

# **Panorama of the New Testament**

## ***Section 7: Gospels or “The Gospel According to...”***

### **1) Gospel – The Good News in Four Additions**

- a) Each presents Jesus Christ as our Good News in the historical setting of His life
- b) Not biographies – only selected events are chronicled
- c) Focus is mainly on the last three years of Jesus’ earthly life
- d) Each writer inserts his own personal spiritual insights in the narrative
- e) All four are to be used in conjunction as a witness to the full significance of Christ’s earthly ministry
- f) The synoptic gospels – Matthew, Mark and Luke are similar but not identical
  - i) Parallel structures of content, but not in their thematic purposes
  - ii) Similar eye-witness accounts, not identical which adds to their credibility (refutes the accusation of deceitful collusion among the authors)
- g) John is organized around the central theme of presenting Jesus as the Son of God; It is not intended as a chronological account of His life; does not track with synoptics

### **2) The Gospel According to Matthew – Presenting Jesus as the Messiah to the Jews**

- a) Written to Greek-speaking Jewish Christians, probably at Antioch
- b) Written in the 60’s – 30-years after Jesus’ ascension
- c) Gospel to the Jews to present Jesus as the King of the Jews, the Son of David
- d) Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah are shown as fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth
- e) Narrative accounts are clearly presented in light of Old Testament prophecies
- f) Jewish leaders are often rebuked for failing to accept Jesus as the Messiah
- g) “The Time of Jacob’s Trouble” (End-times tribulation) presented in dramatic details and parables because Jews / Israel is the intended audience of this future time period

#### **h) Outline of Matthew**

- i) The birth of Jesus and His preparation for ministry (1:1-4:16)
  - (1) Genealogy from Abraham to Joseph: Royal, Abrahamic, Davidic (1:1-17)
  - (2) Humble yet honorable birth, protection from Herod (1:18-2:23)
  - (3) Baptism by John and temptation by Satan (3:1-4:16)
- ii) Public Ministry in Galilee – Salvation offered first to the Jews (4:17-16:20)
  - (1) Fishermen called to be disciples (4:18-22)
  - (2) Great multitudes healed (4:23-25)
  - (3) The Sermon on the Mount (5:1-7:29)
  - (4) The authority of the King is demonstrated (8:1-10:42)
  - (5) The King is rejected by the Jewish leaders (11:1-12:50)
  - (6) The Kingdom Parables (13:1-53)
  - (7) Jesus begins His withdrawal from the Jewish leadership (14:1-16:20)
- iii) Private Ministry in Galilee (16:21-18:35)
- iv) Ministry in Judea (19:1-25:46)
  - (1) Moral and spiritual teaching on the way to Jerusalem (19:1-2:34)
  - (2) The Triumphal Entry and Temple cleansing (21:1-22)
  - (3) Confrontations with and “woes” pronounced on Jewish leadership (21:23-23:39)
  - (4) The Olivet Discourse on the time of His return (24:1-25-46)

v) Rejection and Crucifixion of the King (26:1-27:66)

vi) The Risen Lord and His Great Commission (28:1-20)

### **3) The Gospel According to Mark – The Power of Salvation in the Suffering Servant**

- a) Begins and ends abruptly
- b) No nativity account or genealogy provided (not important for a Servant)
- c) Written to provide Gentile Christians with the life transforming Gospel (64-65 A.D.)
- d) Traditionally assumed to have been written from Rome under Peter's "supervision"
- e) Narrative accounts are paced quickly, non-stop action ("immediately")
- f) Focus is on Jesus' mighty and miraculous works to show His divine nature
- g) Events chronicled are more detailed (excluding discourses) than Matthew
- h) Provides an eyewitness (Peter's) account of the actions and life of Jesus
- i) Generally assumed to be the same John Mark found in Acts and the Epistles
- j) Some believe Mark to be the rich young ruler, but this is speculative (10:17-22)
- k) Mark wanted his readers to know that Jesus had also suffered persecution before they did or would

### **4) The Gospel According to Luke – Behold God Our Savior is With Us!**

- a) Most complete and detailed narrative among the Gospels
- b) Luke is properly credited as an extremely accurate historian
- c) Luke is not a Jew – he was a Gentile physician and probably a slave
- d) Dedicated his gospel (along with Acts) to Theophilus (likely a dignitary title rather than a name), in order to present a complete account of the history of Christianity
- e) Many believe the gospel was written for Paul as part of his appeal to Caesar.
- f) Samaritans, Greeks, Gentiles, Romans and Jews all have equal access to salvation, and are often presented in positive light, as compared to the blinded Jews.
- g) The importance of prayer and discipleship are more prominent in Luke
- h) Materialism is shunned in Luke's accounts of Jesus' teachings

### **5) The Gospel According to John – Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah**

- a) "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us"
- b) Presents the unmistakable deity and authority of Jesus
- c) Seven major miracles before the cross, plus the fish caught in Chapter 21
- d) Seven I AM statements (I exist because I exist – "before Abraham was, I AM)
- e) Written to tell readers how to find eternal life in Jesus alone (20:31)
- f) Written to the Church in 85-90A.D (possibly the last New Testament book).
- g) Uses an overtly mystical style (seven miracles, seven discourses, seven I AMs)
- h) Highlights the significance of John the Baptist more than the others gospels
- i) Places great spiritual significance on the Christian Sacraments (Baptism & Communion) and corrects their misuse and misunderstanding in the church
- j) Offers Christians great hope in the promised Second Coming of the Lord
- k) John leaves no room for doubt – Jesus is fully God and fully Man (not that we can hope to understand this perfectly)

