

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

1. We must HEAR the truth.
(Romans 10:14; Romans 10:17)
2. We must BELIEVE Jesus Christ is the Son of God. (Mark 16:16; John 8:24)
3. We must REPENT of our sins. (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38)
4. We must CONFESS Christ before men.
(Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:10)
5. We must be BAPTIZED into Christ.
(Galatians 3:27; I Peter 3:21; Acts 22:16)

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“ALL THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST
GREET YOU.” (ROMANS 16:16)

COURSE 6

**NEW TESTAMENT
SURVEY**

Lesson Booklet

Revised 2018
Not For Sale

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Lesson 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

We are beginning a journey through the most important book in the world. This book is the New Testament. Without it, God's revelation to man would not be complete. The New Testament tells of the coming of the Son of God to save man from sin. It reveals the birth, life, miracles, and teachings of Jesus. The New Testament tells of Jesus' death for our sins and His resurrection from the dead. It also tells of Jesus' ascension to Heaven and His promise to return. The New Testament records the coming of the Holy Spirit and the beginning of the church. It tells of the growth and spread of the church throughout the world. The New Testament contains inspired letters to help churches deal with problems and to instruct Christians how to live. It ends with a book of encouragement and prophecy. The New Testament was written during the age of miracles. Its words came from God through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit inspired eight men to write the message He revealed. Four of them, Matthew, John, Peter, and Paul, were apostles. The others, Mark, Luke, James and Jude, were evangelists.

All the Bible is inspired by God. Paul said.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Timothy 3:16-17 KJV)

The word for *inspiration* is the Greek word *theopneustos*. It means *God breathed*.

The words used by the writers of the New Testament were chosen by the Holy Spirit from their vocabularies. Thus the books written by each one show his style and personality while accurately revealing the message of God. Paul said,

But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God. But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. Which

things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual words. (1 Corinthians 2:10-13)

The books of the New Testament were written in the first century. They were widely circulated among the churches as individual books. Paul told the church at Colossae,

And when this epistle hath been read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye also read the epistle from Laodicea. (Colossians 4:16)

At first, the New Testament books may have been written on scrolls. These were rolls of animal skin or papyrus (paper made from reeds). It was impossible to combine them into a book in this form. Later, they were written in the form of books like we have today. This made it possible to collect all the books of the New Testament together into one book. This was done in the fourth century.

The New Testament books were first written in Greek, the language of the common people in the first century. We do not have the original books written by the inspired men. We have copies of them. There are more than five thousand manuscripts of these books. Some were made as early as the second century. No other book of ancient times has as many manuscripts still in existence. There are no manuscripts of any other ancient book that goes back as close to the time of writing.

In addition to the manuscripts, translations of the New Testament were made in the first three centuries. There are also the writings of the "church fathers." These were Christians who wrote in defense of the faith. Some wrote as early as the first and second centuries. The New Testament can be largely reproduced from their writings.

To understand the New Testament, it is helpful to know the history of the times when it was written. The Old Testament prophet, Daniel, foretold that in the days of the Roman kings, God would set up His kingdom on the earth (Daniel 2:44). When Jesus was born, Rome ruled much of the world including the Jews. The Roman Empire made it possible for the Gospel to spread rapidly. One could travel more easily and safely than ever before. The Romans built great roads to connect all parts of the empire. They put an end to the pirates on the Mediterranean Sea and made travel by ship safer. One did not need a

offer sacrifices to his image to show they were loyal to him and to the empire. Christians could not do this for it would be idolatry (Galatians 5:19-21). Therefore, Christians were persecuted. Many had their property taken from them. Thousands were killed.

Revelation indicates a time when the churches had lost their early zeal. Ephesus had left its *first love*(2:4). Sardis was *dead* (3:1-2). Laodicea, which had been destroyed by an earthquake in Nero's reign, had been rebuilt. The church had become *lukewarm* (3:14-16). All of these things point to a later date as the time of writing. The time when Revelation was written is very important for understanding the book.

Revelation was addressed to *the seven churches that are in Asia* (1:4; chapters 2 and 3). These churches had been established as a result of the work of the apostle Paul (Acts 19, 20). Since seven is a number which stands for perfection or completeness, it is likely these seven churches were meant to represent all churches everywhere.

THE MESSAGE OF REVELATION

Christians were facing severe persecution and needed encouragement. Revelation provided this. It shows that even though things look bad on earth, God is still in control. Christians may suffer for a time, but they will overcome. Satan and his allies on earth cannot prevail against the Lord. Christians are *more than conquerors through him that loved us* (Romans 8:37).

WHO WROTE REVELATION?

The message of Revelation was given to us by Jesus Christ. It came from God to His servants. It was sent by His angel to John who wrote it in a book (1:1). Again and again, the angel told John to write down the things which were revealed to him (2:1; 2:8; 2:12; 2:18; 3:1; 3:7; 3:14; 14:13; 19:9).

The human writer of Revelation was the apostle John. John also wrote the Gospel of John and the books of First, Second, and Third John. He was the brother of James and one of the original twelve apostles (Matthew 10:1-4). According to early Christian writers, John was the only apostle who died a natural death. He lived to be very old. After the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, John lived in Ephesus. During a time of persecution, John was arrested and taken to Patmos, a small island in the Mediterranean Sea seventy miles from Ephesus. It was here that the vision of Revelation was given to him (1:9-11).

WHEN WAS REVELATION WRITTEN?

Some Bible students believe Revelation was written before Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70. They place the date of writing between A.D. 64 and A.D. 69. They argue that John was commanded to measure the temple (11:1). Therefore, the temple had not yet been destroyed. However, they forget that Revelation is written in figurative language. Thus, the temple is not to be understood in a literal sense. It likely refers to the church. Those who hold the early date also believe the Roman emperor behind the persecution in Revelation is Nero. Nero ruled from A.D. 54 to A.D. 68. He blamed Christians for burning the city of Rome in A.D. 64. He had many Christians cruelly tortured and killed. However, Nero's persecution did not extend to the Roman provinces. The persecution in Revelation affected the churches in places beyond Rome such as in Asia.

Most Bible students believe that Revelation was written during the time of the emperor Domitian who ruled from A.D. 81 to A.D. 96. The evidence for this date is very strong. An early Christian writer, Irenaeus, was a disciple of Polycarp. Polycarp had been a student of the apostle John. Irenaeus wrote of Revelation: "For that was seen not very long since, but almost in our day, toward the end of Domitian's reign." This would place the date of Revelation about A.D. 95.

Domitian was the first Roman emperor to begin a persecution of the church throughout the whole Roman Empire. He required everyone to

passport to go from one country to another. A Roman citizen could claim Rome's protection when needed.

The Greek language also aided in the rapid spread of the Gospel. Rome conquered the kingdoms which had arisen from the old empire of Alexander the Great. The Greek they spoke soon became the common language of the Roman Empire. It was used in writing, business, and schools. The Old Testament had even been translated into Greek. This translation, the Septuagint, was used by Jesus and His apostles as well as the early Christians.

The scattering of the Jews was another factor in the rapid spread of the Gospel. Many Jews remained in foreign lands where they had been taken as captives. Others went to various parts of the Roman Empire to conduct business. Wherever ten male Jews were found, they built a synagogue. Here they met on the sabbath to study the Old Testament, pray, sing praises, and give an offering for the poor. Many Gentiles came to believe in God as a result of the teaching in the synagogues. First century preachers found a ready audience for the Gospel in the synagogues.

Paul wrote:

But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. (Galatians 4:4-5)

Conditions in the first century were right for God's Son to come to the earth!

Lesson 2: MATTHEW AND MARK

MATTHEW

Matthew is the first book in the New Testament. It has twenty-eight chapters. It covers the life of Christ from His birth to the giving of the Great Commission. It is perhaps the most widely read book of the Bible because of its location at the beginning of the New Testament. Matthew was first written to the Jews.

