Paul said, “I was not aware, brethren, that he was high priest; for it is written, ‘YOU SHALL NOT SPEAK EVIL OF A RULER OF YOUR PEOPLE.’” [[Exod 22:28](#)]

6 But perceiving that one group were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, Paul *began* crying out in the Council, “Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; I am on trial for the hope and resurrection of the dead!”

7 As he said this, there occurred a dissension between the Pharisees and Sadducees, and the assembly was divided.

8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor an angel, nor a spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.

9 And there occurred a great uproar; and some of the scribes of the Pharisaic party stood up and *began* to argue heatedly, saying, “We find nothing wrong with this man; suppose a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?”

10 And as a great dissension was developing, the commander was afraid Paul would be torn to pieces by them and ordered the troops to go down and take him away from them by force, and bring him into the barracks.

11 But on the night *immediately* following, the Lord stood at his side and said, “Take courage; for as you have solemnly witnessed to My cause at Jerusalem, so you must witness at Rome also.”

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Chronological Notes

- 1) Acts 22:17–21 refers to Paul’s first visit to Jerusalem as described in Galatians 1:18–19 and Acts 9:26–30. Note Acts 9:29 especially: “But they were seeking to kill him.” So in Acts 22, we get a little more detail into what was going on during that first visit back to Jerusalem three years after Paul was converted (Gal 1:18).

A Plot Against Paul is Uncovered (Summer 55)

Acts 23:12–22

- 12 When it was day, the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves under an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul.
- 13 There were more than forty who formed this plot.
- 14 They came to the chief priests and the elders and said, “We have bound ourselves under a solemn oath to taste nothing until we have killed Paul.
- 15 Now therefore, you and the Council notify the commander to bring him down to you, as though you were going to determine his case by a more thorough investigation; and we for our part are ready to slay him before he comes near *the place*.”
- 16 But the son of Paul’s sister heard of their ambush, and he came and entered the barracks and told Paul.
- 17 Paul called one of the centurions to him and said, “Lead this young man to the commander, for he has something to report to him.”
- 18 So he took him and led him to the commander and said, “Paul the prisoner called me to him and asked me to lead this young man to you since he has something to tell you.”
- 19 The commander took him by the hand and stepping aside, *began* to inquire of him privately, “What is it that you have to report to me?”
- 20 And he said, “The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down tomorrow to the Council, as though they were going to inquire somewhat more thoroughly about him.
- 21 So do not listen to them, for more than forty of them are lying in wait for him who have bound themselves under a curse not to eat or drink until they slay him; and now they are ready and waiting for the promise from you.”
- 22 So the commander let the young man go, instructing him, “Tell no one that you have notified me of these things.”

Paul Taken to Caesarea and Presented to Felix (Summer 55)

Acts 23:23–35

- 23 And he called to him two of the centurions and said, “Get two hundred soldiers ready by the third hour of the night to proceed to Caesarea, with seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen.”
- 24 *They were* also to provide mounts to put Paul on and bring him safely to Felix the governor.
- 25 And he wrote a letter having this form:
- 26 “Claudius Lysias, to the most excellent governor Felix, greetings.
- 27 When this man was arrested by the Jews and was about to be slain by them, I came up to them with the troops and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman.
- 28 And wanting to ascertain the charge for which they were accusing him, I brought him down to their Council;
- 29 and I found him to be accused over questions about their Law, but under no accusation deserving death or imprisonment.
- 30 When I was informed that there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to you at once, also instructing his accusers to bring charges against him before you.”
- 31 So the soldiers, in accordance with their orders, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris.
- 32 But the next day, leaving the horsemen to go on with him, they returned to the barracks.
- 33 When these had come to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they also presented Paul to him.
- 34 When he had read it, he asked from what province he was, and when he learned that he was from Cilicia,
- 35 he said, “I will give you a hearing after your accusers arrive also,” giving orders for him to be kept in Herod’s Praetorium.

Paul’s Defense Before Felix (Summer 55)

Acts 24:1–23

- 1 After five days the high priest Ananias came down with some elders, with an attorney *named* Tertullus, and they brought charges to the governor against Paul.
- 2 After *Paul* had been summoned, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying *to the governor*, “Since we have through you attained much peace, and since by your providence reforms are being carried out for this nation,
- 3 we acknowledge *this* in every way and everywhere, most excellent Felix, with all thankfulness.
- 4 But, that I may not weary you any further, I beg you to grant us, by your kindness, a brief hearing.
- 5 For we have found this man a real pest and a fellow who stirs up dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.
- 6 And he even tried to desecrate the temple; and then we arrested him. [We wanted to judge him according to our own Law.
- 7 But Lysias the commander came along, and with much violence took him out of our hands,

8 ordering his accusers to come before you.] By examining him yourself concerning all these matters you will be able to ascertain the things of which we accuse him.”

9 The Jews also joined in the attack, asserting that these things were so.

10 When the governor had nodded for him to speak, Paul responded: “Knowing that for many years you have been a judge to this nation, I cheerfully make my defense,

11 since you can take note of the fact that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship.

12 Neither in the temple, nor in the synagogues, nor in the city *itself* did they find me carrying on a discussion with anyone or causing a riot.

13 Nor can they prove to you *the charges* of which they now accuse me.

14 But this I admit to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect I do serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets;

15 having a hope in God, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.

16 In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience *both* before God and before men.

17 Now after several years I came to bring alms to my nation and to present offerings;

18 in which they found me *occupied* in the temple, having been purified, without *any* crowd or uproar. But *there were* some Jews from Asia—

19 who ought to have been present before you and to make accusation, if they should have anything against me.

20 Or else let these men themselves tell what misdeed they found when I stood before the Council,

21 other than for this one statement which I shouted out while standing among them, ‘For the resurrection of the dead I am on trial before you today.’”

22 But Felix, having a more exact knowledge about the Way, put them off, saying, “When Lysias the commander comes down, I will decide your case.”

23 Then he gave orders to the centurion for him to be kept in custody and *yet* have *some* freedom, and not to prevent any of his friends from ministering to him.

Paul Under Felix’s Custody (Summer 55 to Summer 57)

Acts 24:24–26

24 But some days later Felix arrived with Drusilla, his wife who was a Jewess, and sent for Paul and heard him *speak* about faith in Christ Jesus.

25 But as he was discussing righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix became frightened and said, “Go away for the present, and when I find time I will summon you.”

26 At the same time too, he was hoping that money would be given him by Paul; therefore he also used to send for him quite often and converse with him.

Paul’s Appeal to Caesar Before Festus (Summer 57)

Acts 24:27–25:12

24:27 But after two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, and wishing to do the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul imprisoned.

25:1 Festus then, having arrived in the province, three days later went up to Jerusalem from Caesarea.

2 And the chief priests and the leading men of the Jews brought charges against Paul, and they were urging him,

3 requesting a concession against Paul, that he might have him brought to Jerusalem (*at the same time*, setting an ambush to kill him on the way).

4 Festus then answered that Paul was being kept in custody at Caesarea and that he himself was about to leave shortly.

5 “Therefore,” he said, “let the influential men among you go there with me, and if there is anything wrong about the man, let them prosecute him.”

6 After he had spent not more than eight or ten days among them, he went down to Caesarea, and on the next day he took his seat on the tribunal and ordered Paul to be brought.

7 After Paul arrived, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many and serious charges against him which they could not prove,

8 while Paul said in his own defense, “I have committed no offense either against the Law of the Jews or against the temple or against Caesar.”

9 But Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, answered Paul and said, “Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and stand trial before me on these *charges*?”

10 But Paul said, “I am standing before Caesar’s tribunal, where I ought to be tried. I have done no wrong to *the* Jews, as you also very well know.

11 If, then, I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything worthy of death, I do not refuse to die; but if none of those things is *true* of which these men accuse me, no one can hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar.”

12 Then when Festus had conferred with his council, he answered, “You have appealed to Caesar, to Caesar you shall go.”

Festus and Herod Agrippa II Discuss Paul’s Case (Summer 57)

Acts 25:13–22

13 Now when several days had elapsed, King Agrippa and Bernice arrived at Caesarea and paid their respects to Festus.

14 While they were spending many days there, Festus laid Paul’s case before the king, saying, “There is a man who was left as a prisoner by Felix;

15 and when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews brought charges against him, asking for a sentence of condemnation against him.

16 I answered them that it is not the custom of the Romans to hand over any man before the accused meets his accusers face to face and has an opportunity to make his defense against the charges.

17 So after they had assembled here, I did not delay, but on the next day took my seat on the tribunal and ordered the man to be brought before me.

18 When the accusers stood up, they *began* bringing charges against him not of such crimes as I was expecting,

19 but they *simply* had some points of disagreement with him about their own religion and about a dead man, Jesus, whom Paul asserted to be alive.

20 Being at a loss how to investigate such matters, I asked whether he was willing to go to Jerusalem and there stand trial on these matters.

21 But when Paul appealed to be held in custody for the Emperor’s decision, I ordered him to be kept in custody until I send him to Caesar.”

22 Then Agrippa *said* to Festus, “I also would like to hear the man myself.” “Tomorrow,” he said, “you shall hear him.”

Paul’s Defense Before Herod Agrippa II and His Sister Bernice (Summer 57)

Acts 25:23–26:32

25:23 So, on the next day when Agrippa came together with Bernice amid great pomp, and entered the auditorium accompanied by the commanders and the prominent men of the city, at the command of Festus, Paul was brought in.

24 Festus said, “King Agrippa, and all you gentlemen here present with us, you see this man about whom all the people of the Jews appealed to me, both at Jerusalem and here, loudly declaring that he ought not to live any longer.

25 But I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death; and since he himself appealed to the Emperor, I decided to send him.

26 Yet I have nothing definite about him to write to my lord. Therefore I have brought him before you *all* and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after the investigation has taken place, I may have something to write.

27 For it seems absurd to me in sending a prisoner, not to indicate also the charges against him.”

26:1 Agrippa said to Paul, “You are permitted to speak for yourself.” Then Paul stretched out his hand and *proceeded* to make his defense:

2 “In regard to all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, I consider myself fortunate, King Agrippa, that I am about to make my defense before you today;

3 especially because you are an expert in all customs and questions among *the* Jews; therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently.

4 “So then, all Jews know my manner of life from my youth up, which from the beginning was spent among my *own* nation and at Jerusalem;

5 since they have known about me for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that I lived *as* a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion.

6 And now I am standing trial for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers;

7 *the promise* to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly serve *God* night and day. And for this hope, O King, I am being accused by Jews.

8 Why is it considered incredible among you *people* if God does raise the dead?

9 “So then, I thought to myself that I had to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

10 And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them.

11 And as I punished them often in all the synagogues, I tried to force them to blaspheme; and being furiously enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities.

12 “While so engaged as I was journeying to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests,

13 at midday, O King, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining all around me and those who were journeying with me.

14 And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’

15 And I said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.

16 But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you;

17 rescuing you from the *Jewish* people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you,

18 to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.’

19 “So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision,

20 but *kept* declaring both to those of Damascus first, and *also* at Jerusalem and *then* throughout all the region of Judea, and *even* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance.

21 For this reason *some* Jews seized me in the temple and tried to put me to death.

22 So, having obtained help from God, I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place;

23 that the Christ was to suffer, *and* that by reason of *His* resurrection from the dead He would be the first to proclaim light both to the *Jewish* people and to the Gentiles.”

24 While *Paul* was saying this in his defense, Festus said in a loud voice, “Paul, you are out of your mind! *Your* great learning is driving you mad.”

25 But Paul said, “I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I utter words of sober truth.

26 For the king knows about these matters, and I speak to him also with confidence, since I am persuaded that none of these things escape his notice; for this has not been done in a corner.

27 King Agrippa, do you believe the Prophets? I know that you do.”

28 Agrippa *replied* to Paul, “In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian.”

29 And Paul *said*, “I would wish to God, that whether in a short or long time, not only you, but also all who hear me this day, might become such as I am, except for these chains.”

30 The king stood up and the governor and Bernice, and those who were sitting with them,

31 and when they had gone aside, they *began* talking to one another, saying, “This man is not doing anything worthy of death or imprisonment.”

32 And Agrippa said to Festus, “This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.”

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Paul's Voyage to Rome—From Caesarea to Fair Havens (August/September 57)

Acts 27:1–12

Initial Difficulties

- 1 When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, they proceeded to deliver Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion of the Augustan cohort named Julius.
- 2 And embarking in an Adramyttian ship, which was about to sail to the regions along the coast of Asia, we put out to sea accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica.
- 3 The next day we put in at Sidon; and Julius treated Paul with consideration and allowed him to go to his friends and receive care.
- 4 From there we put out to sea and sailed under the shelter of Cyprus because the winds were contrary.
- 5 When we had sailed through the sea along the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we landed at Myra in Lycia.
- 6 There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy, and he put us aboard it.
- 7 When we had sailed slowly for a good many days, and with difficulty had arrived off Cnidus, since the wind did not permit us *to go* farther, we sailed under the shelter of Crete, off Salmone;
- 8 and with difficulty sailing past it we came to a place called Fair Havens, near which was the city of Lasea.

Paul's Failed Intervention

- 9 When considerable time had passed and the voyage was now dangerous, since even the fast was already over, Paul *began* to admonish them,
- 10 and said to them, "Men, I perceive that the voyage will certainly be with damage and great loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives."
- 11 But the centurion was more persuaded by the pilot and the captain of the ship than by what was being said by Paul.
- 12 Because the harbor was not suitable for wintering, the majority reached a decision to put out to sea from there, if somehow they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete, facing southwest and northwest, and spend the winter *there*.

Paul's Voyage to Rome—From Fair Havens to Malta (October 57)

Acts 27:13–44

The Great Storm and the Loss of Hope

- 13 When a moderate south wind came up, supposing that they had attained their purpose, they weighed anchor and *began* sailing along Crete, close *inshore*.
- 14 But before very long there rushed down from the land a violent wind, called Euraquilo;
- 15 and when the ship was caught *in it* and could not face the wind, we gave way *to it* and let ourselves be driven along.
- 16 Running under the shelter of a small island called Clauda, we were scarcely able to get the *ship's* boat under control.
- 17 After they had hoisted it up, they used supporting cables in undergirding the ship; and fearing that they might run aground on *the shallows* of Syrtis, they let down the sea anchor and in this way let themselves be driven along.
- 18 The next day as we were being violently storm-tossed, they began to jettison the cargo;
- 19 and on the third day they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands.
- 20 Since neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small storm was assailing *us*, from then on all hope of our being saved was gradually abandoned.