# Panorama of the New Testament

## *Section 8: Acts*

### 1. Purpose, Overview and Outline

- a. Author: Luke
- b. The Acts of ...
  - i. The Apostles (Peter and Paul?)
  - ii. The Church
  - iii. The Holy Spirit
  - iv. Jesus Christ through His Body, the church
- c. Written to Theophilus (along with the Gospel According to Luke)
  - i. “Lover of God” (nickname?)
  - ii. Referred to in Luke as “Most excellent” – title reserved for a Roman official
  - iii. Part of Paul’s trial documents in an appeal to Caesar?
- d. Chronology:  
Covers events from the ascension to Paul’s arrival in Rome (32-62 A.D.)
- e. Purpose:  
To authenticate the reality of the post-resurrection Jesus Christ and His command to spread the Gospel throughout the world
- f. Known for:  
Establishing a narrative bridge between the Gospel accounts and the Epistles
- g. Significance:  
Explains the “Gap” in Israel’s history – the “unforeseen” Age of the Church
  - i. Daniel 9:26,27
  - ii. Isaiah 61:1,2 (Luke 4:16-19)
  - iii. Hosea 3:4,5
  - iv. Micah 5:2,3
  - v. Luke 21:24
  - vi. Matthew 13:34,35
  - vii. Ephesians 3:1-13
- h. Focus: taking the witness of Jesus and salvation to Jerusalem, all of Judea, Samaria, and to the end of the Earth (1:8)
  - i. Chapters 1-12: Peter is the primary focus (Stephen’s witness and Saul’s conversion included) and his leadership in taking the Gospel from Jerusalem to all of Judea and out to Samaria
  - ii. In Chapter 10 God has Peter opened the door of ministry to the Gentiles, but he is not the one who will walk through that door (Paul is the clear Apostle to the Gentiles)
  - iii. Chapters 13-28: Paul is the primary focus and how he is lead by the Holy Spirit to take the Gospel into outermost parts of the earth
  - iv. Acts “ends” with Paul as a house-arrest prisoner in Rome (really ends at the rapture)
- i. Primary Events – Outline Highpoints
  - i. The Ascension of Jesus Christ and His command to carry on the ministry throughout the world (Chapter 1)
  - ii. Pentecost and Peter’s first Holy Spirit empowered sermon (Chapter 2)
  - iii. Lame man healed and Peter’s second Holy Spirit empowered sermon (Chapter 3)
  - iv. Peter and John before the Sanhedrin, Ananias and Sapphira (Chapter 4-6)
  - v. Stephen addresses the Sanhedrin and is stoned for his testimony (Chapter 7)

- vi. Simon the sorcerer and Philip's witness to the Ethiopian (Chapter 8)
- vii. Saul's conversion on the Damascus Road (Chapter 9)
- viii. Peter's vision and the spread of the Gospel to the Gentiles (Chapters 10-12)
- ix. Paul's first missionary journey – turns to the Gentiles (Acts 13-14)
- x. Council at Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas separate after a dispute (Chapter 15)
- xi. Paul's second missionary journey in Galatia & Philippi (Chapters 16-17:15)
- xii. Paul at Athens and on Mar's Hill (Chapters 17:16 – 18:28)
- xiii. Paul's third missionary journey to Galatia and Ephesus (Chapters 19-20)
- xiv. Paul's return to Jerusalem and the Jews response (Chapters 21-24)
- xv. Paul's appeal to Festus and Agrippa, shipwreck, journey to Rome (Chapters 25-28)

## 2. Highlights in Acts

- a. The promise of Jesus' return in like manner (1:11)
  - i. Ascension from the Mount of Olives
  - ii. Received into a cloud
  - iii. Proclaimed by two "men" clothed in white apparel
- b. Peter's shockingly powerful sermons
  - i. First Sermon (Chapter 2)
    - 1. Peter heralds the Son of God, not the Holy Spirit who had filled him
    - 2. Quotes Joel 2:28-32 to proclaim that the events of the last days has come
    - 3. Gentiles are welcome to receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit equally with the Jews – no sociological or genealogical barriers to God's gift
    - 4. Prophecy is now commonplace, not reserved for only those who hold the office of a prophet
    - 5. Consistent with the Old Testament, no distinction is made between the time of the outpouring and the Second Coming of Christ and the Time of the End
    - 6. God had already attested Jesus of Nazareth to the Jews through miracles, wonders and signs (their denial and condemnation did not change that fact)
    - 7. It was God's determined purpose to deliver Jesus into their lawless hands to accomplish His will; He has perfect foreknowledge of their hardened hearts
    - 8. Despite God's determined purpose, the Jews are guilty of innocent bloodshed for delivering Jesus to be crucified
    - 9. It was not possible that the bondage of death could contain Jesus for He is God
    - 10. David the King had affirmed the truth of the Messiah's holiness and the inability of the corruption of death to contain Him in the Psalms (OT)
    - 11. The Father raised Jesus to sit on His throne till His enemies are made His footstool (return in judgment)
    - 12. God has made Jesus whom all Israel crucified both Lord and Christ
    - 13. The answer for their lawlessness is clear: repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit
    - 14. The Body of Christ (the Church) grew from 120 to 3120 from this sermon
  - ii. Peter's Second Sermon (Chapter 3)
    - 1. Results from the Jews great amazement of a lame man's healing
    - 2. Peter responds by telling them that they as Jews should not be amazed that God is working miracles among them – Peter and John are not the source of this power as the power comes from the name and person of Jesus Christ
    - 3. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob has glorified His Servant Jesus in the miraculous healing of the lame man (same God doing a new thing)
    - 4. Even Pilate had declared Jesus to be innocent and he attempted to release Him from punishment, but they demanded a murderer released instead