The purpose of Matthew is to show that Jesus is the Messiah (Christ) who was foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament. There are sixty-five quotations from the Old Testament in the book of Matthew. The family history of Jesus is traced from Abraham through David. This shows Jesus was a true Jew and the promised Seed of Abraham

(Genesis 12:3; 22:18; Galatians 3:16). It also shows Jesus was the Son of David. Therefore, He had the right to the throne of Israel. Matthew, Mark and Luke are sometimes called *the synoptic gospels*. This simply means that they record many of the same things about Jesus' life and teaching. Some scholars do not believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God. They say Mark copied from an unknown writing called "Q." Then Matthew and Luke copied from Mark. There is no proof of this. The so-called "Q" writing does not exist, nor is there proof it has ever existed! There are two reasons Matthew, Mark, and Luke contain much of the same information.

- They were all inspired by the Holy Spirit.
- They all deal with the life and teachings of Jesus.

Each one of these books contains some information the others do not have. Each book was written with a different purpose and audience in mind.

Matthew is the inspired writer of the book which bears his name. He is not named in the book as its author. However, Christians from earliest times have believed he was the writer. Matthew was a tax collector. He was called by Jesus to be one of His disciples (Matthew 9:9). Later, he was chosen to be one of the twelve apostles (Luke 6:12-16). He was one of the group of tax collectors and sinners who followed Jesus (Matthew 9:10-13). When Jesus called him, Matthew left everything to follow Him (Luke 5:27-28).

Matthew must have been a well educated man for this was required to be a tax collector. He was a prosperous man because of his job. He owned a house where he made a feast for Jesus (Matthew 9:9-11; Mark 2:14-17; Luke 5:29). Matthew's name means *gift of God*. He was also known as *Levi, the son of Alphaeus* (Mark 2:14).

The message of Matthew is that Jesus has come to be king over His kingdom. Matthew often uses the phrase *kingdom of heaven* to refer to the church which Jesus had come to build. He also called the coming church *the kingdom of God*. Frequently, Matthew referred to Jesus as *the Son of David*. This showed He was the heir to David's throne. Again and again Matthew shows that Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies of the Christ (Matthew 1:22-23; 2:5- 6, 17-18; 4:13-16; 8:17; 12:17-22; 13:34-35; 21:4-5; 27:9-10). He records Peter's confession that Jesus is *the Christ, the Son of the living God*

in efforts to support their errors. Because it has been so widely misused, many Christians are afraid to study Revelation. Some Christians even believe it is not possible to understand it.

God gave us the book of Revelation. It is a part of His will to mankind. Therefore, it is important that we study it and do our best to understand it. The word *revelation* is a translation of a Greek word which means *an unveiling, an uncovering, or a revealing*. The very name of the book indicates we can understand it. The Holy Spirit pronounces a blessing upon those who read and hear the message of Revelation.

Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things that are written therein: for the time is at hand. (Revelation 1:3)

The key to understanding Revelation is in the first verse:

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show unto his servants, even the things which must shortly come to pass: and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John. (Revelation 1:1)

Two things are mentioned in this verse which will help us understand the book. First, it deals with things which must shortly take place. John was writing to churches in the first century. They were being persecuted because of their faith in Christ. The things revealed in Revelation were meant to encourage them. They did not pertain to things which would happen hundreds of years later. They pertained to things which would happen shortly. Second, Jesus sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John. To *signify* means *to give in signs or symbols*. Revelation was given in figurative language. If we take Revelation literally, we will misunderstand it.

Revelation shows the completion of God's plan of redemption. In the first book of the Bible, we read of man's fall into sin. Because of sin, man was no longer allowed to eat of the tree of life in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3). In Revelation, we learn the tree of life is now in Paradise. Whoever overcomes the temptations of this world will be given the privilege of eating of the tree of life (Revelation 2:7). The first book of the Bible has been called *Paradise Lost*. The last book of the Bible has been called *Paradise Regained*.

true teaching. If one does not remain in the truth, he does not have God! If one does not have God, he is lost! If one remains in the true teaching, he is in fellowship with both God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. Therefore, he is saved!

John also warns Christians that they must not support false teachers in any way. If a teacher does not teach the truth, he must not even be given hospitality in our homes. If one helps a false teacher in any way, he becomes just as guilty as the false teacher.

THIRD JOHN

The short epistle of Third John mentions three men in the church. John commends two of them and condemns one. John is writing to a godly Christian whose name is Gaius. Gaius had showed hospitality to brethren and to strangers and was commended for it. John had written to the church where Gaius was a member. Diotrephes, a member of the church, loved to have preeminence. He would not receive John and spoke malicious words against him. He would not show hospitality to brethren and opposed others who did. Another brother in the church was commended by John. Demetrius was a member who had *good report of all men, and of the truth itself* (3 John 12 KJV).

JUDE

Jude was a brother of James. It is believed that this is James who was one of the younger (half) brothers of Jesus. Therefore, Jude was also a (half) brother of our Lord (Matthew 12:46-47; 13:53-56; John 7:1-5; Acts 1:14). Jude had planned to write a letter concerning the salvation which all Christians enjoy in common. However, the presence of false teachers in the church caused him to change what he wrote.

I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints. (Jude 3)

Jude is a book which teaches Christians that they must always be on guard against those who would destroy their faith and lead them astray.

Lesson 13: REVELATION

The last book of the Bible is Revelation. It is a book of prophecy. No other book of the Bible has been as misunderstood and misapplied as the book of Revelation. False teachers have wrested passages from it

and Jesus' promise to build His church (kingdom) upon this great truth (Matthew 16:16-19).

Matthew includes fifteen parables which were taught by Jesus. Ten of these parables are not found anywhere else in the New Testament. Matthew also records twenty miracles which were done by Jesus. Three of these are not found elsewhere. Matthew sets forth the teaching of Jesus during His personal ministry more fully than the other Gospel writers.

MARK

Mark, the second book in the New Testament, has sixteen chapters. It is the shortest of the four accounts of the life of Christ. It is a fast moving history of Jesus' ministry, death, and resurrection. Mark uses words such as *immediately* many times. He was a companion of Peter in Peter's later years (1 Peter 5:13). Many early Christian writers believe Mark wrote his account of Christ's life as he heard it preached by Peter. They also believed he wrote it with the Romans in mind.

Mark's full name was John Mark (Acts 12:12). His mother was Mary, who was a Christian. The church met in her house to pray for Peter when he was put in prison by Herod. Mark was also a relative of Barnabas (Colossians 4:10). He accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:5). However, he left them and returned home when they came to Perga (Acts 13:13). Later, when they planned to make a second journey, Barnabas wanted to take Mark with them. Paul disagreed strongly, so the two men went their separate ways (Acts 15:36-41). Mark and Paul were later reconciled for Paul mentions him favorably (Colossians 4:10). When he was in prison in Rome, Paul requested Timothy to bring Mark with him for *he is useful to me for ministering* (2 Timothy 4:11).

While Matthew emphasizes what Jesus taught, Mark emphasizes what He did. Mark differs from Matthew and Luke because he does not record the family line of Jesus. Neither does he mention the birth and childhood of Jesus. He begins his account of the life of Christ with the ministry of John the baptist. Mark does not record the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus' rebuke of the scribes and the Pharisees, or the parables of the second coming which are found in Matthew 25. However, he gives more details of the miracles of Jesus than either Matthew or Luke. Mark presents Jesus more as a servant than as a king.

Some unbelieving Bible scholars have argued that the closing verses of Mark 16 should not be in the Bible (Mark 16:9-20). Some versions take this passage out of the text and put it in a footnote at the bottom of the page. However, Mark 16:9-20 is in the majority of the Greek manuscripts. It was quoted by writers such as Irenaeus who lived in the second and third centuries. Therefore, we know it was a part of the Bible in their day. It is also found in the ancient translations which are older than many of our oldest existing manuscripts. As one believing scholar said: "If these verses are not genuine, why did God in His providence so long allow them to pass for genuine?"

Lesson 3: LUKE AND JOHN

LUKE

The third book in the New Testament is Luke. Luke contains twenty-four chapters. It is one of the longest books of the New Testament. The books of Luke and Acts go together. Luke records *all that Jesus began both to do and to teach* (Acts 1:1) during His ministry upon the earth. Acts continues the account by relating what Jesus did through His apostles after He ascended back to Heaven.