Paul's Intervention and Prophecy

- 21 When they had gone a long time without food, then Paul stood up in their midst and said, "Men, you ought to have followed my advice and not to have set sail from Crete and incurred this damage and loss.
- 22 *Yet* now I urge you to keep up your courage, for there will be no loss of life among you, but *only* of the ship.
- 23 For this very night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood before me,
- 24 saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar; and behold, God has granted you all those who are sailing with you.'
- 25 Therefore, keep up your courage, men, for I believe God that it will turn out exactly as I have been told.
- 26 But we must run aground on a certain island."

The Ship Drifts Toward Malta

- 27 But when the fourteenth night came, as we were being driven about in the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sailors *began* to surmise that they were approaching some land.
- 28 They took soundings and found *it to be* twenty fathoms; and a little farther on they took another sounding and found *it to be* fifteen fathoms.
- 29 Fearing that we might run aground somewhere on the rocks, they cast four anchors from the stern and wished for daybreak.
- 30 But as the sailors were trying to escape from the ship and had let down the *ship's* boat into the sea, on the pretense of intending to lay out anchors from the bow,

31 Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, “Unless these men remain in the ship, you yourselves cannot be saved.”
 32 Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the *ship’s* boat and let it fall away.

Paul Urges Them to Eat

33 Until the day was about to dawn, Paul was encouraging them all to take some food, saying, “Today is the fourteenth day that you have been constantly watching and going without eating, having taken nothing.
 34 Therefore I encourage you to take some food, for this is for your preservation, for not a hair from the head of any of you will perish.”
 35 Having said this, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of all, and he broke it and began to eat.
 36 All of them were encouraged and they themselves also took food.
 37 All of us in the ship were two hundred and seventy-six persons.
 38 When they had eaten enough, they *began* to lighten the ship by throwing out the wheat into the sea.

Shipwreck

39 When day came, they could not recognize the land; but they did observe a bay with a beach, and they resolved to drive the ship onto it if they could.
 40 And casting off the anchors, they left them in the sea while at the same time they were loosening the ropes of the rudders; and hoisting the foresail to the wind, they were heading for the beach.
 41 But striking a reef where two seas met, they ran the vessel aground; and the prow stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern *began* to be broken up by the force *of the waves*.
 42 The soldiers’ plan was to kill the prisoners, so that none *of them* would swim away and escape;
 43 but the centurion, wanting to bring Paul safely through, kept them from their intention, and commanded that those who could swim should jump overboard first and get to land,
 44 and the rest *should follow*, some on planks, and others on various things from the ship. And so it happened that they all were brought safely to land.

Paul’s Voyage to Rome—Three Months at Malta (November 57 to January 58)

Acts 28:1–10

1 When they had been brought safely through, then we found out that the island was called Malta.
 2 The natives showed us extraordinary kindness; for because of the rain that had set in and because of the cold, they kindled a fire and received us all.
 3 But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened itself on his hand.
 4 When the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they *began* saying to one another, “Undoubtedly this man is a murderer, and though he has been saved from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live.”
 5 However he shook the creature off into the fire and suffered no harm.
 6 But they were expecting that he was about to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had waited a long time and had seen nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and *began* to say that he was a god.
 7 Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the leading man of the island, named Publius, who welcomed us and entertained us courteously three days.
 8 And it happened that the father of Publius was lying *in bed* afflicted with *recurrent* fever and dysentery; and Paul went in *to see* him and after he had prayed, he laid his hands on him and healed him.
 9 After this had happened, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases were coming to him and getting cured.
 10 They also honored us with many marks of respect; and when we were setting sail, they supplied *us* with all we needed.

Paul’s Voyage to Rome—From Malta to Rome (February 58)

Acts 28:11–16

11 At the end of three months we set sail on an Alexandrian ship which had wintered at the island, and which had the Twin Brothers for its figurehead.
 12 After we put in at Syracuse, we stayed there for three days.
 13 From there we sailed around and arrived at Rhegium, and a day later a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli.
 14 There we found *some* brethren, and were invited to stay with them for seven days; and thus we came to Rome.
 15 And the brethren, when they heard about us, came from there as far as the Market of Appius and Three Inns to meet us; and when Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage.
 16 When we entered Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier who was guarding him.

Paul's Ministry in Rome While Under House Arrest (58–60)

Acts 28:17–31

Paul Addresses the Jewish Leaders

17 After three days Paul called together those who were the leading men of the Jews, and when they came together, he *began* saying to them, “Brethren, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.

18 And when they had examined me, they were willing to release me because there was no ground for putting me to death.

19 But when the Jews objected, I was forced to appeal to Caesar, not that I had any accusation against my nation.

20 For this reason, therefore, I requested to see you and to speak with you, for I am wearing this chain for the sake of the hope of Israel.”

21 They said to him, “We have neither received letters from Judea concerning you, nor have any of the brethren come here and reported or spoken anything bad about you.

22 But we desire to hear from you what your views are; for concerning this sect, it is known to us that it is spoken against everywhere.”

Paul Presents the Gospel

23 When they had set a day for Paul, they came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening.

24 Some were being persuaded by the things spoken, but others would not believe.

25 And when they did not agree with one another, they *began* leaving after Paul had spoken one *parting* word, “The Holy Spirit rightly spoke through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers,

26 saying,

‘GO TO THIS PEOPLE AND SAY,

“YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND;

AND YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE;

27 FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL,

AND WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR,

AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES;

OTHERWISE THEY MIGHT SEE WITH THEIR EYES,

AND HEAR WITH THEIR EARS,

AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN,

AND I WOULD HEAL THEM.”’ [\[Isa 6:9–10\]](#)

28 Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will also listen.”

29 [When he had spoken these words, the Jews departed, having a great dispute among themselves.]

Paul's Ministry While Under House Arrest

30 And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him,

31 preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.

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Paul's Letter to the Church in Philippi (c. 59)

Philippians 1–4

Greeting

1:1 Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus,

To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons:

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving

3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,

4 always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all,

5 in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.

6 *For I am* confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

7 For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me.

8 For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.

Prayer

9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment,

10 so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;

11 having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which *comes* through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Paul Reflects on His Imprisonment

12 Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel,

13 so that my imprisonment in *the cause of* Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else,

14 and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.

15 Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will;

16 the latter *do it* out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel;

17 the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment.

18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice,

19 for I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

20 according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but *that* with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

22 But if *I am* to live *on* in the flesh, this *will mean* fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose.

23 But I am hard-pressed from both *directions*, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for *that* is very much better;

24 yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.

25 Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith,

26 so that your proud confidence in me may abound in Christ Jesus through my coming to you again.

Stand Firm in the Face of Opposition

27 Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

28 in no way alarmed by *your* opponents—which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that *too*, from God.

29 For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,

30 experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear *to be* in me.

A Call for Unity and Mutual Consideration

2:1 Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion,

2 make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.

3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;

4 do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

Jesus—the Supreme Example of Humility

5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,
 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,
 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men.
 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
 9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,
 10 so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Work Out Your Salvation

12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;
 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure.
 14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing;
 15 so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,
 16 holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.
 17 But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all.
 18 You too, *I urge you*, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me.

News About Timothy

19 But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition.
 20 For I have no one *else* of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare.
 21 For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus.
 22 But you know of his proven worth, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child *serv*ing his father.
 23 Therefore I hope to send him immediately, as soon as I see how things *go* with me;
 24 and I trust in the Lord that I myself also will be coming shortly.

News About Epaphroditus

25 But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need;
 26 because he was longing for you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick.
 27 For indeed he was sick to the point of death, but God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, so that I would not have sorrow upon sorrow.
 28 Therefore I have sent him all the more eagerly so that when you see him again you may rejoice and I may be less concerned *about you*.
 29 Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard;
 30 because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me.

Beware of False Teachers and Their Impressive Credentials

3:1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things *again* is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you.
 2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision;
 3 for we are the *true* circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh,
 4 although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more:
 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee;
 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.

Knowing Christ is the Ultimate Credential

7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ.
 8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ,
 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith,
 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;
 11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Paul Makes No Claim of Resurrection Perfection

12 Not that I have already obtained *it* or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

13 Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of *it* yet; but one thing *I do*: forgetting what *lies* behind and reaching forward to what *lies* ahead,

14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

15 Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you;

16 however, let us keep living by that same *standard* to which we have attained.

A Call to Imitate Paul's Godly Example

17 Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.

18 For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* enemies of the cross of Christ,

19 whose end is destruction, whose god is *their* appetite, and *whose* glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.

20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;

21 who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

Closing Exhortations

4:1 Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long *to see*, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved.

2 I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord.

3 Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in *the cause of* the gospel, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

5 Let your gentle *spirit* be known to all men. The Lord is near.

6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

9 The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

Paul's Gratitude for the Philippians' Gift

10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned *before*, but you lacked opportunity.

11 Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.

12 I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.

13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

14 Nevertheless, you have done well to share *with me* in my affliction.

15 You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone;

16 for even in Thessalonica you sent *a gift* more than once for my needs.

17 Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account.

18 But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.

19 And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

20 Now to our God and Father *be* the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Final Greetings

21 Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you.

22 All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household.

23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Chronological Notes1) Date.¹

- A) “The date for Philippians depends on the place of writing. Although the issues are complex, the evidence for a Roman provenance is most persuasive. Philippians appears to have been written somewhat earlier than the other Prison Epistles. Paul appears to have written Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians at about the same time. Philemon implies that Paul’s release from prison was imminent (Phlm 1:21). However, when Paul wrote Philippians, he seemed less certain about the outcome of his trial and was contemplating the possibility that he would be martyred (Phil 1:21–26). On the other hand, Paul’s extensive outreach (Phil 1:12–14) and the widespread knowledge of Paul’s circumstances suggest that he had been imprisoned in Rome for at least several months at the time that he wrote Philippians. These factors suggest that the composition of Philippians should be dated to around the midpoint of the Roman imprisonment in or around the year 59.”

2) Provenance.²

- A) “The question of provenance is one of the most contested issues in Philippians. Paul clearly identified himself as a prisoner (1:7, 13, 17), but he did not explicitly state the location of this imprisonment. Presumably, the Philippians knew where Paul was imprisoned and thus did not need to be told. Three different answers commend themselves as worthy of consideration: (1) Rome; (2) Caesarea; and (3) Ephesus.” See Kostenberger’s extended discussion (pp. 563–565) for more details on each of the three possibilities. I will be following a Roman provenance for the Prison Epistles.

¹ Andreas J. Kostenberger, L. Scott Kellum, Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown*, (B&H Academic, 2009), p. 563.

² Kostenberger, pp. 563–565.

Paul's Letter to the Church in Ephesus – Part 1 (c. 60)

Ephesians 1–3

Greeting

1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,
 To the saints who are at Ephesus and *who are* faithful in Christ Jesus:
 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Praise to God for Our Spiritual Blessings in Christ

3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ,
 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love
 5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,
 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.
 7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace
 8 which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight
 9 He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him
 10 with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, *that is*, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him
 11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,
 12 to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.
 13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,
 14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God's own* possession, to the praise of His glory.

Thanksgiving for the Ephesians' Faith and Intercessory Prayer for Their Increase in Knowledge

15 For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which *exists* among you and your love for all the saints,
 16 do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention *of you* in my prayers;
 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.
 18 *I pray that* the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,
 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. *These are* in accordance with the working of the strength of His might
 20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly *places*,
 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.
 22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, [Ps 8:6] and gave Him as head over all things to the church,
 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

New Life in Christ—Salvation By Grace Through Faith

2:1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,
 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.
 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.
 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,
 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),
 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus,
 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

God's New Creation—A Call to Good Works

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God;
 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.
 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

The Inclusion of the Gentiles in the Promised Blessing

11 Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called “Uncircumcision” by the so-called “Circumcision,” *which is performed in the flesh by human hands*—

12 *remember* that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

13 But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

14 For He Himself is our peace, who made both *groups into* one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,

15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, *which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances*, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, *thus* establishing peace,

16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.

17 AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR; [Isa 57:19]

18 for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.

19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household,

20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*,

21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord,

22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

The Divine Mystery and Paul’s Stewardship

3:1 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—

2 if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace which was given to me for you;

3 that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief.

4 By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ,

5 which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit;

6 *to be specific*, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel,

7 of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God’s grace which was given to me according to the working of His power.

8 To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ,

9 and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things;

10 so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly *places*.

11 *This was* in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord,

12 in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.

13 Therefore I ask you not to lose heart at my tribulations on your behalf, for they are your glory.

Intercessory Prayer for Power, Love and Spiritual Maturity

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,

15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name,

16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man,

17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; *and* that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,

19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

20 Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,

21 to Him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

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Chronological Notes

1) Date.¹

- A) “The date for Ephesians depends on complex questions concerning authorship and provenance. If the letter was written during Paul’s Roman imprisonment, then it dates to 58–60. Since Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon appear to have been

¹ Andreas J. Kostenberger, L. Scott Kellum, Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown*, (B&H Academic, 2009), p. 585.

written at approximately the same time and since Philemon belongs to the final phase of Paul's imprisonment (Phlm 1:22), a date of around the year 60 is reasonable."

2) Provenance.²

- A) See Kostenberger's extended discussion of the provenance of Philippians (pp. 563–565) for more details. I will be following a Roman provenance for the Prison Epistles.

² Kostenberger, pp. 563–565.