5. Even though they were responsible for the death of the Prince of Life, God had raised Him from the dead
  6. Their amazement at God's working is real mystery since every prophet from Moses, Samuel and beyond has foretold of the Messiah's coming and suffering
  7. Peter gives the same response as before: repent and be converted to faith in Jesus Christ so that their sins may be blotted out
  8. God raised His Servant Jesus to the Jews first as a blessing that they may turn from their sins and their resulting punishment
- c. Stephen's Address to the Sanhedrin (Chapter 7)
- i. The Sadducees are the majority of the Sanhedrin
    1. Deny the resurrection
    2. Deny anything supernatural or miraculous
    3. Profess a materialistic worldview (nothing spiritual exists)
  - ii. The Sanhedrin placed Stephen on trial, but he returns the favor (put them on trial)
  - iii. Stephen makes no defense for violating their wishes, for he had to declare the truth
  - iv. Delivered a Holy Spirit inspired Bible study the prominent leaders and teacher
    1. God directed Israel all along to fulfill His purpose (Jesus)
    2. Moses prophesied of the Messiah, and Jesus is the true Messiah
    3. Israel has a unmistakable pattern of rejecting first, accepting second
      - a. Abraham (took two calls to get him to Canaan)
      - b. Joseph (brothers rejected him, then bowed down to him)
      - c. Moses (forty years between deliverance attempts)
      - d. God's Law (golden calf called YHWH, then accepted the covenant)
      - e. Jesus, the "Just One" (implied that they will receive Him upon His return having rejected can crucified Him at His first coming)
  - v. Stephen's address cuts them to the heart; they cover their ears and stone him
- d. Saul's conversion on the road to Damascus (Chapter 9)
- e. Peter's vision and Cornelius' faith (Chapter 10)
- i. God has opened the door to the Gentiles
  - ii. About eight years after birth of the Church at Pentecost
  - iii. Despite Jesus' command to carry the Gospel to the outermost parts of the Earth, the Apostles were still thinking Jewish exclusivity to the Creator of all things
  - iv. God's grace and gift of salvation will no longer be restricted by Jewish prejudice
  - v. Peter's pride caused him to argue with God, again – "Not so Lord!"
  - vi. God alone reserves the right to declare what is clean and what is unclean and the end of the OT Law / food regulations.
  - vii. The Holy Spirit's presence in the new Gentile converts is manifested in tongues
  - viii. Baptism is used to affirm their profession of faith
- f. The Church home base begins to move from Jerusalem to Antioch (Chapter 11)
- g. Barnabas and Paul begin the first missionary journey – Jews first, then Gentiles
- h. Circumcision of the Gentile believers and the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15)
- i. The Apostles had yet to consider the implications of God bypassing the Jews and pouring out His Spirit on all flesh
    1. Does a Gentile have to become a Jew and be circumcised to be saved?
    2. If not, are Gentiles obligated to keep the Law?
    3. If a Gentile is not bound to keep the Law, what must he **DO** to be saved?
    4. Could the grace of God and salvation truly be a free gift from God?
    5. If God is willing to bypass the Jew and the Law to offer salvation to the Gentiles, what is to become of the Jews?

