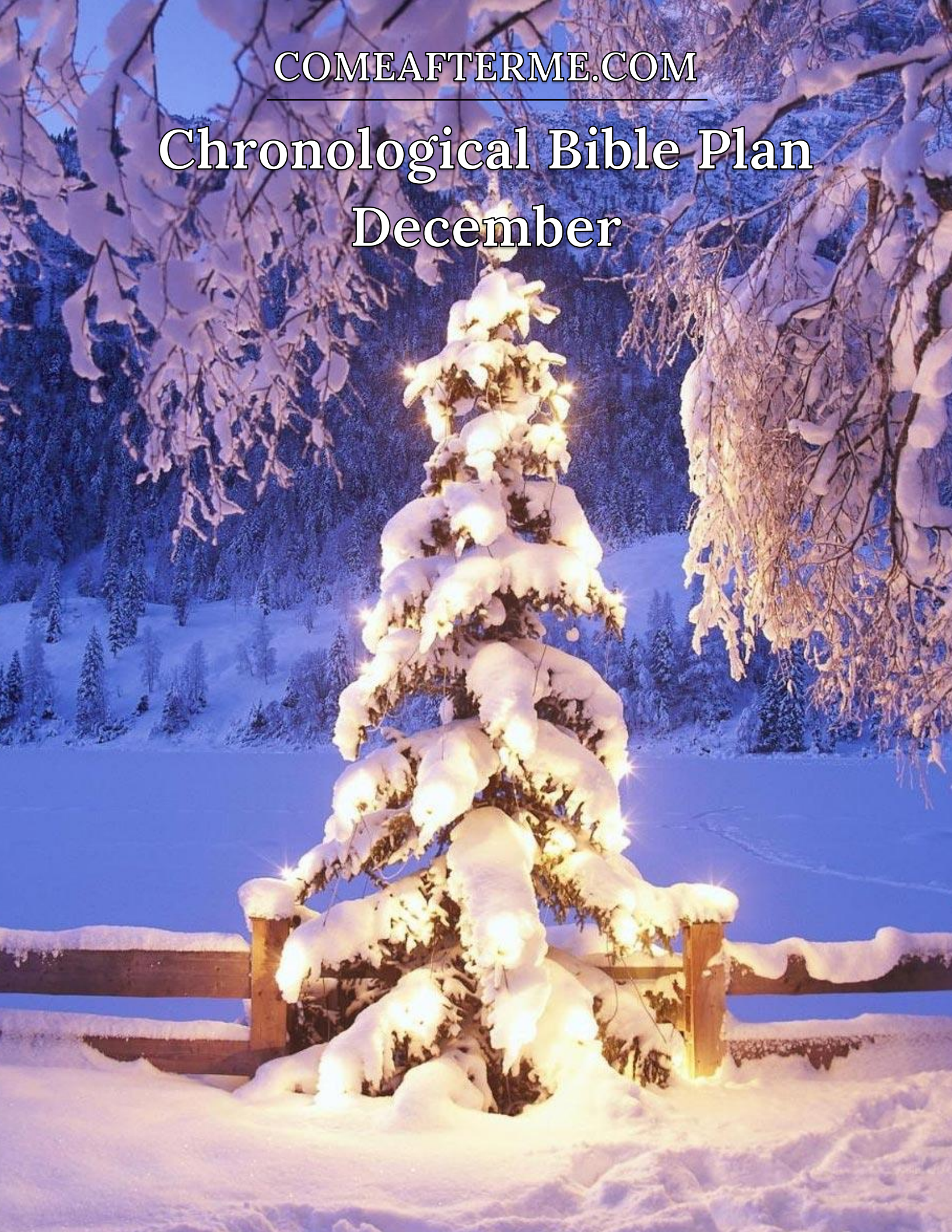


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Chronological Bible Plan December



DECEMBER

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

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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 So I made up my own mind not to pay you another painful visit.

12:14 Look, for the third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not be a burden to you, because I do not want your possessions, but you. For children should not have to save up for their parents, but parents for their children.

13:1 This is the third time I am coming to visit you. *By the testimony of two or three witnesses every matter will be established.* [[Deut 19:15](#)]

2 I said before when I was present the second time and now, though absent, I say again to those who sinned previously and to all the rest, that if I come again, I will not spare anyone,

3 since you are demanding proof that Christ is speaking through me. He is not weak toward you but is powerful among 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 great distress and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears, not to make you sad, but to let you know the love that I have especially for you.

7:8 For even if I made you sad by my letter, I do not regret having written it (even though I did regret it, for I see that my letter made you sad, though only for a short time).

12:17 I have not taken advantage of you through anyone I have sent to you, have I?

18 I urged Titus to visit you and I sent our brother along with him. Titus did not take advantage of you, did he? Did we not conduct ourselves in the same spirit? Did we not behave in the same way?

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

Acts 19:23–41

Demetrius Incites a Riot

23 At that time a great disturbance took place concerning the Way.

24 For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought a great deal of business to the craftsmen.

25 He gathered these together, along with the workmen in similar trades, and said, "Men, you know that our prosperity comes from this business.

26 And you see and hear that this Paul has persuaded and turned away a large crowd, not only in Ephesus but in practically all of the province of Asia, by saying that gods made by hands are not gods at all.

27 There is danger not only that this business of ours will come into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be regarded as nothing, and she whom all the province of Asia and the world worship will suffer the loss of her greatness."

28 When they heard this they became enraged and began to shout, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

Paul's Friends Prevent Him from Intervening

29 The city was filled with the uproar, and the crowd rushed to the theater together, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, the Macedonians who were Paul's traveling companions.

30 But when Paul wanted to enter the public assembly, the disciples would not let him.

31 Even some of the provincial authorities who were his friends sent a message to him, urging him not to venture into the theater.

"Great is Artemis of the Ephesians"

32 So then some were shouting one thing, some another, for the assembly was in confusion, and most of them did not know why they had met together.

33 Some of the crowd concluded it was about Alexander because the Jews had pushed him to the front. Alexander, gesturing with his hand, was wanting to make a defense before the public assembly.

34 But when they recognized that he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" for about two hours.

The City Clerk Quiets the Crowd

35 After the city secretary quieted the crowd, he said, "Men of Ephesus, what person is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is the keeper of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image that fell from heaven?"

36 So because these facts are indisputable, you must keep quiet and not do anything reckless.

37 For you have brought these men here who are neither temple robbers nor blasphemers of our goddess.
 38 If then Demetrius and the craftsmen who are with him have a complaint against someone, the courts are open and there are proconsuls; let them bring charges against one another there.
 39 But if you want anything in addition, it will have to be settled in a legal assembly.
 40 For we are in danger of being charged with rioting today, since there is no cause we can give to explain this disorderly gathering.”
 41 After he had said 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 disturbance had ended, Paul sent for the disciples, and after encouraging them and saying farewell, he left to go to Macedonia.

12 Now when I arrived in Troas to proclaim the gospel of Christ, even though the Lord had opened a door of opportunity for me,
 13 I had no relief in my spirit, because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I said good-bye to them and set out for Macedonia.

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

2 Corinthians 1:1; 7:5–7

1:1 From Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the church of God that is in Corinth, with all the saints who are in all Achaia.

7:5 For even when we came into Macedonia, our body had no rest at all, but we were troubled in every way—struggles from the outside, fears from within.

6 But God, who encourages the downhearted, encouraged us by the arrival of Titus.

7 We were encouraged not only by his arrival, but also by the encouragement you gave him, as he reported to us your longing, your mourning, your deep concern for me, so that I rejoiced more than ever.

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

Acts 20:2a

2 Corinthians 8:1–5

2a After he had gone through those regions and spoken many words of encouragement to the believers there,

1 Now we make known to you, brothers and sisters, the grace of God given to the churches of Macedonia,
 2 that during a severe ordeal of suffering, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in the wealth of their generosity.
 3 For I testify, they gave according to their means and beyond their means. They did so voluntarily,
 4 begging us with great earnestness for the blessing and fellowship of helping the saints.
 5 And they did this not just as we had hoped, but they gave themselves first 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 From Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the church of God that is in Corinth, with all the saints who are in all Achaia.

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

Praise to God for His Provision of Comfort

3 Blessed is 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 troubles so that we may be able to comfort those experiencing any trouble with the comfort with which

we ourselves are comforted by God.

5 For just as the sufferings of Christ overflow toward us, so also our comfort through Christ overflows to you.

6 But if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort that you experience in your patient endurance of the same sufferings that we also suffer.

7 And our hope for you is steadfast because we know that as you share in our sufferings, so also you will share in 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, brothers and sisters, regarding the affliction that happened to us in the province of Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of living.

9 Indeed we felt as if the sentence of death had been passed against us, so that we would not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead.

10 He delivered us from so great a risk of death, and he will deliver us. We have set our hope on him that he will deliver us yet again, 11 as you also join in helping us by prayer, so that many people may give thanks to God on our behalf for the gracious gift given to us through the help of many.

Theme Statement: A Proper Understanding of Paul's Ministry

12 For our reason for confidence is this: the testimony of our conscience, that with pure motives and sincerity which are from God—not by human wisdom but by the grace of God—we conducted ourselves in the world, and all the more toward you.

13 For we do not write you anything other than what you can read and also understand. But I hope that you will understand completely

14 just as also you have partly understood us, that we are your source of pride just as you also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus.

An Explanation of the Changes in Paul's Travel Plans

15 And with this confidence I intended to come to you first so that you would get a second opportunity to see us,

16 and through your help to go on into Macedonia and then from Macedonia to come back to you and be helped on our way into Judea by you.

17 Therefore when I was planning to do this, I did not do so without thinking about what I was doing, did I? Or do I make my plans according to mere human standards so that I would be saying both "Yes, yes" and "No, no" at the same time?

18 But as God is faithful, our message to you is not "Yes" and "No."

19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, the one who was proclaimed among you by us—by me and Silvanus and Timothy—was not "Yes" and "No," but it has always been "Yes" in him.

20 For every one of God's promises are "Yes" in him; therefore also through him the "Amen" is spoken, to the glory we give to God.

21 But it is God who establishes us together with you in Christ and who anointed us,

22 who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a down payment.

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

23 Now I appeal to God as my witness, that to spare you I did not come again to Corinth.

24 I do not mean that we rule over your faith, but we are workers with you for your joy, because by faith you stand firm.

2:1 So I made up my own mind not to pay you another painful visit.

2 For if I make you sad, who would be left to make me glad but the one I caused to be sad?

3 And I wrote this very thing to you, so that when I came I would not have sadness from those who ought to make me rejoice, since I am confident in you all that my joy would be yours.

4 For out of great distress and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears, not to make you sad, but to let you know the love that I have especially for you.

Forgiveness of the Offender

5 But if anyone has caused sadness, he has not saddened me alone, but to some extent (not to exaggerate) he has saddened all of you as well.

6 This punishment on such an individual by the majority is enough for him,

7 so that now instead you should rather forgive and comfort him. This will keep him from being overwhelmed by excessive grief to the point of despair.

8 Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love for him.

9 For this reason also I wrote you: to test you to see if you are obedient in everything.

10 If you forgive anyone for anything, I also forgive him—for indeed what I have forgiven (if I have forgiven anything) I did so for you in the presence of Christ,

11 so that we may not be exploited by Satan (for we are not ignorant of his schemes).

12 Now when I arrived in Troas to proclaim the gospel of Christ, even though the Lord had opened a door of opportunity for me,

13 I had no relief in my spirit, because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I said good-bye to them and set out for Macedonia.

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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.

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

- 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.
- 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 triumphal procession in Christ and who makes known through us the fragrance that consists of the knowledge of him in every place.

15 For we are a sweet aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing—

16 to the latter an odor from death to death, but to the former a fragrance from life to life. And who is adequate for these things?

17 For we are not like so many others, hucksters who peddle the word of God for profit, but we are speaking in Christ before God as persons of sincerity, as persons sent from God.

The Corinthians are Paul's Letter

3:1 Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? We don't need letters of recommendation to you or from you as some other people do, do we?

2 You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone,

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

Paul as Minister of the New Covenant

4 Now we have such confidence in God through Christ.

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

6 who made us adequate to be servants of a new covenant not based on the letter but on the Spirit, for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

7 But if the ministry that produced death—carved in letters on stone tablets—came with glory, so that the Israelites could not keep their eyes fixed on the face of Moses because of the glory of his face (a glory which was made ineffective),

8 how much more glorious will the ministry of the Spirit be?

9 For if there was glory in the ministry that produced condemnation, how much more does the ministry that produces righteousness excel in glory!

10 For indeed, what had been glorious now has no glory because of the tremendously greater glory of what replaced it.

11 For if what was made ineffective came with glory, how much more has what remains come in glory!

12 Therefore, since we have such a hope, we behave with great boldness,

13 and not like Moses who used to put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from staring at the result of the glory that was made ineffective. [cf. [Exod 34:29–30](#)]

14 But their minds were closed. For to this very day, the same veil remains when they hear the old covenant read. It has not been removed because only in Christ is it taken away.

15 But until this very day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds,

16 but when one turns to the Lord, *the veil is removed*. [cf. [Exod 34:34](#)]

17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is present, there is freedom.

18 And we all, with unveiled faces reflecting the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another, which is from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Paul's Ministry of Proclaiming Christ Not Himself

4:1 Therefore, since we have this ministry, just as God has shown us mercy, we do not become discouraged.

2 But we have rejected shameful hidden deeds, not behaving with deceptiveness or distorting the word of God, but by open proclamation of the truth we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience before God.

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

4 among whom the god of this age has blinded the minds of those who do not believe so they would not see the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God.

5 For we do not proclaim ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake.

6 For God, who said "*Let light shine out of darkness*," [[Gen 1:3](#)] is the one who shined in our hearts to give us the light of the glorious knowledge of God in the face of Christ.

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

7 But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that the extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.

8 We are experiencing trouble on every side, but are not crushed; we are perplexed, but not driven to despair;

9 we are persecuted, but not abandoned; we are knocked down, but not destroyed,

10 always carrying around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our body.

11 For we who are alive are constantly being handed over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our mortal body.

12 As a result, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

13 But since we have the same spirit of faith as that shown in what has been written, *“I believed; therefore I spoke,”* [Ps 116:10] we also believe, therefore we also speak.

14 We do so because we know that the one who raised up Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus and will bring us with you into his presence.

15 For all these things are for your sake, so that the grace that is including more and more people may cause thanksgiving to increase to the glory of God.

The Hope of the Resurrection

16 Therefore we do not despair, but even if our physical body is wearing away, our inner person is being renewed day by day.

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

18 because we are not looking at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen. For what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.

5:1 For we know that if our earthly house, the tent we live in, is dismantled, we have a building from God, a house not built by human hands, that is eternal in the heavens.

2 For in this earthly house we groan, because we desire to put on our heavenly dwelling,

3 if indeed, after we have put on our heavenly house, we will not be found naked.

4 For we groan while we are in this tent, since we are weighed down, because we do not want to be unclothed, but clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

5 Now the one who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave us the Spirit as a down payment.

6 Therefore we are always full of courage, and we know that as long as we are alive here on earth we are absent from the Lord—
7 for we live by faith, not by sight.

8 Thus we are full of courage and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

9 So then whether we are alive or away, we make it our ambition to please him.

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be paid back according to what he has done while in the body, whether good or evil.

Ambassadors for Christ

11 Therefore, because we know the fear of the Lord, we try to persuade people, but we are well known to God, and I hope we are well known to your consciences too.

12 We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to be proud of us, so that you may be able to answer those who take pride in outward appearance and not in what is in the heart.

13 For if we are out of our minds, it is for God; if we are of sound mind, it is for you.

14 For the love of Christ controls us, since we have concluded this, that Christ died for all; therefore all have died.

15 And he died for all so that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised.

16 So then from now on we acknowledge no one from an outward human point of view. Even though we have known Christ from such a human point of view, now we do not know him in that way any longer.

17 So then, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; what is old has passed away—look, what is new has come!

18 And all these things are from God who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and who has given us the ministry of reconciliation.

19 In other words, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting people’s trespasses against them, and he has given us the message of reconciliation.

20 Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making His plea through us. We plead with you on Christ’s behalf, *“Be reconciled to God!”*

21 God made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we would become the righteousness of God.

Paul’s Commendable Ministry

6:1 Now because we are fellow workers, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain.

2 For he says, *“I heard you at the acceptable time, and in the day of salvation I helped you.”* Look, now is *the acceptable time; look, now is the day of salvation!* [Isa 49:8]

3 We do not give anyone an occasion for taking an offense in anything, so that no fault may be found with our ministry.

4 But as God’s servants, we have commended ourselves in every way, with great endurance, in persecutions, in difficulties, in distresses,

5 in beatings, in imprisonments, in riots, in troubles, in sleepless nights, in hunger,

6 by purity, by knowledge, by patience, by benevolence, by the Holy Spirit, by genuine love,

7 by truthful teaching, by the power of God, with weapons of righteousness both for the right hand and for the left,

8 through glory and dishonor, through slander and praise; regarded as impostors, and yet true;

9 as unknown, and yet well-known; as dying and yet—see!—we continue to live; as those who are scourged and yet not executed;

10 as sorrowful, but always rejoicing, as poor, but making many rich, as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

Paul's Appeal for an Open Heart

11 We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians; our heart has been opened wide to you.

12 Our affection for you is not restricted, but you are restricted in your affections for us.

13 Now as a fair exchange—I speak as to my children—open wide your hearts to us also.

14 Do not become partners with those who do not believe, for what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship does light have with darkness?

15 And what agreement does Christ have with Beliar? Or what does a believer share in common with an unbeliever?

16 And what mutual agreement does the temple of God have with idols? For we are the temple of the living God, just as God said, *“I will live in them and will walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.”* [[Lev 26:11–12](#)]

17 Therefore *“come out from their midst, and be separate,”* says the Lord, *“and touch no unclean thing,”* [[Isa 52:11](#)] and I will welcome you, [[Ezek 20:41](#)]

18 and I will be a father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters,” says the All-Powerful Lord. [[2 Sam 7:14](#); [Isa 43:6](#)]

7:1 Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that could defile the body and the spirit, and thus accomplish holiness out of reverence for God.

2 Make room for us in your hearts; we have wronged no one, we have ruined no one, we have exploited no one.

Titus' Good Report—Godly Sorrow Brings Repentance

3 I do not say this to condemn you, for I told you before that you are in our hearts so that we die together and live together with you.

4 I have great confidence in you; I take great pride on your behalf. I am filled with encouragement; I am overflowing with joy in the midst of all our suffering.

5 For even when we came into Macedonia, our body had no rest at all, but we were troubled in every way—struggles from the outside, fears from within.

6 But God, who encourages the downhearted, encouraged us by the arrival of Titus.

7 We were encouraged not only by his arrival, but also by the encouragement you gave him, as he reported to us your longing, your mourning, your deep concern for me, so that I rejoiced more than ever.

8 For even if I made you sad by my letter, I do not regret having written it (even though I did regret it, for I see that my letter made you sad, though only for a short time).

9 Now I rejoice, not because you were made sad, but because you were made sad to the point of repentance. For you were made sad as God intended, so that you were not harmed in any way by us.

10 For sadness as intended by God produces a repentance that leads to salvation, leaving no regret, but worldly sadness brings about death.

11 For see what this very thing, this sadness as God intended, has produced in you: what eagerness, what defense of yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what deep concern, what punishment! In everything you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter.

12 So then, even though I wrote to you, it was not on account of the one who did wrong, or on account of the one who was wronged, but to reveal to you your eagerness on our behalf before God.

13 Therefore we have been encouraged. And in addition to our own encouragement, we rejoiced even more at the joy of Titus, because all of you have refreshed his spirit.

14 For if I have boasted to him about anything concerning you, I have not been embarrassed by you, but just as everything we said to you was true, so our boasting to Titus about you has proved true as well.

15 And his affection for you is much greater when he remembers the obedience of you all, how you welcomed him with fear and trembling.

16 I rejoice because in everything I am fully confident 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 we make known to you, brothers and sisters, the grace of God given to the churches of Macedonia,
2 that during a severe ordeal of suffering, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in the wealth of their generosity.
3 For I testify, they gave according to their means and beyond their means. They did so voluntarily,
4 begging us with great earnestness for the blessing and fellowship of helping the saints.
5 And they did this not just as we had hoped, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and to us by the will of God.
6 Thus we urged Titus that, just as he had previously begun this work, so also he should complete this act of kindness for you.

Paul Urges the Corinthians to Give Liberally

7 But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, and in all eagerness and in the love from us that is in you—make sure that you excel in this act of kindness too.
8 I am not saying this as a command, but I am testing the genuineness of your love by comparison with the eagerness of others.
9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that although he was rich, he became poor for your sakes, so that you by his poverty could become rich.
10 So here is my opinion on this matter: It is to your advantage, since you made a good start last year both in your giving and your desire to give,
11 to finish what you started, so that just as you wanted to do it eagerly, you can also complete it according to your means.
12 For if the eagerness is present, the gift itself is acceptable according to whatever one has, not according to what he does not have.

Paul's Desire for Equality

13 For I do not say this so there would be relief for others and suffering for you, but as a matter of equality.
14 At the present time, your abundance will meet their need, so that one day their abundance may also meet your need, and thus there may be equality,
15 as it is written: *"The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little."* [[Exod 16:18](#)]

The Delegates and Their Credentials

16 But thanks be to God who put in the heart of Titus the same devotion I have for you,
17 because he not only accepted our request, but since he was very eager, he is coming to you of his own accord.
18 And we are sending along with him the brother who is praised by all the churches for his work in spreading the gospel.
19 In addition, this brother has also been chosen by the churches as our traveling companion as we administer this generous gift to the glory of the Lord himself and to show our readiness to help.
20 We did this as a precaution so that no one should blame us in regard to this generous gift we are administering.
21 For we are *concerned about what is right not only before the Lord but also before men.* [cf. [Prov 3:4](#)]
22 And we are sending with them our brother whom we have tested many times and found eager in many matters, but who now is much more eager than ever because of the great confidence he has in you.
23 If there is any question about Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you; if there is any question about our brothers, they are messengers of the churches, a glory to Christ.
24 Therefore show them openly before the churches the proof of your love and of our pride in you.

The Need for Readiness

9:1 For it is not necessary for me to write you about this service to the saints,
2 because I know your eagerness to help. I keep boasting to the Macedonians about this eagerness of yours, that Achaia has been ready to give since last year, and your zeal to participate has stirred up most of them.
3 But I am sending these brothers so that our boasting about you may not be empty in this case, so that you may be ready just as I kept telling them.
4 For if any of the Macedonians should come with me and find that you are not ready to give, we would be humiliated (not to mention you) by this confidence we had in you.
5 Therefore I thought it necessary to urge these brothers to go to you in advance and to arrange ahead of time the generous contribution you had promised, so this may be ready as a generous gift and not as something you feel forced to do.

Divine Principles of Giving

6 My point is this: The person who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the person who sows generously will also reap generously.

7 Each one of you should give just as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, because God loves a cheerful giver.

8 And God is able to make all grace overflow to you so that because you have enough of everything in every way at all times, you will overflow in every good work.

9 Just as it is written, *“He has scattered widely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness remains forever.”* [[Ps 112:9](#)]

10 Now God who provides seed for the sower and bread for food will provide and multiply your supply of seed and will cause the harvest of your righteousness to grow.

11 You will be enriched in every way so that you may be generous on every occasion, which is producing through us thanksgiving to God,

12 because the service of this ministry is not only providing for the needs of the saints but is also overflowing with many thanks to God.

13 Through the evidence of this service they will glorify God because of your obedience to your confession in the gospel of Christ and the generosity of your sharing with them and with everyone.

14 And in their prayers on your behalf they long for you because of the extraordinary grace God has shown to 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, appeal to you personally by the meekness and gentleness of Christ (I who am meek when present among you, but am full of courage toward you when away!)—

2 now I ask that when I am present I may not have to be bold with the confidence that (I expect) I will dare to use against some who consider us to be behaving according to human standards.

3 For though we live as human beings, we do not wage war according to human standards,

4 for the weapons of our warfare are not human weapons, but are made powerful by God for tearing down strongholds. We tear down arguments

5 and every arrogant obstacle that is raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to make it obey Christ.

6 We are also ready to punish every act of disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.

7 You are looking at outward appearances. If anyone is confident that he belongs to Christ, he should reflect on this again: Just as he himself belongs to Christ, so too do we.

8 For if I boast somewhat more about our authority that the Lord gave us for building you up and not for tearing you down, I will not be ashamed of doing so.

9 I do not want to seem as though I am trying to terrify you with my letters,

10 because some say, "His letters are weighty and forceful, but his physical presence is weak and his speech is of no account."

11 Let such a person consider this: What we say by letters when we are absent, we also are in actions when we are present.

The Proper Limits of Boasting / What Constitutes Valid Commendation

12 For we would not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some of those who recommend themselves. But when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding.

13 But we will not boast beyond certain limits, but will confine our boasting according to the limits of the work to which God has appointed us, that reaches even as far as you.

14 For we were not overextending ourselves, as though we did not reach as far as you, because we were the first to reach as far as you with the gospel about Christ.

15 Nor do we boast beyond certain limits in the work done by others, but we hope that as your faith continues to grow, our work may be greatly expanded among you according to our limits,

16 so that we may preach the gospel in the regions that lie beyond you, and not boast of work already done in another person's area.

17 But *the one who boasts must boast in the Lord*. [[Jer 9:24](#)]

18 For it is not the person who commends himself who is approved, but the person the Lord commends.

Paul's Defense of His Apostleship

11:1 I wish that you would be patient with me in a little foolishness, but indeed you are being patient with me!

2 For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy, because I promised you in marriage to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.

3 But I am afraid that just as the serpent deceived Eve by his treachery, your minds may be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

4 For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus different from the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit than the one you received, or a different gospel than the one you accepted, you put up with it well enough!

5 For I consider myself not at all inferior to those "super-apostles."

6 And even if I am unskilled in speaking, yet I am certainly not so in knowledge. Indeed, we have made this plain to you in everything in every way.

Paul's Financial Independence During His Ministry Among the Corinthians

7 Or did I commit a sin by humbling myself so that you could be exalted, because I proclaimed the gospel of God to you free of charge?

8 I robbed other churches by receiving support from them so that I could serve you!

9 When I was with you and was in need, I was not a burden to anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia fully supplied my needs. I kept myself from being a burden to you in any way, 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 And what I am doing I will continue to do, so that I may eliminate any opportunity for those who want a chance to be regarded as our equals in the things they boast about.

The “Super-Apostles”

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

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

15 Therefore it is not surprising his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will correspond to their actions.

Justification for Foolish Boasting

16 I say again, let no one think that I am a fool. But if you do, then at least accept me as a fool, so that I too may boast a little.

17 What I am saying with this boastful confidence I do not say the way the Lord would. Instead it is, as it were, foolishness.

18 Since many are boasting according to human standards, I too will boast.

19 For since you are so wise, you put up with fools gladly.

20 For you put up with it if someone makes slaves of you, if someone exploits you, if someone takes advantage of you, if someone behaves arrogantly toward you, if someone strikes you in the face.

21a (To my disgrace I must say that we were too weak for that!)

Paul’s Heritage and Trials

21b But whatever anyone else dares to boast about (I am speaking foolishly), I also dare to boast about the same thing.

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 am talking like I am out of my mind!) I am even more so: with much greater labors, with far more imprisonments, with more severe beatings, facing death many times.

24 Five times I received from the Jews forty lashes less one.

25 Three times I was beaten with a rod. Once I received a stoning. Three times I suffered shipwreck. A night and a day I spent adrift in the open sea.

26 I have been on journeys many times, in dangers from rivers, in dangers from robbers, in dangers from my own countrymen, in dangers from Gentiles, in dangers in the city, in dangers in the wilderness, in dangers at sea, in dangers from false brothers,

27 in hard work and toil, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, many times without food, in cold and without enough clothing.

28 Apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxious concern for all the churches.

29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not burn with indignation?

Escape from Damascus

30 If I must boast, I will boast about the things that show my weakness.

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

32 In Damascus, the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city of Damascus in order to arrest me,

33 but I was let down in a rope-basket through a window in the city wall, and escaped his hands.

Paul’s Visions and Revelations

12:1 It is necessary to go on boasting. Though it is not profitable, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord.

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

3 And I know that this man (whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows)

4 was caught up into paradise and heard things too sacred to be put into words, things that a person is not permitted to speak.

5 On behalf of such an individual I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except about my weaknesses.

6 For even if I wish to boast, I will not be a fool, for I would be telling the truth, but I refrain from this so that no one may regard me beyond what he sees in me or what he hears from me,

7a even because of the extraordinary character of the revelations.

Paul’s Thorn in the Flesh

7b Therefore, so that I would not become arrogant, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to trouble me—so that I would not become arrogant.

8 I asked the Lord three times about this, that it would depart from me.

9 But he said to me, “My grace is enough for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” So then, I will boast most gladly about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may reside in me.

10 Therefore I am content with weaknesses, with insults, with troubles, with persecutions and difficulties for the sake of Christ, for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

Proof of Apostleship

11 I have become a fool. You yourselves forced me to do it, for I should have been commended by you. For I lack nothing in

comparison to those “super-apostles,” even though I am nothing.

12 Indeed, the signs of an apostle were performed among you with great perseverance by signs and wonders and powerful deeds.

13 For how were you treated worse than the other churches, except that I myself was not a burden to you? Forgive me this injustice!

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

14 Look, for the third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not be a burden to you, because I do not want your possessions, but you. For children should not have to save up for their parents, but parents for their children.