Paul's Letter to the Church in Ephesus – Part 2 (c. 60)

Ephesians 4–6

A Call for Unity

4:1 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,
 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love,
 3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
 4 *There is* one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling;
 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism,
 6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

Diversity Within Unity Leads to Maturity

7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.
 8 Therefore it says,

"WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH,
 HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES,
 AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN." [\[Ps 68:18\]](#)

9 (Now this *expression*, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth?
 10 He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.)
 11 And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers,
 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;
 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.
 14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;
 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ,
 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

Put Off the Old Man (living for sin and self) and Put On the New (living for Christ and holiness)

17 So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind,
 18 being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;
 19 and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.
 20 But you did not learn Christ in this way,
 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus,
 22 that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit,
 23 and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind,
 24 and put on the new self, which in *the likeness of* God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

Specific Examples of How to Put Off the Old Man and Put on the New

25 Therefore, laying aside falsehood, **SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE of you** WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, [\[Zech 8:16\]](#) for we are members of one another.
 26 **BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN;** [\[Ps 4:4\]](#) do not let the sun go down on your anger,
 27 and do not give the devil an opportunity.
 28 He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have *something* to share with one who has need.
 29 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such *a word* as is good for edification according to the need *of the moment*, so that it will give grace to those who hear.
 30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.
 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.
 32 Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.
 5:1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children;
 2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

From Darkness to Light—Do What is Pleasing to God

3 But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints;
 4 and *there must be no* filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.
 5 For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.
 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.
 7 Therefore do not be partakers with them;
 8 for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light
 9 (for the fruit of the Light *consists* in all goodness and righteousness and truth),
 10 trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.
 11 Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them;
 12 for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret.
 13 But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light.
 14 For this reason it says,

“Awake, sleeper,
 And arise from the dead,
 And Christ will shine on you.” [cf. [Isa 26:19](#); [60:1–2](#)]

Live Under the Influence of the Holy Spirit

15 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise,
 16 making the most of your time, because the days are evil.
 17 So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.
 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,
 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;
 20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;
 21 and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

Husbands and Wives—A Physical Illustration of the Union of Christ and the Church

22 Wives, *be subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord.
 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body.
 24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives *ought to be* to their husbands in everything.
 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,
 26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,
 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.
 28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself;
 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church,
 30 because we are members of His body.
 31 FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. [[Gen 2:24](#)]
 32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.
 33 Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must *see to it* that she respects her husband.

Children and Parents—A Physical Illustration of our Relationship With God

6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.
 2 HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise),
 3 SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH. [[Exod 20:12](#)]
 4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Masters and Slaves—Remember That Christ is Master of All

5 Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ;
 6 not by way of eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.
 7 With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men,
 8 knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.
 9 And masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

Spiritual Warfare and the Armor of God

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.

11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

14 Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS,

15 and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE;

16 in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil *one*.

17 And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,

19 and *pray* on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel,

20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in *proclaiming* it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Closing Remarks

21 But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you.

22 I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts.

23 Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible *love*.

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Paul's Letter to the Church in Colossae (c. 60)

Colossians 1–4

Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

2 To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ *who are* at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

Thanksgiving for the Colossians' Faith

3 We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints;

5 because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel

6 which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as *it has been doing* in you also since the day you heard *of it* and understood the grace of God in truth;

7 just as you learned *it* from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf,

8 and he also informed us of your love in the Spirit.

Prayer for Spiritual Growth

9 For this reason also, since the day we heard *of it*, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

10 so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please *Him* in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

11 strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously

12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.

13 For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,

14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

The Heart of the Gospel—the Supremacy of Christ

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

16 For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.

17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

19 For it was the *Father's* good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him,

20 and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, *I say*, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

You Have Been Reconciled—Stand Firm in the Faith

21 And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, *engaged* in evil deeds,

22 yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach—

23 if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

Paul's Commitment to the Gospel

24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions.

25 Of *this church* I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the *preaching of* the word of God,

26 *that is*, the mystery which has been hidden from the *past* ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints,

27 to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

28 We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ.

29 For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.

Paul's Commitment to the Colossians and Laodiceans

2:1 For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face,

2 that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and *attaining* to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, *resulting* in a true knowledge of God's mystery, *that is*, Christ *Himself*,
 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.
 4 I say this so that no one will delude you with persuasive argument.
 5 For even though I am absent in body, nevertheless I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good discipline and the stability of your faith in Christ.

Remain Centered on Christ—All That You are Spiritually is Because of Your Union With Him

6 Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk in Him,
 7 having been firmly rooted *and now* being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, *and* overflowing with gratitude.
 8 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.
 9 For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form,
 10 and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;
 11 and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ;
 12 having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.
 13 When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions,
 14 having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.
 15 When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.

Identify and Reject False Teaching

16 Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day—
 17 things which are a *mere* shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.
 18 Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on *visions* he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind,
 19 and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God.
 20 If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as,
 21 "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!"
 22 (which all *refer to* things destined to perish with use)—in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men?
 23 These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, *but are* of no value against fleshly indulgence.

Keep Your Mind Focused on Heavenly Things

3:1 Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.
 2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.
 3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.
 4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

Put Off the Old Man (living for sin and self)

5 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.
 6 For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience,
 7 and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them.
 8 But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, *and* abusive speech from your mouth.
 9 Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices,
 10 and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—
 11 *a renewal* in which there is no *distinction between* Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.

Put on the New Man (living for Christ and holiness)

12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and

patience;

13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

14 Beyond all these things *put on* love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.

16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

17 Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

Biblical Principles for Relationships and the Workplace

18 Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them.

20 Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.

21 Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart.

22 Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who *merely* please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men,

24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

25 For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.

4:1 Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven.

Exhortation to Prayer and Christian Witness

2 Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with *an attitude of* thanksgiving;

3 praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned;

4 that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.

5 Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity.

6 Let your speech always be with grace, *as though* seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.

Tychicus to Deliver the Letter

7 As to all my affairs, Tychicus, *our* beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow bond-servant in the Lord, will bring you information.

8 *For* I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts;

9 and with him Onesimus, *our* faithful and beloved brother, who is one of your *number*. They will inform you about the whole situation here.

Closing Greetings

10 Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, sends you his greetings; and *also* Barnabas's cousin Mark (about whom you received instructions; if he comes to you, welcome him);

11 and *also* Jesus who is called Justus; these are the only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are from the circumcision, and they have proved to be an encouragement to me.

12 Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.

13 *For* I testify for him that he has a deep concern for you and for those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis.

14 Luke, the beloved physician, sends you his greetings, and *also* Demas.

15 Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea and also Nympha and the church that is in her house.

Final Instructions

16 When this letter is read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and you, for your part read my letter *that is coming* from Laodicea.

17 Say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."

18 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my imprisonment. Grace be with you.

Chronological Notes1) Date.¹

- A) “If written by Paul from Rome, then one must place the composition of the letter around 58–60 according to the chronology of Paul suggested in this text.” As already mentioned, I follow Kostenberger’s chronology for Paul’s prison epistles and date Colossians to c. 60.

2) Provenance.²

- A) “The presence of Luke, Aristarchus, Timothy, and other coworkers with Paul at the time of writing are important clues for the provenance of Colossians. The presence of Luke appears to support a Roman provenance because Acts places Luke with Paul in Rome, while Paul’s Ephesian ministry is not one of the ‘we’ passages in Acts. Acts 27:2 also indicates that Aristarchus accompanied Paul to Italy and most likely all the way to Rome. Although Acts does not mention the presence of Timothy in Rome, the Acts narrative closes without identifying by name any persons who visited Paul in Rome during his house arrest. In light of the close relationship shared by Paul and Timothy, one would expect Timothy to visit Paul sometime during the two-year Roman imprisonment. Although good arguments can be made for Ephesus, the balance of the evidence favors a Roman provenance.”

¹ Andreas J. Kostenberger, L. Scott Kellum, Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown*, (B&H Academic, 2009), p. 604.

² Kostenberger, pp. 604–605.

Paul's Letter to Philemon (c. 60)

Philemon

Salutation

1 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,
 To Philemon our beloved *brother* and fellow worker,
 2 and to Apphia our sister, and to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:
 3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving for Philemon's Faith and Prayer for the Knowledge of Every Good Thing

4 I thank my God always, making mention of you in my prayers,
 5 because I hear of your love and of the faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints;
 6 *and I pray* that the fellowship of your faith may become effective through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ's sake.
 7 For I have come to have much joy and comfort in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother.

Paul's Appeal to Philemon to Accept Onesimus

8 Therefore, though I have enough confidence in Christ to order you *to do* what is proper,
 9 yet for love's sake I rather appeal *to you*—since I am such a person as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus—
 10 I appeal to you for my child Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my imprisonment,
 11 who formerly was useless to you, but now is useful both to you and to me.
 12 I have sent him back to you in person, that is, *sending* my very heart,
 13 whom I wished to keep with me, so that on your behalf he might minister to me in my imprisonment for the gospel;
 14 but without your consent I did not want to do anything, so that your goodness would not be, in effect, by compulsion but of your own free will.
 15 For perhaps he was for this reason separated *from you* for a while, that you would have him back forever,
 16 no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.
 17 If then you regard me a partner, accept him as *you would* me.
 18 But if he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge that to my account;
 19 I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand, I will repay it (not to mention to you that you owe to me even your own self as well).
 20 Yes, brother, let me benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ.
 21 Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, since I know that you will do even more than what I say.
 22 At the same time also prepare me a lodging, for I hope that through your prayers I will be given to you.

Greetings and Benediction

23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you,
 24 *as do* Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow workers.
 25 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Jude's Letter to Those Who are Called (c. 61–62)

Jude

Salutation

1 Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James,
 To those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ:
 2 May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you.

Contend Earnestly for the Faith—Reject Those Who Pervert the Grace of God

3 Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.
 4 For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Examples of God's Past Judgment

5 Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe.

6 And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day,

7 just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.

The Sins of the Intruders

8 Yet in the same way these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties.

9 But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”

10 But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed.

Woe Oracle Against the Intruders

11 Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

12 These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted;

13 wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.

Enoch’s Prophecy of God’s Eschatological Judgment

14 *It was* also about these men *that* Enoch, *in* the seventh *generation* from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones,

15 to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”

16 These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their *own* lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of *gaining* an advantage.

Exhortation to Believers

17 But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ,

18 that they were saying to you, “In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts.”

19 These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit.

20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,

21 keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.

22 And have mercy on some, who are doubting;

23 save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.

Closing Doxology

24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy,

25 to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, *be* glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

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Chronological Notes

1) Philemon.

- A) “The date for Philemon depends largely on the date assigned to Colossians. The evidence for the close relationship between the two letters is as follows: (1) Colossians refers to Onesimus (Col 4:9); (2) both letters have Timothy as the co-sender (Phlm 1:1; Col 1:1); (3) both letters refer to Epaphras (Phlm 1:23; Col 1:7) and Archippus (Phlm 1:2; Col 4:17); and (4) both letters include Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke among Paul’s companions (Phlm 1:24; Col 4:10, 14). Assuming the Roman provenance of Colossians, the letter should be dated to around the year 60.”¹ As already mentioned, I follow

¹ Andreas J. Kostenberger, L. Scott Kellum, Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown*, (B&H Academic, 2009), p. 623.

Kostenberger's chronology for Paul's prison epistles and date Philemon to c. 60.

2) Jude.

- A) "The date for Jude depends in part on its relationship with 1 and 2 Peter, particularly the latter. A comparison between Jude's letter and 2 Peter suggests that Jude's letter was written first and that Peter in his second letter adapted Jude for his own purposes and circumstances. In light of the considerable number of parallels between the letters, a literary relationship between the two is more likely than the independent use of a common source by both writers. The probability Jude's having been written prior to 2 Peter can be illustrated by the way in which these writings used Jewish apocryphal literature. Jude included three such quotations or allusions: (1) to The Assumption of Moses in verse 9; (2) to 1 Enoch in verses 14–15; and (3) to an otherwise unattested saying of the apostles in verse 18. All three quotations are lacking in 2 Peter. It seems more likely that Peter avoided reference to these apocryphal works rather than that Jude added these references on the assumption of Petrine priority. Another factor is the question of a possible literary dependence between Jude and 2 Peter. If 2 Peter postdates and is dependent on Jude (a view held by most, though not all, commentators today), and 2 Peter is authentic, the fact that Peter died a martyr's death in circa 65–66 requires the early 60s as the latest possible date for the book of Jude. Since there is no good reason to question the authenticity of 2 Peter, and since it is probable that 2 Peter is dependent on Jude rather than vice versa, 55–62 as a date of composition is most likely. But it must be noted that the lack of clear internal evidence regarding the date of composition renders this estimate tentative at best."² I have chosen to date Jude to c. 61–62 and group it with Philemon in today's reading.

² Kostenberger, pp. 766–767.

Paul's First Letter to Timothy (c. 61–62)

1 Timothy 1–6

Salutation

1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, *who is* our hope,
2 To Timothy, *my* true child in *the* faith: Grace, mercy *and* peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Timothy's Task—Rebuke Those Who Spread False Teaching

3 As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines,
4 nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than *furthering* the administration of God which is by faith.
5 But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.
6 For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion,
7 wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions.
8 But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully,
9 realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers
10 and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching,
11 according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.

Timothy's Task—Follow Paul's Example

12 I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service,
13 even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief;
14 and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are *found* in Christ Jesus.
15 It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost *of all*.
16 Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.
17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, *be* honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Timothy's Task—Hold Firmly to Faith and a Good Conscience

18 This command I entrust to you, Timothy, *my* son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight,
19 keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.
20 Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme.

Pattern for Public Prayer

2:1 First of all, then, I urge that entreaties *and* prayers, petitions *and* thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men,
2 for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.
3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,
4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.
5 For there is one God, *and* one mediator also between God and men, *the* man Christ Jesus,
6 who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony *given* at the proper time.
7 For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying) as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.
8 Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension.

Modesty and the Role of Women

9 Likewise, *I want* women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments,
10 but rather by means of good works, as is proper for women making a claim to godliness.
11 A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness.
12 But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.
13 For it was Adam who was first created, *and* then Eve.
14 *And it was* not Adam *who* was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.
15 But *women* will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.

Qualifications of Overseers

- 3:1 It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires *to do*.
 2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,
 3 not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money.
 4 *He must be* one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity
 5 (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?),
 6 *and* not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.
 7 And he must have a good reputation with those outside *the church*, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

Qualifications of Deacons

- 8 Deacons likewise *must be* men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain,
 9 *but* holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.
 10 These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach.
 11 Women *must* likewise *be* dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things.
 12 Deacons must be husbands of *only* one wife, *and* good managers of *their* children and their own households.
 13 For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

Walk Worthy of the Gospel and the Church

- 14 I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long;
 15 but in case I am delayed, *I write* so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.
 16 By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness:

He who was revealed in the flesh,
 Was vindicated in the Spirit,
 Seen by angels,
 Proclaimed among the nations,
 Believed on in the world,
 Taken up in glory.

Apostasy and Heresy in Later Times

- 4:1 But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,
 2 by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron,
 3 *men* who forbid marriage *and* *advocate* abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.
 4 For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude;
 5 for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer.

Train Yourself for Godliness

- 6 In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, *constantly* nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following.
 7 But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness;
 8 for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and *also* for the *life* to come.
 9 It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance.
 10 For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.

Exercise Your Spiritual Gift and Be an Example of Faithfulness

- 11 Prescribe and teach these things.
 12 Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but *rather* in speech, conduct, love, faith *and* purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.
 13 Until I come, give attention to the *public* reading of *Scripture*, to exhortation and teaching.
 14 Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery.