6. If salvation is to come directly to the Gentiles, how does this impact the restoration of Israel, David's throne, and the Day of Judgment on the Gentile nations?
  - ii. A widely growing dissention was occurring over forcing new Gentile Christians to convert to Judaism to complete their salvation decision
  - iii. Paul and Barnabas who were adamantly opposed to Gentile conversion to Judaism were urged to go to Jerusalem in order to get
  - iv. The Jerusalem Council meeting occurred approximately 52 A.D. (20 years after Christ's ascension)
  - v. Peter, although not focusing his ministry on Gentiles, recounts his cooperation with God in opening the door to the Gentiles through Cornelius' faith
    1. All that is required is to hear the Gospel and believe
    2. God knows the heart and will give His gifts at His pleasure
    3. In offering salvation by faith in Jesus Christ, God has made no distinction between Jew and Gentile
    4. God is purifying their heart by their faith, not by works of the Law
    5. Forcing Christians to become Jews is testing God by putting a yoke of burden on their necks which no Gentile or Jew has ever been able to bear
    6. By the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, Jews can be saved in the same faith without works manner as the Gentiles
  - vi. Barnabas and Paul take center attention as they recount the stories of the miracles and wonders done by God among them with the Gentiles
  - vii. James, the Lord's brother by Joseph and Mary and apparently the leader of the church council confirms the correctness of the testimonies and declares the inappropriateness of forcing Gentile to become Jews in order to be saved
    1. The words of the prophets concur with salvation by faith in Christ alone
      - a. Amos 9:11,12
    2. James judges that the Jewish church should not trouble the growing number of Gentile Christians with Jewish laws and ceremonies as a part of salvation
    3. He concludes that a few timeless and culturally universal moral truths should be used to remind them that they now serve a holy and righteous God
      - a. Abstain from things sacrificed to idols
      - b. Abstain from sexual immorality
      - c. Abstain from things strangled
      - d. Abstain from drinking blood
  - i. The Holy Spirit successfully directs Paul in his missionary and church planting journeys with a wide-open door for the Gospel to be received by the Gentiles
  - j. Paul, against loving protests, returns to Jerusalem causing an uproar among the Jews leading to his arrest and appeal to Caesar in defense of the Gospel of Jesus Christ

# Panorama of the New Testament

## *Section 9: Romans*

### 1. Keys to Understanding Romans

- a. Author: Paul
  - i. A Hebrew of Hebrews
  - ii. A Pharisee of Pharisees
  - iii. Apostle to the Gentiles
  - iv. Trained and educated by the best of the Jewish scholars, Gamaliel
- b. “The Gospel According to Paul” – the Flagship of the Epistles
- c. The most complete, systematic single statement of Theology in Scripture
- d. Highly intellectual and logical in its composition
- e. Provides powerful insights into the Old Testament Scriptures
- f. Widely regarded as the greatest example of persuasive writing in all literature
- g. Written to believers in Rome
  - i. Not to a church founded by Paul
  - ii. Not to unbelievers in an apologetic style
  - iii. Jews and Gentiles included in the intended audience
- h. Not written to correct problems in theology or worship gatherings
- i. Probably written from Corinth on Paul’s third missionary journey (57 A.D.)
- j. Paul had not yet been to Rome and did not establish a church there
- k. Paul wrote from his heart in order to:
  - i. Impart to the saints in Rome a spiritual blessing or gift
  - ii. Ensure that they would be established in truth and well-instructed in the faith
  - iii. Inform them of his desire to come to them in order to bear fruit and preach the gospel
  - iv. Exhort the believers (Jew & Gentile) to live in unity and harmony
  - v. Provide a syllabus of what he intended to teach them when he arrived
- l. The gospel of Christ reveals the righteousness of God through and by faith
- m. Theological Topics
  - i. The purpose of the cross of Jesus Christ
  - ii. Why Jesus had to die for all mankind
  - iii. Universality of sin and the guilty verdict against all mankind
  - iv. The purpose and Law and the believer’s relationship to it
  - v. Faith and works – the inability of man to earn favor with God by works
  - vi. Salvation is a free gift by God through faith alone
  - vii. Justification and the only righteous Justifier of sinful mankind
  - viii. Election
  - ix. Sanctification
  - x. Proclaiming the gospel to the lost
  - xi. The ultimate destiny of the Jew, God’s chosen people through Abraham
  - xii. Spiritual gifts and Christian living
  - xiii. Believer’s relationship and responsibility to government and other believers

### 2. Major Sections

- a. Theological – Eliminating the “Yeah, but...”
  - i. Presenting the case against all mankind: no one is excused from the need of Jesus Christ the Savior
    1. Pagan man is guilty of rejecting the truth of creation

- a. Begins with worthless thinking – vain, foolish thoughts
  - b. Followed by moral insensitivity – hearts darkened, fools
  - c. Resulting in religious stupidity – animal worship (evolution)
- 2. Moral man is also condemned without excuse. God’s judgment is:
  - a. according to the truth
  - b. according to their accumulated guilt
  - c. according to their works
  - d. without respect of person
  - e. according to their disobedience
  - f. able understand the true motivation of the heart
- 3. Religious man, especially the Jew, is condemned because they
  - a. Trust in the law but are not obeying it themselves
  - b. Teach others to obey without recognizing their own failures
  - c. Dishonor God by seeking the praise of men instead of God
- ii. God is a righteous Judge
  - 1. All are under sin – both Jews and Greeks
  - 2. “There is none righteous, no not one”
  - 3. “...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”
- iii. The Law and the Prophets declare God’s righteousness apart from the Law through faith in Jesus Christ
  - 1. Boasting in keeping the law is excluded
  - 2. Abraham was justified by faith not works before he was circumcised
  - 3. David testified of faith as being man’s only hope – the Law reveals but it does not restore
  - 4. All of the promises of God are fulfilled by our faith in Him
  - 5. Faith in God’s love, grace and mercy is our only hope in light of our sin
- iv. Jesus Christ, the Second Adam, has taken our place in death and provided us with life
- v. Faith’s response to the gift of eternal life – believers are called to:
  - 1. Die to sin
  - 2. Become bondservants of God (voluntary servitude)
  - 3. Understand the purpose of the law and our release from it in Christ
  - 4. Understand that the law cannot save us from sin, but it does reveal our sin and show our need for our Savior
- vi. The permanence of our salvation by faith
  - 1. No condemnation for those in Christ
  - 2. The Spirit of God will give life to our mortal bodies (from death to life)
  - 3. Received the Spirit of Adoption to the Father
  - 4. Suffering is not associated with loss of salvation, but rather brings hope
  - 5. Being conformed to the image of the Son, fit for eternity with God
  - 6. Nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, neither:
    - a. death nor life
    - b. angels nor principalities
    - c. things present nor things to come
    - d. height nor depth
    - e. nor any other created thing