The human author of the book of Luke is not mentioned in the book which bears his name. However, it has been the universal belief of all faithful Bible students from the very beginning that Luke wrote both Luke and Acts. *The Muratorian Canon*, written about A.D.170 says: "The Gospel of Luke stands third in order, having been written by Luke, the physician, the companion of Paul, who, not being himself an eyewitness, based his narrative on such information as he could obtain, beginning from the birth of John." Luke and Acts are both addressed to Theophilus (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1). The first chapter of Acts simply begins where the last chapter of Luke stops.

Luke is mentioned by name three times in the New Testament (Colossians 4:14; Philemon 24; and 2 Timothy 4:11). When Paul wrote his last letter, he stated, *Only Luke is with me* (2 Timothy 4:11). Luke was a physician. He was a Greek and the only Gentile who was inspired to write a part of the New Testament. Luke traveled with Paul on his second and third missionary journeys. He joined Paul at Troas (Acts 16:10) and traveled with him until Philippi (Acts 16:40). He rejoined Paul on Paul's third missionary journey (Acts 20:5). Luke remained with Paul after that. He went with Paul when

they claimed to have special knowledge. *Gnostic* comes from the same Greek word from which we get the word for *knowledge*. The Gnostics taught that flesh is evil. If flesh is evil, then they reasoned, the Son of God could not have been born of a woman. Some even believed that Jesus did not have a body of flesh, but only seemed to have a physical body. Others said Jesus was just an ordinary man. The *Christ* came upon the man, Jesus, when he was baptized and left Him shortly before He was crucified.

In the first chapter of First John, John gives his eyewitness testimony that Jesus had come in the flesh (verses 1-4). He then points out that our fellowship with God is possible only if we walk in the light (verses 7-10).

In chapter two, John warns of the coming of antichrists. Whoever denies that Jesus has come in the flesh is an antichrist (verses 18-29). In chapter three, John teaches that Christians do not live a life of continual sinning (verses 1-10). He also discusses the meaning of real love (verses 11-24).

John begins chapter four by telling Christians that they must not believe every teacher but must put them to the test (verses 4:1-6). Then he discusses more about love.

In chapter five, John teaches that eternal life is found only in Jesus Christ (verses 4-13). He concludes his first epistle with a discussion of prayer and forgiveness (verses 14-21).

SECOND JOHN

Second and Third John are the two shortest books in the New Testament. John calls himself *the elder* in the beginning of these letters. This probably refers to the fact that he was now a very old man. Second John is addressed to *the elect lady and her children*. Some think *the elect lady* refers to a church and *her children* refers to the members of the church. It is more likely that John was writing to a Christian woman. John had found her children walking in the truth. He writes to commend her for this. John also teaches the importance of love. Christians must love one another. If we love God we will also keep His commandments.

John next warns the Christian woman of false teachers who deny that the Son of God came into this world as a man. One who denies that Jesus has come in the flesh, as the Gnostics did, is a *deceiver and the antichrist*. John also points out the importance of remaining in the

In chapter three, Peter answered some who were denying that Jesus would return. He pointed out that just as God destroyed the earth before in the flood, He would destroy it a second time by fire. Therefore, Christians should be diligent to be ready.

Lesson 12: FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD JOHN AND JUDE

The letters of First, Second, and Third John were written by John, one of the apostles of Jesus Christ. John was the son of Zebedee and Salome and the brother of James (Matthew 4:21; 27:55-56; Mark 15:40-41). Before John became a follower of Jesus, John was a fisherman (Luke 5:7-10). He and his brother James were among the first disciples chosen by Jesus (Matthew 4:21-22). He was among the twelve who were selected from all the disciples to be apostles (Luke 6:13-16).

John, James, and Peter were special friends of Jesus (Mark 5:35-42; Matthew 17:1-9; 26:36-37). On one occasion Jesus called James and John the *sons of thunder* (Mark 3:17; Luke 9:51-56). John referred to himself in the Gospel of John as the *disciple whom Jesus loved* (John 20:2; 21:20, 24). When Jesus was dying on the cross, he entrusted the care of His mother to John (John 19:26-27). It is commonly believed that John was the only one of Jesus' apostles to die a natural death. The rest were killed because of their faith.

FIRST JOHN

Early Christian writers such as Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria said that John moved to Ephesus after Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70. The apostle Paul had established many churches in Asia where Ephesus was located. John addressed the book of Revelation to *the seven churches that are in Asia* (Revelation 1:4). Irenaeus wrote "...the church in Ephesus, founded by Paul, and having John remaining permanently among them until the time of Trajan, is a true witness of the tradition of the apostles." If John lived until the time of Trajan who ruled from A.D. 98 to A.D. 117, he must have been about one hundred years old when he died. First John was likely written between A.D. 85 and A.D. 90.

False teachers had invaded the churches. John wrote to refute them. These false teachers denied that Jesus had come as a human being (1 John 1:2; 2:22-23; 4:1-3). They were later called *Gnostics* because

Paul was taken as a prisoner to Rome (Acts 27:1 ff.). He was with Paul during this last Roman imprisonment (2 Timothy 4:11). In Acts, we can know when Luke was with Paul for he includes himself by saying "we." When he says "they," we know he was telling what happened to Paul and others when he was not present.

It is commonly accepted that Luke wrote the book which bears his name while Paul was in prison in Caesarea (Acts 23:23-32). This places the time of writing about the year A.D. 61. At Caesarea, Luke had opportunity to visit the places where Jesus had lived and to speak with eyewitnesses who had known Jesus on the earth.

Luke emphasizes that Christ is the Savior of the whole world (Luke 2:32). He traces the family lineage of Jesus all the way back to Adam (Luke 3:38). He mentions Gentiles more than Matthew, Mark, or John. Only Luke records the references to the widow of Zarephath and Naaman the Syrian (Luke 4:25-27). Only Luke records the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) and the story of the Samaritan leper who alone thanked Jesus for healing him (Luke 17:12-19).

Luke contains much which is not found in Matthew, Mark, or John. Only he records the birth of John the baptist (Luke 1) and the birth and early life of Jesus (Luke 2). Only in Luke are found the parables of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10), the rich fool (Luke 12:13-21), and the lost sheep, lost coin, and prodigal son. Luke is also the only inspired writer who tells of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16) and the thief on the cross who believed in Jesus (Luke 23:39-43).

JOHN

The book of John is the fourth inspired account of the life of Jesus. John wrote with everyone as his intended audience. He presented Jesus as God who became flesh and lived among men (John 1:1-18). John's account of the life of Jesus is very different from the earlier accounts by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. He had a different purpose in writing. They had written to relate the facts of Christ's life on earth. He wrote to show us the nature of Christ. John also wrote many years after Matthew, Mark, and Luke had written their books. He does not record the genealogy of Jesus. He does not record such events as Jesus' birth, childhood, baptism, or temptation. He makes no reference to the Sermon on the Mount.

John does include a number of events which Matthew, Mark, and Luke left out. These include the first miracle at Cana (John 2:1-11); the conversations with Nicodemus (John 3:1-21) and with the Samaritan woman (John 4:4-42); the raising of Lazarus (John 11:1-44); the washing of the disciples' feet (John 13:1-17); and Thomas' confession of faith (John 20:25-29).

John was the brother of James and the son of Zebedee and Salome (Matthew 4:21; 20:20-21; 27:55-56; Mark 15:40-41). He was a partner in a fishing business with his brother, father, Peter, and Andrew (Luke 5:10). John, along with James and Peter, was very close to Jesus (Matthew 17:1-9; Mark 5:35-43; Matthew 26:36-37). He referred to himself as *the disciple whom Jesus loved*. This indicates he was a special friend of Jesus (John 13:23; 19:26; 21:20). When Jesus was dying on the cross, He committed the care of His mother, Mary, to John (John 19:25-27).

After Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70, John lived in Ephesus. He remained there until his death except for the time when he was imprisoned by Rome on the island of Patmos (Revelation 1:9). Besides the book of John, John also was inspired to write the letters of First, Second, and Third John and the book of Revelation.