15 Take pains with these things; be *absorbed* in them, so that your progress will be evident to all.

16 Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.

Proper Conduct With Different Age Groups

5:1 Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but *rather* appeal to *him* as a father, to the younger men as brothers, 2 the older women as mothers, *and* the younger women as sisters, in all purity.

Proper Treatment of Widows

3 Honor widows who are widows indeed;

4 but if any widow has children or grandchildren, they must first learn to practice piety in regard to their own family and to make some return to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God.

5 Now she who is a widow indeed and who has been left alone, has fixed her hope on God and continues in entreaties and prayers night and day.

6 But she who gives herself to wanton pleasure is dead even while she lives.

7 Prescribe these things as well, so that they may be above reproach.

8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

9 A widow is to be put on the list only if she is not less than sixty years old, *having been* the wife of one man,

10 having a reputation for good works; *and* if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality to strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has assisted those in distress, *and* if she has devoted herself to every good work.

11 But refuse to *put* younger widows *on the list*, for when they feel sensual desires in disregard of Christ, they want to get married,

12 *thus* incurring condemnation, because they have set aside their previous pledge.

13 At the same time they also learn to *be* idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to *mention*.

14 Therefore, I want younger *widows* to get married, bear children, keep house, *and* give the enemy no occasion for reproach;

15 for some have already turned aside to follow Satan.

16 If any woman who is a believer has *dependent* widows, she must assist them and the church must not be burdened, so that it may assist those who are widows indeed.

Proper Recognition and Discipline of Elders

17 The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.

18 For the Scripture says, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING," [Deut 25:4] and "The laborer is worthy of his wages." [Luke 10:7]

19 Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses.

20 Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of *sinning*.

21 I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of *His* chosen angels, to maintain these *principles* without bias, doing nothing in a *spirit of* partiality.

22 Do not lay hands upon anyone *too* hastily and thereby share *responsibility* for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin.

23 No longer drink water *exclusively*, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.

24 The sins of some men are quite evident, going before them to judgment; for others, their *sins* follow after.

25 Likewise also, deeds that are good are quite evident, and those which are otherwise cannot be concealed.

Proper Conduct for Slaves

6:1 All who are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and *our* doctrine will not be spoken against.

2a Those who have believers as their masters must not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but must serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved.

An Indictment of the False Teachers

2b Teach and preach these *principles*.

3 If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness,

4 he is conceited *and* understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions,

5 and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.

The Greed of the False Teachers

6 But godliness *actually* is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment.

7 For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either.

8 If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.

9 But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.

10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

What It Means to Be a Man of God

11 But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance *and* gentleness.

12 Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

13 I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate,

14 that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,

15 which He will bring about at the proper time—He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords,

16 who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him *be* honor and eternal dominion! Amen.

A Word to the Wealthy

17 Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.

18 *Instruct them* to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share,

19 storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.

Concluding Exhortation

20 O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly *and* empty chatter *and* the opposing arguments of what is falsely called “knowledge”—

21 which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith. Grace be with you.

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Chronological Notes

- 1) “It may be assumed that Paul was released from his first Roman imprisonment (Acts 28) and that he engaged in a subsequent second Aegean ministry that provides the proper framework for 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. If so, Paul probably wrote his first letter to Timothy some time after the year 60 (the most likely date of Paul’s release from his first Roman imprisonment), but before 66, the likely date for Paul’s second Roman imprisonment that was followed by his martyrdom under Nero, who died in AD 68. The most natural reading of 1 Timothy 1:3 is that Paul wrote from Macedonia. Timothy, who was at that time stationed in Ephesus, needed counsel on how to deal with the false teachers in the Ephesian church. To this end Paul interwove personal instructions with those on community life, so that Timothy received public apostolic support while it was acknowledged that he also had certain standards to meet. Paul probably wrote 2 Timothy from Rome in the year 66. Titus was likely written in the interim between 1 and 2 Timothy (or possibly prior to 1 Timothy) from an unknown location.”¹

¹ Andreas J. Kostenberger, L. Scott Kellum, Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown*, (B&H Academic, 2009), p. 644.

Peter's First Letter to the Gentile Churches (c. 62–63)

1 Peter 1–5

Salutation

1:1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen

2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.

Born Again into a Living Hope

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

4 to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

5 who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Trials Test and Prove the Genuineness of Our Faith

6 In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials,

7 so that the proof of your faith, *being* more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

8 and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

9 obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

The Privileged Status of Those Who Know and Believe the Gospel

10 As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that *would come* to you made careful searches and inquiries, 11 seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.

12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look.

A Call to Holiness—Remember That You Were Set Free from Sin

13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober *in spirit*, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts *which were yours* in your ignorance,

15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all *your* behavior;

16 because it is written, “YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.” [[Lev 19:2](#)]

A Call to Reverence—Remember That You Were Redeemed with Christ's Precious Blood

17 If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay *on earth*;

18 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers,

19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood* of Christ.

20 For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you

21 who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

A Call to Love—Remember That You Were Born Again Through God's Enduring Word

22 Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,

23 for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and enduring word of God.

24 For,

“ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS,

AND ALL ITS GLORY LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS.

THE GRASS WITHERS,

AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF,

25 BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER.” [[Isa 40:6–8](#)]

And this is the word which was preached to you.

Put Aside All Evil and Crave Pure, Spiritual Milk

2:1 Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander,
 2 like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,
 3 if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord. [[Ps 34:8](#)]

Living Stones Built On Christ the Cornerstone

4 And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God,
 5 you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
 6 For *this* is contained in Scripture:

“BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER *stone*,
 AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.” [[Isa 28:16](#)]

7 This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve,

“THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED,
 THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER *stone*,” [[Ps 118:22](#)]

8 and,

“A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE”; [[Isa 8:14](#)]

for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this *doom* they were also appointed.

9 But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR *God's* OWN POSSESSION, [[Exod 19:6](#)] so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

10 for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, [[Hos 1:9](#)] but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, [[Hos 1:6](#)] but now you have RECEIVED MERCY. [cf. [Hos 2:23](#)]

Lifestyle Evangelism

11 Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.

12 Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe *them*, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Submit to the Governing Authorities

13 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority,

14 or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.

15 For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.

16 *Act* as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but *use it* as bondslaves of God.

17 Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

Slaves Submit to Your Masters—Christ Is Our Example of Suffering

18 Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable.

19 For this *finds* favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.

20 For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer *for it* you patiently endure it, this *finds* favor with God.

21 For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,

22 WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; [[Isa 53:9](#)]

23 and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting *Himself* to Him who judges righteously;

24 and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. [[Isa 53:4–5](#)]

25 For you were continually straying like sheep, [[Isa 53:6](#)] but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.

Wives Submit to Your Husbands, Husbands Honor Your Wives

3:1 In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any *of them* are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives,
 2 as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.
 3 Your adornment must not be *merely* external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses;
 4 but *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.
 5 For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands;
 6 just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.
 7 You husbands in the same way, live with *your wives* in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

Practical Christian Living

8 To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit;
 9 not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.
 10 For,

“THE ONE WHO DESIRES LIFE, TO LOVE AND SEE GOOD DAYS,
 MUST KEEP HIS TONGUE FROM EVIL AND HIS LIPS FROM SPEAKING DECEIT.

11 “HE MUST TURN AWAY FROM EVIL AND DO GOOD;
 HE MUST SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT.

12 “FOR THE EYES OF THE LORD ARE TOWARD THE RIGHTEOUS,
 AND HIS EARS ATTEND TO THEIR PRAYER,
 BUT THE FACE OF THE LORD IS AGAINST THOSE WHO DO EVIL.” [\[Ps 34:12–16\]](#)

You are Blessed If You Suffer for Doing Good

13 Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good?
 14 But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED, [\[Isa 8:12\]](#)
 15 but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;
 16 and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.
 17 For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.

Christ Also Suffered for Doing Good—The Result Was Our Salvation

18 For Christ also died for sins once for all, *the* just for *the* unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;
 19 in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits *now* in prison,
 20 who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through *the* water.
 21 Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,
 22 who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.

Choosing a Life of Suffering Demonstrates That You Have Ceased from Sin

4:1 Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,
 2 so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.
 3 For the time already past is sufficient *for you* to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries.
 4 In *all* this, they are surprised that you do not run with *them* into the same excesses of dissipation, and they malign *you*;
 5 but they will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.
 6 For the gospel has for this purpose been preached even to those who are dead, that though they are judged in the flesh as men, they may live in the spirit according to *the will of* God.

A Life of Love

7 The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober *spirit* for the purpose of prayer.

8 Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. [[Prov 10:12](#)]

9 Be hospitable to one another without complaint.

10 As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

11 Whoever speaks, *is to do so* as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves *is to do so* as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Rejoice That You Share in the Sufferings of Christ

12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you;

13 but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.

14 If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests [[Isa 11:2](#)] on you.

15 Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler;

16 but if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.

17 For *it is* time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what *will be* the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

18 AND IF IT IS WITH DIFFICULTY THAT THE RIGHTEOUS IS SAVED, WHAT WILL BECOME OF THE GODLESS MAN AND THE SINNER? [[Prov 11:31](#) (LXX)]

19 Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.

Instructions for Elders

5:1 Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as *your* fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed,

2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to *the will of God*; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;

3 nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.

4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

The Need for Humility

5 You younger men, likewise, be subject to *your* elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE. [[Prov 3:34](#) (LXX)]

6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,

7 casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

Resist the Devil!

8 Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, [[Ps 22:13](#)] seeking someone to devour.

9 But resist him, firm in *your* faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.

10 After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen *and* establish you.

11 To Him *be* dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Closing Greeting

12 Through Silvanus, our faithful brother (for so I regard *him*), I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it!

13 She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings, and *so does* my son, Mark.

14 Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace be to you all who are in Christ.

Chronological Notes

- 1) “The best indicator as to the date of the letter, given Peter’s authorship, is the reference to Rome at 1 Peter 5:13. Most agree that ‘Babylon’ refers to Rome. If so, Peter most likely was in Rome in the mid- to late 60s. The letter gives no hint that there is ongoing persecution, by the state or otherwise, in the environment of the author. This indicates a date prior to the persecution of Nero, which began in approximately 64. Most likely, 1 Peter was written slightly before then, around 62–63, when the harbingers of this persecution were already on the horizon.”¹

¹ Andreas J. Kostenberger, L. Scott Kellum, Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown*, (B&H Academic, 2009), p. 736.

Paul's Letter to Titus (c. 63)

Titus 1–3

Salutation

1:1 Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness,
 2 in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago,
 3 but at the proper time manifested, *even* His word, in the proclamation with which I was entrusted according to the commandment of God our Savior,
 4 To Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

Qualifications for Elders

5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you,
 6 *namely*, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion.
 7 For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain,
 8 but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled,
 9 holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

The Need for Qualified Church Leadership

10 For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision,
 11 who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not *teach* for the sake of sordid gain.
 12 One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons."
 13 This testimony is true. For this reason reprove them severely so that they may be sound in the faith,
 14 not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth.
 15 To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.
 16 They profess to know God, but by *their* deeds they deny *Him*, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.

Teaching Sound Doctrine

2:1 But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine.
 2 Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance.
 3 Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good,
 4 so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,
 5 *to be* sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.
 6 Likewise urge the young men to be sensible;
 7 in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, *with* purity in doctrine, dignified,
 8 sound *in* speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.
 9 *Urge* bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative,
 10 not pilfering, but showing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.

God's Grace Trains Us in Godly Behavior

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,
 12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age,
 13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,
 14 who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.
 15 These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.

Instructions for Living in State and Society

3:1 Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed,
 2 to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.
 3 For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.
 4 But when the kindness of God our Savior and *His* love for mankind appeared,

5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,
6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,
7 so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life.
8 This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men.

Final Warning Against Error

9 But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable and worthless.
10 Reject a factious man after a first and second warning,
11 knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned.

Closing Instructions and Greetings

12 When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, make every effort to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there.
13 Diligently help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way so that nothing is lacking for them.
14 Our people must also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful.
15 All who are with me greet you. Greet those who love us in *the* faith. Grace be with you all.

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Chronological Notes

- 1) "Paul's letter to Titus was most likely written around the same time as 1 Timothy and for similar reasons. In Titus's case, the occasion is stated in Titus 1:5 as follows: 'The reason I left you in Crete was to set right what was left undone and, as I directed you, to appoint elders in every town.' This is followed by a set of qualifications for elders in Titus 1:6–9. While initially given to provide guidance for Titus, this passage is hardly limited to the original occasion but continues to have relevance for the church today as it ensures that its leaders meet biblical requirements. Beyond this immediate purpose, Paul provided a variety of other instructions for Titus in overseeing the life of the church. He articulated a series of important and abiding Christian doctrinal truths, such as salvation not by works, the regeneration of believers by the Holy Spirit, justification by grace, and so on (see Titus 3:4–7)."¹

¹ Andreas J. Kostenberger, L. Scott Kellum, Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown*, (B&H Academic, 2009), pp. 647–648.

Anonymous Letter to the Christian Community in Rome – Part 1 (c. 63–64)

Hebrews 1:1–4:13

God Has Spoken Through His Son

1:1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,
 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.
 3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power.
 When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, [cf. [Ps 110:1](#)]
 4 having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.

Superiority of the Son to the Angels

5 For to which of the angels did He ever say,

“YOU ARE MY SON,
 TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU”? [[Ps 2:7](#); cf. [Acts 13:32–33](#)]

And again,

“I WILL BE A FATHER TO HIM
 AND HE SHALL BE A SON TO ME”? [[2 Sam 7:14](#)]

6 And when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says,

“AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM.” [[Deut 32:43](#)] (LXX)

7 And of the angels He says,

“WHO MAKES HIS ANGELS WINDS,
 AND HIS MINISTERS A FLAME OF FIRE.” [[Ps 104:4](#)] (LXX 103:4)

8 But of the Son *He says*,

“YOUR THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER,
 AND THE RIGHTEOUS SCEPTER IS THE SCEPTER OF HIS KINGDOM.