## b. Israel

- i. Paul is willing exchange his salvation for his unbelieving Jewish brethren
- ii. Israel rejected God; He did not reject them
- iii. God’s dealing with Israel is not at all unrighteousness, He still has plans for them



- iv. The law became a stumbling block to the Jews, pulling them away from the Lawgiver
  - v. Jews (Israel) needs the gospel for salvation, the Law can never save them
  - vi. Christ completed the requirements of the law for them (and for us)
  - vii. Although Israel rejected God and crucified Jesus, they will not suffer from God's silence towards them forever
  - viii. God, the perfect Vinedresser, continues to prune and tend the vine so that it bears fruit for the kingdom (when the Jews are unfruitful, He turns to the Gentiles; when the Gentiles cease to bear fruit, He will turn back to Israel)
  - ix. The blindness of Israel will be removed when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in
  - x. God's calling, gifts and covenants are irrevocable, even to Israel who rejected Him
  - xi. God has allowed their disobedience so that they will receive His mercy in His timing
- c. Christian Living and Faithful Servants In Action
- i. Sacrificial worship
  - ii. Humbly using the gift within the Body
  - iii. Loving acts of service and hospitality
  - iv. Imitation of Jesus
  - v. Rendering to Caesar what is Caesar's
  - vi. Loving your neighbor as yourself
  - vii. Living in the daylight, not in darkness
  - viii. Avoiding needless offenses between weak and strong/mature followers of Christ
  - ix. Conclusions, Paul's agenda, various greetings, and warnings



# Panorama of the New Testament

## *Section 10: Pauline Epistles / Church Epistles*

### 1. General Background Information

- a. Author: Paul
- b. Organization in New Testament – 13 Letters
  - i. Not in chronological order
  - ii. Seven local churches receive letters
    1. Rome
    2. Corinth (two letters)
    3. Galatia
    4. Ephesus (a.k.a. prison epistle)
    5. Philippi (a.k.a. prison epistle)
    6. Colosse (a.k.a. prison epistle)
    7. Thessalonica (two letters)
  - iii. Three pastors or individuals receive letters
    1. Timothy (two letters)
    2. Titus
    3. Philemon (a.k.a. prison epistle)
  - iv. Except for Romans, all letters were written by Paul for practical reasons, but he used the occasions to expand the teachings and doctrines of New Testament
  - v. Paul had personally helped to establish the ministry that he was writing to and knew the recipients personally, Romans again excepted.
  - vi. 2 Timothy 3:16 Patterns (doctrine, reproof, correction)
    1. Defined
      - a. Doctrine = Theology
      - b. Reproof = correcting wrong conduct
      - c. Correction = correcting wrong doctrines or theologies
    2. First Group
      - a. Romans - doctrine (salvation)
      - b. 1, 2 Corinthians - reproof (church order)
      - c. Galatians - correction (Grace, not law)
    3. Second Group
      - a. Ephesians - doctrine (ecclesiology)
      - b. Philippians - reproof
      - c. Colossians - correction
    4. 1, 2 Thessalonians - doctrine, correction (eschatology)
  - vii. Paul's epistles (except Romans) are generally intended for the Gentile church and believers not to the Jews. (Paul's calling was to the Gentiles)
- c. Chronological Order
  - i. Galatians (48 A.D. – possibly 52 A.D.)
  - ii. 1 Thessalonians (51 A.D.)
  - iii. 2 Thessalonians (52 A.D.)
  - iv. 1 Corinthians (Spring of 56 A.D.)
  - v. 2 Corinthians (Fall of 56 A.D.)
  - vi. Romans (57 A.D.)
  - vii. Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon (60-62 A.D. from Roman prison)
  - viii. 1 Timothy (62 A.D. after release from prison)
  - ix. Titus (63 A.D.)