15 Now I will most gladly spend and be spent for your lives! If I love you more, am I to be loved less?

16 But be that as it may, I have not burdened you. Yet because I was a crafty person, I took you in by deceit!

17 I have not taken advantage of you through anyone I have sent to you, have I?

18 I urged Titus to visit you and I sent our brother along with him. Titus did not take advantage of you, did he? Did we not conduct ourselves in the same spirit? Did we not behave in the same way?

19 Have you been thinking all this time that we have been defending ourselves to you? We are speaking in Christ before God, and everything we do, dear friends, is to build you up.

20 For I am afraid that somehow when I come I will not find you what I wish, and you will find me not what you wish. I am afraid that somehow there may be quarreling, jealousy, intense anger, selfish ambition, slander, gossip, arrogance, and disorder.

21 I am afraid that when I come again, my God may humiliate me before you, and I will grieve for many of those who previously sinned and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and licentiousness that 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 visit you. *By the testimony of two or three witnesses every matter will be established.* [[Deut 19:15](#)]

2 I said before when I was present the second time and now, though absent, I say again to those who sinned previously and to all the rest, that if I come again, I will not spare anyone,

3 since you are demanding proof that Christ is speaking through me. He is not weak toward you but is powerful among you.

4 For indeed he was crucified by reason of weakness, but he lives because of God’s power. For we also are weak in him, but we will live together with him, because of God’s power toward you.

5 Put yourselves to the test to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize regarding yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you—unless, indeed, you fail the test!

6 And I hope that you will realize that we have not failed the test!

7 Now we pray to God that you may not do anything wrong, not so that we may appear to have passed the test, but so that you may do what is right even if we may appear to have failed the test.

8 For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the sake of the truth.

9 For we rejoice whenever we are weak, but you are strong. And we pray for this: that you may become fully qualified.

10 Because of this I am writing these things while absent, so that when I arrive I may not have to deal harshly with you by using my authority—the Lord gave it to me for building up, not for tearing down!

Benediction

11 Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice, set things right, be encouraged, agree with one another, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you.

12 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you.

13 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 where he stayed for 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 From Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God.
2 This gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures,
3 concerning his Son who was a descendant of David with reference to the flesh,
4 who was appointed the Son-of-God-in-power according to the Holy Spirit by the resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.
5 Through him we have received grace and our apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles on behalf of his name.
6 You also are among them, called to belong to Jesus Christ.
7 To all those loved by God in Rome, called to be saints: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

Thanksgiving and Occasion—Paul's Burden for Rome

8 First of all, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world.
9 For God, whom I serve in my spirit by preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness that I continually remember you
10 and I always ask in my prayers, if perhaps now at last I may succeed in visiting you according to the will of God.
11 For I long to see you, so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you,
12 that is, that we may be mutually comforted by one another's faith, both yours and mine.
13 I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that I often intended to come to you (and was prevented until now), so that I may have some fruit even among you, just as I already have among the rest of the Gentiles.
14 I am a debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.
15 Thus I am eager also to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome.

Theme Statement

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is God's power for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
17 For the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel from faith to faith, just as it is written, "*The righteous by faith will live.*" [[Hab 2:4](#)]

The Gentiles are Without Excuse

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of people who suppress the truth by their unrighteousness,
19 because what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.
20 For since the creation of the world his invisible attributes—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, because they are understood through what has been made. So people are without excuse.
21 For although they knew God, they did not glorify him as God or give him thanks, but they became futile in their thoughts and their senseless hearts were darkened.
22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools
23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for an image resembling mortal human beings or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles.
24 Therefore God gave them over in the desires of their hearts to impurity, to dishonor their bodies among themselves.
25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshiped and served the creation rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.
26 For this reason God gave them over to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged the natural sexual relations for unnatural ones,
27 and likewise the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed in their passions for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.
28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what should not be done.
29 They are filled with every kind of unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, malice. They are rife with envy, murder, strife, deceit, hostility. They are gossips,
30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, contrivers of all sorts of evil, disobedient to parents,
31 senseless, covenant-breakers, heartless, ruthless.

32 Although they fully know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but also approve of those who practice them.

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

2:1 Therefore you are without excuse, whoever you are, when you judge someone else. For on whatever grounds you judge another, you condemn yourself, because you who judge practice the same things.

2 Now we know that God's judgment is in accordance with truth against those who practice such things.

3 And do you think, whoever you are, when you judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself, that you will escape God's judgment?

4 Or do you have contempt for the wealth of his kindness, forbearance, and patience, and yet do not know that God's kindness leads you to repentance?

5 But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath for yourselves in the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment is revealed!

6 He will reward each one according to his works: [[Ps 62:12](#)]

7 eternal life to those who by perseverance in good works seek glory and honor and immortality,

8 but wrath and anger to those who live in selfish ambition and do not obey the truth but follow unrighteousness.

9 There will be affliction and distress on everyone who does evil, on the Jew first and also the Greek,

10 but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, for the Jew first and also the Greek.

11 For there is no partiality with God.

12 For all who have sinned apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law.

13 For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous before God, but those who do the law will be declared righteous.

14 For whenever the Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature the things required by the law, these who do not have the law are a law to themselves.

15 They show that the work of the law is written in their hearts, as their conscience bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or else defend them,

16 on the day when God will judge the secrets of human hearts, according to my gospel through Christ Jesus.

The Jews' Misplaced Trust in Their Heritage

17 But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast of your relationship to God

18 and know his will and approve the superior things because you receive instruction from the law,

19 and if you are convinced that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,

20 an educator of the senseless, a teacher of little children, because you have in the law the essential features of knowledge and of the truth—

21 therefore you who teach someone else, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal?

22 You who tell others not to commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?

23 You who boast in the law dishonor God by transgressing the law!

24 For just as it is written, "*the name of God is being blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.*" [[Isa 52:5](#)]

25 For circumcision has its value if you practice the law, but if you break the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.

26 Therefore if the uncircumcised man obeys the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?

27 And will not the physically uncircumcised man who keeps the law judge you who, despite the written code and circumcision, transgress the law?

28 For a person is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision something that is outward in the flesh,

29 but someone is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart by the Spirit and not by the written code. This person's praise is not from people but from God.

Paul Answers the Objections of the Jews

3:1 Therefore what advantage does the Jew have, or what is the value of circumcision?

2 Actually, there are many advantages. First of all, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God.

3 What then? If some did not believe, does their unbelief nullify the faithfulness of God?

4 Absolutely not! Let God be proven true, and every human being shown up as a liar, just as it is written: "*so that you will be justified in your words and will 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 Absolutely not! For otherwise how could God judge the world?

7 For if by my lie the truth of God enhances his glory, why am I still actually being judged as a sinner?

8 And why not say, "Let us do evil so that good may come of it"?—as some who slander us allege that we say. (Their condemnation

is deserved!)

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

9 What then? Are we better off? Certainly not, for we have already charged that Jews and Greeks alike are all under sin, 10 just as it is written:

- 11 *“There is no one righteous, not even one,
there is no one who understands,
there is no one who seeks God.*
- 12 *All have turned away,
together they have become worthless;
there is no one who shows kindness, not even one.”* [[Ps 14:1–3](#)]
- 13 *“Their throats are open graves,
they deceive with their tongues, [[Ps 5:9](#)]
the poison of asps is under their lips.”* [[Ps 140:3](#)]
- 14 *“Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.”* [[Ps 10:7](#)]
- 15 *“Their feet are swift to shed blood,
16 ruin and misery are in their paths,
17 and the way 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 says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world may be held accountable to God.

20 For *no one is declared righteous before him* [[Ps 143:2](#)] by the works of the law, 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 (which is attested by the law and the prophets) has been disclosed— 22 namely, the righteousness of God through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

24 But they are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

25 God publicly displayed him at his death as the mercy seat accessible through faith. This was to demonstrate his righteousness, because God in his forbearance had passed over the sins previously committed.

26 This was also to demonstrate his righteousness in the present time, so that he would be just and the justifier of the one who lives because of Jesus’ faithfulness.

Claim—We are Justified by Faith Apart from Works

27 Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded! By what principle? Of works? No, but by the principle of faith!

28 For we consider that a person is declared righteous by faith apart from the works of the law.

29 Or is God the God of the Jews only? Is he not the God of the Gentiles too? Yes, of the Gentiles too!

30 Since God is one, he will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.

31 Do we then nullify the law through faith? Absolutely not! Instead we uphold the law.

Supporting Argument—Abraham was Justified by Faith, Not Works

4:1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh, has discovered regarding this matter?

2 For if Abraham was declared righteous by the works of the law, 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 pay is not credited due to grace but due to obligation.

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

6 So even David himself speaks regarding the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

7 *“Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered;*

8 *blessed is the one against whom the Lord will never count sin.”* [[Ps 32:1–2](#)]

Supporting Argument—Abraham was Justified by Grace, Not Law

9 Is this blessedness then for the circumcision or also for the uncircumcision? For we say, *“faith was credited to Abraham as righteousness.”* [[Gen 15:6](#)]

10 How then was it credited to him? Was he circumcised at the time, or not? No, he was not circumcised but uncircumcised!

- 11 And he received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised, so that he would become the father of all those who believe but have never been circumcised, that they too could have righteousness credited to them. [cf. [Gen 17](#)]
- 12 And he is also the father of the circumcised, who are not only circumcised, but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham possessed when he was still uncircumcised.
- 13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would inherit the world was not fulfilled through the law, but through the righteousness that comes by faith.
- 14 For if they become heirs by the law, faith is empty and the promise is nullified.
- 15 For the law brings wrath, because where there is no law there is no transgression either.
- 16 For this reason it is by faith so that it may be by grace, with the result that the promise may be certain to all the descendants—not only to those who are under the law, but also to those who have the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all
- 17 (as it is written, “*I have made you the father of many nations*”). [[Gen 17:5](#)] He is our father in the presence of God whom he believed—the God who makes the dead alive and summons the things that do not yet exist as though they already do.

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

- 18 Against hope Abraham believed in hope with the result that he became *the father of many nations* according to the pronouncement, “*so will your descendants be.*” [[Gen 15:5](#)]
- 19 Without being weak in faith, he considered his own body as dead (because he was about one hundred years old) and the deadness of Sarah’s womb.
- 20 He did not waver in unbelief about the promise of God but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God.
- 21 He was fully convinced that what God promised he was also able to do.
- 22 So indeed it was credited to Abraham as righteousness.
- 23 But the statement *it was credited to him* was not written only for Abraham’s sake,
- 24 but also for our sake, to whom it will be credited, those who believe in the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.
- 25 He was given over because of our transgressions and was raised for the sake 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): 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, since we have been declared righteous by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
 2 through whom we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in the hope of God's glory.
 3 Not only this, but we also rejoice in sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,
 4 and endurance, character, and character, hope.
 5 And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in 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 rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person perhaps someone might possibly dare to die.)
 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
 9 Much more then, because we have now been declared righteous by his blood, we will be saved through him from God's wrath.
 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, how much more, since we have been reconciled, will we be saved by his life?
 11 Not only this, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received this reconciliation.

Adam's Sin Contrasted With God's Gracious Gift

12 So then, just as sin entered the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all people because all sinned—
 13 for before the law was given, sin was in the world, but there is no accounting for sin when there is no law.
 14 Yet death reigned from Adam until Moses even over those who did not sin in the same way that Adam (who is a type of the coming one) transgressed.
 15 But the gracious gift is not like the transgression. For if the many died through the transgression of the one man, how much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one man Jesus Christ multiply to the many!
 16 And the gift is not like the one who sinned. For judgment, resulting from the one transgression, led to condemnation, but the gracious gift from the many failures led to justification.
 17 For if, by the transgression of the one man, death reigned through the one, how much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, Jesus Christ!
 18 Consequently, just as condemnation for all people came through one transgression, so too through the one righteous act came righteousness leading to life for all people.
 19 For just as through the disobedience of the one man many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of one man many will be made righteous.
 20 Now the law came in so that the transgression may increase, but where sin increased, grace multiplied all the more,
 21 so that just as sin reigned in death, so also grace will 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 remain in sin so that grace may increase?
 2 Absolutely not! How can we who died to sin still live in it?
 3 Or do you not know that as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?
 4 Therefore we have been buried with him through baptism into death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too may live a new life.
 5 For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we will certainly also be united in the likeness of his resurrection.
 6 We know that our old man was crucified with him so that the body of sin would no longer dominate us, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.
 7 (For someone who has died has been freed from sin.)
 8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.
 9 We know that since Christ has been raised from the dead, he is never going to die again; death no longer has mastery over him.
 10 For the death he died, he died to sin once for all, but the life he lives, he lives to God.

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

11 So you too consider yourselves 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 desires,
 13 and do not present your members to sin as instruments to be used for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who are alive from the dead and your members to God as instruments to be used for righteousness.
 14 For sin will have no mastery over you, because 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? Absolutely not!

16 Do you not know that if you present yourselves as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or obedience resulting in righteousness?

17 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves to sin, you obeyed from the heart that pattern of teaching you were entrusted to,

18 and having been freed from sin, you became enslaved to righteousness.

19 (I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh.) For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

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

21 So what benefit did you then reap from those things that you are now ashamed of? For the end of those things is death.

22 But now, freed from sin and enslaved to God, you have your benefit leading to sanctification, and the end is eternal life.

23 For the payoff of sin is death, but the 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, brothers and sisters (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law is lord over a person as long as he lives?

2 For a married woman is bound by law to her husband as long as he lives, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of the marriage.

3 So then, if she is joined to another man while her husband is alive, she will be called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she is joined to another man, she is not an adulteress.

4 So, my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you could be joined to another, to the one who was raised from the dead, to bear fruit to God.

5 For when we were in the flesh, the sinful desires, aroused by the law, were active in the members of our body to bear fruit for death.

6 But now we have been released from the law, because we have died to what controlled us, so that we may serve in the new life of the Spirit and not under the old written code.

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? Absolutely not! Certainly, I would not have known sin except through the law. For indeed I would not have known what it means to desire something belonging to someone else if the law had not said, "*Do not covet.*" [[Exod 20:17](#)]

8 But sin, seizing the opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of wrong desires. For apart from the law, sin is dead.

9 And I was once alive apart from the law, but with the coming of the commandment sin became alive

10 and I died. So I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life brought death!

11 For sin, seizing the opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it I died.

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

13 Did that which is good, then, become death to me? Absolutely not! But sin, so that it would be shown to be sin, produced death in me through what 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 unspiritual, sold into slavery to sin.

15 For I don't understand what I am doing. For I do not do what I want—instead, I do what I hate.

16 But if I do what I don't want, I agree that the law is good.

17 But now it is no longer me doing it, but sin that lives in me.

18 For I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh. For I want to do the good, but I cannot do it.

19 For I do not do the good I want, but I do the very evil I do not want!

20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer me doing it but sin that lives in me.

21 So, I find the law that when I want to do good, evil is present with me.

22 For I delight in the law of God in my inner being.

23 But I see a different law in my members waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that is in my members.

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

25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

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

8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

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

3 For God achieved what the law could not do because it was weakened through the flesh. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and concerning sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,

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

5 For those who live according to the flesh have their outlook shaped by the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit have their outlook shaped by the things of the Spirit.

6 For the outlook of the flesh is death, but the outlook of the Spirit is life and peace,

7 because the outlook of the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to the law of God, nor is it able to do so.

8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, this person does not belong to him.

10 But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is your life because of righteousness.

11 Moreover if the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will also make your mortal bodies alive through his Spirit who lives in you.

12 So then, brothers and sisters, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh

13 (for if you live according to the flesh, you will die), but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live.

Our Adoption as Sons of God

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

15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery leading again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry, "Abba, Father."

16 The Spirit himself bears witness to our spirit that we are God's children.

17 And if children, then heirs (namely, heirs of God and also fellow heirs with Christ)—if indeed we suffer with him so we may also be glorified with him.

Present Suffering and Future Glory

18 For I consider that our present sufferings cannot even be compared to the glory that will be revealed to us.

19 For the creation eagerly waits for the revelation of the sons of God.

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

21 that the creation itself will also be set free from the bondage of decay into the glorious freedom of God's children.

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

23 Not only this, but we ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we eagerly await our adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

24 For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope, because who hopes for what he sees?

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

26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how we should pray, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with inexpressible groanings.

27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes on behalf of the saints according to God's will.

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

29 because those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

30 And those he predestined, he also called; and those he called, he also justified; and those he justified, he also glorified.

"If God is for us, who can be against us?"

31 What then shall we say about these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

32 Indeed, he who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, freely give us all things?

33 Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

34 Who is the one who will condemn? Christ is the one who died (and more than that, he was raised), who is at the right hand of God, and who also is interceding for us.

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

36 As it is written, *"For your sake we encounter death all day long; we were considered as sheep to be slaughtered."* [[Ps 44:22](#)]

37 No, in all these things we have complete victory through him who loved us!

38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor heavenly rulers, nor things that are present, nor things to come, nor powers,
39 nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in creation will be able to separate us from the love of God 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!), for my conscience assures me in the Holy Spirit—

2 I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart.

3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed—cut off from Christ—for the sake of my people, my fellow countrymen,

4 who are Israelites. To them belong the adoption as sons, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the temple worship, and the promises.

5 To them belong the patriarchs, and from them, by human descent, came the Christ, who is God over all, 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 It is not as though the word of God had failed. For not all those who are descended from Israel are truly Israel,

7 nor are all the children Abraham's true descendants; rather *"through Isaac will your descendants be counted."* [[Gen 21:12](#)]

8 This means it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God; rather, the children of promise are counted as descendants.

9 For this is what the promise declared: *"About a year from now I will return and Sarah will have a son."* [[Gen 18:10, 14](#)]

10 Not only that, but when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our ancestor Isaac—

11 even before they were born or had done anything good or bad (so that God's purpose in election would stand, not by works but by his calling)—

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? Is there injustice with God? Absolutely not!

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 human desire or exertion, but on God who shows mercy.

17 For the scripture says to Pharaoh: *"For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may demonstrate my power in you, and that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth."* [[Exod 9:16](#)]

18 So then, God has mercy on whom he chooses to have mercy, and he hardens whom he chooses to harden.

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 has ever resisted his will?"

20 But who indeed are you—a mere human being—to talk back to God? *Does what is molded say to the molder, "Why have you made me like this?"* [[Isa 29:16; 45:9](#)]

21 Has the potter no right to make from the same lump of clay one vessel for special use and another for ordinary use?

22 But what if God, willing to demonstrate his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience the objects of wrath prepared for destruction?

23 And what if he is willing to make known the wealth of his glory on the objects of mercy that he has prepared beforehand for glory—

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

24 even us, whom he has called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?

25 As he also says in Hosea:

"I will call those who were not my people, 'My people,' and I will call her who was unloved, 'My beloved.'" [[Hos 2:23](#)]

26 *"And in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there they will be called 'sons of the living God.'"* [[Hos 1:10](#)]

27 And Isaiah cries out on behalf of Israel, *"Though the number of the children of Israel are as the sand of the sea, only the remnant will be saved,*

28 for the Lord will execute his sentence on the earth completely and quickly." [[Isa 10:22–23](#)]

29 Just as Isaiah predicted,

"If the Lord of armies had not left us descendants,

*we would have become like Sodom,
and we would have resembled Gomorrah.”* [[Isa 1:9](#)]

Participation in the Promised Blessing is Through Faith, Not Works

30 What shall we say then?—that the Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness obtained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith,
31 but Israel even though pursuing a law of righteousness did not attain it.

32 Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but (as if it were possible) by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone,
33 just as it is written,

*“Look, I am laying in Zion a stone that will cause people to stumble
and a rock that will make them fall,
yet the one who believes in him will not be put to shame.”* [[Isa 28:16; 8:14](#)]

Paul Explains Where the Jews Went Wrong

10:1 Brothers and sisters, my heart’s desire and prayer to God on behalf of my fellow Israelites is for their salvation.

2 For I can testify that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not in line with the truth.

3 For ignoring the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking instead to establish their own righteousness, they did not submit to God’s righteousness.

4 For Christ is the end [*goal*] of the law, with the result that there is righteousness for 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 about the righteousness that is by the law: *“The one who does these things will live by them.”* [[Lev 18:5](#)]

6 But the righteousness that is by faith says: *“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 that we preach),

9 because if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

10 For with the heart one believes and thus has righteousness and with the mouth one confesses and thus has salvation.

11 For the scripture says, *“Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.”* [[Isa 28:16](#)]

12 For there is no distinction between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all, who richly blesses all who call on him.

13 For *everyone who calls 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 are they to call on one they have not believed in? And how are they to believe in one they have not heard of? And how are they to hear without someone preaching to them?

15 And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, *“How timely is the arrival of those who proclaim the good news.”* [[Isa 52:7](#)]

16 But not all have obeyed the good news, for Isaiah says, *“Lord, who has believed our report?”* [[Isa 53:1](#)]

17 Consequently faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the preached word of Christ.

18 But I ask, have they not heard? Yes, they have: *Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.* [[Ps 19:4](#)]

19 But again I ask, didn’t Israel understand? First Moses says, *“I will make you jealous by those who are not a nation; with a senseless nation I will provoke you to anger.”* [[Deut 32:21](#)]

20 And Isaiah is even bold enough to say, *“I was found by those who did not seek me; I became well known to those who did not ask for me.”* [[Isa 65:1](#)]

21 But about Israel he says, *“All day long I held out my hands to this disobedient and stubborn 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 So I ask, God has not rejected his people, has he? Absolutely not! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin.

2 God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew! Do you not know what the scripture says about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel?

3 *“Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars; I alone am left and they are seeking my life!”* [[1 Kgs 19:10](#)]

4 But what was the divine response to him? *“I have kept for myself seven thousand people who have not bent the knee to Baal.”* [[1 Kgs 19:18](#)]

5 So in the same way at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace.

6 And if it is by grace, it is no longer by works, otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

7 What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was diligently seeking, but the elect obtained it. The rest were hardened,

8 as it is written,

*“God gave them a spirit of stupor,
eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear,
to this very day.”* [[Deut 29:4; Isa 29:10](#)]

9 And David says,

*“Let their table become a snare and trap,
a stumbling block and a retribution for them;*

10 *let their eyes be darkened so that they may not see,
and make their backs bend continually.”* [[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 ask then, they did not stumble into an irrevocable fall, did they? Absolutely not! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make Israel jealous.

12 Now if their transgression means riches for the world and their defeat means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full restoration bring?

13 Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Seeing that I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry,

14 if somehow I could provoke my people to jealousy 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 portion of the dough offered is holy, then the whole batch is holy, and if the root is holy, so too are the branches.

17 Now if some of the branches were broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among them and participated in the richness of the olive root,

18 do not boast over the branches. But if you boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.

19 Then you will say, “The branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in.”

20 Granted! They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but fear!

21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, perhaps he will not spare you.

22 Notice therefore the kindness and harshness of God—harshness toward those who have fallen, but God’s kindness toward you, provided you continue in his kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.

23 And even they—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 grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these natural branches be grafted back 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 to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: A partial hardening has happened to Israel until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.

26 And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written:

*“The Deliverer will come out of Zion;
he will remove ungodliness from Jacob.*

27 *And this is my covenant with them,
when I take away their sins.”* [[Isa 59:20–21; 27:9](#)]

28 In regard to the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but in regard to election they are dearly loved for the sake of the fathers.

29 For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable.

30 Just as you were formerly disobedient to God, but have now received mercy due to their disobedience,

31 so they too have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they too may now receive mercy.

32 For God has consigned all people to disobedience so that he may show mercy to them all.

Paul Bursts into Praise to God for His Great Wisdom

33 Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how fathomless his ways!

34 *For who has known the mind of the Lord,
or who has been his counselor?* [[Isa 40:13](#)]

35 *Or who has first given to God
that God needs to repay him?* [[Job 41:11](#)]

36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be 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 exhort you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a sacrifice—alive, holy, and pleasing to God—which is your reasonable service.
 2 Do not be conformed to this present world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may test and approve what is the will of God—what is good and well-pleasing and perfect.

Spiritual Gifts for Humble Service

3 For by the grace given to me I say to every one of you not to think more highly of yourself than you ought to think, but to think with sober discernment, as God has distributed to each of you a measure of faith.
 4 For just as in one body we have many members, and not all the members serve the same function,
 5 so we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually we are members who belong to one another.
 6 And we have different gifts according to the grace given to us. If the gift is prophecy, that individual must use it in proportion to his faith.
 7 If it is service, he must serve; if it is teaching, he must teach;
 8 if it is exhortation, he must exhort; if it is contributing, he must do so with sincerity; if it is leadership, he must do so with diligence; if it is showing mercy, he must do so with cheerfulness.

Devotion to Love and Goodness

9 Love must be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil, cling to what is good.
 10 Be devoted to one another with mutual love, showing eagerness in honoring one another.
 11 Do not lag in zeal, be enthusiastic in spirit, serve the Lord.
 12 Rejoice in hope, endure in suffering, persist in prayer.
 13 Contribute to the needs of the saints, pursue hospitality.
 14 Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse.
 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.
 16 Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty but associate with the lowly. Do not be conceited.

Treatment of Irritations and Enemies

17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil; consider what is good before all people.
 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all people.
 19 Do not avenge yourselves, dear friends, but give place to God's wrath, for it is written, "*Vengeance is mine, I will repay,*" says the Lord. [[Deut 32:35](#)]
 20 Rather, *if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in doing this you will be heaping 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 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except by God's appointment, and the authorities that exist have been instituted by God.
 2 So the person who resists such authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will incur judgment
 3 (for rulers cause no fear for good conduct but for bad). Do you desire not to fear authority? Do good and you will receive its commendation,
 4 for it is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be in fear, for it does not bear the sword in vain. It is God's servant to administer retribution on the wrongdoer.
 5 Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of the wrath of the authorities but also because of your conscience.
 6 For this reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants devoted to governing.
 7 Pay everyone what is owed: taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due.

Love Fulfills the Requirements of the Law

8 Owe no one anything, except to love one another, for the one who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.
 9 For the commandments, "*Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not covet,*" [[Exod 20:13–15, 17](#)] (and if there is any other commandment) are summed up in this, "*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 And do this because we know the time, that it is already the hour for us to awake from sleep, for our salvation is now nearer than when we became believers.

12 The night has advanced toward dawn; the day is near. So then we must lay aside the works of darkness, and put on the weapons of light.

13 Let us live decently as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in discord and jealousy.

14 Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to arouse its desires.

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

14:1 Now receive the one who is weak in the faith, and do not have disputes over differing opinions.

2 One person believes in eating everything, but the weak person eats only vegetables.

3 The one who eats everything must not despise the one who does not, and the one who abstains must not judge the one who eats everything, for God has accepted him.

4 Who are you to pass judgment on another's servant? Before 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 holier than other days, and another regards them all alike. Each must be fully convinced in his own mind.

6 The one who observes the day does it for the Lord. The one who eats, eats for the Lord because he gives thanks to God, and the one who abstains from eating abstains for the Lord, and he gives thanks to God.

7 For none of us lives for himself and none dies for himself.

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

9 For this reason Christ died and returned to life, so that he may be the Lord of both the dead and the living.

10 But you who eat vegetables only—why do you judge your brother or sister? And you who eat everything—why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.

11 For it is written, *"As I live, says the Lord, every knee will bow to me, and every tongue will give praise to God."* [[Isa 45:23](#)]

12 Therefore, each 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 we must not pass judgment on one another, but rather determine never to place an obstacle or a trap before a brother or sister.

14 I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean in itself; still, it is unclean to the one who considers it unclean.

15 For if your brother or sister is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy by your food someone for whom Christ died.

16 Therefore do not let what you consider good be spoken of as evil.

17 For the kingdom of God does not consist of food and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

18 For the one who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by people.

19 So then, let us pursue what makes for peace and for building up one another.

20 Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. For although all things are clean, it is wrong to cause anyone to stumble by what you eat.

21 It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything that causes your brother to stumble.

22 The faith you have, keep to yourself before God. Blessed is the one who does not judge himself by what he approves.

23 But the man who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not do so from faith, and whatever is not from faith is sin.

Focus on Pleasing Others, Not Yourself

15:1 But we who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak, and not just please ourselves.

2 Let each of us please his neighbor for his good to build him up.

3 For even Christ did not please himself, but just as it is written, *"The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me."* [[Ps 69:9](#)]

4 For everything that was written in former times was written for our instruction, so that through endurance and through encouragement of the scriptures we may have hope.

5 Now may the God of endurance and comfort give you unity with one another in accordance with Christ Jesus,

6 so that together 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 Receive one another, then, just as Christ also received you, to God's glory.

8 For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of God's truth to confirm the promises made to the fathers,

9 and thus the Gentiles glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, *“Because of this I will confess you among the Gentiles, and I will sing praises to your name.”* [[2 Sam 22:50](#); [Ps 18:49](#)]

10 And again it 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 And again Isaiah says, *“The root of Jesse will come, and the one who rises to rule over the Gentiles, in him will the Gentiles hope.”* [[Isa 11:10](#)]

13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe in him, so that you may 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 But I myself am fully convinced about you, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another.

15 But I have written more boldly to you on some points so as to remind you, because of the grace given to me by God

16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. I serve the gospel of God like a priest, so that the Gentiles may become an acceptable offering, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

17 So I boast in Christ Jesus about the things that pertain to God.

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

19 in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit of God. So from Jerusalem even as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

20 And in this way I desire to preach where Christ has not been named, so as not to build on another person's foundation,

21 but as it is written: *"Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand."* [[Isa 52:15](#)]

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

22 This is the reason I was often hindered from coming to you.

23 But now there is nothing more to keep me in these regions, and I have for many years desired to come to you

24 when I go to Spain. For I hope to visit you when I pass through and that you will help me on my journey there, after I have enjoyed your company for a while.