9 “YOU HAVE LOVED RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HATED LAWLESSNESS;
 THEREFORE GOD, YOUR GOD, HAS ANOINTED YOU
 WITH THE OIL OF GLADNESS ABOVE YOUR COMPANIONS.” [[Ps 45:6–7](#)] (LXX 44:7–8)

10 And,

“YOU, LORD, IN THE BEGINNING LAID THE FOUNDATION OF THE EARTH,
 AND THE HEAVENS ARE THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS;

11 THEY WILL PERISH, BUT YOU REMAIN;
 AND THEY ALL WILL BECOME OLD LIKE A GARMENT,
 12 AND LIKE A MANTLE YOU WILL ROLL THEM UP;
 LIKE A GARMENT THEY WILL ALSO BE CHANGED.
 BUT YOU ARE THE SAME,
 AND YOUR YEARS WILL NOT COME TO AN END.” [[Ps 102:25–27](#)]

13 But to which of the angels has He ever said,

“SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND,
 UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES
 A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET”? [[Ps 110:1](#)]

14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?

First Warning—The Danger of Drifting

2:1 For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away *from it*.

2 For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty,
3 how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard,

4 God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

Superiority of Jesus to the Angels

5 For He did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking.

6 But one has testified somewhere, saying,

“WHAT IS MAN, THAT YOU REMEMBER HIM?

OR THE SON OF MAN, THAT YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT HIM?

7 “YOU HAVE MADE HIM FOR A LITTLE WHILE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS;

YOU HAVE CROWNED HIM WITH GLORY AND HONOR,

AND HAVE APPOINTED HIM OVER THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS;

8 YOU HAVE PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET.” [[Ps 8:4–6](#); cf. [1 Cor 15:20–28](#); [Eph 1:22](#)]

For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him.

9 But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, *namely*, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.

10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.

11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one *Father*; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren,

12 saying,

“I WILL PROCLAIM YOUR NAME TO MY BRETHREN,

IN THE MIDST OF THE CONGREGATION I WILL SING YOUR PRAISE.” [[Ps 22:22](#)] (LXX 21:23)

13 And again,

“I WILL PUT MY TRUST IN HIM.” [[Isa 8:17b](#)] (LXX)

And again,

“BEHOLD, I AND THE CHILDREN WHOM GOD HAS GIVEN ME.” [[Isa 8:18](#)] (LXX)

14 Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

15 and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

16 For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham.

17 Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

18 For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.

Superiority of Jesus to Moses

3:1 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession;

2 He was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was in all His house.

3 For He has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house.

4 For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.

5 Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; [[Num 12:7b](#)] (LXX)

6 but Christ *was faithful* as a Son over His house—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.

Second Warning—The Danger of Unbelief

7 Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says,

- “TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE,
 8 DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME,
 AS IN THE DAY OF TRIAL IN THE WILDERNESS,
 9 WHERE YOUR FATHERS TRIED *Me* BY TESTING *Me*,
 AND SAW MY WORKS FOR FORTY YEARS.
 10 “THEREFORE I WAS ANGRY WITH THIS GENERATION,
 AND SAID, ‘THEY ALWAYS GO ASTRAY IN THEIR HEART,
 AND THEY DID NOT KNOW MY WAYS’;
 11 AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH,
 ‘THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST.’” [Ps 95:7b–11] (LXX 94:7b–11)

12 Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God.
 13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is *still* called “Today,” so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.
 14 For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end,
 15 while it is said,

“TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE,
 DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS, AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME.”

16 For who provoked *Him* when they had heard? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt *led* by Moses?
 17 And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness?
 18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient?
 19 So we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief.

“Let us fear”—Unbelief Will Keep You From Entering God’s Rest

4:1 Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it.
 2 For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.
 3 For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said,

“AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH,
 THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST,”

although His works were finished from the foundation of the world.

4 For He has said somewhere concerning the seventh *day*: “AND GOD RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL HIS WORKS”; [Gen 2:3]
 5 and again in this *passage*, “THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST.”
 6 Therefore, since it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly had good news preached to them failed to enter because of disobedience,
 7 He again fixes a certain day, “Today,” saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before,

“TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE,
 DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS.”

8 For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that.
 9 So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God.
 10 For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.
 11 Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through *following* the same example of disobedience.
 12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
 13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

Chronological Notes

1) Dating Hebrews.

A) Internal Evidence.

- (1) The audience had come to faith indirectly through those who were eyewitnesses of Christ's ministry (2:3–4). The exhortation to remember those who first led them and "spoke the word of God" to them implies that some of their leaders had died (13:7). The expectation that "by this time [they] ought to be teachers" (5:12) indicates additional time had passed. The earliest date that could account for these factors would seem to be AD 60 (some 27 years after Christ's resurrection).¹
- (2) According to 10:32–34, the audience had persevered in a time of persecution in the past. They had not yet faced martyrdom (12:4), but a more severe time of trial was coming (11:35–12:3; 12:7; 13:3, 12–13) and some had begun to abandon group meetings (10:25). The situation indicated by the data above suggests a date in the mid-60s AD, just prior to the extreme persecution of the Roman church under Nero. At this point the Roman church had been in existence for about three decades. The expulsion of the Jews by Claudius (Acts 18:2) in AD 49 would account for the earlier time of testing experienced by this community. Also, Nero's rising threat to the church accounts for the fear of death and the warning of commitment indicated in Hebrews.²
- (3) The allusion to "Timothy" in Hebrews 13:23 leads to the assumption that this Timothy is the same person known to us through Paul's letters. Although the exact span of Timothy's life is not known (he joined Paul in ministry in the summer of AD 49; Acts 16:1–5), it could scarcely have outlasted the century. If Hebrews was written within Timothy's lifetime, it could not be dated later than AD 100.³
- (4) It has been argued that an upper limit of the date for Hebrews can be set confidently at AD 70, the year in which the temple of Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans. The basis for this confidence is that the writer of Hebrews refers to cultic⁴ activity in the present tense (e.g., 7:27–28; 8:3–5; 9:7–8, 25; 10:1–3, 8; 13:10–11), presumably reflecting contemporary cultic practice in Jerusalem.⁵ This argument, however, fails to consider four key observations:⁶
 - (a) The focus of the author's comparisons with the sacrificial work of Christ is not the Jewish temple but the Israelite tabernacle.
 - (b) Present tense indicative in the Greek does not necessarily refer to present time (recall the "historic present" in Greek).
 - (c) Skilled rhetoricians frequently use the present tense as a literary device designed to persuade their audiences by emphasizing the timeless nature of their subjects.
 - (d) Other authors, including Josephus and Clement of Rome, use the present tense to discuss the tabernacle long after the destruction of the temple.

B) External Evidence.

- (1) An upper limit in the range for a date is established by the fact that Hebrews was already being appropriated without

¹ Lane, 1:lxii.

² Guthrie, 22–23.

³ Merrill C. Tenney, "A New Approach to the Book of Hebrews," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 123:491 (July 1966): 231.

⁴ The term "cult" stems from the Latin word *cultus*, which carried the meaning of worship or praise-adoration. The *Oxford Dictionary* defines it, among other ways, as "a system of religious worship especially as expressed in ceremonies; devotion to or homage to a person or thing." It is often used in theological and religious scholarship to refer to the sacrificial system and ceremonies that were part of the Mosaic Covenant.

⁵ Lane, 1:lxiii.

⁶ Griffith, 240.

explicit quotation in *1 Clement* (cf. *1 Clem* 17:1 with Heb 11:37; *1 Clem* 36:2–6 with Heb 1:3–5,7; *1 Clem* 36:3 with Heb 1:7). Although some argue that Hebrews and *1 Clement* simply share a common tradition, it is broadly recognized that Clement was, in fact, literarily dependent upon Hebrews. A conventional date of AD 95–96 has been assigned to *1 Clement*, but on insufficient grounds. Internal evidence and external attestation indicate *1 Clement* was composed at some point between AD 80 and 140.⁷

C) Summary.

- (1) Most contemporary scholars date Hebrews somewhere between AD 60 and 100, and are unwilling to try to pinpoint the date more precisely. I personally favor c. 63–64 AD.

⁷ Lane, 1:lxii.

Anonymous Letter to the Christian Community in Rome – Part 2 (c. 63–64)

Hebrews 4:14–10:18

Jesus is Our “Great High Priest”

4:14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

5:1 For every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins;

2 he can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself also is beset with weakness;

3 and because of it he is obligated to offer *sacrifices* for sins, as for the people, so also for himself.

4 And no one takes the honor to himself, but *receives it* when he is called by God, even as Aaron was.

5 So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He who said to Him,

“YOU ARE MY SON,
TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU”; [Ps 2:7]

6 just as He says also in another *passage*,

“YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER
ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK.” [Ps 110:4] (LXX 109:4)

7 In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety.

8 Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.

9 And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation,

10 being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

Rebuke for Negligence in Obeying God’s Word

11 Concerning him we have much to say, and *it is* hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.

12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

13 For everyone who partakes *only* of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant.

14 But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

Challenge—Allow the Spirit to Carry You Forward to Maturity!

6:1 Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

2 of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.

3 And this we will do, if God permits.

Warning—You Are in Danger of Apostasy!

4 For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit,

5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come,

6 and *then* have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.

7 For ground that drinks the rain which often falls on it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God;

8 but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned.

God’s Promise and Oath are a Sure and Steadfast Hope

9 But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation, though we are speaking in this way.

10 For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.

11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end,
 12 so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.
 13 For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself,
 14 saying, "I WILL SURELY BLESS YOU AND I WILL SURELY MULTIPLY YOU." [Gen 22:17]
 15 And so, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise.
 16 For men swear by one greater *than themselves*, and with them an oath *given* as confirmation is an end of every dispute.
 17 In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath,
 18 so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us.
 19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a *hope* both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil,
 20 where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

Melchizedekian Priesthood Superior to the Levitical Priesthood

7:1 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, [cf. Gen 14:17–19]
 2 to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all *the spoils*, [cf. Gen 14:20] was first of all, by the translation of *his name*, king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace.
 3 Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he remains a priest perpetually.
 4 Now observe how great this man was to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the choicest spoils.
 5 And those indeed of the sons of Levi who receive the priest's office have commandment in the Law to collect a tenth from the people, that is, from their brethren, although these are descended from Abraham.
 6 But the one whose genealogy is not traced from them collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed the one who had the promises.
 7 But without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater.
 8 In this case mortal men receive tithes, but in that case one *receives them*, of whom it is witnessed that he lives on.
 9 And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes,
 10 for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

Melchizedekian Priesthood Implies the Need for a Change of Law

11 Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need *was there* for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron?
 12 For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also.
 13 For the one concerning whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no one has officiated at the altar.
 14 For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests.
 15 And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek,
 16 who has become *such* not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life.
 17 For it is attested *of Him*,

"YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER
 ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK." [Ps 110:4] (LXX 109:4)

18 For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness
 19 (for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.

Contrasts Between Jesus and the Levitical Priesthood

20 And inasmuch as *it was* not without an oath
 21 (for they indeed became priests without an oath, but He with an oath through the One who said to Him,

"THE LORD HAS SWORN
 AND WILL NOT CHANGE HIS MIND,
 'YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER'"); [Ps 110:4] (LXX 109:4)

22 so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.
 23 The *former* priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers because they were prevented by death from continuing,

24 but Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently.

25 Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

26 For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens;

27 who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the *sins* of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.

28 For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, *appoints* a Son, made perfect forever.

Christ's Ministry Superior to the Levitical Priest's Ministry

8:1 Now the main point in what has been said *is this*: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,

2 a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.

3 For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; so it is necessary that this *high priest* also have something to offer.

4 Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law;

5 who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned *by God* when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, "SEE," He says, "THAT YOU MAKE all things ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN WHICH WAS SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN." [[Exod 25:40](#)] (LXX)

6a But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry,

Christ's Covenant Superior to the First Covenant

6b by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.

7 For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second.

8 For finding fault with them, He says,

"BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD,
WHEN I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT
WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH;
9 NOT LIKE THE COVENANT WHICH I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS
ON THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND
TO LEAD THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT;
FOR THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT,
AND I DID NOT CARE FOR THEM, SAYS THE LORD.

10 "FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL
AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD:
I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR MINDS,
AND I WILL WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS.
AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD,
AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.

11 "AND THEY SHALL NOT TEACH EVERYONE HIS FELLOW CITIZEN,
AND EVERYONE HIS BROTHER, SAYING, 'KNOW THE LORD,'
FOR ALL WILL KNOW ME,
FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST OF THEM.

12 "FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR INIQUITIES,
AND I WILL REMEMBER THEIR SINS NO MORE." [[Jer 31:31-34](#)] (~LXX 38:31-34)

13 When He said, "A new *covenant*," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.

The Inadequacy of the First Covenant Cultic System

9:1 Now even the first *covenant* had regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary.

2 For there was a tabernacle prepared, the outer one, in which *were* the lampstand and the table and the sacred bread; this is called the holy place.

3 Behind the second veil there was a tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies,

4 having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron's rod which budded, and the tables of the covenant;

5 and above it *were* the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; but of these things we cannot now speak in detail.
 6 Now when these things have been so prepared, the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle performing the divine worship,
 7 but into the second, only the high priest *enters* once a year, not without *taking* blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance.
 8 The Holy Spirit *is* signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed while the outer tabernacle is still standing,
 9 which *is* a symbol for the present time. Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience,
 10 since they *relate* only to food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a time of reformation.

Christ's Blood Superior to the Blood of Sacrificial Animals

11 But when Christ appeared *as* a high priest of the good things to come, *He entered* through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation;
 12 and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.
 13 For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh,
 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Christ's Covenant Superior to the First Covenant

15 For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were *committed* under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.
 16 For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it.
 17 For a covenant is valid *only* when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives.
 18 Therefore even the first *covenant* was not inaugurated without blood.
 19 For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people,
 20 saying, "THIS IS THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT WHICH GOD COMMANDED YOU." [[Exod 24:8](#)]
 21 And in the same way he sprinkled both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry with the blood.
 22 And according to the Law, *one may almost say*, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

Christ's Sacrifice Superior to the High Priestly Sacrifice on the Day of Atonement

23 Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.
 24 For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a *mere* copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;
 25 nor was it that He would offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is not his own. [cf. [Lev 16](#)]
 26 Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.
 27 And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this *comes* judgment,
 28 so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without *reference to sin*, to those who eagerly await Him.