## 2. 1 Corinthians

- a. One of the worldliest cities; sexual immorality was rampant
- b. Major trade center of the Greco-Roman world
- c. Multi-national melting pot worshipping false gods
- d. Financially prosperous, morally decadent
- e. To "Corinthianize" was coined to describe all manner of sexual misconduct
- f. Sinful and pagan practices were commonplace
- g. Believers were extremely immature in their faith and needed transformation
- h. Written in response to a letter sent to Paul for clarification on church operations
- i. Aquila and Pricilla were the installed leadership of the church at Corinth
- j. Major outline of epistle
  - i. Schisms in the church are unbiblical (Chapter 1-6)
  - ii. Specific response to questions asked of Paul (7-11)
    1. Marriage
    2. Christian liberties
    3. Proper worship practices
  - iii. The proper use and place of Spiritual gifts
  - iv. Our coming resurrection!
  - v. Conclusion
- k. Highlights in 1 Corinthians
  1. God's "foolishness" is that He chooses to use what the world calls foolish in order confound the wise (proud in their human knowledge). The cross is the ultimate foolishness to those who are perishing from unbelief
  - ii. Salvation is a separate issue from rewards
    1. Salvation by faith is a promise of God, no works involved, just acceptance
    2. All believers works will be tried by fire in the ends
      - a. Some will be counted as gold, silver and precious stones (surviving)
      - b. The rest will be counted as wood, hay and straw (perish in fire)
  - iii. Old Testament events are there as our examples, mostly of what not to do
  - iv. Spiritual gifts are there for the body and are provided in order that they will be used
    1. Without love even using God's gifts is fruitless vanity
    2. Properly used, gifts validate that a believer is in Jesus Christ (but it is not our place to pronounce who is and who is will not enter God's kingdom)
  - v. The Gospel defined and the transforming truth of the resurrection
    1. The Gospel defined (15:1-6)
      - a. That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures
      - b. He was buried
      - c. He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures
      - d. He was seen resurrected by Cephas, the twelve, and over 500 people
    2. The truth of the resurrection
      - a. If it didn't happen, our faith is in vain, empty and futile (it did happen)
      - b. The last enemy – Death – has been destroyed
      - c. Hades (the abode of the dead) has no victory
      - d. Seven transformations believers receive at their resurrection
        - i. From corruptible into incorruption
        - ii. From mortal into immortality

- iii. From dishonor into honor / glory
- iv. From weakness into power
- v. From natural (sinful) into spiritual (holy)
- vi. From the image of man into the dust to the image of Christ
- vii. From an earthly existence into a heavenly existence
- e. Our labor of love in service to the Lord is not in vain, it has great reward!

### 3. 2 Corinthians

- a. Paul writes “in tears” in defense of his commission from God and to defend the Gospel he preaches in the name of Jesus Christ
- b. Confronts false teachings head-on
- c. Written to oppose a falsified letter sent in Paul’s name
- d. To remind them of the saints living in desperate need in Jerusalem
- e. A personal letter from an apostle of Jesus Christ, written in sincerity and with a genuine concern for the church he deeply loves
- f. Paul defends his ministry not from pride, but from a desire to set the Corinthians back on a proper course in their Christian walk (without his correction, they are wandering away from the faith)

### 4. Galatians

- a. Summary verses 3:3-7 (Battle cry for Luther’s Reformation)
- b. Written to confront a perversion of the Gospel from grace back to law
- c. Most concise and comprehensive explanation of the gospel of Christ in Scripture (concentrated Romans)
  - i. Its authenticity (undeniable truth of Christ’s gospel)
  - ii. Its superiority (greater than the OT Law in every way, see Hebrews also)
  - iii. Its provision of liberty for the believer to be free from the Law
- d. Setting the record straight – compromise is a death sentence
  - i. Never compromise faith in exchange for works as a means to salvation
  - ii. Never compromise that grace saves to eternal life versus the Law which brings bondage and death
  - iii. Never compromise your adoption as a Son for the inheritance of the flesh
- e. Fruits of the Spirit
  - i. Love (fruitfulness of my heart)
  - ii. Joy
  - iii. Peace
  - iv. Longsuffering (fruitfulness toward my neighbor)
  - v. Kindness
  - vi. Goodness
  - vii. Faithfulness (fruitfulness toward my God)
  - viii. Gentleness
  - ix. Self-control

### 5. Ephesians

- a. The truth about our salvation in Jesus Christ
- b. All believers are united as one body in Christ
- c. This epistle divides into two major sections

- i. Understanding our wealth in Christ (1-3)
  - 1. God's election
  - 2. The Spirit's sealing of the believer
  - 3. Salvation by grace through faith
  - 4. Unity
  - 5. Mystery of the Church
- ii. Understanding our walk in Christ
  - 1. Walk worthy of our calling
  - 2. Building up the body using the gifts
  - 3. Put on the new identity if Christ
  - 4. Imitate God (Christlikeness)
  - 5. Living in domestic harmony with one another
  - 6. Putting on the full armor of God

## **6. Philippians**

- a. Experiencing the true joy of serving Christ
- b. Drawing on our resources in Christ when suffering
  - i. To live in right conduct while suffering
  - ii. To empower our minds
  - iii. Doing all for Christ
  - iv. To set Christ as our goal and role model (The humbleness of our Lord)
  - v. Recognizing where our strength comes from (4:13)
- c. Thankfulness for their generosity
- d. Correcting a few weakness in the fellowship
  - i. Their lack of spiritual discernment
  - ii. Paul's desire for their continued maturity
- e. Our citizenship in heaven
- f. Meditation on the right things leads to right conduct

## **7. Colossians**

- a. Responding to the Gnostics (false teachings about Jesus and salvation)
- b. 78 out of 95 verses similar to those in Ephesians
- c. The Preeminence of Christ
- d. The fullness of Christ
  - i. In Creation
  - ii. In Redemption
  - iii. In the Church
  - iv. In response to heresies
  - v. Encouraging right conduct in the life of the believer