25 But now I go to Jerusalem to minister to the saints.

26 For Macedonia and Achaia are pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.

27 For they were pleased to do this, and indeed they are indebted to the Jerusalem saints. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are obligated also to minister to them in material things.

28 Therefore after I have completed this and have safely delivered this bounty to them, I will set out for Spain by way of you,

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

A Request for Prayer

30 Now I urge you, brothers and sisters, through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the love of the Spirit, to join fervently with me in prayer to God on my behalf.

31 Pray that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea and that my ministry in Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints,

32 so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company.

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

Commendation of Phoebe

16:1 Now I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea,

2 so that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints and provide her with whatever help she may need from you, for she has been a great help to many, including me.

Greetings to Roman Brothers and Sisters

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

4 who risked their own necks for my life. Not only I, but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them.

5 Also greet the church in their house. Greet my dear friend Epenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in the province of Asia.

6 Greet Mary, who has worked very hard for you.

7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my compatriots and my fellow prisoners. They are well known to the apostles, and they were in Christ before me.

8 Greet Ampliatus, my dear friend in the Lord.

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

10 Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the household of Aristobulus.

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

12 Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, laborers in the Lord. Greet my dear friend Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord.

13 Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother who was also a mother to me.

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

15 Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the believers 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, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who create dissensions and obstacles contrary to the teaching that you learned. Avoid them!

18 For these are the kind who do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By their smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of the naive.

19 Your obedience is known to all and thus I rejoice 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 quickly 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; so do Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my compatriots.

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

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

24 [*Mss uncertainty favors the omission of v. 24*]

Closing Doxology

25 Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that had been kept secret for long ages,

26 but now is disclosed, and through the prophetic scriptures has been made known to all the nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—

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

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

Acts 20:3b–5

3b Because the Jews had made a plot against him as he was intending to sail for Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia.
 4 Paul was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, and Timothy, as well as Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia.
 5 These had gone on ahead and were waiting for us in Troas.

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

Acts 20:6–12

6 We sailed away from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and within five days we came to the others in Troas, where we stayed for seven days.
 7 On the first day of the week, when we met to break bread, Paul began to speak to the people, and because he intended to leave the next day, he extended his message until midnight.
 8 (Now there were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting.)
 9 A young man named Eutychus, who was sitting in the window, was sinking into a deep sleep while Paul continued to speak for a long time. Fast asleep, he fell down from the third story and was picked up dead.
 10 But Paul went down, threw himself on the young man, put his arms around him, and said, "Do not be distressed, for he is still alive!"
 11 Then Paul went back upstairs, and after he had broken bread and eaten, he talked with them a long time, until dawn. Then he left.
 12 They took the boy home 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 We went on ahead to the ship and put out to sea for Assos, intending to take Paul aboard there, for he had arranged it this way. He himself was intending to go there by land.
 14 When he met us in Assos, we took him aboard and went to Mitylene.
 15 We set sail from there, and on the following day we arrived off Chios. The next day we approached Samos, and the day after that we arrived at Miletus.
 16 For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus so as not to spend time in the province of Asia, for he was hurrying to arrive in Jerusalem, if possible, by the day of Pentecost.

Paul's Farewell Speech to the Ephesian Elders

17 From Miletus he sent a message to Ephesus, telling the elders of the church to come to him.
 18 When they arrived, he said to them, "You yourselves know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I set foot in the province of Asia,
 19 serving the Lord with all humility and with tears, and with the trials that happened to me because of the plots of the Jews.
 20 You know that I did not hold back from proclaiming to you anything that would be helpful, and from teaching you publicly and from house to house,
 21 testifying to both Jews and Greeks about repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus.
 22 And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem without knowing what will happen to me there,
 23 except that the Holy Spirit warns me in town after town that imprisonment and persecutions are waiting for me.
 24 But I do not consider my life worth anything to myself, so that I may finish my task and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the good news of God's grace.
 25 "And now I know that none of you among whom I went around proclaiming the kingdom will see me again.
 26 Therefore I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of you all.
 27 For I did not hold back from announcing to you the whole purpose of God.
 28 Watch out for yourselves and for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son.
 29 I know that after I am gone fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.
 30 Even from among your own group men will arise, teaching perversions of the truth to draw the disciples away after them.
 31 Therefore be alert, remembering that night and day for three years I did not stop warning each one of you with tears.
 32 And now I entrust you to God and to the message of his grace. This message is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

- 33 I have desired no one's silver or gold or clothing.
 34 You yourselves know that these hands of mine provided for my needs and the needs of those who were with me.
 35 By all these things, I have shown you that by working in this way we 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 with them all and prayed.
 37 They all began to weep loudly, and hugged Paul and kissed him,
 38 especially saddened by what he had said, that they were not going to see him again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.

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

Acts 21:1–6

- 1 After we tore ourselves away from them, we put out to sea, and sailing a straight course, we came to Cos, on the next day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara.
 2 We found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, went aboard, and put out to sea.
 3 After we sighted Cyprus and left it behind on our port side, we sailed on to Syria and put in at Tyre, because the ship was to unload its cargo there.
 4 After we located the disciples, we stayed there seven days. They repeatedly told Paul through the Spirit not to set foot in Jerusalem.
 5 When our time was over, we left and went on our way. All of them, with their wives and children, accompanied us outside of the city. After kneeling down on the beach and praying,
 6 we said farewell to one another. Then we went aboard the ship, and they returned to their own homes.

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

Acts 21:7–17

- 7 We continued the voyage from Tyre and arrived at Ptolemais, and when we had greeted the brothers, we stayed with them for one day.
 8 On the next day we left and came to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him.
 9 (He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied.)
 10 While we remained there for a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea.
 11 He came to us, took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it, and said, "The Holy Spirit says this: 'This is the way the Jews in Jerusalem will tie up the man whose belt this is, and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'
 12 When we heard this, both we and the local people begged him not to go up to Jerusalem.
 13 Then Paul replied, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be tied up, but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."
 14 Because he could not be persuaded, we said no more except, "The Lord's will be done."
 15 After these days we got ready and started up to Jerusalem.
 16 Some of the disciples from Caesarea came along with us too, and brought us to the house of Mnason of Cyprus, a disciple from the earliest times, with whom we were to stay.
 17 When we arrived in Jerusalem, the brothers welcomed us gladly.

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

Acts 21:18–26

- 18 The next day Paul went in with us to see James, and all the elders were there.
 19 When Paul had greeted them, he began to explain in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.
 20 When they heard this, they praised God. Then they said to him, "You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all ardent observers of the law.
 21 They have been informed about you—that you teach all the Jews now living among the Gentiles to abandon Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or live according to our customs.
 22 What then should we do? They will no doubt hear that you have come.
 23 So do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow;
 24 take them and purify yourself along with them and pay their expenses, so that they may have their heads shaved. Then everyone will know there is nothing in what they have been told about you, but that you yourself live in conformity with the law.
 25 But regarding the Gentiles who have believed, we have written a letter, having decided that they should avoid meat that has been sacrificed to idols and blood and what has been strangled and sexual immorality."

26 Then Paul took the men the next day, and after he had purified himself along with them, he went to the temple and gave notice of the completion of the days of purification, when the sacrifice would be offered for each 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 the province of Asia who had seen him in the temple area stirred up the whole crowd and seized him,
 28 shouting, "Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches everyone everywhere against our people, our law, and this sanctuary! Furthermore he has brought Greeks into the inner courts of the temple and made this holy place ritually unclean!"
 29 (For they had seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him previously, and they assumed Paul had brought him into the inner temple courts.)
 30 The whole city was stirred up, and the people rushed together. They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple courts, and immediately the doors were shut.
 31 While they were trying to kill him, a report was sent up to the commanding officer of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion.
 32 He immediately took soldiers and centurions and ran down to the crowd. When they saw the commanding officer and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.
 33 Then the commanding officer came up and arrested him and ordered him to be tied up with two chains; he then asked who he was and what he had done.
 34 But some in the crowd shouted one thing, and others something else, and when the commanding officer was unable to find out the truth because of the disturbance, he ordered Paul to be brought into the barracks.
 35 When he came to the steps, Paul had to be carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob,
 36 for a crowd of people followed them, screaming, "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 commanding officer, "May I say something to you?" The officer replied, "Do you know Greek?
 38 Then you're not that Egyptian who started a rebellion and led the four thousand men of the 'Assassins' into the wilderness some time ago?"
 39 Paul answered, "I am a Jew from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of an important city. Please allow me to speak to the people."
 40 When the commanding officer had given him permission, Paul stood on the steps and gestured to the people with his hand. When they had become silent, he addressed them in Aramaic,

Paul Addresses the Crowd in Aramaic

22:1 "Brothers and fathers, listen to my defense that I now make to you."
 2 (When they heard that he was addressing them in Aramaic, they became even quieter.) Then Paul said,
 3 "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated with strictness under Gamaliel according to the law of our ancestors, and was zealous for God just as all of you are today.
 4 I persecuted this Way even to the point of death, tying up both men and women and putting them in prison,
 5 as both the high priest and the whole council of elders can testify about me. From them I also received letters to the brothers in Damascus, and I was on my way to make arrests there and bring the prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.
 6 As I was en route and near Damascus, about noon a very bright light from heaven suddenly flashed around me.
 7 Then I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?'
 8 I answered, 'Who are you, Lord?' He said to me, 'I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you are persecuting.'
 9 Those who were with me saw the light, but did not understand the voice of the one who was speaking to me.
 10 So I asked, 'What should I do, Lord?' The Lord said to me, 'Get up and go to Damascus; there you will be told about everything that you have been designated to do.'
 11 Since I could not see because of the brilliance of that light, I came to Damascus led by the hand of those who were with me.
 12 A man named Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who live there,
 13 came to me and stood beside me and said to me, 'Brother Saul, regain your sight!' And at that very moment I looked up and saw him.
 14 Then he said, 'The God of our ancestors has already chosen you to know his will, to see the Righteous One, and to hear a command from his mouth,
 15 because you will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard.'

16 And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized, and have your sins washed away, calling on his name.’
 17 When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance
 18 and saw the Lord saying to me, ‘Hurry and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.’
 19 I replied, ‘Lord, they themselves know that I imprisoned and beat those in the various synagogues who believed in you.
 20 And when the blood of your witness Stephen was shed, I myself was standing nearby, approving, and guarding the cloaks of those who were killing him.’
 21 Then he said to me, ‘Go, because I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’”
 22 The crowd was listening to him until he said this. Then they raised their voices and shouted, “Away with this man from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live!”
 23 While they were screaming and throwing off their cloaks and tossing dust in the air,
 24a the commanding officer ordered Paul to be brought back into the barracks.

Paul the Roman Citizen

24b He told them to interrogate Paul by beating him with a lash so that he could find out the reason the crowd was shouting at Paul in this way.
 25 When they had stretched him out for the lash, Paul said to the centurion standing nearby, “Is it legal for you to lash a man who is a Roman citizen without a proper trial?”
 26 When the centurion heard this, he went to the commanding officer and reported it, saying, “What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman citizen.”
 27 So the commanding officer came and asked Paul, “Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?” He replied, “Yes.”
 28 The commanding officer answered, “I acquired this citizenship with a large sum of money.” “But I was even born a citizen,” Paul replied.
 29 Then those who were about to interrogate him stayed away from him, and the commanding officer was frightened when he realized that Paul was a Roman citizen and that he had had him tied up.

Paul Before the Jewish Council (Summer 55)

Acts 22:30–23:11

22:30 The next day, because the commanding officer wanted to know the true reason Paul was being accused by the Jews, he released him and ordered the chief priests and the whole council to assemble. He then brought Paul down and had him stand before them.
 23:1 Paul looked directly at the council and said, “Brothers, I have lived my life with a clear conscience before God to this day.”
 2 At that the high priest Ananias ordered those standing near Paul 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 there judging me according to the law, and in violation of the law you order me to be struck?”
 4 Those standing near him said, “Do you dare insult God’s high priest?”
 5 Paul replied, “I did not realize, brothers, that he was the high priest, for it is written, ‘*You must not speak evil about a ruler of your people.*’” [[Exod 22:28](#)]
 6 Then when Paul noticed that part of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, he shouted out in the council, “Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. I am on trial concerning the hope of the resurrection of the dead!”
 7 When he said this, an argument began between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided.
 8 (For the Sadducees say there is no resurrection, or angel, or spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.)
 9 There was a great commotion, and some experts in the law from the party of the Pharisees stood up and protested strongly, “We find nothing wrong with this man. What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?”
 10 When the argument became so great the commanding officer feared that they would tear Paul to pieces, he ordered the detachment to go down, take him away from them by force, and bring him into the barracks.
 11 The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, “Have courage, for just as you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.”

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A Plot Against Paul is Uncovered (Summer 55)

Acts 23:12–22

- 12 When morning came, the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink anything until they had killed Paul.
- 13 There were more than forty of them who formed this conspiracy.
- 14 They went to the chief priests and the elders and said, “We have bound ourselves with a solemn oath not to partake of anything until we have killed Paul.
- 15 So now you and the council request the commanding officer to bring him down to you, as if you were going to determine his case by conducting a more thorough inquiry. We are ready to kill him before he comes near this place.”
- 16 But when the son of Paul’s sister heard about the ambush, he came and entered the barracks and told Paul.
- 17 Paul called one of the centurions and said, “Take this young man to the commanding officer, for he has something to report to him.”
- 18 So the centurion took him and brought him to the commanding officer and said, “The prisoner Paul called me and asked me to bring this young man to you because he has something to tell you.”
- 19 The commanding officer took him by the hand, withdrew privately, and asked, “What is it that you want to report to me?”
- 20 He replied, “The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as if they were going to inquire more thoroughly about him.
- 21 So do not let them persuade you to do this, because more than forty of them are lying in ambush for him. They have bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink anything until they have killed him, and now they are ready, waiting for you to agree to their request.”
- 22 Then the commanding officer sent the young man away, directing him, “Tell no one that you have reported these things to me.”

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

Acts 23:23–35

- 23 Then he summoned two of the centurions and said, “Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea along with seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen by nine o’clock tonight,
- 24 and provide mounts for Paul to ride so that he may be brought safely to Felix the governor.”
- 25 He wrote a letter that went like this:
- 26 Claudius Lysias to His Excellency Governor Felix, greetings.
- 27 This man was seized by the Jews and they were about to kill him, when I came up with the detachment and rescued him, because I had learned that he was a Roman citizen.
- 28 Since I wanted to know what charge they were accusing him of, I brought him down to their council.
- 29 I found he was accused with reference to controversial questions about their law, but no charge against him deserved death or imprisonment.
- 30 When I was informed there would be a plot against this man, I sent him to you at once, also ordering his accusers to state their charges against him before you.
- 31 So the soldiers, in accordance with their orders, took Paul and brought him to Antipatris during the night.
- 32 The next day they let the horsemen go on with him, and they returned to the barracks.
- 33 When the horsemen came to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they also presented Paul to him.
- 34 When the governor had read the letter, he asked what province he was from. When he learned that he was from Cilicia,
- 35 he said, “I will give you a hearing when your accusers arrive too.” Then he ordered that Paul be kept under guard in Herod’s palace.

Paul’s Defense Before Felix (Summer 55)

Acts 24:1–23

- 1 After five days the high priest Ananias came down with some elders and an attorney named Tertullus, and they brought formal charges against Paul to the governor.
- 2 When Paul had been summoned, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying, “We have experienced a lengthy time of peace through your rule, and reforms are being made in this nation through your foresight.
- 3 Most excellent Felix, we acknowledge this everywhere and in every way with all gratitude.
- 4 But so that I may not delay you any further, I beg you to hear us briefly with your customary graciousness.
- 5 For we have found this man to be a troublemaker, one who stirs up riots among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.

6 He even tried to desecrate the temple, so we arrested him.

7 [*this version follows NA²⁷ in omitting this verse*]

8 When you examine him yourself, you will be able to learn from him about all these things we are accusing him of doing.”

9 The Jews also joined in the verbal attack, claiming that these things were true.

10 When the governor gestured for him to speak, Paul replied, “Because I know that you have been a judge over this nation for many years, I confidently make my defense.

11 As you can verify for yourself, not more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship.

12 They did not find me arguing with anyone or stirring up a crowd in the temple courts or in the synagogues or throughout the city,
13 nor can they prove to you the things they are accusing me of doing.

14 But I confess this to you, that I worship the God of our ancestors according to the Way (which they call a sect), believing everything that is according to the law and that is written in the prophets.

15 I have a hope in God (a hope that these men themselves accept too) that there is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous.

16 This is the reason I do my best to always have a clear conscience toward God and toward people.

17 After several years I came to bring to my people gifts for the poor and to present offerings,

18 which I was doing when they found me in the temple, ritually purified, without a crowd or a disturbance.

19 But there are some Jews from the province of Asia who should be here before you and bring charges, if they have anything against me.

20 Or these men here should tell what crime they found me guilty of when I stood before the council,

21 other than this one thing I shouted out while I stood before them: ‘I am on trial before you today concerning the resurrection of the dead.’”

22 Then Felix, who understood the facts concerning the Way more accurately, adjourned their hearing, saying, “When Lysias the commanding officer comes down, I will decide your case.”

23 He ordered the centurion to guard Paul, but to let him have some freedom, and not to prevent any of his friends from meeting his needs.

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

Acts 24:24–26

24 Some days later, when Felix arrived with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, he sent for Paul and heard him speak about faith in Christ Jesus.

25 While Paul was discussing righteousness, self-control, and the coming judgment, Felix became frightened and said, “Go away for now, and when I have an opportunity, I will send for you.”

26 At the same time he was also hoping that Paul would give him money, and for this reason he sent for Paul as often as possible and talked with him.

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

Acts 24:27–25:12

24:27 After two years had passed, Porcius Festus succeeded Felix, and because he wanted to do the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul in prison.

25:1 Now three days after Festus arrived in the province, he went up to Jerusalem from Caesarea.

2 So the chief priests and the most prominent men of the Jews brought formal charges against Paul to him.

3 Requesting him to do them a favor against Paul, they urged Festus to summon him to Jerusalem, planning an ambush to kill him along the way.

4 Then Festus replied that Paul was being kept at Caesarea, and he himself intended to go there shortly.

5 “So,” he said, “let your leaders go down there with me, and if this man has done anything wrong, they may bring charges against him.”

6 After Festus had stayed not more than eight or ten days among them, he went down to Caesarea, and the next day he sat on the judgment seat and ordered Paul to be brought.

7 When he arrived, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many serious charges that they were not able to prove.

8 Paul said in his defense, “I have committed no offense against the Jewish law or against the temple or against Caesar.”

9 But Festus, wanting to do the Jews a favor, asked Paul, “Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and be tried before me there on these charges?”

10 Paul replied, “I am standing before Caesar’s judgment seat, where I should be tried. I have done nothing wrong to the Jews, as you also know very well.

11 If then I am in the wrong and have done anything that deserves death, I am not trying to escape dying, but if not one of their

charges against me is true, no one can hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!”

12 Then, after conferring with his council, Festus replied, “You have appealed to Caesar; to Caesar you will go!”

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

Acts 25:13–22

13 After several days had passed, King Agrippa and Bernice arrived at Caesarea to pay their respects to Festus.

14 While they were staying there many days, Festus explained Paul’s case to the king to get his opinion, saying, “There is a man left here as a prisoner by Felix.

15 When I was in Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me about him, asking for a sentence of condemnation against him.

16 I answered them that it was not the custom of the Romans to hand over anyone before the accused had met his accusers face to face and had been given an opportunity to make a defense against the accusation.

17 So after they came back here with me, I did not postpone the case, but the next day I sat on the judgment seat and ordered the man to be brought.

18 When his accusers stood up, they did not charge him with any of the evil deeds I had suspected.

19 Rather they had several points of disagreement with him about their own religion and about a man named Jesus who was dead, whom Paul claimed to be alive.

20 Because I was at a loss how I could investigate these matters, I asked if he were willing to go to Jerusalem and be tried there on these charges.

21 But when Paul appealed to be kept in custody for the decision of His Majesty the Emperor, I ordered him to be kept under guard until I could send him to Caesar.”

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

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

Acts 25:23–26:32

25:23 So the next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp and entered the audience hall, along with the senior military officers and the prominent men of the city. When Festus gave the order, Paul was brought in.

24 Then Festus said, “King Agrippa, and all you who are present here with us, you see this man about whom the entire Jewish populace petitioned me both in Jerusalem and here, shouting loudly that he ought not to live any longer.

25 But I found that he had done nothing that deserved death, and when he appealed to His Majesty the Emperor, I decided to send him.

26 But I have nothing definite to write to my lord about him. Therefore I have brought him before you all, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after this preliminary hearing I may have something to write.

27 For it seems unreasonable to me to send a prisoner without clearly indicating the charges against him.”

26:1 So Agrippa said to Paul, “You have permission to speak for yourself.” Then Paul held out his hand and began his defense:

2 “Regarding all the things I have been accused of by the Jews, King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate that I am about to make my defense before you today,

3 because you are especially familiar with all the customs and controversial issues of the Jews. Therefore I ask you to listen to me patiently.

4 Now all the Jews know the way I lived from my youth, spending my life from the beginning among my own people and in Jerusalem.

5 They know, because they have known me from time past, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest party of our religion, I lived as a Pharisee.

6 And now I stand here on trial because of my hope in the promise made by God to our ancestors,

7 a promise that our twelve tribes hope to attain as they earnestly serve God night and day. Concerning this hope the Jews are accusing me, Your Majesty!

8 Why do you people think it is unbelievable that God raises the dead?

9 Of course, I myself was convinced that it was necessary to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus the Nazarene.

10 And that is what I did in Jerusalem: Not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons by the authority I received from the chief priests, but I also cast my vote against them when they were sentenced to death.

11 I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to force them to blaspheme. Because I was so furiously enraged at them, I went to persecute them even in foreign cities.

12 “While doing this very thing, as I was going to Damascus with authority and complete power from the chief priests,

13 about noon along the road, Your Majesty, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining everywhere around me and those traveling with me.

14 When we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? You are

hurting yourself by kicking against the goads.’

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

16 But get up and stand on your feet, for I have appeared to you for this reason, to designate you in advance as a servant and witness to the things you have seen and to the things in which I will appear to you.

17 I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you

18 to open their eyes so that they turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a share among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’

19 “Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,

20 but I declared to those in Damascus first, and then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds consistent with repentance.

21 For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple courts and were trying to kill me.

22 I have experienced help from God to this day, and so I stand testifying to both small and great, saying nothing except what the prophets and Moses said was going to happen:

23 that the Christ was to suffer and be the first to rise from the dead, to proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles.”

24 As Paul was saying these things in his defense, Festus exclaimed loudly, “You have lost your mind, Paul! Your great learning is driving you insane!”

25 But Paul replied, “I have not lost my mind, most excellent Festus, but am speaking true and rational words.

26 For the king knows about these things, and I am speaking freely to him, because I cannot believe that any of these things has escaped his notice, for this was not done in a corner.

27 Do you believe the prophets, King Agrippa? I know that you believe.”

28 Agrippa said to Paul, “In such a short time are you persuading me to become a Christian?”

29 Paul replied, “I pray to God that whether in a short or a long time not only you but also all those who are listening to me today could become such as I am, except for these chains.”

30 So the king got up, and with him the governor and Bernice and those sitting with them,

31 and as they were leaving they said to one another, “This man is not doing anything deserving death or imprisonment.”

32 Agrippa said to Festus, “This man could have been released 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 we would sail to Italy, they handed over Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion of the Augustan Cohort named Julius.
- 2 We went on board a ship from Adramyttium that was about to sail to various ports along the coast of the province of Asia and put out to sea, accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica.
- 3 The next day we put in at Sidon, and Julius, treating Paul kindly, allowed him to go to his friends so they could provide him with what he needed.
- 4 From there we put out to sea and sailed under the lee of Cyprus because the winds were against us.
- 5 After we had sailed across the open sea off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we put in at Myra in Lycia.
- 6 There the centurion found a ship from Alexandria sailing for Italy, and he put us aboard it.
- 7 We sailed slowly for many days and arrived with difficulty off Cnidus. Because the wind prevented us from going any farther, we sailed under the lee of Crete off Salmone.
- 8 With difficulty we sailed along the coast of Crete and came to a place called Fair Havens that was near the town of Lasea.

Paul's Failed Intervention

- 9 Since considerable time had passed and the voyage was now dangerous because the fast was already over, Paul advised them,
- 10 "Men, I can see the voyage is going to end in disaster and great loss not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives."
- 11 But the centurion was more convinced by the captain and the ship's owner than by what Paul said.
- 12 Because the harbor was not suitable to spend the winter in, the majority decided to put out to sea from there. They hoped that 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 gentle south wind sprang up, they thought they could carry out their purpose, so they weighed anchor and sailed close along the coast of Crete.
- 14 Not long after this, a hurricane-force wind called the northeaster blew down from the island.
- 15 When the ship was caught in it and could not head into the wind, we gave way to it and were driven along.
- 16 As we ran under the lee of a small island called Cauda, we were able with difficulty to get the ship's boat under control.
- 17 After the crew had hoisted it aboard, they used supports to undergird the ship. Fearing they would run aground on the Syrtis, they lowered the sea anchor, thus letting themselves be driven along.
- 18 The next day, because we were violently battered by the storm, they began throwing the cargo overboard,
- 19 and on the third day they threw the ship's gear overboard with their own hands.
- 20 When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and a violent storm continued to batter us, we finally abandoned all hope of being saved.

Paul's Intervention and Prophecy

- 21 Since many of them had no desire to eat, Paul stood up among them and said, "Men, you should have listened to me and not put out to sea from Crete, thus avoiding this damage and loss.
- 22 And now I advise you to keep up your courage, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only the ship will be lost.
- 23 For last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve came to me
- 24 and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul! You must stand before Caesar, and God has graciously granted you the safety of all who are sailing with you.'
- 25 Therefore keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will be just as I have been told.
- 26 But we must run aground on some island."

The Ship Drifts Toward Malta

- 27 When the fourteenth night had come, while we were being driven across the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sailors suspected they were approaching some land.
- 28 They took soundings and found the water was twenty fathoms deep; when they had sailed a little farther they took soundings again and found it was fifteen fathoms deep.
- 29 Because they were afraid that we would run aground on the rocky coast, they threw out four anchors from the stern and wished for day to appear.
- 30 Then when the sailors tried to escape from the ship and were lowering the ship's boat into the sea, pretending that they were going to put out anchors from the bow,

31 Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, “Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved.”

32 Then the soldiers cut the ropes of the ship’s boat and let it drift away.

Paul Urges Them to Eat

33 As day was about to dawn, Paul urged them all to take some food, saying, “Today is the fourteenth day you have been in suspense and have gone without food; you have eaten nothing.

34 Therefore I urge you to take some food, for this is important for your survival. For not one of you will lose a hair from his head.”

35 After he said this, Paul took bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all, broke it, and began to eat.

36 So all of them were encouraged and took food themselves.

37 (We were in all two hundred seventy-six persons on the ship.)

38 When they had eaten enough to be satisfied, they lightened the ship by throwing the wheat into the sea.

Shipwreck

39 When day came, they did not recognize the land, but they noticed a bay with a beach, where they decided to run the ship aground if they could.

40 So they slipped the anchors and left them in the sea, at the same time loosening the linkage that bound the steering oars together. Then they hoisted the foresail to the wind and steered toward the beach.

41 But they encountered a patch of crosscurrents and ran the ship aground; the bow stuck fast and could not be moved, but the stern was being broken up by the force of the waves.

42 Now the soldiers’ plan was to kill the prisoners so that none of them would escape by swimming away.

43 But the centurion, wanting to save Paul’s life, prevented them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land,

44 and the rest were to follow, some on planks and some on pieces of the ship. And in this way 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 After we had safely reached shore, we learned that the island was called Malta.

2 The local inhabitants showed us extraordinary kindness, for they built a fire and welcomed us all because it had started to rain and was cold.

3 When Paul had gathered a bundle of brushwood and was putting it on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened itself on his hand.

4 When the local people saw the creature hanging from Paul’s hand, they said to one another, “No doubt this man is a murderer! Although he has escaped from the sea, Justice herself has not allowed him to live!”

5 However, Paul shook the creature off into the fire and suffered no harm.

6 But they were expecting that he was going to swell up or suddenly drop dead. So after they had waited a long time and had seen nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god.

7 Now in the region around that place were fields belonging to the chief official of the island, named Publius, who welcomed us and entertained us hospitably as guests for three days.

8 The father of Publius lay sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and after praying, placed his hands on him and healed him.

9 After this had happened, many of the people on the island who were sick also came and were healed.

10 They also bestowed many honors, and when we were preparing to sail, they gave us all the supplies we needed.

Paul’s Voyage to Rome—From Malta to Rome (February 58)

Acts 28:11–16

11 After three months we put out to sea in an Alexandrian ship that had wintered at the island and had the “Heavenly Twins” as its figurehead.

12 We put in at Syracuse and stayed there three days.

13 From there we cast off and arrived at Rhegium, and after one day a south wind sprang up and on the second day we came to Puteoli.

14 There we found some brothers and were invited to stay with them seven days. And in this way we came to Rome.

15 The brothers from there, when they heard about us, came as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns to meet us. When he saw them, Paul thanked God and took courage.

16 When we entered Rome, Paul was allowed to live 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 the local Jewish leaders together. When they had assembled, he said to them, “Brothers, although I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our ancestors, from Jerusalem I was handed over as a prisoner to the Romans.

18 When they had heard my case, they wanted to release me, because there was no basis for a death sentence against me.

19 But when the Jews objected, I was forced to appeal to Caesar—not that I had some charge to bring against my own people.

20 So for this reason I have asked to see you and speak with you, for I am bound with this chain because of the hope of Israel.”