John's account of the life of Christ has been called *The Gospel of Belief*. The miracles of Jesus prove He was a teacher who came from God (John 3:2). John recorded the miracles of Jesus to cause readers to believe. To support his claim that Jesus is God, John records seven miracles in addition to Christ's resurrection. These miracles are: turning water to wine (John 2:1-11); healing the son of the nobleman (John 4:46-54); feeding the five thousand (John 6:1-13); walking on the water (John 6:16-21); healing the man born blind (John 9:1-7); raising Lazarus from the dead (John 11:1-46), and the draught of fish (John 21:1-8). John said Jesus did many other miracles besides the ones which were written in the book. Those which were recorded were to prove that *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God* (John 20:30-31).

Lesson 4: THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

The fifth book of the New Testament is a book of history. Acts is the earliest history of the church of Christ. It has been called "the hub of the Bible." Neither the Old Testament, nor the first four books of the

Peter was a married man (Matthew 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 9:5). Therefore, he could not have been a pope as the Roman Catholic Church claims. Peter was bold and courageous by nature (John 13:36-38). However, he was weak and cowardly at times (Galatians 2:11-

16). He defended Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, but denied Him three times the same night (John 18:10; 15-27). He repented, and was given the opportunity to confess Christ three times (John 21:15-17). Peter was given the privilege to preach the Gospel first to both the Jews and the Gentiles (Acts 2:10). He thus used the keys of the kingdom to open the doors of the kingdom (Matthew 16:18-19). Jesus foretold the manner of Peter's death (John 21:18).

First and Second Peter were both written to Christians in Asia Minor where Paul had earlier evangelized. The time of writing was between A.D. 64 and A.D. 67. The Roman emperor, Nero, was persecuting the church. Peter refers to this time of persecution as a *fiery trial* (1 Peter 4:12). The key word in First Peter is *suffering*. In chapter one, Peter reminds Christians of their hope in Heaven. Though they are being tested by fire, their faith will be made stronger by it.

In chapters two and three he reminds Christians that they must live a holy life as the elect of God.

In chapter four, he tells them they must glorify God in their suffering. Peter reminds Christians they no longer live according to the flesh. He tells them how they should behave in this time of persecution. They should not be surprised at the trials they are undergoing. Even Christ Himself suffered.

In chapter five, elders are urged to be good shepherds of the flock. Younger Christians are told to submit to the older. All must humble themselves under God's hand. In due time He will raise them up.

In Second Peter, chapter one, Peter encourages Christians to add the Christian graces to their lives. He mentions that he must soon die as Jesus had foretold. He reminds the Christians that they did not believe fables, but the truth. He himself had been an eyewitness of Christ and was present on the Mount of Transfiguration where he heard God, the Father, acknowledge Jesus as His beloved Son.

In chapter two, Peter warned of false teachers who were entering the church. He described them as deniers of the Lord, blasphemers, liars, and covetous. He assured the Christians the false prophets will be punished just as God had punished other evildoers in the past.

priest, the scribes, and the Pharisees to the top of the temple. They commanded him to deny Jesus. Instead, he cried out, “Jesus is the Son of God and the Judge of the world.” They threw him down. Then they stoned him. Seeing he was still alive, he was beaten with a club until he died. The book of James was written about A.D. 60, near the close of James’ life.

Chapter one speaks of the blessing of trials, God as the true source of wisdom, the worthlessness of riches, the origin of temptation, God as the Giver of every good gift, the importance of being doers of God’s Word, the need to control one’s tongue, and a definition of pure religion.

Chapter two condemns showing respect of persons based on wealth. The relation of faith and works is also discussed. If one’s faith does not express itself in obedience, it is a dead faith (James 2:26).

Chapter three is a discussion of sins of the tongue. The wisdom which is from above is contrasted with the wisdom which is of the earth. Chapter four speaks of the dangers of a covetous spirit and a love for this world. Christians are admonished to humble themselves in the sight of the Lord and not to speak evil of one another. We ought to take God into all our plans because life on earth is brief and uncertain. Chapter five is directed toward the rich who have lived in luxury and unfairly dealt with their workers. Christians are encouraged to be patient and wait for the coming of the Lord. The prophets of old are held up as examples of patience. Christians are also warned not to swear. They are urged to sing praises, pray to God and confess their sins one to another. Elijah is given as an example of earnest, effective prayer. Those who restore the erring have saved a soul from death.

FIRST AND SECOND PETER

The letters of First and Second Peter were written by the Apostle Peter. Peter’s actual name was Simon. Jesus gave him the name *Cephas* which is Aramaic for *small stone* (John 1:40-42). The word *Peter* comes from the Greek word *petros* which means *small stone*. Peter was the son of Jonah (Matthew 16:17) and brother of Andrew who brought him to Jesus (Matthew 4:18-20). Peter and Andrew were fisherman and were partners of James and John (Luke 5:10). Peter’s home was Bethsaida on the Sea of Galilee (John 1:44), but he later lived in Capernaum where he and Andrew had a house (Mark 1:21, 29).

New Testament, would be complete without the book of Acts. The Old Testament foretold the coming of the Christ and His kingdom. The first four books of the New Testament tell of Christ’s coming to earth and the wonderful life He lived. They tell of His marvelous miracles, His death for the sins of the world, and His mighty resurrection from the dead. They end with Jesus giving the Great Commission to His disciples and His ascension back to Heaven.

Acts tells of Christ sending the Holy Spirit upon the apostles to prepare them for their work (John 14:26; 15:26-27; 16:7-15; Acts 1:4-5; 2:1-21). It tells of their preaching the Gospel (good news of salvation). It records the answer to the most important question one can ever ask, ***What must I do to be saved?*** (Acts 16:30-34). Acts tells of the beginning of the church of Christ when those who first heard the Gospel believed in Jesus Christ, repented of their sins, confessed Him before men, and were baptized for the remission of their sins. When they did this, they were added by the Lord to His church (Acts 2:36-47). Acts, chapter two, contains the fulfillment of the prophecies of the coming of the kingdom (Matthew 16:16-19; Joel 2:28-32; Isaiah 2:1-4; Daniel 2:36-45).

The Acts of the Apostles was written by Luke, ***the beloved physician*** (Colossians 4:14). Luke was one of Paul’s companions on his second and third missionary journeys as well as on his trip to Rome. Luke addressed the book of Acts to Theophilus, the same person to whom he had addressed the book of Luke (Acts 1:1; Luke 1:1-4). The book of Acts is simply a continuation of the book of Luke.

The Acts of the Apostles does not contain all the acts of all the apostles. It would be more accurate to call it “some of the acts of some of the apostles.” Acts mostly records the work of only two of the apostles- Peter and Paul. Peter’s labors for the Lord are recorded in chapters 2-12. Paul’s work in the kingdom is recorded in chapters 13-28. Peter worked mainly among the Jews. He carried the Gospel to Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria. Paul preached among the Gentiles and carried the Gospel to Rome and later to Spain (Acts 1:8; Romans 15:24, 28). While Peter and Paul were busy with their work, the other apostles were carrying the Gospel to other parts of the world.

The book of Acts was most likely written during Paul’s first imprisonment in Rome. It ends with the mention of Paul under house arrest awaiting his hearing before Caesar (Acts 28:30-31). During this

time, he wrote the epistles of Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon. These four books are known as the *Prison Epistles*. The date of writing of Acts was probably A.D. 62 or 63.

Like the book of Genesis, the book of Acts is a book of beginnings. Acts records the beginning of the work of the Holy Spirit as He revealed and confirmed the Word of God through the apostles (Acts 2:1-4; 1 Corinthians 2:10-13; 13:8-12; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). Acts records the carrying out of the Great Commission as it tells of the Gospel being preached in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the end of the earth (Luke 24:46-47; Acts 1:8; Colossians 1:23). Acts tells of the beginning of persecution against the church (Acts 4, 5, 7, 8, 12). Too, it speaks of the beginning of preaching the Gospel among the Gentiles (Acts 10, 11). Acts also tells of the first use of the name *Christian* as a Divinely given name for the members of the church of Christ (Isaiah 62:1-2; Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16). Acts also speaks of the setting in order of the church when elders were appointed in the congregations (Acts 11:30; 14:23; 20:17, 28).