## **8. 1 & 2 Thessalonians**

- a. Written to encourage believers after some believers had passed away (no cause for alarm)
- b. Not to be concerned about the persecutions in relation to the end-times
- c. Paul reminds them that he has already taught them about eschatology; they just need a reminder on what he already taught them
- d. Concise, powerful statements of doctrine
  - i. Trinity
  - ii. Deity of Christ

- iii. Nature of Scripture
- iv. End-times and the Day of the Lord
- v. Salvation
- vi. Sanctification
- vii. Resurrection
- viii. Apostasy
- ix. Idleness
- e. Establishing the basics of faith
- f. Opposing the Jews offended because gentiles were being drawn away from the synagogues to faith in Christ

# Panorama of the New Testament

## *Section 11: Pastoral and General Epistles*

### 1. The Pastorals

#### a. 1 & 2 Timothy

- i. Recipient is Paul's beloved son in the faith, appointed to lead the church of Ephesus
- ii. Commissioning of young Timothy and advising him of the challenges he will face
- iii. Purpose of 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy
  1. Defining how the church is to function
  2. Setting the ground rules for appointing leaders in the church
  3. Recognition of and response to false teachings
  4. Highly practical advice for one of Paul's most beloved protégés
  5. Urging Timothy to stay pure and live as an example for others to follow
  6. Warning Timothy to avoid the things that would destroy his ministry and the pure teaching of the Gospel
- iv. Purpose of 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy
  1. Paul's last words to his faithful son – his death was immanent
  2. Encouraging Timothy to continue serving after Paul's passing
  3. Exhorting Timothy to respect God's inspired Word
  4. Passing the baton of preaching from the teacher to the student
  5. Warning Timothy of the very real dangers of apostasy
  6. An urgent request for Timothy to come to Paul in Rome before it is too late

#### b. Titus – Paul's Point Man

- i. One of Paul's most trusted associates, his go-to guy to get things done
- ii. Pastor of the church on the island of Crete
- iii. A key book for our understanding of the NT church organization and operation
- iv. Offers practical, common-sense guidelines for servants in the church
- v. Forty-six verses of powerful insights into how to lead the church
  1. Organization and structure
  2. The supreme importance of holding to sound doctrine
  3. Maintaining a strong commitment to teaching the Word

#### c. Philemon

- i. A friend and contemporary of Paul who held church in his house
- ii. Philemon's slave, Onesimus, appears to have run away but then became a believer and became a companion of Paul
- iii. Letting a run away slave go unpunished was considered a substantial threat to the Roman citizenry because there were far more slaves than Roman citizens
- iv. Paul sets his treasured Apostolic Authority aside to simply request Philemon to engage in Christian forgiveness for Onesimus' error
- v. A witty, playful letter drawing on the friendship between Paul and Philemon in order to release Onesimus to service to the Lord, given that he has proven profitable to Paul
- vi. Paul offers to pay any debt Onesimus owes if Philemon deems restitution is required
- vii. A favorable response by Philemon will result in Paul's heart being refreshed
- viii. Onesimus himself was sent by Paul to deliver the letter

### 2. Hebrews

- a. Written to Jewish believers in Christ
- b. Only unsigned Epistle in the New Testament (Paul is clearly the author)
- c. The most significant New Testament book in terms of unlocking all of the peculiar and unexplained practices commanded by God in the Old Testament



- d. A theological writing from cover to cover, with just a few personal details at the end of the letter
- e. The most complete writing on the deity of Jesus Christ anywhere in Scripture
- f. Specifically and explicitly written to combat Jewish Apostasy – no small issue
  - i. Jewish Temple and daily sacrifices still in practice in Jerusalem with seemingly:
    - 1. Divinely appointed priests officiating
    - 2. Divinely appointed temple
    - 3. Performing divinely ordained duties that Jews were commanded to followed throughout their generations
  - ii. What is a believing Jew to do with all the commands given to Moses?
  - iii. Failure to “be Jewish” is resulting in extreme persecution for Jewish Christians
  - iv. The unasked question that is addressed was, “Would it be acceptable to fall back on the Jewish sacrificial system and worship God at the Temple in order to avoid persecution, even if they returned to Christian beliefs after the persecutions stopped?”
- g. Jesus Christ is unquestionably God (the Son)
  - i. He is heir of all things
  - ii. He made the ages, the heavens and the Earth
  - iii. He is the brightness of God’s glory
  - iv. He is the image of the Father
  - v. He upholds all things by His own power
  - vi. He alone has purged our sins – only God can forgive sins
  - vii. He has sat down in Majesty on High
- h. Jesus Christ is superior to everything the Jews hold in the highest of esteem
  - i. Superior in position and preexistent to the angels
    - 1. Unique in His relationship to the Father
    - 2. He is the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant
    - 3. The Son created the angels
    - 4. Angels worship and serve the Son
    - 5. The Son rules the Kingdom of God
    - 6. The Son is Creator of all things and will continue after creation passes away
    - 7. The Son is enthroned at the right-hand of the Father
    - 8. Having become a Man, He alone is to inherit sovereignty over the Earth
    - 9. The earth was created for and given to Man; the Son has regained for man what Adam lost in the Garden to Satan
    - 10. The Son, not angels, has manifested God’s incomparable grace
    - 11. The Son has overcome Satan, the prince over the power of death by His death
    - 12. The Son aids man, not angels, from the struggle over the power of sin
    - 13. Because the Son has suffered being tempted, He offers perfect help to those tempted
  - ii. He is a more faithful and superior Servant-Leader than Moses
    - 1. His superior obedience to the Father
    - 2. His position and ownership over His own house
  - iii. He is a superior Commander than Joshua
    - 1. Joshua never achieved rest for his people
    - 2. Joshua’s conquest was incomplete
  - iv. He is a High Priest superior to Aaron and all of the Levitical Priesthood
    - 1. The Son came down from Heaven
    - 2. The Son can perfectly sympathize with our weakness while providing access the Throne of Grace where we can obtain mercy and grace
    - 3. The Father appointed the Son to be High Priest while Aaron was called
    - 4. Jesus is a Priest on the order of Melchizedek and is therefore superior to Aaron