21 They replied, “We have received no letters from Judea about you, nor have any of the brothers come from there and reported or said anything bad about you.

22 But we would like to hear from you what you think, for regarding this sect we know that people everywhere speak against it.”

Paul Presents the Gospel

23 They set a day to meet with him, and they came to him where he was staying in even greater numbers. From morning until evening he explained things to them, testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus from both the law of Moses and the prophets.

24 Some were convinced by what he said, but others refused to believe.

25 So they began to leave, unable to agree among themselves, after Paul made one last statement: “The Holy Spirit spoke rightly to your ancestors through the prophet Isaiah

26 when he said,

*‘Go to this people and say,
“You will keep on hearing, but will never understand,
and you will keep on looking, but will never perceive.*

27 *For the heart of this people has become dull,
and their ears are hard of hearing,
and they have closed their eyes,
so that they would not see with their eyes
and hear with their ears
and understand with their heart and turn,
and I would heal them.”* [\[Isa 6:9–10\]](#)

28 “Therefore be advised that this salvation from God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen!”

29 [*v. 29 is not well attested for the original text of Acts*]

Paul's Ministry While Under House Arrest

30 Paul lived there two whole years in his own rented quarters and welcomed all who came to him,

31 proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with complete boldness and without restriction.

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Paul's Letter to the Church in Philippi (c. 59)

Philippians 1–4

Greeting

1:1 From Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the overseers and deacons.
2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

Thanksgiving

3 I thank my God every time I remember you.
4 I always pray with joy in my every prayer for all of you
5 because of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.
6 For I am sure of this very thing, that the one who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.
7 For it is right for me to think this about all of you, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel all of you became partners in God's grace together with me.
8 For God is my witness that I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

Prayer

9 And I pray this, that your love may abound even more and more in knowledge and every kind of insight
10 so that you can decide what is best, and thus be sincere and blameless for the day of Christ,
11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

Paul Reflects on His Imprisonment

12 I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that my situation has actually turned out to advance the gospel:
13 The whole imperial guard and everyone else knows that I am in prison for the sake of Christ,
14 and most of the brothers and sisters, having confidence in the Lord because of my imprisonment, now more than ever dare to speak the word fearlessly.
15 Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from goodwill.
16 The latter do so from love because they know that I am placed here for the defense of the gospel.
17 The former proclaim Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, because they think they can cause trouble for me in my imprisonment.
18 What is the result? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is being proclaimed, and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice,
19 for I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.
20 My confident hope is that I will in no way be ashamed but that with complete boldness, even now as always, Christ will be exalted in my body, whether I live or die.
21 For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain.
22 Now if I am to go on living in the body, this will mean productive work for me, yet I don't know which I prefer:
23 I feel torn between the two, because I have a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far,
24 but it is more vital for your sake that I remain in the body.
25 And since I am sure of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for the sake of your progress and joy in the faith,
26 so that what you can be proud of may increase because of me in Christ Jesus, when I come back to you.

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 whether I remain absent—I should hear that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind, by contending side by side for the faith of the gospel,
28 and by not being intimidated in any way by your opponents. This is a sign of their destruction, but of your salvation—a sign which is from God.
29 For it has been granted to you not only to believe in Christ but also to suffer for him,
30 since you are encountering the same conflict that you saw me face and now hear that I am facing.

A Call for Unity and Mutual Consideration

2:1 Therefore, if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort provided by love, any fellowship in the Spirit, any affection or mercy,
2 complete my joy and be of the same mind, by having the same love, being united in spirit, and having one purpose.
3 Instead of being motivated by selfish ambition or vanity, each of you should, in humility, be moved to treat one another as more important than yourself.
4 Each of you should be concerned not only about your own interests, but about the interests of others as well.

Jesus—the Supreme Example of Humility

5 You should have the same attitude toward one another that Christ Jesus had,

- 6 who though he existed in the form of God
did not regard equality with God
as something to be grasped,
7 but emptied himself
by taking on the form of a slave,
by looking like other men,
and by sharing in human nature.
8 He humbled himself,
by becoming obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross!
9 As a result God exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
10 so that at the name of Jesus
every knee will bow—
in heaven and on earth and under the earth—
11 and every tongue confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord
to the glory of God the Father.

Work Out Your Salvation

- 12 So then, my dear friends, just as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence but even more in my absence, continue working out your salvation with awe and reverence,
13 for the one bringing forth in you both the desire and the effort—for the sake of his good pleasure—is God.
14 Do everything without grumbling or arguing,
15 so that you may be blameless and pure, children of God without blemish though you live in a crooked and perverse society, in which you shine as lights in the world
16 by holding on to the word of life so that on the day of Christ I will have a reason to boast that I did not run in vain nor labor in vain.
17 But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice together with all of you.
18 And in the same way you also should be glad and rejoice together with me.

News About Timothy

- 19 Now I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be encouraged by hearing news about you.
20 For there is no one here like him who will readily demonstrate his deep concern for you.
21 Others are busy with their own concerns, not those of Jesus Christ.
22 But you know his qualifications, that like a son working with his father, he served with me in advancing the gospel.
23 So I hope to send him as soon as I know more about my situation,
24 though I am confident in the Lord that I too will be coming to see you soon.

News About Epaphroditus

- 25 But for now I have considered it necessary to send Epaphroditus to you. For he is my brother, coworker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to me in my need.
26 Indeed, he greatly missed all of you and was distressed because you heard that he had been ill.
27 In fact he became so ill that he nearly died. But God showed mercy to him—and not to him only, but also to me—so that I would not have grief on top of grief.
28 Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you can rejoice and I can be free from anxiety.
29 So welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor people like him,
30 since it was because of the work of Christ that he almost died. He risked his life so that he could make up for your inability to serve me.

Beware of False Teachers and Their Impressive Credentials

- 3:1 Finally, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! To write this 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 those who mutilate the flesh!

3 For we are the circumcision, the ones who worship by the Spirit of God, exult in Christ Jesus, and do not rely on human credentials
4 —though mine too are significant. If someone thinks he has good reasons to put confidence in human credentials, I have more:
5 I was circumcised on the eighth day, from the people of Israel and the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews. I lived according to the law as a Pharisee.

6 In my zeal for God I persecuted the church. According to the righteousness stipulated in the law I was blameless.

Knowing Christ is the Ultimate Credential

7 But these assets I have come to regard as liabilities because of Christ.

8 More than that, I now regard all things as liabilities compared to the far greater value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things—indeed, I regard them as dung!—that I may gain Christ,

9 and be found in him, not because I have my own righteousness derived from the law, but because I have the righteousness that comes by way of Christ’s faithfulness—a righteousness from God that is in fact based on Christ’s faithfulness.

10 My aim is to know him, to experience the power of his resurrection, to share in his sufferings, and to be like him in his death,

11 and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Paul Makes No Claim of Resurrection Perfection

12 Not that I have already attained this—that is, I have not already been perfected—but I strive to lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus also laid hold of me.

13 Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself to have attained this. Instead I am single-minded: Forgetting the things that are behind and reaching out for the things that are ahead,

14 with this goal in mind, I strive toward the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

15 Therefore let those of us who are “perfect” embrace this point of view. If you think otherwise, God will reveal to you the error of your ways.

16 Nevertheless, let us live up to the standard that we have already attained.

A Call to Imitate Paul’s Godly Example

17 Be imitators of me, brothers and sisters, and watch carefully those who are living this way, just as you have us as an example.

18 For many live, about whom I have often told you, and now, with tears, I tell you that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ.

19 Their end is destruction, their god is the belly, they exult in their shame, and they think about earthly things.

20 But our citizenship is in heaven—and we also await a savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ,

21 who will transform these humble bodies of ours into the likeness of his glorious body by means of that power by which he is able to subject all things to himself.

Closing Exhortations

4:1 So then, my brothers and sisters, dear friends whom I long to see, my joy and crown, stand in the Lord in this way, my dear friends!

2 I appeal to Euodia and to Syntyche to agree in the Lord.

3 Yes, I say also to you, true companion, help them. They have struggled together in the gospel ministry along with me and Clement and my other coworkers, whose names are in the book of life.

4 Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I say, rejoice!

5 Let everyone see your gentleness. The Lord is near!

6 Do not be anxious about anything. Instead, in every situation, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, tell your requests to God.

7 And the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is worthy of respect, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if something is excellent or praiseworthy, think about these things.

9 And what you learned and received and heard and saw in me, do these things. And the God of peace will be with you.

Paul’s Gratitude for the Philippians’ Gift

10 I have great joy in the Lord because now at last you have again expressed your concern for me. (Now I know you were concerned before but had no opportunity to do anything.)

11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content in any circumstance.

12 I have experienced times of need and times of abundance. In any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of contentment, whether I go satisfied or hungry, have plenty or nothing.

13 I am able to do all things through the one who strengthens me.

14 Nevertheless, you did well to share with me in my trouble.

15 And as you Philippians know, at the beginning of my gospel ministry, when I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in this matter of giving and receiving except you alone.

- 16 For even in Thessalonica on more than one occasion you sent something for my need.
17 I do not say this because I am seeking a gift. Rather, I seek the credit that abounds to your account.
18 For I have received everything, and I have plenty. I have all I need because I received from Epaphroditus what you sent—a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, very pleasing to God.
19 And my God will supply your every need according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.
20 May glory be given to God our Father forever and ever. Amen.

Final Greetings

- 21 Give greetings to all the saints in Christ Jesus. The brothers with me here send greetings.
22 All the saints greet you, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.
23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

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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 From Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus.

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

Praise to God for Our Spiritual Blessings in Christ

3 Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms in Christ.

4 For he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world that we may be holy and unblemished in his sight in love.

5 He did this by predestining us to adoption as his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the pleasure of his will—

6 to the praise of the glory of his grace that he has freely bestowed on us in his dearly loved Son.

7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace

8 that he lavished on us in all wisdom and insight.

9 He did this when he revealed to us the secret of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ,

10 toward the administration of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ—the things in heaven and the things on earth.

11 In Christ we too have been claimed as God's own possession, since we were predestined according to the one purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to the counsel of his will

12 so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, would be to the praise of his glory.

13 And when you heard the word of truth (the gospel of your salvation)—when you believed in Christ—you were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit,

14 who is the down payment of our inheritance, until 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, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,

16 I do not cease to give thanks for you when I remember you in my prayers.

17 I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you spiritual wisdom and revelation in your growing knowledge of him,

18 —since the eyes of your heart have been enlightened—so that you may know what is the hope of his calling, what is the wealth of his glorious inheritance in the saints,

19 and what is the incomparable greatness of his power toward us who believe, as displayed in the exercise of his immense strength.

20 This power he exercised in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms

21 far above every 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 God *put all things under Christ's feet*, [Ps 8:6] and he gave him to the church as head over all things.

23 Now the church is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

New Life in Christ—Salvation By Grace Through Faith

2:1 And although you were dead in your transgressions and sins,

2 in which you formerly lived according to this world's present path, according to the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the ruler of the spirit that is now energizing the sons of disobedience,

3 among whom all of us also formerly lived out our lives in the cravings of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and 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 though we were dead in transgressions, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you are saved!—

6 and he raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,

7 to demonstrate in the coming ages the surpassing wealth of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

God's New Creation—A Call to Good Works

8 For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God;

9 it is not from works, so that no one can boast.

10 For we are his workmanship, having been created in Christ Jesus for good works that God prepared beforehand so we may do 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” that is performed on the body by human hands—

12 that you were at that time without the Messiah, alienated from the citizenship 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 used to be far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

14 For he is our peace, the one who made both groups into one and who destroyed the middle wall of partition, the hostility,

15 when he nullified in his flesh the law of commandments in decrees. He did this to create in himself one new man out of two, thus making peace,

16 and to reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by which the hostility has been killed.

17 And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near,

18 so that through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

19 So then you are no longer foreigners and noncitizens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of God’s household,

20 because you have been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.

21 In him the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,

22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place 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 that was given to me for you,

3 that by revelation the divine secret was made known to me, as I wrote before briefly.

4 When reading this, you will be able to understand my insight into this secret of Christ.

5 Now this secret was not disclosed to people in former generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit,

6 namely, that through the gospel the Gentiles are fellow heirs, fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus.

7 I became a servant of this gospel according to the gift of God’s grace that was given to me by the exercise of his power.

8 To me—less than the least of all the saints—this grace was given, to proclaim to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ

9 and to enlighten everyone about God’s secret plan—a secret that has been hidden for ages in God who has created all things.

10 The purpose of this enlightenment is that through the church the multifaceted wisdom of God should now be disclosed to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly realms.

11 This was according to the eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,

12 in whom we have boldness and confident access to God because of Christ’s faithfulness.

13 For this reason I ask you not to lose heart because of what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.

Intercessory Prayer for Power, Love and Spiritual Maturity

14 For this reason I kneel before the Father,

15 from whom every family in heaven and on the earth is named.

16 I pray that according to the wealth of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner person,

17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, so that, because you have been rooted and grounded in love,

18 you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,

19 and thus to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

20 Now to him who by the power that is working within us is able to do far beyond all that we ask or think,

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 I, therefore, the prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live worthily of the calling with which you have been called,
 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,
 3 making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you too were called to the 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 the gift of Christ.
 8 Therefore it says, “*When he ascended on high he captured captives; he gave gifts to men.*” [[Ps 68:18](#)]
 9 Now what is the meaning of “*he ascended,*” except that he also descended to the lower regions, namely, the earth?
 10 He, the very one who descended, is also the one who ascended above all the heavens, in order to fill all things.
 11 It was he who gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers,
 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, that is, to build up the body of Christ,
 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God—a mature person, attaining to the measure of Christ’s full stature.
 14 So we are no longer to be children, tossed back and forth by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching by the trickery of people who craftily carry out their deceitful schemes.
 15 But practicing the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Christ, who is the head.
 16 From him the whole body grows, fitted and held together through every supporting ligament. As each one does its part, the body grows in love.

Put Off the Old Man (living for sin and self) and Put On the New (living for Christ and holiness)

17 So I say this, and insist in the Lord, that you no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking.
 18 They are darkened in their understanding, being alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardness of their hearts.
 19 Because they are callous, they have given themselves over to indecency for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.
 20 But you did not learn about Christ like this,
 21 if indeed you heard about him and were taught in him, just as the truth is in Jesus.
 22 You were taught with reference to your former way of life to lay aside the old man who is being corrupted in accordance with deceitful desires,
 23 to be renewed in the spirit of your mind,
 24 and to put on the new man who has been created in God’s image—in righteousness and holiness that comes from truth.

Specific Examples of How to Put Off the Old Man and Put on the New

25 Therefore, having laid aside falsehood, *each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor*, [[Zech 8:16](#)] for we are members of one another.
 26 *Be angry and do not sin*; [[Ps 4:4](#)] do not let the sun go down on the cause of your anger.
 27 Do not give the devil an opportunity.
 28 The one who steals must steal no longer; rather he must labor, doing good with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with the one who has need.
 29 You must let no unwholesome word come out of your mouth, but only what is beneficial for the building up of the one in need, that it may give grace to those who hear.
 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.
 31 You must put away every kind of bitterness, anger, wrath, quarreling, and evil, slanderous talk.
 32 Instead, be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you.
 5:1 Therefore, be imitators of God as dearly loved children
 2 and live in love, just as Christ also loved us and gave himself for us, a sacrificial and fragrant offering to God.

From Darkness to Light—Do What is Pleasing to God

3 But among you there must not be either sexual immorality, impurity of any kind, or greed, as these are not fitting for the saints.
 4 Neither should there be vulgar speech, foolish talk, or coarse jesting—all of which are out of character—but rather thanksgiving.
 5 For you can be confident of this one thing: that no person who is immoral, impure, or greedy (such a person is an idolater) has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.
 6 Let nobody deceive you with empty words, for because of these things God’s wrath comes on the sons of disobedience.

7 Therefore do not be partakers with them,
 8 for you were at one time darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of the light—
 9 for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth—
 10 trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.
 11 Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.
 12 For the things they do in secret are shameful even to mention.
 13 But all things being exposed by the light are made evident.
 14 For everything made evident is light, and for this reason it says:

“Awake, O sleeper!
 Rise 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 very careful how you live—not as unwise but as wise,
 16 taking advantage of every opportunity, because the days are evil.
 17 For this reason do not be foolish, but be wise by understanding what the Lord’s will is.
 18 And do not get drunk with wine, which is debauchery, but be filled by the Spirit,
 19 speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music in your hearts to the Lord,
 20 always giving thanks to God the Father for each other in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 21 and submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Husbands and Wives—A Physical Illustration of the Union of Christ and the Church

22 Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord,
 23 because the husband is the head of the wife as also Christ is the head of the church—he himself being the savior of the body.
 24 But as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.
 25 Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her
 26 to sanctify her by cleansing her with the washing of the water by the word,
 27 so that he may present the church to himself as glorious—not having a stain or wrinkle, or any such blemish, but holy and blameless.
 28 In the same way husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.
 29 For no one has ever hated his own body but he feeds it and takes care of it, just as Christ also does the church,
 30 for we are members of his body.
 31 *For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and will be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.* [[Gen 2:24](#)]
 32 This mystery is great—but I am actually speaking with reference to Christ and the church.
 33 Nevertheless, each one of you must also love his own wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect [*fear*] 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 accompanied by a promise, namely,
 3 “that it may go well with you and that you will live a long time on the earth.” [[Exod 20:12](#)]
 4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but raise them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Masters and Slaves—Remember That Christ is Master of All

5 Slaves, obey your human masters with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart as to Christ,
 6 not like those who do their work only when someone is watching—as people-pleasers—but as slaves of Christ doing the will of God from the heart.
 7 Obey with enthusiasm, as though serving the Lord and not people,
 8 because you know that each person, whether slave or free, if he does something good, this will be rewarded by the Lord.
 9 Masters, treat your slaves the same way, giving up the use of threats, because you know that both you and they have the same master in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

Spiritual Warfare and the Armor of God

10 Finally, be strengthened in the Lord and in the strength of his power.
 11 Clothe yourselves with the full armor of God so that you may be able to stand 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 rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens.
 13 For this reason, take up the full armor of God so that you may be able to stand your ground on the evil day, and having done

everything, to stand.

14 Stand firm therefore, by fastening the belt of truth around your waist, by putting on the breastplate of righteousness,

15 by fitting your feet with the preparation that comes from the good news of peace,

16 and in all of this, by taking up the shield of faith with which you can 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 every prayer and petition, pray at all times in the Spirit, and to this end be alert, with all perseverance and requests for all the saints.

19 Pray for me also, that I may be given the message when I begin to speak—that I may confidently make known the mystery of the gospel,

20 for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may be able to speak boldly as I ought to speak.

Closing Remarks

21 Tychicus, my dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will make everything known to you, so that you too may know about my circumstances, how I am doing.

22 I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts.

23 Peace to the brothers and sisters, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

24 Grace be with all of those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.

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Paul's Letter to the Church in Colossae (c. 60)

Colossians 1–4

Greeting

1:1 From Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,
2 to the saints, the faithful brothers and sisters in Christ, at Colossae. Grace and peace to you from God our Father!

Thanksgiving for the Colossians' Faith

3 We always give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you,
4 since we heard about your faith in Christ Jesus and the love that you have for all the saints.
5 Your faith and love have arisen from the hope laid up for you in heaven, which you have heard about in the message of truth, the gospel
6 that has come to you. Just as in the entire world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, so it has also been bearing fruit and growing among you from the first day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth.
7 You learned the gospel from Epaphras, our dear fellow slave—a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf—
8 who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

Prayer for Spiritual Growth

9 For this reason we also, from the day we heard about you, have not ceased praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,
10 so that you may live worthily of the Lord and please him in all respects—bearing fruit in every good deed, growing in the knowledge of God,
11 being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might for the display of all patience and steadfastness, joyfully
12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified you to share in the saints' inheritance in the light.
13 He delivered us from the power of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of the Son he loves,
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 over all creation,
16 for all things in heaven and on earth were created by him—all things, whether visible or invisible, whether thrones or dominions, whether principalities or powers—all things were created through him and for him.
17 He himself is before all things and all things are held together in him.
18 He is the head of the body, the church, as well as the beginning, the firstborn from among the dead, so that he himself may become first in all things.
19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in the Son
20 and through him to reconcile all things to himself by making peace through the blood of his cross—through him, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

You Have Been Reconciled—Stand Firm in the Faith

21 And you were at one time strangers and enemies in your minds as expressed through your evil deeds,
22 but now he has reconciled you by his physical body through death to present you holy, without blemish, and blameless before him—
23 if indeed you remain in the faith, established and firm, without shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard. This gospel has also been preached in all creation under heaven, and I, Paul, have become its servant.

Paul's Commitment to the Gospel

24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and I fill up in my physical body—for the sake of his body, the church—what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ.
25 I became a servant of the church according to the stewardship from God—given to me for you—in order to complete the word of God,
26 that is, the mystery that has been kept hidden from ages and generations, but has now been revealed to his saints.
27 God wanted to make known to them the glorious riches of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.
28 We proclaim him by instructing and teaching all people with all wisdom so that we may present every person mature in Christ.
29 Toward this goal I also labor, struggling according to his power that powerfully works in me.

Paul's Commitment to the Colossians and Laodiceans

2:1 For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you, and for those in Laodicea, and for those who have not met me face to face.

2 My goal is that their hearts, having been knit together in love, may be encouraged, and that they may have all the riches that assurance brings in their understanding of the knowledge of the mystery of God, namely, Christ,
3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.
4 I say this so that no one will deceive you through arguments that sound reasonable.
5 For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your morale and the firmness of your faith in Christ.

Remain Centered on Christ—All That You are Spiritually is Because of Your Union With Him

6 Therefore, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him,
7 rooted and built up in him and firm in your faith just as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.
8 Be careful not to allow anyone to captivate you through an empty, deceitful philosophy that is according to human traditions and the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.
9 For in him all the fullness of deity lives in bodily form,
10 and you have been filled in him, who is the head over every ruler and authority.
11 In him you also were circumcised—not, however, with a circumcision performed by human hands, but by the removal of the fleshly body, that is, through the circumcision done by Christ.
12 Having been buried with him in baptism, you also have been raised with him through your faith in the power of God who raised him from the dead.
13 And even though you were dead in your transgressions and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, he nevertheless made you alive with him, having forgiven all your transgressions.
14 He has destroyed what was against us, a certificate of indebtedness expressed in decrees opposed to us. He has taken it away by nailing it to the cross.
15 Disarming the rulers and authorities, he has made a public disgrace of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Identify and Reject False Teaching

16 Therefore do not let anyone judge you with respect to food or drink, or in the matter of a feast, new moon, or Sabbath days—
17 these are only the shadow of the things to come, but the reality is Christ!
18 Let no one who delights in humility and the worship of angels pass judgment on you. That person goes on at great lengths about what he has supposedly seen, but he is puffed up with empty notions by his fleshly mind.
19 He has not held fast to the head from whom the whole body, supported and knit together through its ligaments and sinews, grows with a growth that is from God.
20 If you have died with Christ to the elemental spirits of the world, why do you submit to them as though you lived in the world?
21 “Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!”
22 These are all destined to perish with use, founded as they are on human commands and teachings.
23 Even though they have the appearance of wisdom with their self-imposed worship and false humility achieved by an unsparing treatment of the body—a wisdom with no true value—they in reality result in fleshly indulgence.

Keep Your Mind Focused on Heavenly Things

3:1 Therefore, if you have been raised with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.
2 Keep thinking about things above, not things on the earth,
3 for you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.
4 When Christ (who is your life) appears, then you too will be revealed in glory with him.

Put Off the Old Man (living for sin and self)

5 So put to death whatever in your nature belongs to the earth: sexual immorality, impurity, shameful passion, evil desire, and greed which is idolatry.
6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming on the sons of disobedience.
7 You also lived your lives in this way at one time, when you used to live among them.
8 But now, put off all such things as anger, rage, malice, slander, abusive language from your mouth.
9 Do not lie to one another since you have put off the old man with its practices
10 and have been clothed with the new man that is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of the one who created it.
11 Here there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all and in all.

Put on the New Man (living for Christ and holiness)

12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with a heart of mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience,
13 bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if someone happens to have a complaint against anyone else. Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also forgive others.

14 And to all these virtues add love, which is the perfect bond.

15 Let the peace of Christ be in control in your heart (for you were in fact called as one body to this peace), and be thankful.

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and exhorting one another with all wisdom, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, all with grace in your hearts to God.

17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Biblical Principles for Relationships and the Workplace

18 Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them.

20 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this is pleasing in the Lord.

21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, so they will not become disheartened.

22 Slaves, obey your earthly masters in every respect, not only when they are watching—like those who are strictly people-pleasers—but with a sincere heart, fearing the Lord.

23 Whatever you are doing, work at it with enthusiasm, as to the Lord and not for people,

24 because you know that you will receive your inheritance from the Lord as the reward. Serve the Lord Christ.

25 For the one who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there are no exceptions.

4:1 Masters, treat your slaves with justice and fairness, because you know that you also have a master in heaven.

Exhortation to Prayer and Christian Witness

2 Be devoted to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving.

3 At the same time pray for us too, that God may open a door for the message so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.

4 Pray that I may make it known as I should.

5 Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunities.

6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer everyone.

Tychicus to Deliver the Letter

7 Tychicus, a dear brother, faithful minister, and fellow slave in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me.

8 I sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are doing and that he may encourage your hearts.

9 I sent him with Onesimus, the faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you about everything here.

Closing Greetings

10 Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, sends you greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions; if he comes to you, welcome him).

11 And Jesus who is called Justus also sends greetings. In terms of Jewish converts, these are the only fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me.

12 Epaphras, who is one of you and a slave of Christ, greets you. He is always struggling in prayer on your behalf, so that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.

13 For I can testify that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and Hierapolis.

14 Our dear friend Luke the physician and Demas greet you.

15 Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters who are in Laodicea and to Nympha and the church that meets in her house.

Final Instructions

16 And after you have read this letter, have it read to the church of Laodicea. In turn, read the letter from Laodicea as well.

17 And tell Archippus, "See to it that you complete the ministry you received in the Lord."

18 I, Paul, write this greeting by my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

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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 From Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon, our dear friend and co-laborer,
2 to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church that meets in your house.
3 Grace and peace to you 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 always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers,
5 because I hear of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints.
6 I pray that the faith you share with us may deepen your understanding of every blessing that belongs to you in Christ.
7 I have had great joy and encouragement because of your love, for the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother.

Paul's Appeal to Philemon to Accept Onesimus

8 So, although I have quite a lot of confidence in Christ and could command you to do what is proper,
9 I would rather appeal to you on the basis of love—I, Paul, an old man and even now a prisoner for the sake of Christ Jesus—
10 I am appealing to you concerning my child, whose spiritual father I have become during my imprisonment, that is, Onesimus,
11 who was formerly useless to you, but is now useful to you and me.
12 I have sent him (who is my very heart) back to you.
13 I wanted to keep him so that he could serve me in your place during my imprisonment for the sake of the gospel.
14 However, without your consent I did not want to do anything, so that your good deed would not be out of compulsion, but from your own willingness.
15 For perhaps it was for this reason that he was separated from you for a little while, so that you would have him back eternally,
16 no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, as a dear brother. He is especially so to me, and even more so to you now, both humanly speaking and in the Lord.
17 Therefore if you regard me as a partner, accept him as you would me.
18 Now if he has defrauded you of anything or owes you anything, charge what he owes to me.
19 I, Paul, have written this letter with my own hand: I will repay it. I could also mention that you owe me your very self.
20 Yes, brother, let me have some benefit from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ.
21 Since I was confident that you would obey, I wrote to you, because I knew that you would do even more than what I am asking you to do.
22 At the same time also, prepare a place for me to stay, for I hope that through your prayers I will be given back to you.

Greetings and Benediction

23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you.
24 Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my co-laborers, greet you too.
25 May 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 From Jude, a slave of Jesus Christ and brother of James, to those who are called, wrapped in the love of God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ.
2 May mercy, peace, and love be lavished on you!

Contend Earnestly for the Faith—Reject Those Who Pervert the Grace of God

3 Dear friends, although I have been eager to write to you about our common salvation, I now feel compelled instead to write to encourage you to contend earnestly for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.
4 For certain men have secretly slipped in among you—men who long ago were marked out for the condemnation I am about to describe—ungodly men who have turned the grace of our God into a license for evil and who deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Examples of God's Past Judgment

5 Now I desire to remind you (even though you have been fully informed of these facts once for all) that Jesus, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, later destroyed those who did not believe.
6 You also know that the angels who did not keep within their proper domain but abandoned their own place of residence, he has

kept in eternal chains in utter darkness, locked up for the judgment of the great Day.

7 So also Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighboring towns, since they indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire in a way similar to these angels, are now displayed as an example by suffering the punishment of eternal fire.

The Sins of the Intruders

8 Yet these men, as a result of their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and insult the glorious ones.

9 But even when Michael the archangel was arguing with the devil and debating with him concerning Moses' body, he did not dare to bring a slanderous judgment, but said, "May the Lord rebuke you!"

10 But these men do not understand the things they slander, and they are being destroyed by the very things that, like irrational animals, they instinctively comprehend.

Woe Oracle Against the Intruders

11 Woe to them! For they have traveled down Cain's path, and because of greed have abandoned themselves to Balaam's error; hence, they will certainly perish in Korah's rebellion.

12 These men are dangerous reefs at your love feasts, feasting without reverence, feeding only themselves. They are waterless clouds, carried along by the winds; autumn trees without fruit—twice dead, uprooted;

13 wild sea waves, spewing out the foam of their shame; wayward stars for whom the utter depths of eternal darkness have been reserved.