The book of Acts has often been called “the book of conversions.” When Jesus gave the Great Commission to His apostles, He told them the conditions of salvation. When the Gospel is preached, men must hear, believe, repent, confess, and be baptized in order to be saved (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47). In order to be sure no one could be mistaken on such an important matter, the book of Acts contains several examples of people obeying the Gospel just as Jesus taught. From the thousands of cases of conversion in the first century, the Holy Spirit selected these to record in Acts as examples for all men to follow.

In Acts, chapter two, we learn of Peter preaching the Gospel for the first time on Pentecost. As he preached the crucified Christ whom God had raised from the dead, the Jews cried out,

Men and brethren, what shall we do? (Acts 2:37 KJV) And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

(Acts 2:38)

They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls. (Acts 2:41)

served only as a reminder of sins year after year. However, Christ’s sacrifice of His own blood was made once for all time.

Chapter eleven is one of the best known chapters in the Bible. It is called “the hall of fame of the heroes of faith.” Because of their faith in His promises, great men and women of God overcame many trials and temptations. They were able to do this because they were looking for a better city, a better country, and a better resurrection.

Chapter twelve shows that Christians are running a race. We are surrounded by the great heroes of faith of the past. In order to complete the race successfully, we must keep our eyes on Jesus who is the ***author and finisher*** of our faith.

Chapter thirteen closes with various exhortations to faithfulness. Hebrews is a great book of faith. It presents Jesus Christ as God’s last word to mankind. He is the offering for sin as well as the Christian’s high priest. If we reject Christ and His new covenant, there is no hope for our salvation.

Lesson 11: JAMES AND FIRST AND SECOND PETER

JAMES

The letter of James has been called “the epistle of common sense.” It has also been referred to as “the book of Proverbs of the New Testament.” It is a practical letter which was written in the first century by a Christian named James. There were two apostles named James. One was James, brother of John, the first of the apostles to be killed for his faith (Acts 12:1-2). The other was James, the son of Alphaeus (Matthew 10:2-3). A third James, though not one of the twelve apostles, was James, the son of Mary and Joseph, the half brother of Jesus (Matthew 13:55). Very few dispute that this James is the human author of the letter which bears his name.

James and his brothers did not believe in Jesus during His earthly ministry (John 7:5). Jesus appeared to James after His resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:7). From this time on we find the brothers of Jesus, along with their mother, Mary, in the company of the apostles (Acts 1:14).

James became an elder in the church in Jerusalem (Acts 12:17; 15:2, 6, 13-21; 21:18; Galatians 1:19). He was a married man (1 Corinthians 9:5; 1 Timothy 3:2). Historians say he was known as “the just.” After serving Christ faithfully for many years, James was taken by the high

In chapter two, the reason God became a man in the person of Jesus Christ is revealed. Christ became man in order that He might die for the sins of man and thereby free him from sin and death.

In chapter three, Christ is shown to be superior to Moses, the great Lawgiver. Moses was only a servant in God's house. Christ is the Son over God's house.

In chapter four, Christ is shown to be superior to Joshua. Joshua led Israel into the Promised Land, but the permanent rest for the people of God still remains. Christ will lead His faithful people into that eternal rest which is in Heaven.

In chapter five, Christ is shown to be superior to the priests under the Old Testament. A discussion of Christ as the Christian's high priest began in Hebrews 4:14. It is discussed more fully in this chapter. The discussion continues through chapter ten. Not only is Christ our high priest, but He is also the offering for man's sins.

In chapter six, a warning against apostasy is given. If one rejects Christ, there is no other hope for salvation. God's promise to His people was confirmed by His oath. Since it is contrary to the nature of God to lie, we have double assurance that God will keep His promises.

Chapter seven shows that Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek. Melchizedek was superior to Abraham, father of the Levites from which the priests came, because Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek. Melchizedek blessed Abraham. It is an accepted fact that the one who blesses is greater than the one who is blessed.

In chapter eight, Christ's new covenant is shown to be superior to the old covenant which was given to Israel at Mt. Sinai. The old covenant was weak because it could not take away sins permanently. Under the new covenant, our sins are removed forever.

Chapter nine tells us Christ is the offering for our sins as well as our high priest. He has given us His new covenant. The old covenant given to Israel at Mt. Sinai was dedicated with the blood of animals. Christ's new covenant is superior to that old one for it was sealed with His own blood.

Chapter ten shows Christ's sacrifice is superior to the sin offerings made under the old covenant. Those animal sacrifices had to be made over and over. They could not permanently take away sin. They

They were added by the Lord to His church when they obeyed His Gospel (Acts 2:47).

In Acts, chapter eight, there are three accounts of conversion. First, we learn of Philip, the evangelist, preaching in Samaria.

But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. (Acts 8:12
KJV)

We also learn that Simon, a sorcerer, believed and was baptized (Acts 8:13). Philip was then sent by the Holy Spirit to preach to the treasurer of the Queen of Ethiopia. When the treasurer heard the Gospel, he confessed his faith and was baptized (Acts 8:26-39). The conversion of Saul, who became the apostle Paul (Acts 13:9), is recorded three times (chapters 9, 22, 26). Chapter 16 tells of the conversion of Lydia as well as that of the jailor and his household. We read of the conversion of the Corinthians in chapter 18:

And Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. (Acts 18:8)

Chapter nineteen tells of Paul baptizing twelve men at Ephesus who knew only John's baptism (Acts 19:1-7).

Without Acts, we would not understand what we must do to be saved.

Lesson 5: ROMANS AND GALATIANS

ROMANS

The letters to the Romans and to the Galatians are often studied together because they have the same theme—salvation from sin is through the Gospel of Jesus Christ, not through the Law of Moses (Romans 1:16-17; 3:21-22). There were false teachers called Judaizers in the early church. Judaizers were Jews who believed in Jesus as the Christ. However, they refused to accept the truth that the New Testament had replaced the Old as the law and guide for God's people. They taught that Gentiles must be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses in order to be saved.

When Judaizers came to Antioch, Paul and Barnabas stood against their false teaching. Since these false teachers had come from Jerusalem, and also claimed the church in Jerusalem believed as they did, Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem to discuss the matter. They

met with the inspired apostles and elders who agreed with them that Gentiles were justified by faith without keeping the Law of Moses. These inspired men wrote a letter to the churches stating this (Acts 15).

Judaizers continued to trouble the Lord's church for many years. Because Paul strongly opposed them, they attacked him. They denied he was really an apostle. They tried to destroy his influence so they could destroy the Gospel he preached (1 Corinthians 9:1-4; 2 Corinthians 10:1-13:6; Galatians 1:6-2:21). The book of Romans was written by Paul to the church in Rome. It was written about A.D. 57 while Paul was in Corinth. He was staying in the home of Gaius, a Christian he had baptized with his own hands (Romans 16:23; 1 Corinthians 1:14). Paul had often planned to visit the church in Rome, but up to this time, he had not been able to do so (Romans 1:10-13). He planned to go on from Rome to Spain to preach the Gospel. He hoped the church in Rome would assist him in this work (Romans 15:23-24).

The church in Rome had been in existence for some time when Paul wrote to them. No mention is made of Peter or of any of the other apostles being in Rome. We are not told how the church in Rome was started or by whom. We do know Jews from Rome were in Jerusalem on Pentecost. They heard Peter preach the first Gospel sermon (Acts 2:10). It is possible some of them became Christians and carried the Gospel back to Rome. Paul commended the church at Rome.

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world. (Romans 1:8)

The letter to the Romans teaches that righteousness (justification) is only possible through the Gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16-17). The key to understanding Romans is the phrase ***unto obedience of faith*** which is found at the beginning and at the end of the book (Romans 1:5; 16:26). Sinners cannot be saved by works of their own devising. Neither can they be saved by the law of Moses. They can only be saved by loving, trusting obedience to the system of faith which is the Gospel of Christ.