- 5. The perfected Son, who learned obedience through suffering, is the Author of eternal salvation
- v. He is the Mediator of the superior New Covenant (in every way)
  - 1. Built on superior promises
  - 2. The New Covenant is sealed by a once-for-all superior Sacrifice
  - 3. Superior results and blessings for the believer in the New compared to the Old
- vi. Faith in Christ is the true and superior response for all of God's servants in any time
- i. The Son is the High Priest in the true Sanctuary of God in Heaven
  - i. Heavenly not earthly
  - ii. Erected by the Lord rather than by man
  - iii. Established on a more perfect Covenant; man must trust in this Covenant for salvation
  - iv. The Old Covenant practices were merely intended to be a shadow of the New
    - 1. Innocent blood required
    - 2. Man could not pay the penalty himself
    - 3. A mediator between God and man is required because of man's sin
    - 4. God Himself and not man could alone provide a restored relationship to man
  - v. Christ's sacrifice was a once-for-all offering, never needed to be repeated
  - vi. Animal sacrifice could never take away sins, it could only cover them temporarily until the perfect sacrifice was offered by God Himself
  - vii. Only by His death could the New Covenant be legally be enforced
- j. Access to the New Covenant is the same as it was to the old: By Faith Alone!
  - i. The lineage of Hebrew heroes all lived by and were justified by faith alone
  - ii. Faith alone is our only true response, even in the face of extreme trials
  - iii. Faith in God demands living by an uncompromising set of moral responsibilities
  - iv. Faith demonstrates works of obedience; works of obedience do not save
- k. Five Warnings in Hebrews
  - i. Drifting away from the faith (apostasy)
  - ii. Disobedience (trying to please God on our terms, not His)
  - iii. Failure to press on to maturity (milk not meat)
  - iv. Committing the willful sin of denying Jesus, but hoping for salvation anyway
  - v. Indifference to God's gift by grace (ignoring the suffering and penalty paid on the cross)

### 3. James

- a. To the 12 Tribes of Israel (Jews, not Gentiles were the original audience)
- b. Written to confront faulty doctrine in regards to Christian conduct
  - i. Does not address salvation by grace alone (Paul already covered that)
  - ii. Addresses behavior not belief; deeds not doctrine
- c. Enduring in our faith
  - i. Tribulations (outward pressures)
  - ii. Temptations (inward pressures)
  - iii. Self-control
- d. Testing the genuineness of our faith
  - i. Our response to the Word of God
  - ii. Producing good works
  - iii. Exercising proper self-control
  - iv. Not speaking evil of a brother
  - v. Refraining from boasting
  - vi. Faith without works (dead faith)
  - vii. Works without faith (salvation denied)

#### **4. 1 & 2 Peter**

- a. To the elect sojourners of the dispersion (Christians fleeing persecution)
- b. Christians should expect suffering to accompany their faith
- c. Reassurance of God's grace and election
- d. Calling Christians to live righteous and holy lives even in the face of evil
- e. Warning of apostasy
- f. Warning against false teachers and their judgment
- g. Reminder of Christ's authority
- h. Reminder of the certainty of the end-times
- i. Elders in the church must rule out of love
- j. Resisting the devil through God's divine power and grace
- k. The need to guard against error at all times

#### **5. 1 John**

- a. Faith's true response = love; answers the question "What is faith?"
- b. Establishing truth over error
- c. Twelve tests of our faith
  - i. Are you walking in the Light (Christ)?
  - ii. Are you keeping God's NT commandments?
  - iii. Are you loving your brothers?
  - iv. Have you stopped loving the world?
  - v. Are you able to discern truth from deception?
  - vi. Are you practicing righteousness?
  - vii. Are you seeking purification from sin?
  - viii. Are you pursuing righteousness and true brotherly love?
  - ix. Do you have the Holy Spirit?
  - x. Are you still loving believers in the fellowship?
  - xi. Are you faithful and obedient to God?
  - xii. Are you receiving the Holy Spirit's witness or the witness of the world?

#### **6. 1 & 2 John**

- a. Confronting false teaching
  - i. False teaching
  - ii. False charity
- b. Walking in love
- c. Guarding against errors
- d. Dealing with the power struggles within the church