Enoch's Prophecy of God's Eschatological Judgment

14 Now Enoch, the seventh in descent beginning with Adam, even prophesied of them, saying, "Look! The Lord is coming with thousands and thousands of his holy ones,

15 to execute judgment on all, and to convict every person of all their thoroughly ungodly deeds that they have committed, and of all the harsh words that ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

16 These people are grumblers and fault-finders who go wherever their desires lead them, and they give bombastic speeches, enchanting folks for their own gain.

Exhortation to Believers

17 But you, dear friends—recall the predictions foretold by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.

18 For they said to you, "In the end time there will come scoffers, propelled by their own ungodly desires."

19 These people are divisive, worldly, devoid of the Spirit.

20 But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith, by praying in the Holy Spirit,

21 maintain yourselves in the love of God, while anticipating the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that brings eternal life.

22 And have mercy on those who waver;

23 save others by snatching them out of the fire; have mercy on others, coupled with a fear of God, hating even the clothes stained by the flesh.

Closing Doxology

24 Now to the one who is able to keep you from falling, and to cause you to stand, rejoicing, without blemish before his glorious presence,

25 to the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power, and authority, before all time, and now, and for all eternity. 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 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.

¹ Andreas J. Kostenberger, L. Scott Kellum, Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown*, (B&H Academic, 2009), p. 623.

² Kostenberger, pp. 766–767.

Paul's First Letter to Timothy (c. 61–62)**1 Timothy 1–6****Salutation**

1:1 From Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope,
2 to Timothy, my genuine 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 when I was leaving for Macedonia, stay on in Ephesus to instruct certain people not to spread false teachings,
4 nor to occupy themselves with myths and interminable genealogies. Such things promote useless speculations rather than God's redemptive plan that operates by faith.
5 But the aim of our instruction is love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith.
6 Some have strayed from these and turned away to empty discussion.
7 They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not understand what they are saying or the things they insist on so confidently.
8 But we know that the law is good if someone uses it legitimately,
9 realizing that law is not intended for a righteous person, but for lawless and rebellious people, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers,
10 sexually immoral people, practicing homosexuals, kidnappers, liars, perjurers—in fact, for any who live contrary to sound teaching.
11 This accords with the glorious gospel of the blessed God that was entrusted to me.

Timothy's Task—Follow Paul's Example

12 I am grateful to the one who has strengthened me, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he considered me faithful in putting me into ministry,
13 even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor, and an arrogant man. But I was treated with mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief,
14 and our Lord's grace was abundant, bringing faith and love in Christ Jesus.
15 This saying is trustworthy and deserves full acceptance: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"—and I am the worst of them!
16 But here is why I was treated with mercy: so that in me as the worst, Christ Jesus could demonstrate his utmost patience, as an example for those who are going to believe in him for eternal life.
17 Now to the eternal king, 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 I put this charge before you, Timothy my child, in keeping with the prophecies once spoken about you, in order that with such encouragement you may fight the good fight.
19 To do this you must hold firmly to faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and so have suffered shipwreck in regard to the faith.
20 Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.

Pattern for Public Prayer

2:1 First of all, then, I urge that requests, prayers, intercessions, and thanks be offered on behalf of all people,
2 even for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.
3 Such prayer for all is good and welcomed before God our Savior,
4 since he wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.
5 For there is one God and one intermediary between God and humanity, Christ Jesus, himself human,
6 who gave himself as a ransom for all, revealing God's purpose at his appointed time.
7 For this I was appointed a preacher and apostle—I am telling the truth; I am not lying—and a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.
8 So I want the men to pray in every place, lifting up holy hands without anger or dispute.

Modesty and the Role of Women

9 Likewise the women are to dress in suitable apparel, with modesty and self-control. Their adornment must not be with braided hair and gold or pearls or expensive clothing,
10 but with good deeds, as is proper for women who profess reverence for God.
11 A woman must learn quietly with all submissiveness.
12 But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man. She must remain quiet.
13 For Adam was formed first and then Eve.
14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman, because she was fully deceived, fell into transgression.

15 But she will be delivered through childbearing, if she continues in faith and love and holiness with self-control.

Qualifications of Overseers

3:1 This saying is trustworthy: "If someone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a good work."

2 The overseer then must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, an able teacher,

3 not a drunkard, not violent, but gentle, not contentious, free from the love of money.

4 He must manage his own household well and keep his children in control without losing his dignity.

5 But if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for the church of God?

6 He must not be a recent convert or he may become arrogant and fall into the punishment that the devil will exact.

7 And he must be well thought of by those outside the faith, so that he may not fall into disgrace and be caught by the devil's trap.

Qualifications of Deacons

8 Deacons likewise must be dignified, not two-faced, not given to excessive drinking, not greedy for gain,

9 holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.

10 And these also must be tested first and then let them serve as deacons if they are found blameless.

11 Likewise also their wives must be dignified, not slanderous, temperate, faithful in every respect.

12 Deacons must be husbands of one wife and good managers of their children and their own households.

13 For those who have served well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and great boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

Walk Worthy of the Gospel and the Church

14 I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these instructions to you

15 in case I am delayed, to let you know how people ought to conduct themselves in the household of God, because it is the church of the living God, the support and bulwark of the truth.

16 And we all agree, our religion contains amazing revelation:

He was revealed in the flesh,
vindicated by the Spirit,
seen by angels,
proclaimed among Gentiles,
believed on in the world,
taken up in glory.

Apostasy and Heresy in Later Times

4:1 Now the Spirit explicitly says that in the later times some will desert the faith and occupy themselves with deceiving spirits and demonic teachings,

2 influenced by the hypocrisy of liars whose consciences are seared.

3 They will prohibit marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

4 For every creation of God is good and no food is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving.

5 For it is sanctified by God's word and by prayer.

Train Yourself for Godliness

6 By pointing out such things to the brothers and sisters, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, having nourished yourself on the words of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed.

7 But reject those myths fit only for the godless and gullible, and train yourself for godliness.

8 For "physical exercise has some value, but godliness is valuable in every way. It holds promise for the present life and for the life to come."

9 This saying is trustworthy and deserves full acceptance.

10 In fact this is why we work hard and struggle, because we have set our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of believers.

Exercise Your Spiritual Gift and Be an Example of Faithfulness

11 Command and teach these things.

12 Let no one look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in your speech, conduct, love, faithfulness, and purity.

13 Until I come, give attention to the public reading of scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.

- 14 Do not neglect the spiritual gift you have, given to you and confirmed by prophetic words when the elders laid hands on you.
15 Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that everyone will see your progress.
16 Be conscientious about how you live and what you teach. Persevere in this, because by doing so you will save both yourself and those who listen to you.

Proper Conduct With Different Age Groups

- 5:1 Do not address an older man harshly but appeal to him as a father. Speak to younger men as brothers,
2 older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters—with complete purity.

Proper Treatment of Widows

- 3 Honor widows who are truly in need.
4 But if a widow has children or grandchildren, they should first learn to fulfill their duty toward their own household and so repay their parents what is owed them. For this is what pleases God.
5 But the widow who is truly in need, and completely on her own, has set her hope on God and continues in her pleas and prayers night and day.
6 But the one who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives.
7 Reinforce these commands, so that they will be beyond reproach.
8 But if someone does not provide for his own, especially his own family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.
9 No widow should be put on the list unless she is at least sixty years old, was the wife of one husband,
10 and has a reputation for good works: as one who has raised children, practiced hospitality, washed the feet of the saints, helped those in distress—as one who has exhibited all kinds of good works.
11 But do not accept younger widows on the list, because their passions may lead them away from Christ and they will desire to marry,
12 and so incur judgment for breaking their former pledge.
13 And besides that, going around from house to house they learn to be lazy, and they are not only lazy, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things they should not.
14 So I want younger women to marry, raise children, and manage a household, in order to give the adversary no opportunity to vilify us.
15 For some have already wandered away to follow Satan.
16 If a believing woman has widows in her family, let her help them. The church should not be burdened, so that it may help the widows who are truly in need.

Proper Recognition and Discipline of Elders

- 17 Elders who provide effective leadership must be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard in speaking and teaching.
18 For the scripture says, “Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain,” [[Deut 25:4](#)] and, “The worker deserves his pay.” [[Luke 10:7](#)]
19 Do not accept an accusation against an elder unless it can be confirmed by two or three witnesses.
20 Those guilty of sin must be rebuked before all, as a warning to the rest.
21 Before God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, I solemnly charge you to carry out these commands without prejudice or favoritism of any kind.
22 Do not lay hands on anyone hastily and so identify with the sins of others. Keep yourself pure.
23 (Stop drinking just water, but use a little wine for your digestion and your frequent illnesses.)
24 The sins of some people are obvious, going before them into judgment, but for others, they show up later.
25 Similarly good works are also obvious, and the ones that are not cannot remain hidden.

Proper Conduct for Slaves

- 6:1 Those who are under the yoke as slaves must regard their own masters as deserving of full respect. This will prevent the name of God and Christian teaching from being discredited.
2a But those who have believing masters must not show them less respect because they are brothers. Instead they are to serve all the more, because those who benefit from their service are believers and dearly loved.

An Indictment of the False Teachers

- 2b Teach them and exhort them about these things.
3 If someone spreads false teachings and does not agree with sound words (that is, those of our Lord Jesus Christ) and with the teaching that accords with godliness,
4 he is conceited and understands nothing, but has an unhealthy interest in controversies and verbal disputes. This gives rise to envy, dissension, slanders, evil suspicions,

5 and constant bickering by people corrupted in their minds and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a way of making a profit.

The Greed of the False Teachers

6 Now godliness combined with contentment brings great profit.

7 For we have brought nothing into this world and so we cannot take a single thing out either.

8 But if we have food and shelter, we will be satisfied with that.

9 Those who long to be rich, however, stumble into temptation and a trap and many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

10 For the love of money is the root of all evils. Some people in reaching for it have strayed from the faith and stabbed themselves with many pains.

What It Means to Be a Man of God

11 But you, as a person dedicated to God, keep away from all that. Instead pursue righteousness, godliness, faithfulness, love, endurance, and gentleness.

12 Compete well for the faith and lay hold of that eternal life you were called for and made your good confession for in the presence of many witnesses.

13 I charge you before God who gives life to all things and Christ Jesus who made his good confession before Pontius Pilate,

14 to obey this command without fault or failure until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ

15 —whose appearing the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, will reveal at the right time.

16 He alone possesses immortality and lives in unapproachable light, whom no human has ever seen or is able to see. To him be honor and eternal power! Amen.

A Word to the Wealthy

17 Command those who are rich in this world's goods not to be haughty or to set their hope on riches, which are uncertain, but on God who richly provides us with all things for our enjoyment.

18 Tell them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, to be generous givers, sharing with others.

19 In this way they will save up a treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the future and so lay hold of what is truly life.

Concluding Exhortation

20 O Timothy, protect what has been entrusted to you. Avoid the profane chatter and absurdities of so-called "knowledge."

21 By professing it, some have strayed from the faith. Grace be with you all.

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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 From Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those temporarily residing abroad (in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, the province of Asia, and Bithynia) who are chosen

2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father by being set apart by the Spirit for obedience and for sprinkling with Jesus Christ's blood. May grace and peace be yours in full measure!

Born Again Into a Living Hope

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he gave us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

4 that is, into an inheritance imperishable, undefiled, and unfading. It is reserved in heaven for you,

5 who by God's power are protected through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Trials Test and Prove the Genuineness of Our Faith

6 This brings you great joy, although you may have to suffer for a short time in various trials.

7 Such trials show the proven character of your faith, which is much more valuable than gold—gold that is tested by fire, even though it is passing away—and will bring praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

8 You have not seen him, but you love him. You do not see him now but you believe in him, and so you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy,

9 because you are attaining the goal of your faith—the salvation of your souls.

The Privileged Status of Those Who Know and Believe the Gospel

10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets who predicted the grace that would come to you searched and investigated carefully.

11 They probed into what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating when he testified beforehand about the sufferings appointed for Christ and his subsequent glory.

12 They were shown that they were serving not themselves but you, in regard to the things now announced to you through those who proclaimed the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things angels long to catch a glimpse of.

A Call to Holiness—Remember That You Were Set Free from Sin

13 Therefore, get your minds ready for action by being fully sober, and set your hope completely on the grace that will be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed.

14 Like obedient children, do not comply with the evil urges you used to follow in your ignorance,

15 but, like the Holy One who called you, become holy yourselves in all of your conduct,

16 for it is written, "*You shall be holy, because I am holy.*" [[Lev 19:2](#)]

A Call to Reverence—Remember That You Were Redeemed With Christ's Precious Blood

17 And if you address as Father the one who impartially judges according to each one's work, live out the time of your temporary residence here in reverence.

18 You know that from your empty way of life inherited from your ancestors you were ransomed—not by perishable things like silver or gold,

19 but by precious blood like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb, namely Christ.

20 He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was manifested in these last times for your sake.

21 Through him you now trust 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 You have purified your souls by obeying the truth in order to show sincere mutual love. So love one another earnestly from a pure heart.

23 You have been born anew, not from perishable but from imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.

24 For

all flesh is like grass

and all its glory like the flower of the 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 that was proclaimed to you.

Put Aside All Evil and Crave Pure, Spiritual Milk

2:1 So get rid of all evil and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander.

2 And yearn like newborn infants for pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up to salvation,

3 if *you have experienced the Lord's kindness*. [[Ps 34:8](#)]

Living Stones Built On Christ the Cornerstone

4 So as you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but chosen and priceless in God's sight,

5 you yourselves, as living stones, are built up as a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood and to offer spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

6 For it says in scripture, "*Look, I lay in Zion a stone, a chosen and priceless cornerstone, and whoever believes in him will never be put to shame.*" [[Isa 28:16](#)]

7 So you who believe see his value, but for those who do not believe, *the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone*, [[Ps 118:22](#)]

8 and *a stumbling-stone and a rock to trip over*. [[Isa 8:14](#)] They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, [[Exod 19:6](#)] a people of his own, so that you may proclaim the virtues of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

10 You once were *not a people*, [[Hos 1:9](#)] but now you are God's people. You were *shown no mercy*, [[Hos 1:6](#)] but now you have received mercy. [cf. [Hos 2:23](#)]

Lifestyle Evangelism

11 Dear friends, I urge you as foreigners and exiles to keep away from fleshly desires that do battle against the soul,

12 and maintain good conduct among the non-Christians, so that though they now malign you as wrongdoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God when he appears.

Submit to the Governing Authorities

13 Be subject to every human institution for the Lord's sake, whether to a king as supreme

14 or to governors as those he commissions to punish wrongdoers and praise those who do good.

15 For God wants you to silence the ignorance of foolish people by doing good.

16 Live as free people, not using your freedom as a pretext for evil, but as God's slaves.

17 Honor all people, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the king.

Slaves Submit to Your Masters—Christ Is Our Example of Suffering

18 Slaves, be subject to your masters with all reverence, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are perverse.

19 For this finds God's favor, if because of conscience toward God someone endures hardships in suffering unjustly.

20 For what credit is it if you sin and are mistreated and endure it? But if you do good and suffer and so endure, this finds favor with God.

21 For to this you were called, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving an example for you to follow in his steps.

22 He *committed no sin nor was deceit found in his mouth*. [[Isa 53:9](#)]

23 When he was maligned, he did not answer back; when he suffered, he threatened no retaliation, but committed himself to God who judges justly.

24 He *himself bore our sins* in his body on the tree, that we may cease from sinning and live for righteousness. *By his wounds you were healed*. [[Isa 53:4–5](#)]

25 For you were *going astray like sheep* [[Isa 53:6](#)] but now you have turned back to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

Wives Submit to Your Husbands, Husbands Honor Your Wives

3:1 In the same way, wives, be subject to your own husbands. Then, even if some are disobedient to the word, they will be won over without a word by the way you live,

2 when they see your pure and reverent conduct.

3 Let your beauty not be external—the braiding of hair and wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes—

4 but the inner person of the heart, the lasting beauty of a gentle and tranquil spirit, which is precious in God's sight.

5 For in the same way the holy women who hoped in God long ago adorned themselves by being subject to their husbands,

6 like Sarah who obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. You become her children when you do what is good and have no fear in doing so.

7 Husbands, in the same way, treat your wives with consideration as the weaker partners and show them honor as fellow heirs of the grace of life. In this way nothing will hinder your prayers.

Practical Christian Living

8 Finally, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, affectionate, compassionate, and humble.

9 Do not return evil for evil or insult for insult, but instead bless others because you were called to inherit a blessing.

10 For

the one who wants to love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from uttering deceit.

11 *And he must turn away from evil and do good;*

he must seek peace and pursue it.

12 *For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous and his ears are open to their prayer.*

But the Lord's face is against those who do evil. [Ps 34:12–16]

You are Blessed If You Suffer for Doing Good

13 For who is going to harm you if you are devoted to what is good?

14 But in fact, if you happen to suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. *But do not be terrified of them or be shaken.* [Isa 8:12]

15 But set Christ apart as Lord in your hearts and always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks about the hope you possess.

16 Yet do it with courtesy and respect, keeping a good conscience, so that those who slander your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame when they accuse you.

17 For it is better to suffer for doing good, if God wills it, than for doing evil.

Christ Also Suffered for Doing Good—The Result Was Our Salvation

18 Because Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring you to God, by being put to death in the flesh but by being made alive in the spirit.

19 In it he went and preached to the spirits in prison,

20 after they were disobedient long ago when God patiently waited in the days of Noah as an ark was being constructed. In the ark a few, that is eight souls, were delivered through water.

21 And this prefigured baptism, which now saves you—not the washing off of physical dirt but the pledge of a good conscience to God—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

22 who went into heaven and is at the right hand of God with angels and authorities and powers subject to him.

Choosing a Life of Suffering Demonstrates That You Have Ceased From Sin

4:1 So, since Christ suffered in the flesh, you also arm yourselves with the same attitude, because the one who has suffered in the flesh has finished with sin,

2 in that he spends the rest of his time on earth concerned about the will of God and not human desires.

3 For the time that has passed was sufficient for you to do what the non-Christians desire. You lived then in debauchery, evil desires, drunkenness, carousing, drinking bouts, and wanton idolatries.

4 So they are astonished when you do not rush with them into the same flood of wickedness, and they vilify you.

5 They will face a reckoning before Jesus Christ who stands ready to judge the living and the dead.

6 Now it was for this very purpose that the gospel was preached to those who are now dead, so that though they were judged in the flesh by human standards they may live spiritually by God's standards.

A Life of Love

7 For the culmination of all things is near. So be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of prayer.

8 Above all keep your love for one another fervent, because *love covers a multitude of sins.* [Prov 10:12]

9 Show hospitality to one another without complaining.

10 Just as each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of the varied grace of God.

11 Whoever speaks, let it be with God's words. Whoever serves, do so with the strength that God supplies, so that in everything God will be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.

Rejoice That You Share in the Sufferings of Christ

12 Dear friends, do not be astonished that a trial by fire is occurring among you, as though something strange were happening to you.

13 But rejoice in the degree that you have shared in the sufferings of Christ, so that when his glory is revealed you may also rejoice and be glad.

14 If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory, who is *the Spirit of God, rests* [Isa 11:2] on you.

15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer or thief or criminal or as a troublemaker.

16 But if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but glorify God that you bear such a name.

17 For it is time for judgment to begin, starting with the house of God. And if it starts with us, what will be the fate of those who are disobedient to the gospel of God?

18 And *if the righteous are barely saved, what will become of the ungodly and sinners?* [[Prov 11:31](#) (LXX)]

19 So then let those who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful Creator as they do good.

Instructions for Elders

5:1 So as your fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings and as one who shares in the glory that will be revealed, I urge the elders among you:

2 Give a shepherd's care to God's flock among you, exercising oversight not merely as a duty but willingly under God's direction, not for shameful profit but eagerly.

3 And do not lord it over those entrusted to you, but be examples to the flock.

4 Then when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that never fades away.

The Need for Humility

5 In the same way, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. And all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because God *opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.* [[Prov 3:34](#) (LXX)]

6 And God will exalt you in due time, if you humble yourselves under his mighty hand

7 by casting all your cares on him because he cares for you.

Resist the Devil!

8 Be sober and alert. Your enemy the devil, *like a roaring lion*, [[Ps 22:13](#)] is on the prowl looking for someone to devour.

9 Resist him, strong in your faith, because you know that your brothers and sisters throughout the world are enduring the same kinds of suffering.

10 And, after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace who called you to his eternal glory in Christ will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

11 To him belongs the power forever. Amen.

Closing Greeting

12 Through Silvanus, whom I know to be a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, in order to encourage you and testify that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it.

13 The church in Babylon, chosen together with you, greets you, and so does Mark, my son.

14 Greet one another with a loving kiss. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

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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 From Paul, a slave of God and apostle of Jesus Christ, to further the faith of God's chosen ones and the knowledge of the truth that is in keeping with godliness,
 2 in hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the ages began.
 3 But now in his own time he has made his message evident through the preaching I was entrusted with according to the command of God our Savior.
 4 To Titus, my genuine son in a common faith. Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior!

Qualifications for Elders

5 The reason I left you in Crete was to set in order the remaining matters and to appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.
 6 An elder must be blameless, the husband of one wife, with faithful children who cannot be charged with dissipation or rebellion.
 7 For the overseer must be blameless as one entrusted with God's work, not arrogant, not prone to anger, not a drunkard, not violent, not greedy for gain.
 8 Instead he must be hospitable, devoted to what is good, sensible, upright, devout, and self-controlled.
 9 He must hold firmly to the faithful message as it has been taught, so that he will be able to give exhortation in such healthy teaching and correct those who speak against it.

The Need for Qualified Church Leadership

10 For there are many rebellious people, idle talkers, and deceivers, especially those with Jewish connections,
 11 who must be silenced because they mislead whole families by teaching for dishonest gain what ought not to be taught.
 12 A certain one of them, in fact, one of their own prophets, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons."
 13 Such testimony is true. For this reason rebuke them sharply that they may be healthy in the faith
 14 and not pay attention to Jewish myths and commands of people who reject the truth.
 15 All is pure to those who are pure. But to those who are corrupt and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their minds and consciences are corrupted.
 16 They profess to know God but with their deeds they deny him, since they are detestable, disobedient, and unfit for any good deed.

Teaching Sound Doctrine

2:1 But as for you, communicate the behavior that goes with sound teaching.
 2 Older men are to be temperate, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in endurance.
 3 Older women likewise are to exhibit behavior fitting for those who are holy, not slandering, not slaves to excessive drinking, but teaching what is good.
 4 In this way they will train the younger women to love their husbands, to love their children,
 5 to be self-controlled, pure, fulfilling their duties at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the message of God may not be discredited.
 6 Encourage younger men likewise to be self-controlled,
 7 showing yourself to be an example of good works in every way. In your teaching show integrity, dignity,
 8 and a sound message that cannot be criticized, so that any opponent will be at a loss, because he has nothing evil to say about us.
 9 Slaves are to be subject to their own masters in everything, to do what is wanted and not talk back,
 10 not pilfering, but showing all good faith, in order to bring credit to the teaching of God our Savior in everything.

God's Grace Trains Us in Godly Behavior

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all people.
 12 It trains us to reject godless ways and worldly desires and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,
 13 as we wait for the happy fulfillment of our hope in the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.
 14 He gave himself for us to set us free from every kind of lawlessness and to purify for himself a people who are truly his, who are eager to do good.
 15 So communicate these things with the sort of exhortation or rebuke that carries full authority. Don't let anyone look down on you.

Instructions for Living in State and Society

3:1 Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work.
 2 They must not slander anyone, but be peaceable, gentle, showing complete courtesy to all people.
 3 For we too were once foolish, disobedient, misled, enslaved to various passions and desires, spending our lives in evil and envy, hateful and hating one another.

4 But “when the kindness of God our Savior and his love for mankind appeared,
5 he saved us not by works of righteousness that we have done but on the basis of his mercy, through the washing of the new birth and the renewing of the Holy Spirit,
6 whom he poured out on us in full measure through Jesus Christ our Savior.
7 And so, since we have been justified by his grace, we become heirs with the confident expectation of eternal life.”
8 This saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on such truths, so that those who have placed their faith in God may be intent on engaging in good works. These things are good and beneficial for all people.

Final Warning Against Error

9 But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, quarrels, and fights about the law, because they are useless and empty.
10 Reject a divisive person after one or two warnings.
11 You know that such a person is twisted by sin and is conscious of it himself.

Closing Instructions and Greetings

12 When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there.
13 Make every effort to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; make sure they have what they need.
14 Here is another way that our people can learn to engage in good works to meet pressing needs and so not be unfruitful.
15 Everyone with me greets 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’ 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 After God spoke long ago in various portions and in various ways to our ancestors through the prophets,
 2 in these last days he has spoken to us in a son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he created the world.
 3 The Son is the radiance of his glory and the representation of his essence, and he sustains all things by his powerful word, and so when he had accomplished cleansing for sins, *he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.* [cf. [Ps 110:1](#)]
 4 Thus he became so far better than the angels as he has inherited a name superior to theirs.

Superiority of the Son to the Angels

- 5 For to which of the angels did God ever say, *“You are my son! Today I have fathered you?”* [[Ps 2:7](#)] And in another place he says, *“I will be his father and he will be my son.”* [[2 Sam 7:14](#)]
 6 But when he again brings his firstborn into the world, he says, *“Let all the angels of God worship him!”* [[Deut 32:43](#) (LXX)]
 7 And he says of the angels, *“He makes his angels spirits 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 a righteous scepter is the scepter of your kingdom.*

- 9 *You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness.
 So God, your God, has anointed you over your companions with the oil of rejoicing.”* [[Ps 45:6–7](#) (LXX 44:7–8)]

10 And,

*“You founded the earth in the beginning, Lord,
 and the heavens are the works of your hands.*

- 11 *They will perish, but you continue.
 And they will all grow old like a garment,
 12 and like a robe you will fold them up
 and like a garment they will be changed,
 but you are the same and your years will never run out.”* [[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 serve those who will inherit salvation?

First Warning—The Danger of Drifting

- 2:1 Therefore we must pay closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.
 2 For if the message spoken through angels proved to be so firm that every violation or disobedience received its just penalty,
 3 how will we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was first communicated through the Lord and was confirmed to us by those who heard him,
 4 while God confirmed their witness with signs and wonders and various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

Superiority of Jesus to the Angels

- 5 For he did not put the world to come, about which we are speaking, under the control of angels.
 6 Instead someone testified somewhere:

“What is man that you think of him or the son of man that you care for him?”

- 7 *You made him lower than the angels for a little while. You crowned him with glory and honor.
 8 You put all things under his control.”* [[Ps 8:4–6](#)]

For when he *put all things under his control*, he left nothing outside of his control. At present we do not yet see *all things under his control*,

- 9 but we see Jesus, who was made *lower than the angels for a little while*, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by God’s grace he would experience death on behalf of everyone.
 10 For it was fitting for him, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings.
 11 For indeed he who makes holy and those being made holy all have the same origin, and so he is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters,

12 saying, *“I will proclaim your name to my brothers; in the midst of the assembly I will praise you.”* [[Ps 22:22](#) (LXX 21:23)]

13 Again he says, *“I will be confident in him,”* [[Isa 8:17b](#) (LXX)] and again, *“Here I am, with the children God has given me.”* [[Isa 8:18](#) (LXX)]

14 Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, he likewise shared in their humanity, so that through death he could destroy the one who holds the power of death (that is, the devil),

15 and set free those who were held in slavery all their lives by their fear of death.

16 For surely his concern is not for angels, but he is concerned for Abraham’s descendants.

17 Therefore he had to be made like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he could become a merciful and faithful high priest in things relating to God, to make atonement for the sins of the people.

18 For since he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted.

Superiority of Jesus to Moses

3:1 Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, partners in a heavenly calling, take note of Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess,

2 who is faithful to the one who appointed him, as Moses was also in God’s house.

3 For he has come to deserve greater glory than Moses, just as the builder of a house deserves greater honor than the house itself!

4 For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.

5 Now Moses was *faithful in all God’s house* as a servant, to testify to the things that would be spoken. [[Num 12:7b](#) (LXX)]

6 But Christ is faithful as a son over God’s house. We are of his house, if in fact we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope we take pride in.

Second Warning—The Danger of Unbelief

7 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says,

“Oh, that today you would listen as he speaks!

8 *“Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of testing in the wilderness.*

9 *“There your fathers tested me and tried me, and they saw my works for forty years.*

10 *“Therefore, I became provoked at that generation and said, ‘Their hearts are always wandering and they have not known my ways.’*

11 *“As I swore in my anger, ‘They will never enter my rest!’”* [[Ps 95:7b–11](#) (LXX 94:7b–11)]

12 See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has an evil, unbelieving heart that forsakes the living God.

13 But exhort one another each day, as long as it is called *“Today,”* that none of you may become hardened by sin’s deception.

14 For we have become partners with Christ, if in fact we hold our initial confidence firm until the end.

15 As it says, *“Oh, that today you would listen as he speaks! Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”*

16 For which ones heard and rebelled? Was it not all who came out of Egypt under Moses’ leadership?

17 And against whom was God provoked for forty years? Was it not those who sinned, whose dead bodies fell in the wilderness?

18 And to whom did he swear they would never enter into his rest, except those who were disobedient?

19 So we see that they could not enter because of unbelief.

“Let us fear”—Unbelief Will Keep You From Entering God’s Rest

4:1 Therefore we must be wary that, while the promise of entering his rest remains open, none of you may seem to have come short of it.

2 For we had good news proclaimed to us just as they did. But the message they heard did them no good, since they did not join in with those who heard it in faith.

3 For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, *“As I swore in my anger, ‘They will never enter my rest!’”* And yet God’s works were accomplished from the foundation of the world.