GALATIANS

On Paul's first missionary journey, he and Barnabas preached in several cities of Galatia. They established churches in Antioch of

Lesson 10: THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS

The letter to the Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians in Palestine. We know this because those who received the letter were very familiar with the temple and its sacrifices. They were also well acquainted with the Old Testament Scriptures. The title "To the Hebrews" has been the title of the letter from the very earliest times. The term *Hebrews* was used to describe only the people of Israel who lived in Palestine. Everywhere else in the first century, they were called *Jews*. Hebrews reflects the situation faced by the Jewish Christians in Palestine in the ten year period before the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

The writer of Hebrews, as well as all the other books of the New Testament, was the Holy Spirit. The human writer used by the Holy Spirit is not mentioned in the book. The most widely held view is that Hebrews was written by the apostle Paul. This has been accepted from the earliest days of the church. Clement of Alexandria, an early Christian writer, said Paul wrote Hebrews in the Hebrew language and Luke later translated it into Greek.

Hebrews was written from Italy (13:24). Timothy was with the writer at the time it was written (13:23). Hebrews deals with the situation of the Jewish Christians in Palestine in the last few years before Jerusalem's destruction. The time fits that of Paul's first imprisonment in Rome which was from A.D. 61 to A.D. 63.

The purpose of writing Hebrews was to encourage Jewish Christians who were being persecuted. Because of this, they were tempted to return to the Jewish religion. The writer shows them that the old Jewish faith has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. He does this by showing that the religion of Christ is superior in every way. In fact, the key word in Hebrews is *better*. Christ has a better name than the angels (1:4). Better things were expected of the Christians (6:9). Melchizedek was better than Abraham (7:7). Christians have a better hope (7:19). Jesus is the mediator of a better covenant which is established upon better promises (7:22; 8:6). The great heroes of faith looked for a better country and a better resurrection (11:16, 35).

In chapter one, Christ is shown to be superior to the angels. He created all things, and sustains them by the word of His power. Even though they are mighty created beings, angels are simply the servants of those who shall inherit eternal salvation.

taken to Rome and kept under house arrest for two years (Acts 28:30-31). During this time, Paul wrote the *Prison Epistles*. According to historical records, he was released and went to Spain (Romans 15:22-24). He returned to work among churches he had established on earlier missionary journeys when he was again arrested, taken to Rome, and condemned to die. It is clear from Second Timothy that Paul expected to die very soon (2 Timothy 4:6-8).

Timothy was Paul's *son in the faith*. He longed to see him again before he died. He wanted Timothy to bring books and a cloak to him. He especially wanted to strengthen Timothy to carry on with the Lord's work. He reminded him of the good example of his faithful mother and grandmother in chapter one. In chapter two, he compared the work of preachers to soldiers, athletes and farmers to show discipline and endurance are needed. In chapter three, he warned Timothy of the coming of persecution. He admonished him to remain faithful to the Scriptures which would equip him for every good work. In chapter four, Paul solemnly charged Timothy to preach the Word of God.

TITUS

Titus was a Greek (Galatians 2:3). He was a preacher of the Gospel who worked with Paul (2 Corinthians 8:16-24). Paul had left Titus in Crete for a purpose.

That thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city. (Titus 1:5)

The qualifications for elders are again given in chapter one. Paul warns of the problems among the people of Crete because of their character. In chapter two, Titus is told to admonish the older men and women in *sound* (healthy) *doctrine*.

For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men. Instruction us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world. (Titus 2:11-12)

In chapter three, Paul tells Titus to teach the Christians to be law-abiding, avoid foolish discussions, and reject those who cause division after they have been given a first and second admonition.

Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. They visited these churches on their return journey and appointed elders in each of them (Acts 13:1-14:23). Paul and Silas visited these same churches at the beginning of Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 16:1-6). Timothy joined them when they came to Lystra. They delivered the letter to the churches from the elders and apostles at Jerusalem. In spite of this, Judaizers came among the churches and spread their false teaching. Many of the Christians were led astray by them.

At the time Paul learned of the divisive work of the Judaizers in Galatia, he was unable to visit them. He wrote to warn them the Judaizers were teaching a different Gospel which would cause them to be lost (Galatians 1:6-9). The date of Paul's writing is not known for certain. Probably Galatians was written from Greece about A.D. 55 or 56. Paul identifies himself as the author (Galatians 1:1). The first two chapters of the book deal mainly with Paul's life as a Christian. The style of writing is so clearly that of Paul that very few have ever denied he is the author.

In the first two chapters, Paul tells how he was chosen by God to be an apostle (Galatians 1:15-17). Further, he states the Gospel he preached was not received from man. It was revealed directly to him by Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:12). After he had preached this Gospel for three years, Paul went to Jerusalem where he visited Peter and James, the Lord's brother (Galatians 1:18-19). Fourteen years later, Paul, Barnabas, and Titus went to Jerusalem to discuss the question of circumcision and keeping the Law of Moses. James, John, Peter, and other leaders in the church gave them the right hand of fellowship. This showed they approved of Paul's work and the Gospel he preached (Galatians 2:1-10).

In the letter to the churches of Galatia, Paul argued that being circumcised in the flesh had nothing to do with salvation (Galatians 5:6). He showed that salvation through the Gospel of Jesus Christ was promised to Abraham long before the Law of Moses was given. Therefore, keeping the Law had nothing to do with man's salvation (Galatians 3:15-18).

What then is the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise hath been made; and it was ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator. (Galatians 3:19)

The Law of Moses was a temporary covenant. It was added because of sin. It lasted until Christ came and His system of faith was revealed. When the Law had fulfilled its purpose, it was taken out of the way (Galatians 3:22-25; Colossians 2:14).

Some today, like the Judaizers of Paul's day, tell us we must keep the Law of Moses to be saved. Those who leave the gospel of Christ for the Law have fallen from grace (Galatians 5:4; Hebrews 3:12). No one can be justified by keeping the Law or any part of it, such as offering animal sacrifices, keeping Jewish feast days, burning incense, using instrumental music in worship, keeping the sabbath, etc. Salvation is in Jesus Christ for all upon one basis- **obedience to the faith** of Christ!

Lesson 6: FIRST AND SECOND CORINTHIANS

FIRST CORINTHIANS

The church in Corinth was begun by Paul on his second missionary journey (Acts 18:1-18). When he came to Corinth, Paul met a Jew named Aquila. Aquila and his wife, Priscilla, had recently come to Corinth from Rome. They earned their living by making tents. Because Paul also knew this trade, he lived with them and worked to support himself while preaching the Gospel.

As his custom was, Paul first preached in the Jewish synagogue. Silas and Timothy soon joined him in the work. When the Jews refused to hear the Gospel, Paul left the synagogue and began preaching to the Gentiles. Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, became a believer. Many of the Corinthians heard the Gospel, believed it and were baptized (Acts 18:8).

Paul remained in Corinth for a year and six months (Acts 18:11). When the Roman proconsul, Gallio, came to Corinth, the Jews brought charges against Paul. Gallio knew their charges had to do with matters of the Jewish religion so he refused to hear them. Paul continued his work in Corinth for some time after this (Acts 18:18).

From earliest times, Christian writers have all agreed that Paul wrote First Corinthians. The book claims Paul as its author (1 Corinthians 1:1). Clement of Rome, a Christian, wrote a letter to the church at Corinth about A.D. 95. In his letter, he refers to Paul's first letter to the church at Corinth. He called it "the epistle of the blessed Apostle

necessary for him to leave Timothy at Ephesus to **charge certain men not to teach a different doctrine** (1 Timothy 1:3).

Two verses in First Timothy sum up what the epistle is about.

These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

(1 Timothy 3:14-15)

Chapter one of First Timothy speaks of the importance of teaching correct doctrine. Chapter two deals with the place of women in the church. Men and women are equal in salvation (Galatians 3:28), but they have different works in the church. Man is commanded to take the lead in prayers and teaching. Women are to **learn in quietness with all subjection** (1 Timothy 2:11). They are not to teach publicly where they would have authority over men. Two reasons are given for this.