The Repetition of the Sacrifices Demonstrated Their Inability to Perfect the Worshipers

10:1 For the Law, since it has *only* a shadow of the good things to come *and* not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near.
 2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins?
 3 But in those *sacrifices* there is a reminder of sins year by year.
 4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

God's Will Was to Sanctify Us Through the Offering of the Body of Jesus Christ

5 Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says,

“SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED,
BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME;

6 IN WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND *sacrifices* FOR SIN YOU HAVE TAKEN NO PLEASURE.

7 “THEN I SAID, ‘BEHOLD, I HAVE COME

(IN THE SCROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME)

TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD.” [Ps 40:6–8] (LXX 39:7–9)

8 After saying above, “SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS AND WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND *sacrifices* FOR SIN YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, NOR HAVE YOU TAKEN PLEASURE *in them*” (which are offered according to the Law),

9 then He said, “BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO YOUR WILL.” He takes away the first in order to establish the second.

10 By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Jesus' Single Offering Perfected Us for All Time

11 Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins;

12 but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD,

13 waiting from that time onward UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET.

14 For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

15 And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying,

16 “THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM
AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD:

I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEART,

AND ON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE THEM,”

He then says,

17 “AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS

I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE.” [cf. Jer 31:31–34] (~LXX 38:31–34)

18 Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer *any* offering for sin.

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Anonymous Letter to the Christian Community in Rome – Part 3 (c. 63–64)

Hebrews 10:19–13:25

Hold Fast the Confession of Our Hope

10:19 Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus,
 20 by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh,
 21 and since *we have* a great priest over the house of God,
 22 let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.
 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;
 24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,
 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

Fourth Warning—The Danger of Rejecting Christ’s Sacrifice

26 For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,
 27 but a terrifying expectation of judgment and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES.
 28 Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy *on the testimony of* two or three witnesses.
 29 How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?
 30 For we know Him who said, “VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY.” [Deut 32:35a] And again, “THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE.” [Deut 32:36a] (LXX); cf. [Ps 135:14] (LXX 134:14)
 31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.
 32 But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings,
 33 partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated.
 34 For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one.
 35 Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.
 36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.

37 FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, [Isa 26:20] (LXX)
 HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY.
 38 BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH;
 AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM. [Hab 2:3–4]

39 But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.

Old Testament Examples of People Who Lived “By Faith”

11:1 Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.
 2 For by it the men of old gained approval.
 3 By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.
 4 By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.
 5 By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.
 6 And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.
 7 By faith Noah, being warned *by God* about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.
 8 By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.
 9 By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign *land*, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise;
 10 for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.
 11 By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised.
 12 Therefore there was born even of one man, and him as good as dead at that, *as many descendants* AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN IN

NUMBER, AND INNUMERABLE AS THE SAND WHICH IS BY THE SEASHORE. [cf. [Gen 22:17](#)] (LXX)

13 All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

14 For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own.

15 And indeed if they had been thinking of that *country* from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return.

16 But as it is, they desire a better *country*, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son;

18 *it was he* to whom it was said, "IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED." [[Gen 21:12](#)] (LXX)

19 He considered that God is able to raise *people* even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.

20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come.

21 By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, *leaning* on the top of his staff. [[Gen 47:31](#)] (LXX)

22 By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones.

23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,

25 choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,

26 considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.

27 By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen.

28 By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, so that he who destroyed the firstborn would not touch them.

29 By faith they passed through the Red Sea as though *they were passing* through dry land; and the Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned.

30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days.

31 By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace.

32 And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets,

33 who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed *acts of righteousness*, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions,

34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.

35 Women received *back* their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection;

36 and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment.

37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated

38 (*men* of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.

39 And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised,

40 because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.

Running to Win

12:1 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

3 For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

The Lord's Discipline/Training

4 You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin;

5 and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons,

"MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD,
NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM;

6 FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES,
AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES." [[Prov 3:11-12](#)] (LXX^A)

7 It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom *his* father does not discipline?

8 But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

9 Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?

10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He *disciplines us* for *our* good, so that we may share His holiness.

11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

12 Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, [[Isa 35:3](#)]

13 and make straight paths for your feet, [[Prov 4:26](#)] (LXX) so that *the limb* which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed.

Dos and Don'ts of the Race

14 Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.

15 See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled;

16 that *there be* no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a *single* meal.

17 For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.

Fifth Warning—Do Not Refuse God's Son

18 For you have not come to a *mountain* that can be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind, 19 and to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words which *sound was such that* those who heard begged that no further word be spoken to them.

20 For they could not bear the command, "IF EVEN A BEAST TOUCHES THE MOUNTAIN, IT WILL BE STONED." [[Exod 19:12-13](#)]

21 And so terrible was the sight, *that* Moses said, "I AM FULL OF FEAR and trembling." [cf. [Deut 9:19a](#)] (LXX)

22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels,

23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of *the* righteous made perfect,

24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than *the blood* of Abel.

25 See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned *them* on earth, much less *will we escape* who turn away from Him who *warns* from heaven.

26 And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, "YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO THE HEAVEN." [[Hag 2:6](#)] (LXX)

27 This *expression*, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

28 Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe;

29 for our God is a consuming fire. [[Deut 9:3](#)] (LXX)

Well-pleasing Service to God

13:1 Let love of the brethren continue.

2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.

3 Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, *and* those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves also are in the body.

4 Marriage *is to be held* in honor among all, and the *marriage* bed *is to be* undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

5 *Make sure that* your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU," [cf. [Gen 28:15](#); [Deut 31:6](#), 8; [Josh 1:5](#)]

6 so that we confidently say,

"THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID.

WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?" [[Ps 118:6](#)] (LXX 117:6)

Shepherds and Sheep

7 Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.

8 Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday and today and forever.

9 Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited.

10 We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat.

11 For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest *as an offering* for sin, are burned outside the camp.

12 Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate.
13 So, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.
14 For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking *the city* which is to come.
15 Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.
16 And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.
17 Obey your leaders and submit *to them*, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

Closing

18 Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a good conscience, desiring to conduct ourselves honorably in all things.
19 And I urge *you* all the more to do this, so that I may be restored to you the sooner.
20 Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, *even* Jesus our Lord,
21 equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* the glory forever and ever. Amen.
22 But I urge you, brethren, bear with this word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly.
23 Take notice that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom, if he comes soon, I will see you.
24 Greet all of your leaders and all the saints. Those from Italy greet you.
25 Grace be with you all.

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Peter's Second Letter to the Gentile Churches (c. 65)

2 Peter 1–3

Salutation

1:1 Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:

2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;

Be Diligent to Grow in Grace

3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in *your* moral excellence, knowledge,

6 and in *your* knowledge, self-control, and in *your* self-control, perseverance, and in *your* perseverance, godliness,

7 and in *your* godliness, brotherly kindness, and in *your* brotherly kindness, love.

8 For if these *qualities* are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 For he who lacks these *qualities* is blind *or* short-sighted, having forgotten *his* purification from his former sins.

10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;

11 for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

Peter's Determination to Leave a Legacy

12 Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you *already* know *them*, and have been established in the truth which is present with *you*.

13 I consider it right, as long as I am in this *earthly* dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder,

14 knowing that the laying aside of my *earthly* dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.

15 And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you will be able to call these things to mind.

Peter Affirms That He Was an Eyewitness of Jesus' Ministry

16 For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

17 For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased"—

18 and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

Classic Passage on the Inspiration of Scripture

19 *So* we have the prophetic word *made* more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.

20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is *a matter* of one's own interpretation,

21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

Peter's Main Concern—False Teachers in the Flock

2:1 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

2 Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned;

3a and in *their* greed they will exploit you with false words;

Be Sure of This—God Will Rescue the Godly and Punish the Wicked

3b their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment;

5 and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;

6 and *if* He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing *them* to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly *lives* thereafter;

7 and *if* He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men

8 (for by what he saw and heard *that* righteous man, while living among them, felt *his* righteous soul tormented day after day by *their* lawless deeds),

9 *then* the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment,

10 and especially those who indulge the flesh in *its* corrupt desires and despise authority.

The Sinfulness of the False Teachers

10b Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties,

11 whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord.

12 But these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed,

13 suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong. They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you,

14 having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children;

15 forsaking the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the *son* of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

16 but he received a rebuke for his own transgression, *for* a mute donkey, speaking with a voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet.

The Terrible Truth—These False Teachers Once Knew the Way of Righteousness

17 These are springs without water and mists driven by a storm, for whom the black darkness has been reserved.

18 For speaking out arrogant *words* of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error,

19 promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved.

20 For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first.

21 For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them.

22 It has happened to them according to the true proverb, “A DOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT,” [cf. [Prov 26:11](#)] and, “A sow, after washing, *returns* to wallowing in the mire.”

Don't Listen to Those Who Deny the Coming of Christ

3:1 This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, 2 that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior *spoken* by your apostles.

3 Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with *their* mocking, following after their own lusts,

4 and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For *ever* since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.”

5 For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God *the* heavens existed long ago and *the* earth was formed out of water and by water,

6 through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water.

7 But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

Don't Mistake God's Patience for Slowness—the “Day of the Lord” is Coming!

8 But do not let this one *fact* escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.

9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

Live Your Life With the Coming Judgment in Mind

11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!

13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

Peter's Call to Holiness / Peter Affirms Paul's Writings as Scripture

14 Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,
15 and regard the patience of our Lord *as* salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you,

16 as also in all *his* letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

Final Warning and Exhortation

17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness,

18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

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Chronological Notes

- 1) "Few books are attributed to such diverse dates as 2 Peter. Those who find the arguments for pseudepigraphy compelling place 2 Peter as late as the mid-second century. If 2 Peter is from the apostle, then it must have been written late in his life. Since 2 Peter probably comes from the pen of the apostle, and in light of the reference to his impending death in 2 Peter 1:14–15, it should be placed near the end of the apostle's life. Church tradition holds that Peter died during the Neronian persecution (64–66; see *1 Clem.* 5.4). The best date for Peter's death is 65 or 66. Thus the letter was most likely written just prior to Peter's martyrdom."¹

¹ Andreas J. Kostenberger, L. Scott Kellum, Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown*, (B&H Academic, 2009), p. 754–55.

Paul's Second Letter to Timothy (c. 66)

2 Timothy 1–4

Salutation

1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life in Christ Jesus,
2 To Timothy, my beloved son: Grace, mercy *and* peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul's Gratitude for Timothy's Faith

3 I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day,
4 longing to see you, even as I recall your tears, so that I may be filled with joy.
5 For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that *it is* in you as well.

Paul Urges Timothy to Rededicate Himself to the Ministry of the Gospel

6 For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.
7 For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.
8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with *me* in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God,
9 who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,
10 but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,
11 for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher.
12 For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.
13 Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.
14 Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to *you*.
15 You are aware of the fact that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.
16 The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains;
17 but when he was in Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me—
18 the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on that day—and you know very well what services he rendered at Ephesus.

Illustrations of Effective Service for God

2:1 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.
2 The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.
3 Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.
4 No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.
5 Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules.
6 The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops.
7 Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.

Endure to the End for the Sake of the Gospel

8 Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel,
9 for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the word of God is not imprisoned.
10 For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus *and* with *it* eternal glory.
11 It is a trustworthy statement:

For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him;

12 If we endure, we will also reign with Him;

If we deny Him, He also will deny us;

13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.

Teach Sound Doctrine and Avoid Useless Quarrels

14 Remind *them* of these things, and solemnly charge *them* in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless *and leads* to the ruin of the hearers.

15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

16 But avoid worldly *and* empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness,

17 and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus,

18 *men* who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some.

19 Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, “The Lord knows those who are His,” [Num 16:5] and, “Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness.” [cf. Ps 34:14; Prov 3:7]

20 Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor.

21 Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these *things*, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.

22 Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love *and* peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

23 But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels.

24 The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged,

25 with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,

26 and they may come to their senses *and escape* from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

Difficult Times Will Come—With Them Will Come False Teachers

3:1 But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come.

2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy,

3 unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good,

4 treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,

5 holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.

6 For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses,

7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

8 Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these *men* also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected in regard to the faith.

9 But they will not make further progress; for their folly will be obvious to all, just as Jannes’s and Jambres’s folly was also.

Paul’s Example of Perseverance in Persecution

10 Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance,

11 persecutions, *and* sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium *and* at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me!

12 Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

13 But evil men and impostors will proceed *from bad* to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

The Vital Importance of God’s Word

14 You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*,

15 and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Paul’s Charge to Preach the Gospel

4:1 I solemnly charge *you* in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom:

2 preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,

4 and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

5 But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

Paul’s Testimony in the Face of Death

6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.

7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith;

8 in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day;

and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Final Requests, Warnings and Greetings

9 Make every effort to come to me soon;

10 for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens *has gone* to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.

11 Only Luke is with me. Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service.

12 But Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus.

13 When you come bring the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments.

14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. [cf. [Ps 28:4](#)]

15 Be on guard against him yourself, for he vigorously opposed our teaching.

16 At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them.

17 But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was rescued out of the lion's mouth.

18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him *be* the glory forever and ever. Amen.

19 Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus.

20 Erastus remained at Corinth, but Trophimus I left sick at Miletus.

21 Make every effort to come before winter. Eubulus greets you, also Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brethren.

22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

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Chronological Notes

- 1) "It may be assumed that Paul was released from his first Roman imprisonment (Acts 28) and that he engaged in a subsequent second Aegean ministry that provides the proper framework for 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. If so, Paul probably wrote his first letter to Timothy some time after the year 60 (the most likely date of Paul's release from his first Roman imprisonment), but before 66, the likely date for Paul's second Roman imprisonment that was followed by his martyrdom under Nero, who died in AD 68. The most natural reading of 1 Timothy 1:3 is that Paul wrote from Macedonia. Timothy, who was at that time stationed in Ephesus, needed counsel on how to deal with the false teachers in the Ephesian church. To this end Paul interwove personal instructions with those on community life, so that Timothy received public apostolic support while it was acknowledged that he also had certain standards to meet. Paul probably wrote 2 Timothy from Rome in the year 66. Titus was likely written in the interim between 1 and 2 Timothy (or possibly prior to 1 Timothy) from an unknown location."¹

¹ Andreas J. Kostenberger, L. Scott Kellum, Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown*, (B&H Academic, 2009), p. 644.

John's Letter to the Beloved (c. 90–95)

1 John 1–5

Statement of Authority and Purpose

1:1 What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life—
 2 and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us—
 3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.
 4 These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

God Is Light—Those Who Claim to Know Him Must Walk in the Light

5 This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.
 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;
 7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.
 8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.
 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

Jesus Christ—Our Advocate and Propitiation

2:1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;
 2 and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those of* the whole world.