4 For he has spoken somewhere about the seventh day in this way: *“And God rested on the seventh day from all his works,”* [[Gen 2:3](#)]

5 but to repeat the text cited earlier: *“They will never enter my rest!”*

6 Therefore it remains for some to enter it, yet those to whom it was previously proclaimed did not enter because of disobedience.

7 So God again ordains a certain day, *“Today,”* speaking through David after so long a time, as in the words quoted before, *“O, that today you would listen as he speaks! Do not harden your hearts.”*

8 For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken afterward about another day.

9 Consequently a Sabbath rest remains for the people of God.

10 For the one who enters God's rest has also rested from his works, just as God did from his own works.

11 Thus we must make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by following the same pattern of disobedience.

12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any double-edged sword, piercing even to the point of dividing soul from spirit, and joints from marrow; it is able to judge the desires and thoughts of the heart.

13 And no creature is hidden from God, but everything is naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must render an account.

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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.

¹ Lane, 1:lxii.

² Guthrie, 22–23.

³ Merrill C. Tenney, "A New Approach to the Book of Hebrews," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 123:491 (Jul 66): 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.

- (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 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 to our confession.

15 For we do not have a high priest incapable of sympathizing with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way just as we are, yet without sin.

16 Therefore let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and find grace whenever we need help.

5:1 For every high priest is taken from among the people and appointed to represent them before God, to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.

2 He is able to deal compassionately with those who are ignorant and erring, since he also is subject to weakness,

3 and for this reason he is obligated to make sin offerings for himself as well as for the people.

4 And no one assumes this honor on his own initiative, but only when called to it by God, as in fact Aaron was.

5 So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming high priest, but the one who glorified him was God, who said to him, *“You are my Son! Today I have fathered you,”* [Ps 2:7]

6 as also in another place God says, *“You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.”* [Ps 110:4 (LXX 109:4)]

7 During his earthly life Christ offered both requests and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death and he was heard because of his devotion.

8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience through the things he suffered.

9 And by being perfected in this way, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,

10 and he was designated by God as high priest in the order of Melchizedek.

Rebuke for Negligence in Obeying God’s Word

11 On this topic we have much to say and it is difficult to explain, since you have become sluggish in hearing.

12 For though you should in fact be teachers by this time, you need someone to teach you the beginning elements of God’s utterances. You have gone back to needing milk, not solid food.

13 For everyone who lives on milk is inexperienced in the message of righteousness, because he is an infant.

14 But solid food is for the mature, whose perceptions are trained by practice to discern both good and evil.

Challenge—Allow the Spirit to Carry You Forward to Maturity!

6:1 Therefore we must progress beyond the elementary instructions about Christ and move on to maturity, not laying this foundation again: repentance from dead works and faith in God,

2 teaching about baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

3 And this is what we intend to do, if God permits.

Warning—You Are in Danger of Apostasy!

4 For it is impossible in the case of those who have once been enlightened, tasted the heavenly gift, become partakers of the Holy Spirit,

5 tasted the good word of God and the miracles of the coming age,

6 and then have committed apostasy, to renew them again to repentance, [while] they are crucifying the Son of God for themselves all over again and holding him up to contempt.

7 For the ground that has soaked up the rain that frequently falls on it and yields useful vegetation for those who tend it receives a blessing from God.

8 But if it produces thorns and thistles, it is useless and about to be cursed; its fate is to be burned.

God’s Promise and Oath are a Sure and Steadfast Hope

9 But in your case, dear friends, even though we speak like this, we are convinced of better things relating to salvation.

10 For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love you have demonstrated for his name, in having served and continuing to serve the saints.

11 But we passionately want each of you to demonstrate the same eagerness for the fulfillment of your hope until the end,

12 so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and perseverance inherit the promises.

13 Now when God made his promise to Abraham, since he could swear by no one greater, he swore by himself,

14 saying, *“Surely I will bless you greatly and multiply your descendants abundantly.”* [Gen 22:17]

15 And so by persevering, Abraham inherited the promise.

16 For people swear by something greater than themselves, and the oath serves as a confirmation to end all dispute.

17 In the same way God wanted to demonstrate more clearly to the heirs of the promise that his purpose was unchangeable, and so he intervened with an oath,

18 so that we who have found refuge in him may find strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us through two

unchangeable things, since it is impossible for God to lie.

19 We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, sure and steadfast, which reaches inside behind the curtain,

20 where Jesus our forerunner entered on our behalf, since he became *a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek*. [[Ps 110:4](#) (LXX 109:4)]

Melchizedekian Priesthood Superior to the Levitical Priesthood

7:1 Now this *Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, met Abraham as he was returning from defeating the kings and blessed him*. [cf. [Gen 14:17–19](#) (LXX)]

2 To him also *Abraham apportioned a tithe of everything*. [cf. [Gen 14:20](#) (LXX)] His name first means king of righteousness, then *king of Salem*, that is, king of peace.

3 Without father, without mother, without genealogy, he has neither beginning of days nor end of life but is like the son of God, and he remains a priest for all time.

4 But see how great he must be, if Abraham the patriarch gave him a tithe of his plunder.

5 And those of the sons of Levi who receive the priestly office have authorization according to the law to collect a tithe from the people, that is, from their fellow countrymen, although they too are descendants of Abraham.

6 But Melchizedek who does not share their ancestry collected a tithe from Abraham and blessed the one who possessed the promise.

7 Now without dispute the inferior is blessed by the superior,

8 and in one case tithes are received by mortal men, while in the other by him who is affirmed to be alive.

9 And it could be said that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid a tithe through Abraham.

10 For he was still in his ancestor Abraham's loins when Melchizedek met him.

Melchizedekian Priesthood Implies the Need for a Change of Law

11 So if perfection had in fact been possible through the Levitical priesthood—for on that basis the people received the law—what further need would there have been for another priest to arise, said to be in the order of Melchizedek and not in Aaron's order?

12 For when the priesthood changes, a change in the law must come as well.

13 Yet the one these things are spoken about belongs to a different tribe, and no one from that tribe has ever officiated at the altar.

14 For it is clear that our Lord is descended from Judah, yet Moses said nothing about priests in connection with that tribe.

15 And this is even clearer if another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek,

16 who has become a priest not by a legal regulation about physical descent but by the power of an indestructible life.

17 For here is the testimony about him: "*You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek*." [[Ps 110:4](#) (LXX 109:4)]

18 On the one hand a former command is set aside because it is weak and useless,

19 for the law made nothing perfect. On the other hand a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God.

Contrasts Between Jesus and the Levitical Priesthood

20 And since this was not done without a sworn affirmation—for the others have become priests without a sworn affirmation,

21 but Jesus did so with a sworn affirmation by 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 accordingly Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

23 And the others who became priests were numerous, because death prevented them from continuing in office,

24 but he holds his priesthood permanently since he lives forever.

25 So he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

26 For it is indeed fitting for us to have such a high priest: holy, innocent, undefiled, separate from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.

27 He has no need to do every day what those priests do, to offer sacrifices first for their own sins and then for the sins of the people, since he did this in offering himself once for all.

28 For the law appoints as high priests men subject to weakness, but the word of solemn affirmation that 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 of what we are saying is this: We have such a high priest, one who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven,

2 a minister in the sanctuary and the true tabernacle that the Lord, not man, set up.

3 For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. So this one too had to have something to offer.

4 Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest, since there are already priests who offer the gifts prescribed by the law.

5 The place where they serve is a sketch and shadow of the heavenly sanctuary, just as Moses was warned by God as he was about to complete the tabernacle. For he says, "*See that you make everything according to the design shown to you on the mountain*." [[Exod 25:40](#) (LXX)]

6a But now Jesus has obtained a superior ministry,

Christ's Covenant Superior to the First Covenant

6b since the covenant that he mediates is also better and is enacted on better promises.

7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, no one would have looked for a second one.

8 But showing its fault, God says to them,

"Look, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will complete a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.

9 *"It will not be like the covenant that I made with their fathers, on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not continue in my covenant and I had no regard for them, says the Lord.*

10 *"For this is the covenant that I will establish with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and I will inscribe them on their hearts. And I will be their God and they will be my people.*

11 *"And there will be no need at all for each one to teach his countryman or each one to teach his brother saying, 'Know the Lord,' since they will all know me, from the least to the greatest.*

12 *"For I will be merciful toward their evil deeds, and their sins I will remember no longer." [Jer 31:31–34 (~LXX 38:31–34)]*

13 When he speaks of a new covenant, he makes the first obsolete. Now what is growing obsolete and aging is about to disappear.

The Inadequacy of the First Covenant Cultic System

9:1 Now the first covenant, in fact, had regulations for worship and its earthly sanctuary.

2 For a tent was prepared, the outer one, which contained the lampstand, the table, and the presentation of the loaves; this is called the holy place.

3 And after the second curtain there was a tent called the holy of holies.

4 It contained the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered entirely with gold. In this ark were the golden urn containing the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant.

5 And above the ark were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Now is not the time to speak of these things in detail.

6 So with these things prepared like this, the priests enter continually into the outer tent as they perform their duties.

7 But only the high priest enters once a year into the inner tent, and not without blood that he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance.

8 The Holy Spirit is making clear that the way into the holy place had not yet appeared as long as the old tabernacle was standing.

9 This was a symbol for the time then present, when gifts and sacrifices were offered that could not perfect the conscience of the worshiper.

10 They served only for matters of food and drink and various washings; they are external regulations imposed until the new order came.

Christ's Blood Superior to the Blood of Sacrificial Animals

11 But now Christ has come as the high priest of the good things to come. He passed through the greater and more perfect tent not made with hands, that is, not of this creation,

12 and he entered once for all into the most holy place not by the blood of goats and calves but by his own blood, and so he himself secured eternal redemption.

13 For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a young cow sprinkled on those who are defiled consecrated them and provided ritual purity,

14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our consciences from dead works to worship the living God.

Christ's Covenant Superior to the First Covenant

15 And so he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the eternal inheritance he has promised, since he died to set them free from the violations committed under the first covenant.

16 For where there is a will, the death of the one who made it must be proven.

17 For a will takes effect only at death, since it carries no force while the one who made it is alive.

18 So even the first covenant was inaugurated with blood.

19 For when Moses had spoken every command to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats with water and scarlet wool and hyssop and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people,

20 and said, *"This is the blood of the covenant that God has commanded you to keep."* [Exod 24:8]

21 And both the tabernacle and all the utensils of worship he likewise sprinkled with blood.

22 Indeed according to the law almost everything was purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no

forgiveness.

Christ's Sacrifice Superior to the High Priestly Sacrifice on the Day of Atonement

23 So it was necessary for the sketches of the things in heaven to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves required better sacrifices than these.

24 For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with hands—the representation of the true sanctuary—but into heaven itself, and he appears now in God's presence for us.

25 And he did not enter to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the sanctuary year after year with blood that is not his own, [cf. [Lev 16](#)]

26 for then he would have had to suffer again and again since the foundation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the consummation of the ages to put away sin by his sacrifice.

27 And just as people are appointed to die once, and then to face judgment,

28 so also, after Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many, to those who eagerly await him he will appear a second time, not to bear sin but to bring salvation.

The Repetition of the Sacrifices Demonstrated Their Inability to Perfect the Worshippers

10:1 For the law possesses a shadow of the good things to come but not the reality itself, and is therefore completely unable, by the same sacrifices offered continually, year after year, to perfect those who come to worship.

2 For otherwise would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers would have been purified once for all and so have no further consciousness of sin?

3 But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year after year.

4 For the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sins.

God's Will Was to Sanctify Us Through the Offering of the Body of Jesus Christ

5 So when he came into the world, he said,

"Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me.

6 *"Whole burnt offerings and sin-offerings you took no delight in.*

7 *"Then I said, 'Here I am: I have come—it is written of me in the scroll of the book—to do your will, O God.'"*

[[Ps 40:6–8](#) (LXX 39:7–9)]

8 When he says above, *"Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sin-offerings you did not desire nor did you take delight in them"* (which are offered according to the law),

9 then he says, *"Here I am: I have come to do your will."* He does away with the first to establish the second.

10 By his will we have been made holy through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Jesus' Single Offering Perfected Us for All Time

11 And every priest stands day after day serving and offering the same sacrifices again and again—sacrifices that can never take away sins.

12 But when this priest had offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, he sat down at the right hand of God,

13 where he is now waiting until his enemies are made a footstool for his feet.

14 For by one offering he has perfected for all time those who are made holy.

15 And the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us, for after saying,

16 *"This is the covenant that I will establish with them after those days, says the Lord. I will put my laws on their hearts and I will inscribe them on their minds,"*

17 then he says, *"Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no longer."* [cf. [Jer 31:31–34](#) (~LXX 38:31–34)]

18 Now where there is forgiveness of these, 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, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus,
 20 by the fresh and living way that he inaugurated for us through the curtain, that is, through 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 the assurance that faith brings, because we have had our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed in pure water.
 23 And let us hold unwaveringly to the hope that we confess, for the one who made the promise is trustworthy.
 24 And let us take thought of how to spur one another on to love and good works,
 25 not abandoning our own meetings, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and even more so because you see the day drawing near.

Fourth Warning—The Danger of Rejecting Christ’s Sacrifice

26 For if we deliberately keep on sinning after receiving the knowledge of the truth, no further sacrifice for sins is left for us,
 27 but only a certain fearful expectation of judgment and a fury of fire that will consume God’s enemies.
 28 Someone who rejected the law of Moses was put to death without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.
 29 How much greater punishment do you think that person deserves who has contempt for the Son of God, and profanes the blood of the covenant that made him holy, and insults the Spirit of grace?
 30 For we know the one 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 you endured a harsh conflict of suffering after you were enlightened.
 33 At times you were publicly exposed to abuse and afflictions, and at other times you came to share with others who were treated in that way.
 34 For in fact you shared the sufferings of those in prison, and you accepted the confiscation of your belongings with joy, because you knew that you certainly had a better and lasting possession.
 35 So do not throw away your confidence, because it has great reward.
 36 For you need endurance in order to do God’s will and so receive what is promised.
 37 For *just a little longer* [[Isa 26:20](#) (LXX)] and *he who is coming will arrive and not delay.*
 38 *But my righteous one will live by faith, and if he shrinks back, I take no pleasure in him.* [[Hab 2:3–4](#)]
 39 But we are not among those who shrink back and thus perish, but are among those who have faith and preserve their souls.

Old Testament Examples of People Who Lived “By Faith”

11:1 Now faith is being sure of what we hope for, being convinced of what we do not see.
 2 For by it the people of old received God’s commendation.
 3 By faith we understand that the worlds were set in order at God’s command, so that the visible has its origin in the invisible.
 4 By faith Abel offered God a greater sacrifice than Cain, and through his faith he was commended as righteous, because God commended him for his offerings. And through his faith he still speaks, though he is dead.
 5 By faith Enoch was taken up so that he did not see death, and he was not to be found because God took him up. For before his removal he had been commended as having pleased God.
 6 Now without faith it is impossible to please him, for the one who approaches God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.
 7 By faith Noah, when he was warned about things not yet seen, with reverent regard constructed an ark for the deliverance of his family. Through faith he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.
 8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place he would later receive as an inheritance, and he went out without understanding where he was going.
 9 By faith he lived as a foreigner in the promised land as though it were a foreign country, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, who were fellow heirs of the same promise.
 10 For he was looking forward to the city with firm foundations, whose architect and builder is God.
 11 By faith, even though Sarah herself was barren and he was too old, he received the ability to procreate, because he regarded the one who had given the promise to be trustworthy.
 12 So in fact children were fathered by one man—and this one as good as dead—*like the number of stars in the sky and like the innumerable grains of sand on the seashore.* [cf. [Gen 22:17](#) (LXX)]
 13 These all died in faith without receiving the things promised, but they saw them in the distance and welcomed them and acknowledged that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth.
 14 For those who speak in such a way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland.
 15 In fact, if they had been thinking of the land that they had left, they would have had opportunity to return.

16 But as it is, they aspire to a better land, 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. He had received the promises, yet he was ready to offer up his only son.

18 God had told him, *“Through Isaac descendants will carry on your name,”* [[Gen 21:12](#) (LXX)]

19 and he reasoned that God could even raise him from the dead, and in a sense he received him back from there.

20 By faith also Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning the future.

21 By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph and *worshiped as he leaned on his staff.* [[Gen 47:31](#) (LXX)]

22 By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, mentioned the exodus of the sons of Israel and gave instructions about his burial.

23 By faith, when Moses was born, his parents hid him for three months, because they saw the child was beautiful and they were not afraid of the king’s edict.

24 By faith, when he grew up, Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter,

25 choosing rather to be ill-treated with the people of God than to enjoy sin’s fleeting pleasure.

26 He regarded abuse suffered for Christ to be greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for his eyes were fixed on the reward.

27 By faith he left Egypt without fearing the king’s anger, for he persevered as though he could see the one who is invisible.

28 By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, so that the one who destroyed the firstborn would not touch them.

29 By faith they crossed the Red Sea as if on dry ground, but when the Egyptians tried it, they were swallowed up.

30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell after the people marched around them for seven days.

31 By faith Rahab the prostitute escaped the destruction of the disobedient, because she 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 Through faith they conquered kingdoms, administered justice, gained what was promised, shut the mouths of lions,

34 quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, gained strength in weakness, became mighty in battle, put foreign armies to flight,

35 and women received back their dead raised to life. But others were tortured, not accepting release, to obtain resurrection to a better life.

36 And others experienced mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment.

37 They were stoned, sawed apart, murdered with the sword; they went about in sheepskins and goatskins; they were destitute, afflicted, ill-treated

38 (the world was not worthy of them); they wandered in deserts and mountains and caves and openings in the earth.

39 And these all were commended for their faith, yet they did not receive what was promised.

40 For God had provided something better for us, so that they would be made perfect together with us.

Running to Win

12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, we must get rid of every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and run with endurance the race set out for us,

2 keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. For the joy set out for him he endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

3 Think of him who endured such opposition against himself by sinners, so that you may not grow weary in your souls and give up.

The Lord’s Discipline/Training

4 You have not yet resisted to the point of bloodshed in your struggle against sin.

5 And have you forgotten the exhortation addressed to you as sons?

*“My son, do not scorn the Lord’s discipline
or give up when he corrects you.*

6 *“For the Lord disciplines the one he loves and chastises every son he accepts.”* [[Prov 3:11–12](#) (LXX^A)]

7 Endure your suffering as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is there that a father does not discipline?

8 But if you do not experience discipline, something all sons have shared in, then you are illegitimate and are not sons.

9 Besides, we have experienced discipline from our earthly fathers and we respected them; shall we not submit ourselves all the more to the Father of spirits and receive life?

10 For they disciplined us for a little while as seemed good to them, but he does so for our benefit, that we may share his holiness.

11 Now all discipline seems painful at the time, not joyful. But later it produces the fruit of peace and righteousness for those trained by it.

12 Therefore, *strengthen your listless hands and your weak knees,* [[Isa 35:3](#)]

13 and *make straight paths for your feet,* [[Prov 4:26](#) (LXX)] so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but be healed.

Dos and Don'ts of the Race

14 Pursue peace with everyone, and holiness, for without it no one will see the Lord.

15 See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God, that no one be like a bitter root springing up and causing trouble, and through him many become defiled.

16 And see to it that no one becomes an immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal.

17 For you know that later when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no opportunity for repentance, although he sought the blessing with tears.

Fifth Warning—Do Not Refuse God's Son

18 For you have not come to something that can be touched, to a burning fire and darkness and gloom and a whirlwind

19 and the blast of a trumpet and a voice uttering words such that those who heard begged to hear no more.

20 For they could not bear what was commanded: *"If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned."* [[Exod 19:12–13](#)]

21 In fact, the scene was so terrifying that Moses said, *"I shudder with fear."* [cf. [Deut 9:19a](#) (LXX)]

22 But you have come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the assembly
23 and congregation of the firstborn, who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous, who have been made perfect,

24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks of something better than Abel's does.

25 Take care not to refuse the one who is speaking! For if they did not escape when they refused the one who warned them on earth, how much less shall we, if we reject the one who warns from heaven?

26 Then his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, *"I will once more shake not only the earth but heaven too."* [[Hag 2:6](#) (LXX)]

27 Now this phrase *"once more"* indicates the removal of what is shaken, that is, of created things, so that what is unshaken may remain.

28 So since we are receiving an unshakable kingdom, let us give thanks, and through this let us offer worship pleasing to God in devotion and awe.

29 For our *God is indeed a devouring fire.* [[Deut 9:3](#) (LXX)]

Well-pleasing Service to God

13:1 Brotherly love must continue.

2 Do not neglect hospitality, because through it some have entertained angels without knowing it.

3 Remember those in prison as though you were in prison with them, and those ill-treated as though you too felt their torment.

4 Marriage must be honored among all and the marriage bed kept undefiled, for God will judge sexually immoral people and adulterers.

5 Your conduct must be free from the love of money and you must be content with what you have, for he has said, *"I will never leave you and I will never abandon you."* [cf. [Gen 28:15](#); [Deut 31:6, 8](#); [Josh 1:5](#)]

6 So we can say with confidence, *"The Lord is my helper, and I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"* [[Ps 118:6](#) (LXX 117:6)]

Shepherds and Sheep

7 Remember your leaders, who spoke God's message to you; reflect on the outcome of their lives and imitate their faith.

8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever!

9 Do not be carried away by all sorts of strange teachings. For it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not ritual meals, which have never benefited those who participated in them.

10 We have an altar that those who serve in the tabernacle have no right to eat from.

11 For the bodies of those animals whose blood the high priest brings into the sanctuary as an offering for sin are burned outside the camp.

12 Therefore, to sanctify the people by his own blood, Jesus also suffered outside the camp.

13 We must go out to him, then, outside the camp, bearing the abuse he experienced.

14 For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come.

15 Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, acknowledging his name.

16 And do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for God is pleased with such sacrifices.

17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls and will give an account for their work. Let them do this with joy and not with complaints, for this would be no advantage for you.

Closing

18 Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to conduct ourselves rightly in every respect.

19 I especially ask you to pray that I may be restored to you very soon.

20 Now may the God of peace who by the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep, our Lord Jesus Christ,

21 equip you with every good thing to do his will, working in us what is pleasing before him through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

22 Now I urge you, brothers and sisters, bear with my message of exhortation, for in fact I have written to you briefly.

23 You should know that our brother Timothy has been released. If he comes soon, he will be with me when I see you.

24 Greetings to all your leaders and all the saints. Those from Italy send you greetings.

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 From Simeon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ, have been granted a faith just as precious as ours.

2 May grace and peace be lavished on you as you grow in the rich knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord!

Be Diligent to Grow in Grace

3 I can pray this because his divine power has bestowed on us everything necessary for life and godliness through the rich knowledge of the one who called us by his own glory and excellence.

4 Through these things he has bestowed on us his precious and most magnificent promises, so that by means of what was promised you may become partakers of the divine nature, after escaping the worldly corruption that is produced by evil desire.

5 For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith excellence, to excellence, knowledge;

6 to knowledge, self-control; to self-control, perseverance; to perseverance, godliness;

7 to godliness, brotherly affection; to brotherly affection, unselfish love.

8 For if these things are really yours and are continually increasing, they will keep you from becoming ineffective and unproductive in your pursuit of knowing our Lord Jesus Christ more intimately.

9 But concerning the one who lacks such things—he is blind. That is to say, he is nearsighted, since he has forgotten about the cleansing of his past sins.

10 Therefore, brothers and sisters, make every effort to be sure of your calling and election. For by doing this you will never stumble into sin.

11 For thus an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be richly provided for you.

Peter's Determination to Leave a Legacy

12 Therefore, I intend to remind you constantly of these things even though you know them and are well established in the truth that you now have.

13 Indeed, as long as I am in this tabernacle, I consider it right to stir you up by way of a reminder,

14 since I know that my tabernacle will soon be removed, because our Lord Jesus Christ revealed this to me.

15 Indeed, I will also make every effort that, after my departure, you have a testimony of these things.

Peter Affirms That He Was an Eyewitness to Jesus' Ministry

16 For we did not follow cleverly concocted fables when we made known to you the power and return of our Lord Jesus Christ; no, we were eyewitnesses of his grandeur.

17 For he received honor and glory from God the Father, when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory: "This is my dear Son, in whom I am delighted."

18 When this voice was conveyed from heaven, we ourselves heard it, for we were with him on the holy mountain.

Classic Passage on the Inspiration of Scripture

19 Moreover, we possess the prophetic word as an altogether reliable thing. You do well if you pay attention to this as you would to a light shining in a murky place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

20 Above all, you do well if you recognize this: No prophecy of scripture ever comes about by the prophet's own imagination,

21 for no prophecy was ever borne of human impulse; rather, men carried along by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

Peter's Main Concern—False Teachers in the Flock

2:1 But false prophets arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. These false teachers will infiltrate your midst with destructive heresies, even to the point of denying the Master who bought them. As a result, they will bring swift destruction on themselves.

2 And many will follow their debauched lifestyles. Because of these false teachers, the way of truth will be slandered.

3a And in their greed they will exploit you with deceptive words.

Be Sure of This—God Will Rescue the Godly and Punish the Wicked

3b Their condemnation pronounced long ago is not sitting idly by; their destruction is not asleep.

4 For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but threw them into hell and locked them up in chains in utter darkness, to be kept until the judgment,

5 and if he did not spare the ancient world, but did protect Noah, a herald of righteousness, along with seven others, when God brought a flood on an ungodly world,

6 and if he turned to ashes the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah when he condemned them to destruction, having appointed them to serve as an example to future generations of the ungodly,

7 and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man in anguish over the debauched lifestyle of lawless men,
8 (for while he lived among them day after day, that righteous man was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)
9 —if so, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from their trials, and to reserve the unrighteous for punishment at the day of judgment,
10a especially those who indulge their fleshly desires and who despise authority.

The Sinfulness of the False Teachers

10b Brazen and insolent, they are not afraid to insult the glorious ones,
11 yet even angels, who are much more powerful, do not bring a slanderous judgment against them before the Lord.
12 But these men, like irrational animals—creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed—do not understand whom they are insulting, and consequently in their destruction they will be destroyed,
13 suffering harm as the wages for their harmful ways. By considering it a pleasure to carouse in broad daylight, they are stains and blemishes, indulging in their deceitful pleasures when they feast together with you.
14 Their eyes, full of adultery, never stop sinning; they entice unstable people. They have trained their hearts for greed, these cursed children!
15 By forsaking the right path they have gone astray, because they followed the way of Balaam son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness,
16 yet was rebuked for his own transgression (a dumb donkey, speaking with a human voice, restrained the prophet's madness).

The Terrible Truth—These False Teachers Once Knew the Way of Righteousness

17 These men are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm, for whom the utter depths of darkness have been reserved.
18 For by speaking high-sounding but empty words they are able to entice, with fleshly desires and with debauchery, people who have just escaped from those who reside in error.
19 Although these false teachers promise such people freedom, they themselves are enslaved to immorality. For whatever a person succumbs to, to that he is enslaved.
20 For if after they have escaped the filthy things of the world through the rich knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they again get entangled in them and succumb to them, their last state has become worse for them than their first.
21 For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than, having known it, to turn back from the holy commandment that had been delivered to them.
22 They are illustrations of this true proverb: *"A dog returns to its own vomit,"* [cf. [Prov 26:11](#)] and *"A sow, after washing herself, wallows in the mire."*

Don't Listen to Those Who Deny the Coming of Christ

3:1 Dear friends, this is already the second letter I have written you, in which I am trying to stir up your pure mind by way of reminder:
2 I want you to recall both the predictions foretold by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles.
3 Above all, understand this: In the last days blatant scoffers will come, being propelled by their own evil urges
4 and saying, "Where is his promised return? For ever since our ancestors died, all things have continued as they were from the beginning of creation."
5 For they deliberately suppress this fact, that by the word of God heavens existed long ago and an earth was formed out of water and by means of water.
6 Through these things the world existing at that time was destroyed when it was deluged with water.
7 But by the same word the present heavens and earth have been reserved for fire, by being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

Don't Mistake God's Patience for Slowness—the "Day of the Lord" is Coming!

8 Now, dear friends, do not let this one thing escape your notice, that a single day is like a thousand years with the Lord and a thousand years are like a single day.
9 The Lord is not slow concerning his promise, as some regard slowness, but is being patient toward you, because he does not wish for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.
10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief; when it comes, the heavens will disappear with a horrific noise, and the celestial bodies will melt away in a blaze, and the earth and every deed done on it will be laid bare.

Live Your Life With the Coming Judgment in Mind

11 Since all these things are to melt away in this manner, what sort of people must we be, conducting our lives in holiness and godliness,

12 while waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God? Because of this day, the heavens will be burned up and dissolve, and the celestial bodies will melt away in a blaze!

13 But, according to his promise, we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness truly resides.

Peter's Call to Holiness / Peter Affirms Paul's Writings as Scripture

14 Therefore, dear friends, since you are waiting for these things, strive to be found at peace, without spot or blemish, when you come into his presence.

15 And regard the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as also our dear brother Paul wrote to you, according to the wisdom given to him,

16 speaking of these things in all his letters. Some things in these letters are hard to understand, things the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they also do to the rest of the scriptures.

Final Warning and Exhortation

17 Therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned, be on your guard that you do not get led astray by the error of these unprincipled men and fall from your firm grasp on the truth.

18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the honor both now and on that eternal day.

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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 From Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to further the promise of life in Christ Jesus,
2 to Timothy, my dear child. Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord!

Paul's Gratitude for Timothy's Faith

3 I am thankful to God, whom I have served with a clear conscience as my ancestors did, when I remember you in my prayers as I do constantly night and day.

4 As I remember your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy.

5 I recall your sincere faith that was alive first in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice, and I am sure is in you.