- God created man first.
- Adam was not deceived, but Eve was.

Chapter three deals with the qualifications of elders and deacons. It is God's plan that each congregation be led by men called elders, or bishops (overseers), or pastors (shepherds). However, one must be qualified before he can serve in this important work. Deacons are special servants of the church. They serve under the elders of the church in works assigned to them. They too must be qualified.

Chapter four deals with the work and qualifications of ministers (preachers). It begins with a warning of false teachers who would lead the church astray. It is the responsibility of preachers to instruct congregations in the truth so they will not be led astray. Chapter five deals with the responsibility of the church to care for widows who have no relatives to support them. Chapter six closes with practical admonitions. Paul especially warns about the danger of desiring to be rich (verses 6-10). Those who are rich must not trust in their wealth, but use it to help those in need.

SECOND TIMOTHY

Paul's second letter to Timothy was his last New Testament letter. He wrote it while he was in prison in Rome the second time. Paul's first imprisonment in Rome is recorded in Acts. Because he saw he would not receive justice, he had appealed to Caesar (Acts 25:9-12). He was

from the faith would come first. The *man of sin* would be revealed (2:3-12).

False teachers often charge the New Testament writers with teaching that Jesus would come back in their lifetime. In fact, the opposite is true. Some at Thessalonica did believe this, but Paul corrected them. A second problem in Thessalonica was that some Christians had quit working. They were living off others. Paul taught,

If any will not work, neither let him eat. (2 Thessalonians 3:10)
Further, he taught that those who were too lazy to work, and indeed all disorderly saints, should be withdrawn from (3:6).

Lesson 9: FIRST AND SECOND TIMOTHY AND TITUS

The three brief letters of First and Second Timothy and Titus were written by the apostle Paul to two preachers, Timothy and Titus. These three epistles are often called the *Pastoral Epistles*. This is a result of misunderstanding who a pastor is according to New Testament teaching. Many people have the mistaken idea that a preacher is a pastor. They confuse the roles of preachers (evangelists) with that of pastors (elders). The Bible, however, makes a clear distinction between evangelists and pastors. They do not refer to the same work in the church (Ephesians 4:11).

Since the letters of Timothy and Titus were written to evangelists rather than pastors, it is more accurate to call them the *Evangelistic Epistles*. Even though First Timothy and Titus do contain the qualifications of elders (pastors), the letters were specifically written to preachers rather than to elders.

These three short letters are filled with practical information about the organization and work of the local church. They provide a pattern for organizing the church and carrying on its work and worship.

FIRST TIMOTHY

Paul established the church in Ephesus on his third missionary journey (Acts 19). He remained in Ephesus for three years preaching and teaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Acts 20:31). After Paul left Ephesus, he continued to have contact with the saints. In Acts 20, we read of his speech to the elders of the church. He warned them of the coming of false teachers who would draw away disciples after their teaching (Acts 20:28-32). Paul's prophecy soon came true. It was

Paul." First Corinthians was written sometime between A.D. 55 and 57.

Corinth was an ancient city when Paul came there. It was in existence one thousand years before the time of Christ. Philip, father of Alexander the Great, conquered Corinth in 338 B.C. In 196 B.C., Corinth became an independent city state. Fifty years after this, it was conquered by the Romans who killed all the men, sold the women and children into slavery, and completely destroyed the city. About one hundred years later, Julius Caesar rebuilt Corinth as a Roman city. In Paul's day, Corinth had a population of 600,000, made up of Jews, Greeks, Romans, and many other nationalities.

Corinth was a very wealthy city. It was a center of art, athletics, business, and religion. The temple of Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love, sex, and fertility was located there. One thousand priestesses who were prostitutes carried on their immoral trade. Corinth had such a bad reputation as an evil, immoral city that it had become an insult to refer to someone as a Corinthian.

Paul had learned of division in the church at Corinth from the household of Chloe (1 Corinthians 1:10-17). Three members of the church at Corinth had visited Paul (1 Corinthians 16:17-18). Paul had also received a letter from the church at Corinth asking a number of questions (1 Corinthians 7:1; 8:1; 12:1). He had written an earlier letter to the church (1 Corinthians 5:9). He also sent Timothy to help them with their problems (1 Corinthians 4:17; 16:10).

The church at Corinth was badly divided. There were groups who followed after their favorite preacher (1:12-17). A brother was living in open fornication and had not been disciplined (5:1-13). Members of the church were taking their own brethren to court instead of having their disputes settled by faithful Christians (6:1-9). There were disputes over whether Christians should eat meat that had been offered to idols (8:1-13; 10:14-33). There were also questions over marriage (7:1-40). Some questioned that Paul was really an apostle since he did not take support from them (9:1-23). Women had abused their freedom in Christ by refusing to show their submission to men (11:1-16). The Lord's supper had been turned into a common meal (11:17-34). There was much dispute about miraculous gifts. They had become a source of contention and confusion (12:1-14:40). Some at

Corinth even denied the resurrection (15:1-58). Paul wrote to correct these problems.

SECOND CORINTHIANS

Second Corinthians gives us more personal information about Paul than any of his other letters. Paul identifies himself twice as the writer of Second Corinthians (1:1; 10:1). Second Corinthians is a follow-up letter to First Corinthians and was probably written from six months to a year later than First Corinthians. This would place the time of writing between A.D. 55 and 57.

The book is both positive and negative. The first nine chapters are very positive. Titus had visited Corinth and brought a good report to Paul (7:6-7). He reported that the majority of the brethren had responded well to the First Corinthian letter. They had corrected many of the wrongs Paul dealt with in that letter. The fornicator had been disciplined and had repented. Paul encouraged the church to forgive him and receive him back into fellowship (2:5-11). Paul gave further instruction concerning the contribution he was collecting for Judea and urged them to have it ready when he came (8:1-9:15).

The last four chapters are more negative. There were still some in the church who opposed Paul. They even questioned if he was really an apostle (12:11-12). Paul replied to his opponents in a very strong way. His enemies had boasted of their great standing. Paul was forced to speak of his own sufferings and sacrifices for the cause of Christ in order to defend himself (11:16-33). In chapter twelve, he told how he had been taken up into Paradise and had heard things which he could not reveal (12:1-4). Paul said,

There was given to me a thorn in the flesh... that I should not be exalted overmuch. (2 Corinthians 12:7)

Paul told the Corinthians he was coming to visit them for the third time (12:14; 13:1-6). Whether he came with strength or gentleness depended upon them. He would put to the test those who had spoken against him. However, he expressed his hope that they would repent so he would not have to punish them (13:10).

Lesson 7: EPHESIANS, PHILIPPIANS, COLOSSIANS AND PHILEMON

The books of Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon are often called the *Prison Epistles*. They were written by the apostle Paul

preached the Gospel honestly and sincerely. They did not use flattering words or seek glory from men (2:5-6). They worked night and day to support themselves while preaching the Gospel (2:9). No one could honestly question their motives. In the third chapter, Paul expressed his great concern for the Christians which caused him to send Timothy back to them. He told of his joy when he learned they were standing firm in spite of persecution.

In the fourth chapter, Paul warned the Christians of the dangers of sexual immorality, a common sin in the Roman world of the first century. He urged them to abstain from sinful relationships by possessing their *own vessel* (wives) *in sanctification and honor*. By doing this, they would not *wrong his brother* (take advantage of them by becoming involved with their wives) (4:1-8). This warning needs to be heeded by Christians today!

In the latter part of chapter four, and the first part of chapter five, Paul corrected misunderstandings about the second coming of Christ (4:13-5:11). Those who have died in Christ will not lose their reward at His coming. In fact, they will be raised first before the living saints are caught up to meet the Lord in the air. No mention is ever made of the Lord setting foot on earth again. At His coming,

The earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up. (2 Peter 3:10)

Those who are caught up to be with the Lord will *always be with Him*. The New Testament says nothing about a so-called seven year rapture as false teachers claim. Rather than fear the second coming, Christians should be ready to meet the Lord whether He comes during their lifetime or after their death.