The Basis of Our Assurance of Salvation: Keeping His Commandments

3 By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.
 4 The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;
 5 but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him:
 6 the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

The Nature and Implications of the Author's Message

7 Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard.
 8 On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining.
 9 The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now.
 10 The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him.
 11 But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

A Pastoral Appeal in View of the Author's Message

12 I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake.
 13 I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father.
 14 I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.
 15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.
 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.
 17 The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

The Appearance of Antichrists Demonstrates That it is the Last Hour

18 Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour.
 19 They went out from us, but they were not *really* of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but *they went out*, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.
 20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know.

21 I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth.

The Definition of an Antichrist

22 Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.

23 Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also.

24 As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.

25 This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life.

26 These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you.

A Call to Abide in Christ

27 As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.

28 Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.

29 If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.

What it Means to Abide in Christ

3:1 See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and *such* we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.

3 And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

4 Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.

5 You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.

6 No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him.

7 Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous;

8 the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.

A Call to Love One Another

9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

10 By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

11 For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another;

12 not as Cain, *who* was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous.

13 Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you.

14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

16 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

17 But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?

18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

Loving Others Leads to Assurance of Heart and Mind

19 We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him

20 in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things.

21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God;

22 and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

23 This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.

24 The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

How to Distinguish Between the Spirit of God and a Spirit of the Antichrist

4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God;

3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the *spirit* of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.

4 You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

5 They are from the world; therefore they speak *as* from the world, and the world listens to them.

6 We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

God Is Love—Those Who Claim to Know Him Must Walk in Love

7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

9 By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.

10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

12 No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.

13 By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

14 We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son *to be* the Savior of the world.

15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

16 We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

17 By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.

18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

19 We love, because He first loved us.

20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

21 And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

True Love Expresses Itself in Faith and Obedience

5:1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the *child* born of Him.

2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

5 Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

God's Testimony Concerning Jesus Christ, His Son

6 This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.

7 For there are three that testify:

8 the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.

9 If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for the testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son.

10 The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son.

11 And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

The Confidence and Characteristics of the Child of God

13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

14 This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

15 And if we know that He hears us *in* whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

16 If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not *leading* to death, he shall ask and *God* will for him give life to those who commit sin not *leading* to death. There is a sin *leading* to death; I do not say that he should make request for this.

17 All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not *leading* to death.

18 We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him.

19 We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in *the power of* the evil one.

20 And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in

Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.
21 Little children, guard yourselves from idols.

John's Letter to a Sister Church and Its Members (c. 90–95)

2 John

Greeting

1 The elder to the chosen lady and her children, whom I love in truth; and not only I, but also all who know the truth,
2 for the sake of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever:
3 Grace, mercy *and* peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

A Call to Love One Another and to Walk in Obedience

4 I was very glad to find *some* of your children walking in truth, just as we have received commandment *to do* from the Father.
5 Now I ask you, lady, not as though *I were* writing to you a new commandment, but the one which we have had from the beginning, that we love one another.
6 And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it.

Warning Against False Teachers—The Mark of an Antichrist

7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ *as* coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.
8 Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward.

Prohibition Against Aiding Heretics

9 Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.
10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into *your* house, and do not give him a greeting;
11 for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds.

Farewell

12 Though I have many things to write to you, I do not want to *do so* with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, so that your joy may be made full.
13 The children of your chosen sister greet you.

John's Letter to Gaius (c. 90–95)

3 John

Greeting

1 The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth.
2 Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers.
3 For I was very glad when brethren came and testified to your truth, *that is*, how you are walking in truth.
4 I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.

Our Obligation to Support Those Who Spread the Gospel

5 Beloved, you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren, and especially *when they are* strangers;
6 and they have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God.
7 For they went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles.
8 Therefore we ought to support such men, so that we may be fellow workers with the truth.

Reject the Example of Diotrephes and Imitate the Example of Demetrius

9 I wrote something to the church; but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not accept what we say.
10 For this reason, if I come, I will call attention to his deeds which he does, unjustly accusing us with wicked words; and not satisfied with this, he himself does not receive the brethren, either, and he forbids those who desire *to do so* and puts *them* out of the church.
11 Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God.
12 Demetrius has received a *good* testimony from everyone, and from the truth itself; and we add our testimony, and you know that our testimony is true.

Farewell

13 I had many things to write to you, but I am not willing to write *them* to you with pen and ink;

14 but I hope to see you shortly, and we will speak face to face.

15 Peace *be* to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends by name.

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Chronological Notes

- 1) “Reliable historical tradition strongly suggests that John spent his latter years in Asia Minor in and around Ephesus (see Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.1.2; Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* 3.1.1). The apostle’s move from Palestine to Asia Minor reportedly took place sometime subsequent to the Jewish rebellion in the year 66. We concluded that John’s Gospel was most likely written in the early to mid-80s (see chap. 7). So the question concerning the date of John’s Letters is, Were they written prior or subsequent to John’s Gospel? On balance, the latter seems more likely. While it is possible that some of the connections with John’s Gospel in 1 John are based on a common tradition, in a few places the Gospel seems to be assumed. For example, 1 John 2:7–8 refers to and explicates the meaning of the new commandment of John 13:34–35 without naming it. In 1 John 5:6, reference is made to Jesus’ coming by “water and blood,” most likely referring to Jesus’ baptism and crucifixion, respectively (see the verbal parallel with John 19:34). Some, such as Carson and Moo, think the Johannine Letters were written to combat heretical misinterpretations of the Gospel, which would require a date for them after the Gospel. This seems entirely plausible. Yet even if the purpose for the Letters were construed differently, the conclusion that they postdate the Gospel would still appear to be the most probable in light of the parallels mentioned above. The best date, given the death of John at around the turn of the century and the dating of the Gospel in the early to mid-80s, is somewhere in the early to mid-90s.”¹

¹ Andreas J. Kostenberger, L. Scott Kellum, Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown*, (B&H Academic, 2009), p. 790–791.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ – Part 1 (c. 95–96)

Revelation 1–3

Foreword

1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated *it* by His angel to His bond-servant John,
 2 who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, *even* to all that he saw.
 3 Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.

Greeting and Doxology

4 John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,
 5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood—
 6 and He has made us *to be* a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him *be* the glory and the dominion forever and ever.
 Amen.

Summary Statement

7 BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, [cf. [Dan 7:13](#)] and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. [cf. [Zech 12:10](#)] So it is to be. Amen.
 8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

John’s Vision of Jesus Christ

9 I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance *which are* in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.
 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like *the sound* of a trumpet,
 11 saying, “Write in a book what you see, and send *it* to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.”
 12 Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands;
 13 and in the middle of the lampstands I *saw* one like a son of man, [cf. [Dan 7:13](#)] clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash.
 14 His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire.
 15 His feet *were* like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice *was* like the sound of many waters.
 16 In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.
 17 When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, “Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, [cf. [Isa 41:4](#); [44:6](#)]
 18 and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.
 19 Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things.
 20 As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

Jesus’ Message to the Church in Ephesus

2:1 “To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this:
 2 ‘I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them *to be* false;
 3 and you have perseverance and have endured for My name’s sake, and have not grown weary.
 4 But I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love.
 5 Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent.
 6 Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.
 7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.’

Jesus’ Message to the Church in Smyrna

8 “And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this:

9 'I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

10 Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

11 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.'

Jesus' Message to the Church in Pergamum

12 "And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this:

13 'I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

14 But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit *acts of immorality*.

15 So you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans.

16 Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth.

17 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give *some* of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.'

Jesus' Message to the Church in Thyatira

18 "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this:

19 'I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first.

20 But I have *this* against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit *acts of immorality* and eat things sacrificed to idols.

21 I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality.

22 Behold, I will throw her on a bed *of sickness*, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds.

23 And I will kill her children with pestilence, and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; [cf. [Jer 17:10](#)] and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.

24 But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them—I place no other burden on you.

25 Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come.

26 He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS;

27 AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, [[Ps 2:9](#)] as I also have received *authority* from My Father;

28 and I will give him the morning star.

29 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

Jesus' Message to the Church in Sardis

3:1 "To the angel of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars, says this: 'I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.

2 'Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God.

3 So remember what you have received and heard; and keep *it*, and repent. Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you.

4 But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.

5 He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

6 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

Jesus' Message to the Church in Philadelphia

7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens, says this: [cf. [Isa 22:22](#)]

8 'I know your deeds. Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut, because you have a little power, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name.

9 Behold, I will cause *those* of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—I will make them come and bow down at your feet, and *make them* know that I have loved you.

10 Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that *hour* which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

11 I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown.

12 He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name.

13 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

Jesus’ Message to the Church in Laodicea

14 “To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:

15 ‘I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot.

16 So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.

17 Because you say, “I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,” and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,

18 I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and *that* the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.

19 Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.

20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.

21 He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

22 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’”

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Chronological Notes

- 1) “Scholarly opinion concerning the date of Revelation’s composition is divided between an early date (64–69) and a late date (95–96). In addition, some opt for a middle ground, conjecturing that composition began in the 60s and was completed in the late 90s. Although certainty continues to be elusive, the late date, during the reign of Domitian, has considerably stronger support. On the whole the preponderance of the internal and external evidence suggests the mid-90s during the reign of Domitian as the most probable date of composition. The external testimony overwhelmingly favors the late date, which became the established tradition throughout church history. The internal testimony, while less than conclusive, also tends to support a later date. Although some passages may reflect historical circumstances prior to 70, most of the evidence seems to point to a later date. The book of Revelation was written around 95–96 by John in obedient submission to the vision he received while in exile on Patmos.”¹

¹ Andreas J. Kostenberger, L. Scott Kellum, Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown*, (B&H Academic, 2009), p. 814–824.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ – Part 2 (c. 95–96)

Revelation 4:1–8:1

The Throne of God

4:1 After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like *the sound* of a trumpet speaking with me, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.”

2 Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne.

3 And He who was sitting *was* like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and *there was* a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance.

4 Around the throne *were* twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones *I saw* twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads.

5 Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;

6a and before the throne *there was something* like a sea of glass, like crystal;

The Four Living Creatures and the Twenty-four Elders Worship God

6b and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind.

7 The first creature *was* like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature *was* like a flying eagle.

8 And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say,

“HOLY, HOLY, HOLY *is* THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, [cf. [Isa 6:3](#)] WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME.”

9 And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

11 “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.”

The Scroll With Seven Seals

5:1 I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals.

2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?”

3 And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book or to look into it.

4 Then I *began* to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look into it;

The Lamb of God—Worthy to Open the Scroll’s Seals

5 and one of the elders said to me, “Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals.”

6 And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth.

7 And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

Songs of Worship for God and the Lamb

8 When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

9 And they sang a new song, saying,

“Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

10 “You have made them *to be* a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”

11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands,

12 saying with a loud voice,

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain
to receive power and riches and wisdom and might
and honor and glory and blessing.”

13 And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying,

“To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb,
be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.”

14 And the four living creatures kept saying, “Amen.” And the elders fell down and worshiped.

The First Seal is Opened—A White Horse

6:1 Then I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, “Come.”

2 I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

The Second Seal is Opened—A Fiery Red Horse

3 When He broke the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, “Come.”

4 And another, a red horse, went out; and to him who sat on it, it was granted to take peace from the earth, and that *men* would slay one another; and a great sword was given to him.

The Third Seal is Opened—A Black Horse

5 When He broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, “Come.” I looked, and behold, a black horse; and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand.

6 And I heard *something* like a voice in the center of the four living creatures saying, “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not damage the oil and the wine.”

The Fourth Seal is Opened—A Pale Green Horse

7 When the Lamb broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, “Come.”

8 I looked, and behold, an ashen horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him. Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth.

The Fifth Seal is Opened—The Martyred Saints

9 When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained;

10 and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”

11 And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until *the number of* their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also.

The Sixth Seal is Opened—The Great Earthquake

12 I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth *made of* hair, and the whole moon became like blood;

13 and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind.

14 The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

15 Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains;

16 and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb;

17 for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?” [cf. [Joel 2:11](#); [Mal 3:2](#)]

First Interlude—The Sealing of the Saints

7:1 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind would blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree.

2 And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God; and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea,

3 saying, “Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads.”
4 And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:

- 5 from the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand *were* sealed,
from the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand,
from the tribe of Gad twelve thousand,
6 from the tribe of Asher twelve thousand,
from the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand,
from the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand,
7 from the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand,
from the tribe of Levi twelve thousand,
from the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand,
8 from the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand,
from the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand,
from the tribe of Benjamin, twelve thousand *were* sealed.

A Great Multitude Worship God Around His Throne

9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and *all* tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches *were* in their hands;
10 and they cry out with a loud voice, saying,

“Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”

11 And all the angels were standing around the throne and *around* the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,
12 saying,

“Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving
and honor and power and might,
be to our God forever and ever. Amen.”

An Elder Identifies Those in Long White Robes as Having Been Martyred in the Great Tribulation

13 Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, “These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?”

14 I said to him, “My lord, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15 “For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them.

16 “They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; [[Isa 49:10](#)]

17 for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes.” [cf. [Isa 25:8](#)]

The Seventh Seal is Opened—Silence in Heaven

8:1 When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

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The Revelation of Jesus Christ – Part 3 (c. 95–96)

Revelation 8:2–13:18

The Seven Trumpets and the Golden Censer—God Answers the Prayers of the Saints

8:2 And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.

3 Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne.

4 And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand.

5 Then the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar, and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake.

6 And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them.

The First Trumpet is Sounded—Hail and Fire Mixed With Blood

7 The first sounded, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.

The Second Trumpet is Sounded—A Mountain of Fire

8 The second angel sounded, and *something* like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea; and a third of the sea became blood,

9 and a third of the creatures which were in the sea and had life, died; and a third of the ships were destroyed.

The Third Trumpet is Sounded—The Star Called Wormwood

10 The third angel sounded, and a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of waters.

11 The name of the star is called Wormwood; and a third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the waters, because they were made bitter.

The Fourth Trumpet is Sounded—The Heavens Darkened

12 The fourth angel sounded, and a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were struck, so that a third of them would be darkened and the day would not shine for a third of it, and the night in the same way.

13 Then I looked, and I heard an eagle flying in midheaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!"

The Fifth Trumpet (First Woe) is Sounded—Locusts from the Abyss

9:1 Then the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him.

2 He opened the bottomless pit, and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit.

3 Then out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth, and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

4 They were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

5 And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment for five months; and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man.

6 And in those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death flees from them.

7 The appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle; and on their heads appeared to be crowns like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men.