Paul Urges Timothy to Rededicate Himself to the Ministry of the Gospel

6 Because of this I remind you to rekindle God's gift that you possess through the laying on of my hands.

7 For God did not give us a Spirit of fear but of power and love and self-control.

8 So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me, a prisoner for his sake, but by God's power accept your share of suffering for the gospel.

9 He is the one who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not based on our works but on his own purpose and grace, granted to us in Christ Jesus before time began,

10 but now made visible through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus. He has broken the power of death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel!

11 For this gospel I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher.

12 Because of this, in fact, I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, because I know the one in whom my faith is set and I am convinced that he is able to protect what has been entrusted to me until that day.

13 Hold to the standard of sound words that you heard from me and do so with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

14 Protect that good thing entrusted to you, through the Holy Spirit who lives within us.

15 You know that everyone in the province of Asia deserted me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes.

16 May the Lord grant mercy to the family of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my imprisonment.

17 But when he arrived in Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me.

18 May the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that day! And you know very well all the ways he served me in Ephesus.

Illustrations of Effective Service for God

2:1 So you, my child, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

2 And entrust what you heard me say in the presence of many others as witnesses to faithful people who will be competent to teach others as well.

3 Take your share of suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

4 No one in military service gets entangled in matters of everyday life; otherwise he will not please the one who recruited him.

5 Also, if anyone competes as an athlete, he will not be crowned as the winner unless he competes according to the rules.

6 The farmer who works hard ought to have the first share of the crops.

7 Think about what I am saying and the Lord will give you understanding of all this.

Endure to the End for the Sake of the Gospel

8 Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, a descendant of David; such is my gospel,

9 for which I suffer hardship to the point of imprisonment as a criminal, but God's message is not imprisoned!

10 So I endure all things for the sake of those chosen by God, that they too may obtain salvation in Christ Jesus and its eternal glory.

11 This saying is trustworthy:

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 will also deny us.

13 If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful, since he cannot deny himself.

Teach Sound Doctrine and Avoid Useless Quarrels

14 Remind people of these things and solemnly charge them before the Lord not to wrangle over words. This is of no benefit; it just brings ruin on those who listen.

15 Make every effort to present yourself before God as a proven worker who does not need to be ashamed, teaching the message of truth accurately.

16 But avoid profane chatter, because those occupied with it will stray further and further into ungodliness,
 17 and their message will spread its infection like gangrene. Hymenaeus and Philetus are in this group.
 18 They have strayed from the truth by saying that the resurrection has already occurred, and they are undermining some people's faith.
 19 However, God's solid foundation remains standing, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his," [Num 16:5] and "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from evil." [cf. Ps 34:14; Prov 3:7]
 20 Now in a wealthy home there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also ones made of wood and of clay, and some are for honorable use, but others for ignoble use.
 21 So if someone cleanses himself of such behavior, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart, useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.
 22 But keep away from youthful passions, and pursue righteousness, faithfulness, love, and peace, in company with others who call on the Lord from a pure heart.
 23 But reject foolish and ignorant controversies, because you know they breed infighting.
 24 And the Lord's slave must not engage in heated disputes but be kind toward all, an apt teacher, patient,
 25 correcting opponents with gentleness. Perhaps God will grant them repentance and then knowledge of the truth
 26 and they will come to their senses and escape the devil's trap where they are held captive to do his will.

Difficult Times Will Come—With Them Will Come False Teachers

3:1 But understand this, that in the last days difficult times will come.
 2 For people will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy,
 3 unloving, irreconcilable, slanderers, without self-control, savage, opposed to what is good,
 4 treacherous, reckless, conceited, loving pleasure rather than loving God.
 5 They will maintain the outward appearance of religion but will have repudiated its power. So avoid people like these.
 6 For some of these insinuate themselves into households and captivate weak women who are overwhelmed with sins and led along by various passions.
 7 Such women are always seeking instruction, yet never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth.
 8 And just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these people—who have warped minds and are disqualified in the faith—also oppose the truth.
 9 But they will not go much further, for their foolishness will be obvious to everyone, just like it was with Jannes and Jambres.

Paul's Example of Perseverance in Persecution

10 You, however, have followed my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, my faith, my patience, my love, my endurance,
 11 as well as the persecutions and sufferings that happened to me in Antioch, in Iconium, and in Lystra. I endured these persecutions and the Lord delivered me from them all.
 12 Now in fact all who want to live godly lives in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.
 13 But evil people and charlatans will go from bad to worse, deceiving others and being deceived themselves.

The Vital Importance of God's Word

14 You, however, must continue in the things you have learned and are confident about. You know who taught you
 15 and how from infancy you have known the holy writings, which are able to give you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.
 16 Every scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,
 17 that the person dedicated to God may be capable and equipped for every good work.

Paul's Charge to Preach the Gospel

4:1 I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus, who is going to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom:
 2 Preach the message, be ready whether it is convenient or not, reprove, rebuke, exhort with complete patience and instruction.
 3 For there will be a time when people will not tolerate sound teaching. Instead, following their own desires, they will accumulate teachers for themselves, because they have an insatiable curiosity to hear new things.
 4 And they will turn away from hearing the truth, but on the other hand they will turn aside to myths.
 5 You, however, be self-controlled in all things, endure hardship, do an evangelist's work, fulfill your ministry.

Paul's Testimony in the Face of Death

6 For I am already being poured out as an offering, and the time for me to depart is at hand.
 7 I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith!
 8 Finally the crown of righteousness is reserved for me. The Lord, the righteous Judge, will award it to me in that day—and not to me

only, but also to all who have set their affection on his appearing.

Final Requests, Warnings and Greetings

9 Make every effort to come to me soon.

10 For Demas deserted me, since he loved the present age, and he went to Thessalonica. Crescens went to Galatia and Titus to Dalmatia.

11 Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is a great help to me in ministry.

12 Now I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus.

13 When you come, bring with you the cloak I left in Troas with Carpas and the scrolls, especially the parchments.

14 Alexander the coppersmith did me a great deal of harm. *The Lord will repay him in keeping with his deeds.* [cf. [Ps 28:4](#)]

15 You be on guard against him too, because he vehemently opposed our words.

16 At my first defense no one appeared in my support; instead they all deserted me—may they not be held accountable for it.

17 But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message would be fully proclaimed for all the Gentiles to hear. And so I was delivered from the lion's mouth!

18 The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed and will bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever! Amen.

19 Greetings to Prisca and Aquila and the family of Onesiphorus.

20 Erastus stayed in Corinth. Trophimus I left ill in Miletus.

21 Make every effort to come before winter. Greetings to you from Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brothers and sisters.

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 This is what we proclaim to you: what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and our hands have touched (concerning the word of life—
 2 and the life was revealed, and we have seen and testify and announce to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us).
 3 What we have seen and heard we announce to you too, so that you may have fellowship with us (and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ).
 4 Thus we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

God Is Light—Those Who Claim to Know Him Must Walk in the Light

5 Now this is the gospel message we have heard from him and announce to you: God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all.
 6 If we say we have fellowship with him and yet keep on walking in the darkness, we are lying and not practicing 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 we do not [have] sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.
 9 But if we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous, forgiving us our sins and cleansing us from all unrighteousness.
 10 If we say 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.) But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous One,
 2 and he himself is the [propitiation] for our sins, and not only for our sins but also for the whole world.

The Basis of Our Assurance of Salvation: Keeping His Commandments

3 Now by this we know that we have come to know God: if we keep his commandments.
 4 The one who says "I have come to know God" and yet does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in such a person.
 5 But whoever obeys his word, truly in this person the love of God has been perfected. By this we know that we are in him.
 6 The one who says he resides in God ought himself to walk just as Jesus walked.

The Nature and Implications of the Author's Message

7 Dear friends, 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 that you have already 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 but still hates his fellow Christian is still in the darkness.
 10 The one who loves his fellow Christian resides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him.
 11 But the one who hates his fellow Christian is in the darkness, 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, that your sins have been forgiven because of his name.
 13 I am writing to you, fathers, that you have known him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young people, that you have conquered the evil one.
 14 I have written to you, children, that you have known the Father. I have written to you, fathers, that you have known him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young people, that you are strong, and the word of God resides in you, and you have conquered the evil one.
 15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him,
 16 because all that is in the world (the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the arrogance produced by material possessions) is not from the Father, but is from the world.
 17 And the world is passing away with all its desires, but the person who does the will of God remains 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 the antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have appeared. We know from this that it is the last hour.
 19 They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us, because if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with

us. But they went out from us to demonstrate that all of them do not belong to us.
 20 Nevertheless you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know.
 21 I have not written to you that you do not know the truth, but that you do know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

The Definition of an Antichrist

22 Who is the liar but the person who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This one is the antichrist: the person who denies the Father and the Son.
 23 Everyone who denies the Son does not have the Father either. The person who confesses the Son has the Father also.
 24 As for you, what you have heard from the beginning must remain in you. If what you heard from the beginning remains in you, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father.
 25 Now this is the promise that he himself made to us: eternal life.
 26 These things I have written to you about those who are trying to deceive you.

A Call to Abide in Christ

27 Now as for you, the anointing that you received from him resides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things, it is true and is not a lie. Just as it has taught you, you reside in him.
 28 And now, little children, remain in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink away from him in shame when he comes back.
 29 If you know that he is righteous, you also know that everyone who practices righteousness has been fathered by him.

What it Means to Abide in Christ

3:1 (See what sort of love the Father has given to us: that we should be called God's children—and indeed we are! For this reason the world does not know us: because it did not know him.
 2 Dear friends, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet been revealed. We know that whenever it is revealed we will be like him, because we will see him just as he is.
 3 And everyone who has this hope focused on him purifies himself, just as Jesus is pure).
 4 Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; indeed, sin is lawlessness.
 5 And you know that Jesus was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin.
 6 Everyone who resides in him does not sin; everyone who sins has neither seen him nor known him.
 7 Little children, let no one deceive you: The one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as Jesus is righteous.
 8 The one who practices sin is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was revealed: to destroy the works of the devil.

A Call to Love One Another

9 Everyone who has been fathered by God does not practice sin, because God's seed resides in him, and thus he is not able to sin, because he has been fathered by God.
 10 By this the children of God and the children of the devil are revealed: Everyone who does not practice righteousness—the one who does not love his fellow Christian—is not of God.
 11 For this is the gospel message that you have heard from the beginning: that we should love one another,
 12 not like Cain who was of the evil one and brutally murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his deeds were evil, but his brother's were righteous.
 13 Therefore do not be surprised, brothers and sisters, if the world hates you.
 14 We know that we have crossed over from death to life because we love our fellow Christians. The one who does not love remains in death.
 15 Everyone who hates his fellow Christian is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.
 16 We have come to know love by this: that Jesus laid down his life for us; thus we ought to lay down our lives for our fellow Christians.
 17 But whoever has the world's possessions and sees his fellow Christian in need and shuts off his compassion against him, how can the love of God reside in such a person?
 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 And by this we will know that we are of the truth and will convince our conscience in his presence,
 20 that if our conscience condemns us, that God is greater than our conscience and knows all things.
 21 Dear friends, if our conscience does not condemn us, we have confidence in the presence of God,
 22 and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do the things that are pleasing to him.
 23 Now this is his commandment: that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he gave us the commandment.

24 And the person who keeps his commandments resides in God, and God in him. Now by this we know that God resides in us: by the Spirit he has given us.

How to Distinguish Between the Spirit of God and a Spirit of the Antichrist

4:1 Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to determine if 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 Jesus as the Christ who has come in the flesh is from God,

3 but every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God, and this is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming, and now is already in the world.

4 You are from God, little children, and have conquered them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

5 They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world's perspective and the world listens to them.

6 We are from God; the person who knows God listens to us, but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of deceit.

God Is Love—Those Who Claim to Know Him Must Walk in Love

7 Dear friends, let us love one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves has been fathered by God and knows God.

8 The person who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

9 By this the love of God is revealed in us: that God has sent his one and only Son into the world so that we may live through him.

10 In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

11 Dear friends, if God so loved us, then we also ought to love one another.

12 No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God resides in us, and his love is perfected in us.

13 By this we know that we reside in God and he in us: in that he has given us of his Spirit.

14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

15 If anyone confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God resides in him and he in God.

16 And we have come to know and to believe the love that God has in us. God is love, and the one who resides in love resides in God, and God resides in him.

17 By this love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment, because just as Jesus is, so also are we in this world.

18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears punishment has not been perfected in love.

19 We love because he loved us first.

20 If anyone says "I love God" and yet hates his fellow Christian, he is a liar, because the one who does not love his fellow Christian whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.

21 And the commandment we have from him is this: that the one who loves God should love his fellow Christian too.

True Love Expresses Itself in Faith and Obedience

5:1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been fathered by God, and everyone who loves the father loves the child fathered by him.

2 By this we know that we love the children of God: whenever we love God and obey his commandments.

3 For this is the love of God: that we keep his commandments. And his commandments do not weigh us down,

4 because everyone who has been fathered by God conquers the world. This is the conquering power that has conquered the world: our faith.

5 Now who is the person who has conquered the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

God's Testimony Concerning Jesus Christ, His Son

6 Jesus Christ is the one who came by water and blood—not by the water only, but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one 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 these three are in agreement.

9 If we accept the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, because this is the testimony of God 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 testified concerning his Son.)

11 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

12 The one who has the Son has this eternal life; the one who does not have the Son of God does not have this eternal life.

The Confidence and Characteristics of the Child of God

- 13 I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.
- 14 And this is the confidence that we have before him: that whenever we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.
- 15 And if we know that he hears us in regard to whatever we ask, then we know that we have the requests that we have asked from him.
- 16 If anyone sees his fellow Christian committing a sin not resulting in death, he should ask, and God will grant life to the person who commits a sin not resulting in death. There is a sin resulting in death. I do not say that he should ask about that.
- 17 All unrighteousness is sin, but there is sin not resulting in death.
- 18 We know that everyone fathered by God does not sin, but God protects the one he has fathered, and the evil one cannot touch him.
- 19 We know that we are from God, and 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 insight to know him who is true, and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. This one 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 From the elder, to an elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth (and not I alone, but also all those who know the truth),
- 2 because of the truth that resides 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 rejoiced greatly because I have found some of your children living according to the truth, just as the Father commanded us.
- 5 But now I ask you, lady (not as if I were writing a new commandment to you, but the one we have had from the beginning), that we love one another.
- 6 (Now this is love: that we walk according to his commandments.) This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning; thus you should walk in it.

Warning Against False Teachers—The Mark of an Antichrist

- 7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world, people who do not confess Jesus as Christ coming in the flesh. This person is the deceiver and the antichrist!
- 8 Watch out, so that you do not lose the things we have worked for, but receive a full reward.

Prohibition Against Aiding Heretics

- 9 Everyone who goes on ahead and does not remain in the teaching of Christ does not have God. The one who remains in this teaching 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 any greeting,
- 11 because the person who gives him a greeting shares in his evil deeds.

Farewell

- 12 Though I have many other things to write to you, I do not want to do so with paper and ink, but I hope to come visit you and speak face to face, so that our joy may be complete.
- 13 The children of your elect sister greet you.

John's Letter to Gaius (c. 90–95)**3 John****Greeting**

- 1 From the elder, to Gaius my dear brother, whom I love in truth.
- 2 Dear friend, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, just as it is well with your soul.
- 3 For I rejoiced greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth, just as you are living according to the truth.
- 4 I have no greater joy than this: to hear that my children are living according to the truth.

Our Obligation to Support Those Who Spread the Gospel

- 5 Dear friend, you demonstrate faithfulness by whatever you do for the brothers (even though they are strangers).
- 6 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 have gone forth on behalf of “The Name,” accepting nothing from the pagans.

8 Therefore we ought to support such people, so that we become coworkers in cooperation with the truth.

Reject the Example of Diotrefes and Imitate the Example of Demetrius

9 I wrote something to the church, but Diotrefes, who loves to be first among them, does not acknowledge us.

10 Therefore, if I come, I will call attention to the deeds he is doing—the bringing of unjustified charges against us with evil words! And not being content with that, he not only refuses to welcome the brothers himself, but hinders the people who want to do so and throws them out of the church!

11 Dear friend, do not imitate what is bad but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does what is bad has not seen God.

12 Demetrius has been testified to by all, even by the truth itself. We also testify to him, and you know that our testimony is true.

Farewell

13 I have many things to write to you, but I do not wish to write to you with pen and ink.

14 But I hope to see you right away, and we will speak face to face.

15 Peace be with you. The friends here greet you. Greet the friends there 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 his servants what must happen very soon. He made it clear by sending his angel to his servant John,
 2 who then testified to everything that he saw concerning the word of God and the testimony about Jesus Christ.
 3 Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy aloud, and blessed are those who hear and obey the things written in it, because the time is near!

Greeting and Doxology

4 From John, to the seven churches that are in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from “he who is,” and who was, and who is still to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne,
 5 and from Jesus Christ—the faithful witness, the firstborn from among the dead, the ruler over the kings of the earth. To the one who loves us and has set us free from our sins at the cost of his own blood
 6 and has appointed us as a kingdom, as priests serving his God and Father—to him be the glory and the power for ever and ever! Amen.

Summary Statement

7 (Look! *He is returning with the clouds*, [cf. [Dan 7:13](#)]
and every eye will see him,
even those who pierced him,
 and all the tribes on the earth will mourn because of him. [cf. [Zech 12:10](#)]
 This will certainly come to pass! Amen.)

8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God—the one who is, and who was, and who is still to come—the All-Powerful!

John’s Vision of Jesus Christ

9 I, John, your brother and the one who shares with you in the persecution, kingdom, and endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony about Jesus.
 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day when I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet,
 11 saying: “Write in a book what you see and send it to the seven churches—to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.”
 12 I turned to see whose voice was speaking to me, and when I did so, I saw seven golden lampstands,
 13 and in the midst of the lampstands was one *like a son of man*. [cf. [Dan 7:13](#)] He was dressed in a robe extending down to his feet and he wore a wide golden belt around his chest.
 14 His head and hair were as white as wool, even as white as snow, and his eyes were like a fiery flame.
 15 His feet were like polished bronze refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters.
 16 He held seven stars in his right hand, and a sharp double-edged sword extended out of his mouth. His face shone like the sun shining at full strength.
 17 When I saw him I fell down at his feet as though I were dead, but he placed his right hand on me and said: “Do not be afraid! I am the first and the last, [cf. [Isa 41:4; 44:6](#)]
 18 and the one who lives! I was dead, but look, now I am alive—forever and ever—and I hold the keys of death and of Hades!
 19 Therefore write what you saw, what is, and what will be after these things.
 20 The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and the seven golden lampstands is this: 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 following: “This is the solemn pronouncement of the one who has a firm grasp on the seven stars in his right hand—the one who walks among the seven golden lampstands:
 2 ‘I know your works as well as your labor and steadfast endurance, and that you cannot tolerate evil. You have even put to the test those who refer to themselves as apostles (but are not), and have discovered that they are false.
 3 I am also aware that you have persisted steadfastly, endured much for the sake of my name, and have not grown weary.
 4 But I have this against you: You have departed from your first love!
 5 Therefore, remember from what high state you have fallen and repent! Do the deeds you did at the first; if not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place—that is, if you do not repent.
 6 But you do have this going for you: You hate what the Nicolaitans practice—practices I also hate.
 7 The one who has an ear had better hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers, I will permit him to eat from the tree of life that is in the paradise of God.’

Jesus' Message to the Church in Smyrna

8 "To the angel of the church in Smyrna write the following: "This is the solemn pronouncement of the one who is the first and the last, the one who was dead, but came to life:

9 'I know the distress you are suffering and your poverty (but you are rich). I also know the slander against you by those who call themselves Jews and really are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

10 Do not be afraid of the things you are about to suffer. The devil is about to have some of you thrown into prison so you may be tested, and you will experience suffering for ten days. Remain faithful even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown that is life itself.

11 The one who has an ear had better hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will in no way be harmed by the second death.'

Jesus' Message to the Church in Pergamum

12 "To the angel of the church in Pergamum write the following: "This is the solemn pronouncement of the one who has the sharp double-edged sword:

13 'I know where you live—where Satan's throne is. Yet you continue to cling to my name and you have not denied your faith in me, even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was killed in your city where Satan lives.

14 But I have a few things against you: You have some people there who follow the teaching of Balaam, who instructed Balak to put a stumbling block before the people of Israel so they would eat food sacrificed to idols and commit sexual immorality.

15 In the same way, there are also some among you who follow the teaching of the Nicolaitans.

16 Therefore, repent! If not, I will come against you quickly and make war against those people with the sword of my mouth.

17 The one who has an ear had better hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers, I will give him some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and on that stone will be written a new name that no one can understand except the one who receives it.'

Jesus' Message to the Church in Thyatira

18 "To the angel of the church in Thyatira write the following: "This is the solemn pronouncement of the Son of God, the one who has eyes like a fiery flame and whose feet are like polished bronze:

19 'I know your deeds: your love, faith, service, and steadfast endurance. In fact, your more recent deeds are greater than your earlier ones.

20 But I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and by her teaching deceives my servants to commit sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.

21 I have given her time to repent, but she is not willing to repent of her sexual immorality.

22 Look! I am throwing her onto a bed of violent illness, and those who commit adultery with her into terrible suffering, unless they repent of her deeds.

23 Furthermore, I will strike her followers with a deadly disease, and then all the churches will know that I am the one who searches minds and hearts. [cf. [Jer 17:10](#)] I will repay each one of you what your deeds deserve.

24 But to the rest of you in Thyatira, all who do not hold to this teaching (who have not learned the so-called "deep secrets of Satan"), to you I say: I do not put any additional burden on you.

25 However, hold on to what you have until I come.

26 And to the one who conquers and who continues in my deeds until the end, I will give him authority over the nations—

27 *he will rule them with an iron rod
and like clay jars he will break them to pieces, [Ps 2:9]*

28 just as I have received the right to rule from my Father—and I will give him the morning star.

29 The one who has an ear had better 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 the following: "This is the solemn pronouncement of the one who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars: 'I know your deeds, that you have a reputation that you are alive, but in reality you are dead.

2 Wake up then, and strengthen what remains that was about to die, because I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God.

3 Therefore, remember what you received and heard, and obey it, and repent. If you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will never know at what hour I will come against you.

4 But you have a few individuals in Sardis who have not stained their clothes, and they will walk with me dressed in white, because they are worthy.

5 The one who conquers will be dressed like them in white clothing, and I will never erase his name from the book of life, but will declare his name before my Father and before his angels.

6 The one who has an ear had better hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

Jesus’ Message to the Church in Philadelphia

7 “To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write the following: “This is the solemn pronouncement of the Holy One, the True One, who holds the key of David, who opens doors no one can shut, and shuts doors no one can open: [cf. [Isa 22:22](#)]

8 ‘I know your deeds. (Look! I have put in front of you an open door that no one can shut.) I know that you have little strength, but you have obeyed my word and have not denied my name.

9 Listen! I am going to make those people from the synagogue of Satan—who say they are Jews yet are not, but are lying—Look, I will make them come and bow down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you.

10 Because you have kept my admonition to endure steadfastly, I will also keep you from the hour of testing that is about to come on the whole world to test those who live on the earth.

11 I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have so that no one can take away your crown.

12 The one who conquers I will make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he will never depart from it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God (the new Jerusalem that comes down out of heaven from my God), and my new name as well.

13 The one who has an ear had better 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 following: “This is the solemn pronouncement of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the originator of God’s creation:

15 ‘I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either cold or hot!

16 So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I am going to vomit you out of my mouth!

17 Because you say, “I am rich and have acquired great wealth, and need nothing,” but do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked,

18 take my advice and buy gold from me refined by fire so you can become rich! Buy from me white clothing so you can be clothed and your shameful nakedness will not be exposed, and buy eye salve to put on your eyes so you can see!

19 All those I love, I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent!

20 Listen! I am standing at the door and knocking! If anyone hears my voice and opens the door I will come into his home and share a meal with him, and he with me.

21 I will grant the one who conquers permission to sit with me on my throne, just as I too conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.

22 The one who has an ear had better 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 there was a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet said: “Come up here so that I can show you what must happen after these things.”

2 Immediately I was in the Spirit, and a throne was standing in heaven with someone seated on it!

3 And the one seated on it was like jasper and carnelian in appearance, and a rainbow looking like it was made of emerald encircled the throne.

4 In a circle around the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on those thrones were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white clothing and had golden crowns on their heads.

5 From the throne came out flashes of lightning and roaring and crashes of thunder. Seven flaming torches, which are the seven spirits of God, were burning in front of the throne

6a and in front of the throne was something like a sea of glass, like crystal.

The Four Living Creatures and the Twenty-four Elders Worship God

6b In the middle of the throne and around the throne were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back.

7 The first living creature was like a lion, the second creature like an ox, the third creature had a face like a man’s, and the fourth creature looked like an eagle flying.

8 Each one of the four living creatures had six wings and was full of eyes all around and inside. They never rest day or night, saying:

“Holy Holy Holy is the Lord God, the All-Powerful, [cf. [Isa 6:3](#)]

Who was and who is, and who is still to come!”

9 And whenever the living creatures give glory, honor, and thanks to the one who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever,

10 the twenty-four elders throw themselves to the ground before the one who sits on the throne and worship the one who lives forever and ever, and they offer their crowns before his throne, saying:

11 “You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
since you created all things,
and because of your will they existed and were created!”

The Scroll With Seven Seals

5:1 Then I saw in the right hand of the one who was seated on the throne a scroll written on the front and back and sealed with seven seals.

2 And I saw a powerful angel proclaiming in a loud voice: “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to break its seals?”

3 But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or look into it.

4 So I began weeping bitterly because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or to look into it.

The Lamb of God—Worthy to Open the Scroll’s Seals

5 Then one of the elders said to me, “Stop weeping! Look, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has conquered; thus he can open the scroll and its seven seals.”

6 Then I saw standing in the middle of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the middle of the elders, a Lamb that appeared to have been killed. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

7 Then he came and took the scroll from the right hand of the one who was seated on the throne,

Songs of Worship for God and the Lamb

8 and when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders threw themselves to the ground before the Lamb. Each of them had a harp and golden bowls full of incense (which are the prayers of the saints).

9 They were singing a new song:

“You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals
because you were killed,
and at the cost of your own blood you have purchased for God
persons from every tribe, language, people, and nation.

10 You have appointed them as a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.”

11 Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels in a circle around the throne, as well as the living creatures and the elders. Their number was ten thousand times ten thousand—thousands times thousands—

12 all of whom were singing in a loud voice:

“Worthy is the lamb who was killed
to receive power and wealth
and wisdom and might
and honor and glory and praise!”

13 Then I heard every creature—in heaven, on earth, under the earth, in the sea, and all that is in them—singing:

“To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb
be praise, honor, glory, and ruling power forever and ever!”

14 And the four living creatures were saying “Amen,” and the elders threw themselves to the ground and worshiped.

The First Seal is Opened—A White Horse

6:1 I looked on when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a thunderous voice, “Come!”

2 So I looked, and here came a white horse! The one who rode it had a bow, and he was given a crown, and as a conqueror he rode out to conquer.

The Second Seal is Opened—A Fiery Red Horse

3 Then when the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, “Come!”

4 And another horse, fiery red, came out, and the one who rode it was granted permission to take peace from the earth, so that people would butcher one another, and he was given a huge sword.

The Third Seal is Opened—A Black Horse

5 Then when the Lamb opened the third seal I heard the third living creature saying, “Come!” So I looked, and here came a black horse! The one who rode it had a balance scale in his hand.

6 Then I heard something like a voice from among the four living creatures saying, “A quart of wheat will cost a day’s pay and three quarts of barley will cost a day’s pay. But do not damage the olive oil and the wine!”

The Fourth Seal is Opened—A Pale Green Horse

7 Then when the Lamb opened the fourth seal I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, “Come!”

8 So I looked and here came a pale green horse! The name of the one who rode it was Death, and Hades followed right behind. They were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill its population with the sword, famine, and disease, and by the wild animals of the earth.

The Fifth Seal is Opened—The Martyred Saints

9 Now when the Lamb opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been violently killed because of the word of God and because of the testimony they had given.

10 They cried out with a loud voice, “How long, Sovereign Master, holy and true, before you judge those who live on the earth and avenge our blood?”

11 Each of them was given a long white robe and they were told to rest for a little longer, until the full number was reached of both their fellow servants and their brothers who were going to be killed just as they had been.

The Sixth Seal is Opened—The Great Earthquake

12 Then I looked when the Lamb opened the sixth seal, and a huge earthquake took place; the sun became as black as sackcloth made of hair, and the full moon became blood red;

13 and the stars in the sky fell to the earth like a fig tree dropping its unripe figs when shaken by a fierce wind.

14 The sky was split apart like a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved from its place.

15 Then the kings of the earth, the very important people, the generals, the rich, the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains.

16 They said to the mountains and to the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of the one who is seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb,

17 because the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to withstand it?” [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 no wind could blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree.

2 Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, who had the seal of the living God. He shouted out with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given permission to damage the earth and the sea:

3 “Do not damage the earth or the sea or the trees until we have put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.”

4 Now I heard the number of those who were marked with the seal, one hundred and forty-four thousand, sealed from all the tribes of the people 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 here was an enormous crowd that no one could count, made up of persons from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb dressed in long white robes, and with palm branches in their hands.

10 They were shouting out in a loud voice,

“Salvation belongs to our God, to the one seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

11 And all the angels stood there in a circle around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they threw themselves down with their faces to the ground before the throne and worshiped God,

12 saying,

“Amen! Praise and glory,
and wisdom and thanksgiving,
and honor and power and strength
be to our God for ever 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 asked me, “These dressed in long white robes—who are they and where have they come from?”