SECOND THESSALONIANS

The second letter to the Thessalonians was written a few months after the first. The date was late A.D. 51 or early 52. Persecution against the church continued. Paul reminded the Christians that their persecutors will be punished by Christ at His second coming (1:6-10). Two mistaken ideas are corrected in this epistle. First, there was still confusion about the second coming of Christ. Some were *shaken from your mind*. Perhaps a false letter claiming to be from Paul was being circulated (2:1-2). Paul made it very clear that the second coming would not take place for a long time. A great falling away

and several of the leading women became believers in Christ (Acts 17:4). The unbelieving Jews were jealous of Paul's success in winning converts. They gathered together a mob of evil men who caused an uproar in the city. They dragged Jason, a Christian, and some of the other brethren before the rulers of the city. They made false charges against the missionaries. They said,

These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also. (Acts 17:6)

They accused Paul and Silas.

And these all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus. (Acts 17:7)

The rulers of the city were troubled when they heard these things. They took **security** (a bond) from Jason and the other brethren. Then the brethren, for the sake of their safety, sent Paul and Silas away by night (Acts 17:9-10).

After preaching in Berea, Paul went on to Athens where he waited for the coming of Silas and Timothy who had remained behind in Berea (Acts 17:14). They eventually came to Paul after he had gone on to Corinth (Acts 17:15; 18:5). Paul learned from them the persecution against the church in Thessalonica still continued. He also learned that some had misunderstood his teaching of the second coming of Christ. They thought Christ would return within their lifetime. When some of the Christians died, they feared these Christians would lose their reward since they would not be alive when Christ came. Paul wrote to them to correct this false idea and to encourage the saints to be steadfast in persecution.

FIRST THESSALONIANS

In the first chapter, Paul commended the Thessalonian Christians.

Remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

(I Thessalonians 1:3)

He reminded them of how powerfully the Gospel had come to them. He mentioned how the Word of God had gone forth from Thessalonica to many other areas. Others had heard of how they had turned from idols to serve the living God (1:5-10).

The Jews who had opposed Paul in Thessalonica and Berea were making false accusations against him. He defended himself in chapter two. He reminded the Christians how he and his companions had

during his first imprisonment in Rome. When Paul returned to Jerusalem after his third missionary journey, some of the Jews made false charges against him (Acts 21:27-40). They stirred up the people against him. They probably would have killed Paul, but he was rescued by the Roman soldiers who put him in prison in Jerusalem.

While Paul was in custody, a group of the Jews made a vow to kill him. When the Romans learned this, they took him to Caesarea (Acts 23:12-35). After being imprisoned there for two years, Paul realized he was not going to be set free. Therefore, he used his right as a Roman citizen to appeal to the emperor (Acts 25:1-12). After a very dangerous voyage by sea, Paul arrived in Rome (Acts 27:1-28:31). He lived under house arrest for two years awaiting his trial before Caesar. During this time Paul wrote letters to the churches in Ephesus, Philippi, and Colossae, and also to a Christian named Philemon. All four of these letters mention Paul's imprisonment in Rome (Ephesians 3:1; 4:1; 6:18-20; Philippians 1:12-13; 4:22; Colossians 4:2-4; Philemon 1, 10, 22-23).

The Prison Epistles were all written at about the same time. They were also written to congregations or individuals in the same area. Therefore, they are alike in many ways. Tychicus, Paul's companion, was the bearer of the epistles of Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon (Ephesians 6:21; Colossians 4:7-8). Ephesians and Colossians are called "twin epistles" because they are so much alike. About one half of the verses in Ephesians are also found in Colossians in very similar language.

EPHESIANS

Paul visited Ephesus briefly at the end of his second missionary journey. He left Aquila and Priscilla there as he continued his journey to Jerusalem. Apollos, an eloquent Jew, came to Ephesus and preached in the synagogue. He preached about Jesus, but knew only John's baptism.

When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more accurately. (Acts 18:26)

When Paul returned to Ephesus on his third missionary journey, he found twelve disciples who had received John's baptism. They may have been taught by Apollos before he learned the baptism of the Great Commission had replaced the baptism of John (Mark 16:15-16).

Paul taught them the way of the Lord more perfectly and baptized them into Christ (Acts 19:1-7).

Ephesians has been called “Paul’s great treatise on the church of Christ.” It tells of the church as part of the eternal purpose of God (Ephesians 3:8-11). It describes the church as *the body of Christ*. Christ is the head of the body (Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23). There is one body just as there is one God, the Father, one Lord and Savior, one Holy Spirit, one hope, one faith, and one baptism (Ephesians 4:4-6).

PHILIPPIANS

Philippians is a beautiful letter Paul wrote to a church he loved. The church in Philippi was established by Paul and Silas on Paul’s second missionary journey (Acts 16:11-40). Lydia and her household, and the jailor and his household, were among the first converts. Philippians was written to thank the church for the gift they sent to help Paul while he was in prison (Philippians 4:10-20).

Just as Ephesians sets forth the church of Christ, Philippians sets forth the mind of Christ (Philippians 2:1-11). Even though Paul was a prisoner when he wrote to Philippi, he is full of joy. The key word in Philippians is *joy*. This word, and other forms of it such as *rejoice*, is found at least fifteen times in the four chapters of this epistle. Philippians teaches us that Christians can be happy even if we are in the midst of hardship and suffering. We are joyful because of the hope we have in Christ.

COLOSSIANS

The church at Colossae was not established by Paul himself. He says he had *heard* of their faith (Colossians 1:4, 9). One of Paul’s co-workers, possibly Epaphras, had first preached the Gospel in Colossae (Colossians 4:12-13). False teachers had come to Colossae with a strange, new doctrine. They mixed pagan philosophy and Judaism with Christianity. Paul opposed this false teaching by showing that Christ is over all things. Any spiritual teaching that is not Christ centered from beginning to end is false. If it is wrong about the nature of Christ, it cannot be right about anything else!

Colossians has been called “the most Christ centered epistle in the New Testament.” It shows that Jesus Christ is head over all things. He existed before the world came into being. Indeed, He is the Creator of all things. All the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him. He is the

head of the church. Through His death on the cross, He has made it possible for all to be reconciled to Him (Colossians 1:14-20).

PHILEMON

Philemon is one of the shortest books in the New Testament. It is a personal letter which Paul wrote to his friend, Philemon. Philemon was a Christian. The church met in his house (verse 2). Slavery was common in the Roman Empire in Paul’s day. Philemon had a slave named Onesimus. Onesimus had run away from his master. Paul met him and taught him the Gospel. Now he is sending Onesimus back to his master. He sends this letter along with him. He points out to Philemon that he will now have Onesimus back as a brother in Christ. The New Testament does not specifically forbid slavery. Neither did the apostles command that owners of slaves must free them. However, the principles of Christ, when applied, will cause people to give up slaves. If one would not want to be a slave of another person, he will not make another person his slave. This is the application of the *Golden Rule* (Matthew 7:12).

Lesson 8: FIRST AND SECOND THESSALONIANS

Thessalonica was a large and prosperous city in Macedonia. It was located on the Aegean Sea. The great military highway from Rome to the East ran through the city. Thessalonica served as the capital of its district. Its population was made up of Romans, Greeks, and Jews in Paul’s day. The church in Thessalonica was established by Paul and Silas about A.D. 51, on Paul’s second missionary journey.

When Paul and Silas were asked to leave Philippi after they had been beaten and imprisoned, they passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia and came to Thessalonica. They stopped to evangelize in Thessalonica because a synagogue of the Jews was there (Acts 17:1). The Gospel was to be preached to the Jews first (Acts 1:8; Romans 1:16). Synagogues were good places to start for the people who assembled there already believed in the one true God and the Old Testament Scriptures. They were looking forward to the coming of the Messiah (Christ). They would give visiting Jews such as Paul and Silas an opportunity to speak.

Paul and Silas preached the Gospel in the synagogue for three sabbaths. They showed that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies concerning the Messiah (Acts 17:2-3). Some of the Jews, many of the Greeks,