8 They had hair like the hair of women, and their teeth were like *the teeth* of lions.

9 They had breastplates like breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to battle.

10 They have tails like scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men for five months.

11 They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon.

12 The first woe is past; behold, two woes are still coming after these things.

The Sixth Trumpet (Second Woe) is Sounded—The Four Angels Set Free / The Army of Two Hundred Million

13 Then the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,

14 one saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates."

15 And the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released, so that they would kill a third of mankind.

16 The number of the armies of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them.

17 And this is how I saw in the vision the horses and those who sat on them: *the riders* had breastplates *the color* of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone; and the heads of the horses are like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceed fire and smoke and brimstone.

18 A third of mankind was killed by these three plagues, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which proceeded out of their mouths.

19 For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents and have heads, and with them they do harm.

20 The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk;

21 and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.

Second Interlude (Part 1): The Mighty Angel With the Little Scroll

10:1 I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, clothed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire;

2 and he had in his hand a little book which was open. He placed his right foot on the sea and his left on the land;

3 and he cried out with a loud voice, as when a lion roars; and when he had cried out, the seven peals of thunder uttered their voices.

4 When the seven peals of thunder had spoken, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up the things which the seven peals of thunder have spoken and do not write them."

5 Then the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up his right hand to heaven,

6 and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, WHO CREATED HEAVEN AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE EARTH AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE SEA AND THE THINGS IN IT, that there will be delay no longer,

7 but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then the mystery of God is finished, as He preached to His servants the prophets.

8 Then the voice which I heard from heaven, *I heard* again speaking with me, and saying, "Go, take the book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the land."

9 So I went to the angel, telling him to give me the little book. And he said to me, "Take it and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey."

10 I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and in my mouth it was sweet as honey; and when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter.

11 And they said to me, "You must prophesy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings."

Second Interlude (Part 2): The Two Witnesses

11:1 Then there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, "Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it.

2 "Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months.

3 And I will grant *authority* to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."

4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.

5 And if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies; so if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way.

6 These have the power to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire.

7 When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them.

8 And their dead bodies *will lie* in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified.

9 Those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations *will* look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb.

10 And those who dwell on the earth *will* rejoice over them and celebrate; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

11 But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were watching them.

12 And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." Then they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies watched them.

13 And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

14 The second woe is past; behold, the third woe is coming quickly.

The Seventh Trumpet (Third Woe) is Sounded—Voices in Heaven

15 Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying,

“The kingdom of the world has become *the kingdom* of our Lord and of His Christ;
and He will reign forever and ever.”

16 And the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God,
17 saying,

“We give You thanks, O Lord God,
the Almighty, who are and who were,
because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign.

18 And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came,
and the time *came* for the dead to be judged,
and *the time* to reward Your bond-servants the prophets and the saints
and those who fear Your name, the small and the great,
and to destroy those who destroy the earth.”

19 And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm.

Two Great Signs—A Woman (Israel) and a Great Red Dragon (Satan)

12:1 A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars;

2 and she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth.

3 Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads *were* seven diadems.

4 And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.

5 And she gave birth to a son, a male *child*, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne.

6 Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

War in Heaven—Satan is Cast Down to Earth

7 And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war,

8 and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven.

9 And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying,

“Now the salvation, and the power,
and the kingdom of our God
and the authority of His Christ have come,
for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down,
he who accuses them before our God day and night.

11 And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb
and because of the word of their testimony,
and they did not love their life even when faced with death.

12 For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them.
Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you,
having great wrath, knowing that he has *only* a short time.”

Satan Attempts to Destroy Israel

13 And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male *child*.

14 But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.

15 And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with

the flood.

16 But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth.

Unable to Destroy Israel, Satan Makes War on the Saints

17 So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

13:1a And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore.

Satan Gives Authority to the Beast with Seven Heads and Ten Horns (see Rev 17:7–14)

1b Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns *were* ten diadems, and on his heads *were* blasphemous names.

2 And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like *those* of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority.

3 I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed *and followed* after the beast;

4 they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?”

5 There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him.

6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, *that is*, those who dwell in heaven.

7 It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.

8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, *everyone* whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.

9 If anyone has an ear, let him hear.

10 If anyone *is destined* for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints.

The Second Beast—The False Prophet

11 Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon.

12 He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed.

13 He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men.

14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life.

15 And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

16 And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead,

17 and *he provides* that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, *either* the name of the beast or the number of his name.

18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.

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The Revelation of Jesus Christ – Part 4 (c. 95–96)

Revelation 14–18

The Lamb and the 144,000 on Mount Zion

14:1 Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb *was* standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.

2 And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard *was* like *the sound* of harpists playing on their harps.

3 And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth.

4 These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste. These *are* the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb.

5 And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless.

The Message of the Three Angels

6 And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people;

7 and he said with a loud voice, “Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters.”

8 And another angel, a second one, followed, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality.”

9 Then another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand,

10 he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

11 And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.”

12 Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.

13 And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, “Write, ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!’” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them.”

Jesus Comes to Harvest the Earth

14 Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud *was* one like a son of man, [cf. [Dan 7:13](#)] having a golden crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand.

15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, “Put in your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe.”

16 Then He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped.

17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle.

18 Then another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar; and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, “Put in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, because her grapes are ripe.”

19 So the angel swung his sickle to the earth and gathered *the clusters from* the vine of the earth, and threw them into the great wine press of the wrath of God.

20 And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses’ bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles.

The Seven Bowls

15:1 Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels who had seven plagues, *which are* the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished.

2 And I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God.

3 And they sang the song of Moses, the bond-servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying,

“Great and marvelous are Your works,
O Lord God, the Almighty;
Righteous and true are Your ways,
King of the nations!

4 “Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name?
For You alone are holy;
FOR ALL THE NATIONS WILL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE YOU,

FOR YOUR RIGHTEOUS ACTS HAVE BEEN REVEALED.”

5 After these things I looked, and the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven was opened,

6 and the seven angels who had the seven plagues came out of the temple, clothed in linen, clean *and* bright, and girded around their chests with golden sashes.

7 Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever.

8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power; and no one was able to enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.

The First Bowl is Poured—Painful Sores

16:1 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple, saying to the seven angels, “Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God.”

2 So the first *angel* went and poured out his bowl on the earth; and it became a loathsome and malignant sore on the people who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image.

The Second Bowl is Poured—the Sea Turns to Blood

3 The second *angel* poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became blood like *that* of a dead man; and every living thing in the sea died.

The Third Bowl is Poured—the Rivers Turn to Blood

4 Then the third *angel* poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of waters; and they became blood.

5 And I heard the angel of the waters saying, “Righteous are You, who are and who were, O Holy One, because You judged these things;

6 for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. They deserve it.”

7 And I heard the altar saying, “Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments.”

The Fourth Bowl is Poured—A Scorching Sun

8 The fourth *angel* poured out his bowl upon the sun, and it was given to it to scorch men with fire.

9 Men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues, and they did not repent so as to give Him glory.

The Fifth Bowl is Poured—Painful Darkness Covers the Beast’s Kingdom

10 Then the fifth *angel* poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became darkened; and they gnawed their tongues because of pain,

11 and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they did not repent of their deeds.

The Sixth Bowl is Poured—Three Unclean Spirits Gather the Nations to Armageddon

12 The sixth *angel* poured out his bowl on the great river, the Euphrates; and its water was dried up, so that the way would be prepared for the kings from the east.

13 And I saw *coming* out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs;

14 for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty.

15 (“Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame.”)

16 And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon.

The Seventh Bowl is Poured—A Super-quake Destroys the Great City

17 Then the seventh *angel* poured out his bowl upon the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, “It is done.”

18 And there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder; and there was a great earthquake, such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth, so great an earthquake *was it, and* so mighty.

19 The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath.

20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

21 And huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, came down from heaven upon men; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was extremely severe.

The Woman on the Beast—Babylon the Great, Mother of Prostitutes, the Great City Who Rules the World

17:1 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, “Come here, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters,
 2 with whom the kings of the earth committed *acts of immorality*, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality.”
 3 And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns.
 4 The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality,
 5 and on her forehead a name *was* written, a mystery, “BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.”
 6 And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. When I saw her, I wondered greatly.

The Meaning of the Woman and the Beast (see Rev 13:1–10)

7 And the angel said to me, “Why do you wonder? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns.
 8 “The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will wonder when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come.
 9 Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits,
 10 and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while.
 11 The beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth and is *one* of the seven, and he goes to destruction.
 12 The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour.
 13 These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast.
 14 These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him *are the* called and chosen and faithful.”
 15 And he said to me, “The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.
 16 And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire.
 17 For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled.
 18 The woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth.”

The Destruction of Babylon the Great

18:1 After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illumined with his glory.
 2 And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird.
 3 For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed *acts of immorality* with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality.”
 4 I heard another voice from heaven, saying, “Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues;
 5 for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.
 6 Pay her back even as she has paid, and give back *to her* double according to her deeds; in the cup which she has mixed, mix twice as much for her.
 7 To the degree that she glorified herself and lived sensuously, to the same degree give her torment and mourning; for she says in her heart, ‘I SIT AS A QUEEN AND I AM NOT A WIDOW, and will never see mourning.’
 8 For this reason in one day her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong.
 9 “And the kings of the earth, who committed *acts of immorality* and lived sensuously with her, will weep and lament over her when they see the smoke of her burning,
 10 standing at a distance because of the fear of her torment, saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For in one hour your judgment has come.’
 11 “And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their cargoes any more—
 12 cargoes of gold and silver and precious stones and pearls and fine linen and purple and silk and scarlet, and every *kind of* citron wood and every article of ivory and every article *made* from very costly wood and bronze and iron and marble,

13 and cinnamon and spice and incense and perfume and frankincense and wine and olive oil and fine flour and wheat and cattle and sheep, and *cargoes* of horses and chariots and slaves and human lives.

14 The fruit you long for has gone from you, and all things that were luxurious and splendid have passed away from you and *men* will no longer find them.

15 The merchants of these things, who became rich from her, will stand at a distance because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning,

16 saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city, she who was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls;

17 for in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste!' And every shipmaster and every passenger and sailor, and as many as make their living by the sea, stood at a distance,

18 and were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What *city* is like the great city?'

19 And they threw dust on their heads and were crying out, weeping and mourning, saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city, in which all who had ships at sea became rich by her wealth, for in one hour she has been laid waste!'

20 Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her."

21 Then a strong angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "So will Babylon, the great city, be thrown down with violence, and will not be found any longer.

22 And the sound of harpists and musicians and flute-players and trumpeters will not be heard in you any longer; and no craftsman of any craft will be found in you any longer; and the sound of a mill will not be heard in you any longer;

23 and the light of a lamp will not shine in you any longer; and the voice of the bridegroom and bride will not be heard in you any longer; for your merchants were the great men of the earth, because all the nations were deceived by your sorcery.

24 And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth."

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The Revelation of Jesus Christ – Part 5 (c. 95–96)

Revelation 19–22

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb

19:1 After these things I heard something like a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying,

“Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God;

2 BECAUSE HIS JUDGMENTS ARE TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS;
for He has judged the great harlot
who was corrupting the earth with her immorality,
and HE HAS AVENGED THE BLOOD OF HIS BOND-SERVANTS ON HER.”

3 And a second time they said,

“Hallelujah! HER SMOKE RISES UP FOREVER AND EVER.”

4 And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sits on the throne saying,

“Amen. Hallelujah!”

5 And a voice came from the throne, saying,

“Give praise to our God,
all you His bond-servants,
you who fear Him,
the small and the great.”

6 Then I heard *something* like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying,

“Hallelujah!
For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns.

7 Let us rejoice and be glad
and give the glory to Him,
for the marriage of the Lamb has come
and His bride has made herself ready.”

8 It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright *and* clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

9 Then he said to me, “Write, ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’” And he said to me, “These are true words of God.”

10 Then I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

Jesus Rides to War

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it *is* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war.

12 His eyes *are* a flame of fire, and on His head *are* many diadems; and He has a name written *on Him* which no one knows except Himself.

13 *He is* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.

14 And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white *and* clean, were following Him on white horses.

15 From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; [[Ps 2:9](#)] and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.

16 And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

The Beast and the False Prophet Are Cast into the Lake of Fire

17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, “Come, assemble for the great supper of God,

18 so that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great.”

19 And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.

20 And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.

21 And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

Satan Is Bound for 1,000 Years

20:1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand.

2 And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;

3 and he threw him into the abyss, and shut *it* and sealed *it* over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.

The First Resurrection—Martyred Saints Rule with Christ in the Millennium

4 Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection.

6 Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

Satan Defeated and Cast into the Lake of Fire

7 When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison,

8 and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore.

9 And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them.

10 And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

The Great White Throne Judgment

11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.

12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one *of them* according to their deeds.

14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

The Eternal State—A New Heaven and a New Earth

21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea. [cf. [Isa 65:17](#); [66:22](#); [2 Pet 3:13](#)]

2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,

4 and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

5 And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true."

6 Then He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost.

7 He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.

8 But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part *will be* in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

The Heavenly City—The New Jerusalem

9 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, “Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.”

10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,

11 having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper.

12 It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names *were* written on them, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel.

13 *There were* three gates on the east and three gates on the north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west.

14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them *were* the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

15 The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall.

16 The city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal.

17 And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards, *according to* human measurements, which are *also* angelic measurements.

18 The material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.

19 The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald;

20 the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst.

21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

22 I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

23 And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp *is* the Lamb. [cf. [Isa 60:20–21](#)]

24 The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.

25 In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed;

26 and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it;

27 and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

22:1 Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb,

2 in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve *kinds of* fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

3 There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him;

4 they will see His face, and His name *will be* on their foreheads.

5 And there will no longer be *any* night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.

The Certainty of the Blessed Hope

6 And he said to me, “These words are faithful and true”; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond-servants the things which must soon take place.

7 “And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book.”

John Told to Worship God Alone

8 I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things.

9 But he said to me, “Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. Worship God.”

Proclaim the Prophecy—Present Choices Determine a Permanent Outcome

10 And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.

11 Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy.”

Invitation to Eternal Life

12 “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.

13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

14 Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city.

15 Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.

16 “I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, [cf. [Isa 11:1](#)] the bright morning star.” [cf. [Num 24:17](#)]

17 The Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.

The Final Testimony of Jesus Christ

18 I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book;

19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.

20 He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming quickly.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Benediction

21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

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