14 So I said to him, “My lord, you know the answer.” Then he said to me, “These are the ones who have come out of the great tribulation. 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 the one seated on the throne will shelter them.

16 *They will never go hungry or be thirsty again, and the sun will not beat down on them, nor any burning heat, [Isa 49:10]*

17 because the Lamb in the middle of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to springs of living water, *and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.*” [cf. [Isa 25:8](#)]

The Seventh Seal is Opened—Silence in Heaven

8:1 Now when the Lamb opened 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 Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.

3 Another angel holding a golden censer came and was stationed at the altar. A large amount of incense was given to him to offer up, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar that is before the throne.

4 The smoke coming from the incense, along with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand.

5 Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it on the earth, and there were crashes of thunder, roaring, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.

6 Now the seven angels holding the seven trumpets prepared to blow them.

The First Trumpet is Sounded—Hail and Fire Mixed With Blood

7 The first angel blew his trumpet, and there was hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was thrown at the earth so that a third of the earth was burned up, 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 Then the second angel blew his trumpet, and something like a great mountain of burning fire was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea became blood,

9 and a third of the creatures living in the sea died, and a third of the ships were completely destroyed.

The Third Trumpet is Sounded—The Star Called Wormwood

10 Then the third angel blew his trumpet, and a huge star burning like a torch fell from the sky; it landed on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water.

11 (Now the name of the star is Wormwood.) So a third of the waters became wormwood, and many people died from these waters because they were poisoned.

The Fourth Trumpet is Sounded—The Heavens Darkened

12 Then the fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. And there was no light for a third of the day and for a third of the night likewise.

13 Then I looked, and I heard an eagle flying directly overhead, proclaiming with a loud voice, "Woe! Woe! Woe to those who live on the earth because of the remaining sounds of the trumpets of the three angels who are about to blow them!"

The Fifth Trumpet (First Woe) is Sounded—Locusts from the Abyss

9:1 Then the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth, and he was given the key to the shaft of the abyss.

2 He opened the shaft of the abyss and smoke rose out of it like smoke from a giant furnace. The sun and the air were darkened with smoke from the shaft.

3 Then out of the smoke came locusts onto the earth, and they were given power like that of the scorpions of the earth.

4 They were told not to damage the grass of the earth, or any green plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their forehead.

5 The locusts were not given permission to kill them, but only to torture them for five months, and their torture was like that of a scorpion when it stings a person.

6 In those days people will seek death, but will not be able to find it; they will long to die, but death will flee from them.

7 Now the locusts looked like horses equipped for battle. On their heads were something like crowns similar to gold, and their faces looked like men's faces.

8 They had hair like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth.

9 They had breastplates like iron breastplates, and the sound of their wings was like the noise of many horse-drawn chariots charging into battle.

10 They have tails and stingers like scorpions, and their ability to injure people for five months is in their tails.

11 They have as king over them the angel of the abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon.

12 The first woe has passed, but 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 blew his trumpet, and I heard a single voice coming from the horns on the golden altar that is before God,

14 saying to the sixth angel, the one holding the trumpet, "Set free the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates!"

15 Then the four angels who had been prepared for this hour, day, month, and year were set free to kill a third of humanity.

16 The number of soldiers on horseback was two hundred million; I heard their number.

17 Now this is what the horses and their riders looked like in my vision: The riders had breastplates that were fiery red, dark blue,

and sulfurous yellow in color. The heads of the horses looked like lions' heads, and fire, smoke, and sulfur came out of their mouths.
18 A third of humanity was killed by these three plagues, that is, by the fire, the smoke, and the sulfur that came out of their mouths.

19 For the power of the horses resides in their mouths and in their tails, because their tails are like snakes, having heads that inflict injuries.

20 The rest of humanity, who had not been killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so that they did not stop worshiping demons and idols made of gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood—idols that cannot see or hear or walk about.

21 Furthermore, they did not repent of their murders, of their magic spells, of their sexual immorality, or of their stealing.

Second Interlude (Part 1): The Mighty Angel With the Little Scroll

10:1 Then I saw another powerful angel descending from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head; his face was like the sun and his legs were like pillars of fire.

2 He held in his hand a little scroll that was open, and he put his right foot on the sea and his left on the land.

3 Then he shouted in a loud voice like a lion roaring, and when he shouted, the seven thunders sounded their voices.

4 When the seven thunders spoke, I was preparing to write, but just then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Seal up what the seven thunders spoke and do not write it down."

5 Then the angel I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven

6 and swore by the one who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, and the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it, "There will be no more delay!

7 But in the days when the seventh angel is about to blow his trumpet, the mystery of God is completed, just as he has proclaimed to his servants the prophets."

8 Then the voice I had heard from heaven began to speak to me again, "Go and take the open scroll in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land."

9 So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me, "Take the scroll and eat it. It will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth."

10 So I took the little scroll from the angel's hand and ate it, and it did taste as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter.

11 Then they told me: "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages, and kings."

Second Interlude (Part 2): The Two Witnesses

11:1 Then a measuring rod like a staff was given to me, and I was told, "Get up and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and the ones who worship there.

2 But do not measure the outer courtyard of the temple; leave it out, because it has been given to the Gentiles, and they will trample on the holy city for forty-two months.

3 And I will grant my two witnesses authority to prophesy for 1,260 days, dressed in sackcloth.

4 (These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.)

5 If anyone wants to harm them, fire comes out of their mouths and completely consumes their enemies. If anyone wants to harm them, they must be killed this way.

6 These two have the power to close up the sky so that it does not rain during the time they are prophesying. They have power to turn the waters to blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague whenever they want.

7 When they have completed their testimony, the beast that comes up from the abyss will make war on them and conquer them and kill them.

8 Their corpses will lie in the street of the great city that is symbolically called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was also crucified.

9 For three and a half days those from every people, tribe, nation, and language will look at their corpses, because they will not permit them to be placed in a tomb.

10 And those who live on the earth will rejoice over them and celebrate, even sending gifts to each other, because these two prophets had tormented those who live on the earth.

11 But after three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and tremendous fear seized those who were watching them.

12 Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them: "Come up here!" So the two prophets went up to heaven in a cloud while their enemies stared at them.

13 Just then a major earthquake took place and a tenth of the city collapsed; 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 has come and gone; the third is coming quickly.

The Seventh Trumpet (Third Woe) is Sounded—Voices in Heaven

15 Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, 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 for ever and ever.”

16 Then the twenty-four elders who are seated on their thrones before God threw themselves down with their faces to the ground and worshiped God

17 with these words:

“We give you thanks, Lord God, the All-Powerful,
the one who is and who was,
because you have taken your great power
and begun to reign.

18 The nations were enraged,
but your wrath has come,
and the time has come for the dead to be judged,
and the time has come to give to your servants,
the prophets, their reward,
as well as to the saints
and to those who revere your name, both small and great,
and the time has come to destroy those who destroy the earth.”

19 Then the temple of God in heaven was opened and the ark of his covenant was visible within his temple. And there were flashes of lightning, roaring, crashes of thunder, an earthquake, and a great hailstorm.

Two Great Signs—A Woman (Israel) and a Great Red Dragon (Satan)

12:1 Then a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and with the moon under her feet, and on her head was a crown of twelve stars.

2 She was pregnant and was screaming in labor pains, struggling to give birth.

3 Then another sign appeared in heaven: a huge red dragon that had seven heads and ten horns, and on its heads were seven diadem crowns.

4 Now the dragon’s tail swept away a third of the stars in heaven and hurled them to the earth. Then the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child as soon as it was born.

5 So the woman gave birth to a son, a male child, who is going to rule over all the nations with an iron rod. Her child was suddenly caught up to God and to his throne,

6 and she fled into the wilderness where a place had been prepared for her by God, so she could be taken care of for 1,260 days.

War in Heaven—Satan is Cast Down to Earth

7 Then war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back.

8 But the dragon was not strong enough to prevail, so there was no longer any place left in heaven for him and his angels.

9 So that huge dragon—the ancient serpent, the one called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world—was thrown down to the earth, and his angels along with him.

10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven saying,

“The salvation and the power
and the kingdom of our God,
and the ruling authority of his Christ, have now come,
because the accuser of our brothers and sisters,
the one who accuses them day and night before our God,
has been thrown down.

11 But they overcame him
by the blood of the Lamb
and by the word of their testimony,
and they did not love their lives so much that they were afraid to die.

12 Therefore you heavens rejoice, and all who reside in them!
But woe to the earth and the sea
because the devil has come down to you!
He is filled with terrible anger,

for he knows that he only has a little time!”

Satan Attempts to Destroy Israel

13 Now when the dragon realized that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child.

14 But the woman was given the two wings of a giant eagle so that she could fly out into the wilderness, to the place God prepared for her, where she is taken care of—away from the presence of the serpent—for a time, times, and half a time.

15 Then the serpent spouted water like a river out of his mouth after the woman in an attempt to sweep her away by a flood, but the earth came to her rescue; the ground opened up and swallowed the river that the dragon had spewed from his mouth.

Unable to Destroy Israel, Satan Makes War on the Saints

17 So the dragon became enraged at the woman and went away to make war on the rest of her children, those who keep God’s commandments and hold to the testimony about Jesus.

18 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)

13:1 Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads, and on its horns were ten diadem crowns, and on its heads a blasphemous name.

2 Now the beast that I saw was like a leopard, but its feet were like a bear’s, and its mouth was like a lion’s mouth. The dragon gave the beast his power, his throne, and great authority to rule.

3 One of the beast’s heads appeared to have been killed, but the lethal wound had been healed. And the whole world followed the beast in amazement;

4 they worshiped the dragon because he had given ruling authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast too, saying: “Who is like the beast?” and “Who is able to make war against him?”

5 The beast was given a mouth speaking proud words and blasphemies, and he was permitted to exercise ruling authority for forty-two months.

6 So the beast opened his mouth to blaspheme against God—to blaspheme both his name and his dwelling place, that is, those who dwell in heaven.

7 The beast was permitted to go to war against the saints and conquer them. He was given ruling authority over every tribe, people, language, and nation,

8 and all those who live on the earth will worship the beast, everyone whose name has not been written since the foundation of the world in the book of life belonging to the Lamb who was killed.

9 If anyone has an ear, he had better listen!

10 If anyone is meant for captivity,
into captivity he will go.
If anyone is to be killed by the sword,
then by the sword he must be killed.

This requires steadfast endurance and faith from the saints.

The Second Beast—The False Prophet

11 Then I saw another beast coming up from the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but was speaking like a dragon.

12 He exercised all the ruling authority of the first beast on his behalf, and made the earth and those who inhabit it worship the first beast, the one whose lethal wound had been healed.

13 He performed momentous signs, even making fire come down from heaven in front of people

14 and, by the signs he was permitted to perform on behalf of the beast, he deceived those who live on the earth. He told those who live on the earth to make an image to the beast who had been wounded by the sword, but still lived.

15 The second beast was empowered to give life to the image of the first beast so that it could speak, and could cause all those who did not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

16 He also caused everyone (small and great, rich and poor, free and slave) to obtain a mark on their right hand or on their forehead.

17 Thus no one was allowed to buy or sell things unless he bore the mark of the beast—that is, his name or his number.

18 This calls for wisdom: Let the one who has insight calculate the beast’s number, for it is man’s number, and his number is 666.

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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 here was the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with him were one hundred and forty-four thousand, who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads.

2 I also heard a sound coming out of heaven like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder. Now the sound I heard was like that made by harpists playing their harps,

3 and they were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one was able to learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been redeemed from the earth.

4 These are the ones who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These were redeemed from humanity as firstfruits to God and to the Lamb,

5 and no lie was found on their lips; they are blameless.

The Message of the Three Angels

6 Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, and he had an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language, and people.

7 He declared in a loud voice: "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has arrived, and worship the one who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water!"

8 A second angel followed the first, declaring: "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great city! She made all the nations drink of the wine of her immoral passion."

9 A third angel followed the first two, declaring in a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and takes the mark on his forehead or his hand,

10 that person will also drink of the wine of God's anger that has been mixed undiluted in the cup of his wrath, and he will be tortured with fire and sulfur in front of the holy angels and in front of the Lamb.

11 And the smoke from their torture will go up forever and ever, and those who worship the beast and his image will have no rest day or night, along with anyone who receives the mark of his name."

12 This requires the steadfast endurance of the saints—those who obey God's commandments and hold to their faith in Jesus.

13 Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write this:

'Blessed are the dead,
those who die in the Lord from this moment on!'"

"Yes," says the Spirit, "so they can rest from their hard work, because their deeds will follow them."

Jesus Comes to Harvest the Earth

14 Then I looked, and a white cloud appeared, and seated *on the cloud was one like a son of man!* [cf. [Dan 7:13](#)] He had a golden crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand.

15 Then another angel came out of the temple, shouting in a loud voice to the one seated on the cloud, "Use your sickle and start to reap, because the time to reap has come, since the earth's harvest is ripe!"

16 So the one seated on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped.

17 Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle.

18 Another angel, who was in charge of the fire, came from the altar and called in a loud voice to the angel who had the sharp sickle, "Use your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes off the vine of the earth, because its grapes are now ripe."

19 So the angel swung his sickle over the earth and gathered the grapes from the vineyard of the earth and tossed them into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

20 Then the winepress was stomped outside the city, and blood poured out of the winepress up to the height of horses' bridles for a distance of almost two hundred miles.

The Seven Bowls

15:1 Then I saw another great and astounding sign in heaven: seven angels who have seven final plagues (they are final because in them God's anger is completed).

2 Then I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had conquered the beast and his image and the number of his name. They were standing by the sea of glass, holding harps given to them by God.

3 They sang the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb:

"Great and astounding are your deeds,
Lord God, the All-Powerful!
Just and true are your ways,

King over the nations!

- 4 Who will not fear you, O Lord,
and glorify your name, because you alone are holy?
All nations will come and worship before you
for your righteous acts have been revealed.”

5 After these things I looked, and the temple (the tent of the testimony) was opened in heaven,
6 and the seven angels who had the seven plagues came out of the temple, dressed in clean bright linen, wearing wide golden belts around their chests.

7 Then one of the four living creatures gave the seven angels seven golden bowls filled with the wrath of God who lives forever and ever,

8 and the temple was filled with smoke from God’s glory and from his power. Thus no one could enter the temple until the seven plagues from the seven angels were completed.

The First Bowl is Poured—Painful Sores

16:1 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple declaring to the seven angels: “Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls containing God’s wrath.”

2 So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth. Then ugly and painful sores appeared 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 Next, the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea and it turned into blood, like that of a corpse, and every living creature that was in the sea died.

The Third Bowl is Poured—the Rivers Turn to Blood

4 Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and the springs of water, and they turned into blood.

5 Now I heard the angel of the waters saying:

“You are just—the one who is and who was,
the Holy One—because you have passed these judgments,

- 6 because they poured out the blood of your saints and prophets,
so you have given them blood to drink. They got what they deserved!”

7 Then I heard the altar reply, “Yes, Lord God, the All-Powerful, your judgments are true and just!”

The Fourth Bowl is Poured—A Scorching Sun

8 Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was permitted to scorch people with fire.

9 Thus people were scorched by the terrible heat, yet they blasphemed the name of God, who has ruling authority over these plagues, and they would not repent and 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 so that darkness covered his kingdom, and people began to bite their tongues because of their pain.

11 They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their sufferings and because of their sores, but nevertheless they still refused to repent of their deeds.

The Sixth Bowl is Poured—Three Unclean Spirits Gather the Nations to Armageddon

12 Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates and dried up its water to prepare the way for the kings from the east.

13 Then I saw three unclean spirits that looked like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

14 For they are the spirits of the demons performing signs who go out to the kings of the earth to bring them together for the battle that will take place on the great day of God, the All-Powerful.

- 15 (Look! I will come like a thief!
Blessed is the one who stays alert and does not lose his clothes so that he will not have to walk around naked and his shameful condition be seen.)

16 Now the spirits gathered the kings and their armies to the place that is called Armageddon in Hebrew.

The Seventh Bowl is Poured—A Super-quake Destroys the Great City

17 Finally the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying: “It is done!”

18 Then there were flashes of lightning, roaring, and crashes of thunder, and there was a tremendous earthquake—an earthquake unequaled since humanity has been on the earth, so tremendous was that earthquake.

19 The great city was split into three parts and the cities of the nations collapsed. So Babylon the great was remembered before God, and was given the cup filled with the wine made of God’s furious wrath.

20 Every island fled away and no mountains could be found.

21 And gigantic hailstones, weighing about a hundred pounds each, fell from heaven on people, but they blasphemed God because of the plague of hail, since it was so horrendous.

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 to me. “Come,” he said, “I will show you the condemnation and punishment of the great prostitute who sits on many waters,

2 with whom the kings of the earth committed sexual immorality and the earth’s inhabitants got drunk with the wine of her immorality.”

3 So he carried me away in the Spirit to a wilderness, and there I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns.

4 Now the woman was dressed in purple and scarlet clothing, and adorned with gold, precious stones, and pearls. She held in her hand a golden cup filled with detestable things and unclean things from her sexual immorality.

5 On her forehead was written a name, a mystery: “Babylon the Great, the Mother of prostitutes and of the detestable things of the earth.”

6 I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of those who testified to Jesus. I was greatly astounded when I saw her.

The Meaning of the Woman and the Beast (see Rev 13:1–10)

7 But the angel said to me, “Why are you astounded? I will interpret for you the mystery of the woman and of the beast with the seven heads and ten horns that carries her.

8 The beast you saw was, and is not, but is about to come up from the abyss and then go to destruction. The inhabitants of the earth—all those whose names have not been written in the book of life since the foundation of the world—will be astounded when they see that the beast was, and is not, but is to come.

9 (This requires a mind that has wisdom.) The seven heads are seven mountains the woman sits on. They are also seven kings:

10 five have fallen; one is, and the other has not yet come, but whenever he does come, he must remain for only a brief time.

11 The beast that was, and is not, is himself an eighth king and yet is one of the seven, and is going to destruction.

12 The ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but will receive ruling authority as kings with the beast for one hour.

13 These kings have a single intent, and they will give their power and authority to the beast.

14 They will make war with the Lamb, but the Lamb will conquer them, because he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those accompanying the Lamb are the called, chosen, and faithful.”

15 Then the angel said to me, “The waters you saw (where the prostitute is seated) are peoples, multitudes, nations, and languages.

16 The ten horns that you saw, and the beast—these will hate the prostitute and make her desolate and naked. They will consume her flesh and burn her up with fire.

17 For God has put into their minds to carry out his purpose by making a decision to give their royal power to the beast until the words of God are fulfilled.

18 As for the woman you saw, she is the great city that has sovereignty over the kings of the earth.”

The Destruction of Babylon the Great

18:1 After these things I saw another angel, who possessed great authority, coming down out of heaven, and the earth was lit up by his radiance.

2 He shouted with a powerful voice:

“Fallen, fallen, is Babylon the great!

She has become a lair for demons,

a haunt for every unclean spirit,

a haunt for every unclean bird,

a haunt for every unclean and detested beast.

3 For all the nations have fallen from
the wine of her immoral passion,
and the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality with her,
and the merchants of the earth have gotten rich from the power of her sensual behavior.”

4 Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, my people, so you will not take part in her sins and so you will not receive her plagues,

5 because her sins have piled up all the way to heaven and God has remembered her crimes.

6 Repay her the same way she repaid others; pay her back double corresponding to her deeds. In the cup she mixed, mix double the amount for her.

7 As much as she exalted herself and lived in sensual luxury, to this extent give her torment and grief because she said to herself, ‘I rule as queen and am no widow; I will never experience grief!’

8 For this reason, she will experience her plagues in a single day: disease, mourning, and famine, and she will be burned down with fire, because the Lord God who judges her is powerful!”

9 Then the kings of the earth who committed immoral acts with her and lived in sensual luxury with her will weep and wail for her when they see the smoke from the fire that burns her up.

10 They will stand a long way off because they are afraid of her torment, and will say,

“Woe, woe, O great city,
Babylon the powerful city!
For in a single hour your doom has come!”

11 Then the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn for her because no one buys their cargo any longer—

12 cargo such as gold, silver, precious stones, pearls, fine linen, purple cloth, silk, scarlet cloth, all sorts of things made of citron wood, all sorts of objects made of ivory, all sorts of things made of expensive wood, bronze, iron and marble,

13 cinnamon, spice, incense, perfumed ointment, frankincense, wine, olive oil and costly flour, wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and four-wheeled carriages, slaves and human lives.

14 (The ripe fruit you greatly desired
has gone from you,
and all your luxury and splendor
have gone from you—
they will never ever be found again!)

15 The merchants who sold these things, who got rich from her, will stand a long way off because they are afraid of her torment.

They will weep and mourn,

16 saying,

“Woe, woe, O great city—
dressed in fine linen, purple and scarlet clothing,
and adorned with gold, precious stones, and pearls—

17 because in a single hour such great wealth has been destroyed!”

And every ship’s captain, and all who sail along the coast—seamen, and all who make their living from the sea, stood a long way off

18 and began to shout when they saw the smoke from the fire that burned her up, “Who is like the great city?”

19 And they threw dust on their heads and were shouting with weeping and mourning,

“Woe, Woe, O great city—
in which all those who had ships on the sea got rich from her wealth—
because in a single hour she has been destroyed!”

20 (Rejoice over her, O heaven,
and you saints and apostles and prophets,
for God has pronounced judgment against her on your behalf!)

21 Then one powerful angel picked up a stone like a huge millstone, threw it into the sea, and said,

“With this kind of sudden violent force
Babylon the great city will be thrown down

- and it will never be found again!
- 22 And the sound of the harpists, musicians,
flute players, and trumpeters
will never be heard in you again.
No craftsman who practices any trade
will ever be found in you again;
the noise of a mill will never be heard in you again.
- 23 Even the light from a lamp
will never shine in you again!
The voices of the bridegroom and his bride
will never be heard in you again.
For your merchants were the tycoons of the world,
because all the nations were deceived by your magic spells!
- 24 The blood of the saints and prophets was found in her,
along with the blood of all those who had been killed 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 what sounded like the loud voice of a vast throng in heaven, saying,

“Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God,

2 because his judgments are true and just.

For he has judged the great prostitute

who corrupted the earth with her sexual immorality,

and has avenged the blood of his servants poured out by her own hands!”

3 Then a second time the crowd shouted, “Hallelujah!” The smoke rises from her forever and ever.

4 The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures threw themselves to the ground and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne, saying: “Amen! Hallelujah!”

5 Then a voice came from the throne, saying:

“Praise our God

all you his servants,

and all you who fear Him,

both the small and the great!”

6 Then I heard what sounded like the voice of a vast throng, like the roar of many waters and like loud crashes of thunder. They were shouting:

“Hallelujah!

For the Lord our God, the All-Powerful, reigns!

7 Let us rejoice and exult

and give him glory,

because the wedding celebration of the Lamb has come,

and his bride has made herself ready.

8 She was permitted to be dressed in bright, clean, fine linen” (for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints).

9 Then the angel said to me, “Write the following: Blessed are those who are invited to the banquet at the wedding celebration of the Lamb!” He also said to me, “These are the true words of God.”

10 So I threw myself down at his feet to worship him, but he said, “Do not do this! I am only a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony about Jesus. Worship God, for the testimony about Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

Jesus Rides to War

11 Then I saw heaven opened and here came a white horse! The one riding it was called “Faithful” and “True,” and with justice he judges and goes to war.

12 His eyes are like a fiery flame and there are many diadem crowns on his head. He has a name written that no one knows except himself.

13 He is dressed in clothing dipped in blood, and he is called the Word of God.

14 The armies that are in heaven, dressed in white, clean, fine linen, were following him on white horses.

15 From his mouth extends a sharp sword, so that with it he can strike the nations. *He will rule them with an iron rod*, [\[Ps 2:9\]](#) and he stomps the winepress of the furious wrath of God, the All-Powerful.

16 He has a name written on his clothing and on his thigh: “King of kings and Lord of lords.”

The Beast and the False Prophet Are Cast Into the Lake of Fire

17 Then I saw one angel standing in the sun, and he shouted in a loud voice to all the birds flying high in the sky:

“Come, gather around for the great banquet of God,

18 to eat your fill of the flesh of kings,

the flesh of generals,

the flesh of powerful people,

the flesh of horses and those who ride them,

and the flesh of all people, both free and slave,

and small and great!”

19 Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to do battle with the one who rode the horse and with his army.

20 Now the beast was seized, and along with him the false prophet who had performed the signs on his behalf—signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. Both of them were thrown alive into the lake of fire burning with sulfur.

21 The others were killed by the sword that extended from the mouth of the one who rode the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves with their flesh.

Satan Is Bound for 1,000 Years

20:1 Then I saw an angel descending from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the abyss and a huge chain.

2 He seized the dragon—the ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan—and tied him up for a thousand years.

3 The angel then threw him into the abyss and locked and sealed it so that he could not deceive the nations until the one thousand years were finished. (After these things he must be released for a brief period of time.)

The First Resurrection—Martyred Saints Rule With Christ in the Millennium

4 Then I saw thrones and seated on them were those who had been given authority to judge. I also saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. These had not worshiped the beast or his image and had refused to receive his mark on their forehead or hand. 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 finished.) This is the first resurrection.

6 Blessed and holy is the one who takes part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

Satan Defeated and Cast Into the Lake of Fire

7 Now when the thousand years are finished, Satan will be released from his prison

8 and will go out to deceive the nations at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to bring them together for the battle. They are as numerous as the grains of sand in the sea.

9 They went up on the broad plain of the earth and encircled the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and devoured them completely.

10 And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet are too, and they will be tormented there day and night forever and ever.

The Great White Throne Judgment

11 Then I saw a large white throne and the one who was seated on it; the earth and the heaven fled from his presence, and no place was found for them.

12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne. Then books were opened, and another book was opened—the book of life. So the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to their deeds.

13 The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and Death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each one was judged according to his deeds.

14 Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death—the lake of fire.

15 If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, that person 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 earth had ceased to exist, and the sea existed no more. [cf. [Isa 65:17](#); [66:22](#); [2 Pet 3:13](#)]

2 And I saw the holy city—the new Jerusalem—descending out of heaven from God, made ready like a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying: “Look! The residence of God is among human beings. He will live among them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them.

4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death will not exist any more—or mourning, or crying, or pain, for the former things have ceased to exist.”

5 And the one seated on the throne said: “Look! I am making all things new!” Then he said to me, “Write it down, because these words are reliable and true.”

6 He also said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the one who is thirsty I will give water free of charge from the spring of the water of life.

7 The one who conquers will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be my son.

8 But to the cowards, unbelievers, detestable persons, murderers, the sexually immoral, and those who practice magic spells, idol worshipers, and all those who lie, their place will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur. That 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 final plagues came and spoke to me, saying, “Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb!”

10 So he took me away in the Spirit to a huge, majestic mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.

11 The city possesses the glory of God; its brilliance is like a precious jewel, like a stone of crystal-clear jasper.

12 It has a massive, high wall with twelve gates, with twelve angels at the gates, and the names of the twelve tribes of the nation of Israel are written on the gates.

13 There are three gates on the east side, three gates on the north side, three gates on the south side and three gates on the west side.

14 The wall of the city has twelve foundations, and on them are the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

15 The angel who spoke to me had a golden measuring rod with which to measure the city and its foundation stones and wall.

16 Now the city is laid out as a square, its length and width the same. He measured the city with the measuring rod at fourteen hundred miles (its length and width and height are equal).

17 He also measured its wall, one hundred forty-four cubits according to human measurement, which is also the angel’s.

18 The city’s wall is made of jasper and the city is pure gold, like transparent glass.

19 The foundations of the city’s wall are decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation is jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald,

20 the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst.

21 And the twelve gates are twelve pearls—each one of the gates is made from just one pearl! The main street of the city is pure gold, like transparent glass.

22 Now I saw no temple in the city, because the Lord God—the All-Powerful—and the Lamb are its temple.

23 The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, because the glory of God lights it up, 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 grandeur into it.

25 Its gates will never be closed during the day (and there will be no night there).

26 They will bring the grandeur and the wealth of the nations into it,

27 but nothing ritually unclean will ever enter into it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or practices falsehood, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

22:1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life—water as clear as crystal—pouring out from the throne of God and of the Lamb,

2 flowing down the middle of the city’s main street. On each side of the river is the tree of life producing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month of the year. Its leaves are for the healing of the nations.

3 And there will no longer be any curse, and the throne of God and the Lamb will be in the city. His servants will worship him,

4 and they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

5 Night will be no more, and they will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, because the Lord God will shine on them, and they will reign forever and ever.

The Certainty of the Blessed Hope

6 Then the angel said to me, “These words are reliable and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must happen soon.”

7 (Look! I am coming soon!
Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy expressed in 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 them, I threw myself down to worship at the feet of the angel who was showing them to me.

9 But he said to me, “Do not do this! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers the prophets, and with those who obey the words of this book. Worship God!”

Proclaim the Prophecy—Present Choices Determine a Permanent Outcome

10 Then he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy contained in this book, because the time is near.

11 The evildoer must continue to do evil, and the one who is morally filthy must continue to be filthy. The one who is righteous must continue to act righteously, and the one who is holy must continue to be holy.”

Invitation to Eternal Life

- 12 (Look! I am coming soon,
and my reward is with me to pay each one 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 they can have access to the tree of life and can enter into the city by the gates.

15 Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the sexually immoral, and the murderers, and the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood!

16 “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about 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 And 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 wants it take the water of life free of charge.

The Final Testimony of Jesus Christ

18 I testify to the one who hears the words of the prophecy contained in this book: If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book.

19 And if anyone takes away from the words of this book of prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city that are described in this book.

20 The one who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon!” Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!

Benediction

21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all.

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