



Provided by the Church of the Lutheran Confession - Board of Missions

New Testament Survey

Lesson 36 – Paul’s Last Letter and the Letter to the Hebrews

Paul’s Last Writing

During his second imprisonment in Rome Paul wrote his second letter to Timothy, which was his last New Testament letter. At that time the situation was not good. Paul had no hope of being released. He was deserted by most of his friends. Only Luke was with him. This last letter is Paul’s last will and testament, in which he tells Timothy, his assistant, to preserve the pure Gospel, to defend it against false teachers, to train young men to preserve it, and to be ready to suffer for this Gospel even as Paul had suffered. Paul probably wrote this letter shortly before his own execution, which took place in the years between 64 and 67 AD.

Second Timothy

Read Paul’s second letter to Timothy. If you have questions, do not hesitate to ask them.

Here are some of the main points of this letter, not necessarily presented in this order:

1. Paul was alone at his **“first defense”**. He expected to die very soon.

“I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (vv. 4:6-7).

2. Paul talked about his helpers.

“All those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes”
(v. 1:15).

“Demas has forsaken me” (v. 4:10). Crescens, Titus, and Tychicus had gone elsewhere. Erastus and Trophimus were not with Paul. **“Only Luke is with me”** (v. 4:11).

“Onesiphorus ...was not ashamed of my chain. ... He sought me out ... and found me”
(vv. 1:16-17).

3. Paul made some personal requests.

To Timothy: **“Do your utmost to come before winter”** (v. 4:21). I am **“desiring to see you”** (v. 1:4).

“Get Mark and bring him with you. ... Bring the cloak ... and the books” (vv. 4:11, 13).

4. Paul gave Timothy last words of instruction for his ministry.

“Do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner” (v. 1:8).

“Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me” (v. 1:13).

“Commit (these words) to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (v. 2:2).

“Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace” (v. 2:22).

“Preach the word! ... Endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist” (vv. 4:2, 5).

“Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching” (v. 4:2).

5. Paul reminded Timothy of the truth in words worth remembering.

“God ... has saved us and called us ..., not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before time began” (vv. 1:8-9).

“The word of God is not chained. ... The Lord knows those who are His” (vv. 2:9, 19).

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God (breathed out by God), and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (v. 3:16).

“The Holy Scriptures ... are able to make you wise for salvation through faith” (in Christ) (v. 3:15).

6. Paul foretold dark days for Christ’s Church in the near future.

“Their message (of the false teachers) will spread like cancer” (v. 2:17).

“In the last days perilous times will come” (v. 3:1).

“All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” (v. 3:12).

“Evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived” (v. 3:13).

“The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine” (v. 4:3).

7. Paul looked forward to Jesus’ kingdom of eternal glory.

“Our Savior Jesus Christ ... has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (v. 1:10).

“If we died with Him, we shall also live with Him” (v. 2:11).

**“The Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom”
(v. 4:18).**

The Letter to The Hebrews

This letter was probably written to Jewish Christians in Rome or in Jerusalem in the ten years from 60 to 70 AD. We do not know who wrote the letter. Some possibilities are: Apollos, Barnabas, Luke, Silas (Silvanus). An ancient church father said: "Who wrote the letter God only knows."

Those who received this letter were in danger of abandoning Christianity and going back to Judaism. The Jews were protected by the Roman government at this time, but the Christians were not. Thus, it was safer to be a Jew than to be a Christian.

The letter to the Hebrews points out how Christianity is far superior to Judaism and is the fulfillment of Judaism. The author discusses the superiority of Jesus Christ and His work over Moses and all the Old Testament ceremonies and sacrifices. He also adds strong encouragements to follow Christ and severe warnings to those who turn away.

Read all the letter to the Hebrews. If you have questions, do not hesitate to ask them.

1. Jesus is superior to the angels. (1:1 – 2:4)

Instruction (1:1-14)

Admonition (2:1-4)

2. Jesus' humiliation on the cross was a necessary part of His work as High Priest. (2:5 – 3:1)

Instruction (2:5-18)

Admonition (3:1)

3. Jesus is superior to Moses, who gave the Old Testament law. (3:2 – 4:13)

Instruction (3:2-6)

Warning (3:7 – 4:13)

"Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts" (vv. 3:7-8, 15; 4:7).

4. Jesus is a true High Priest, a true man, yet appointed by God. (4:14 – 6:20)

Instruction (4:14 – 5:10)

He **"was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin"** (v. 4:15).

God said to Jesus: **"You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek"** (vv. 5:6; 7:17, 21).

Warning and encouragement (5:11 – 6:20)

5. Jesus is both High Priest and King forever, after the order of Melchizedek (7:1 – 12:29)

Instruction (7:1 – 10:19)

He **“does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people’s, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself”** (v. 7:27).

“With His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption” (v. 9:12).

“Once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (v. 9:26).

Admonition and warning (10:19 – 12:29)

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering” (v. 10:23).

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some” (v. 10:25).

“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (v. 10:31).

“You have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise” (v. 10:36).

“We are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul” (v. 10:39).

We need to remember the Old Testament heroes of faith (Chapter 11):

Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Rahab. Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, the prophets

These **“through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions”** (v. 11:33).

“Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus” (vv. 12:1-2).

“Whom the Lord loves He chastens” (v. 12:6).

“Looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God” (v. 12:15).

“See that you do not refuse Him who speaks ... from heaven” (v. 12:25).

6. Some concluding admonitions (13:1-19)

“Let brotherly love continue” (v. 1).

“Remember the prisoners as if chained with them” (v. 3).

“Marriage is honorable among all ... but fornicators and adulterers God will judge” (v. 4).

“Be content with such things as you have” (v. 5).

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (v. 8).

“Here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come” (v. 14).

“By Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God” (v. 15).

“Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls” (v. 17).

7. Prayer and thanksgiving and conclusion (13:20-25)

“Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen” (vv. 20-21).

“Our brother Timothy has been set free, with whom I shall see you if he comes shortly” (v. 23).

“Grace be with you all. Amen” (v. 25).

Questions

1. What was on Paul’s mind as he faced death?
2. What evidence is there that Paul treasured his earthly friends?
3. What did Paul want Timothy to do so that the Gospel could continue to be proclaimed long after Paul’s death?
4. What is special about the Bible?
5. What are the Scriptures able to accomplish?
6. Why is false teaching so dangerous?
7. Why can all Christians be hopeful regarding the future?
8. What difficulties were the recipients of Hebrews facing?
9. In what ways was Jesus superior to the angels?
10. In what ways was Jesus superior to Moses?
11. In what ways was Jesus superior to the Old Testament priests?
12. Why is Jesus called a priest according to Melchizedek?
13. What did Jesus accomplish by His one sacrifice?
14. Why is it impossible to please God without faith?
15. What kind of sacrifices can we make as God’s priests today?
16. What kind of sacrifice was only Jesus able to make?
17. Why can Christians be truly content in this life?