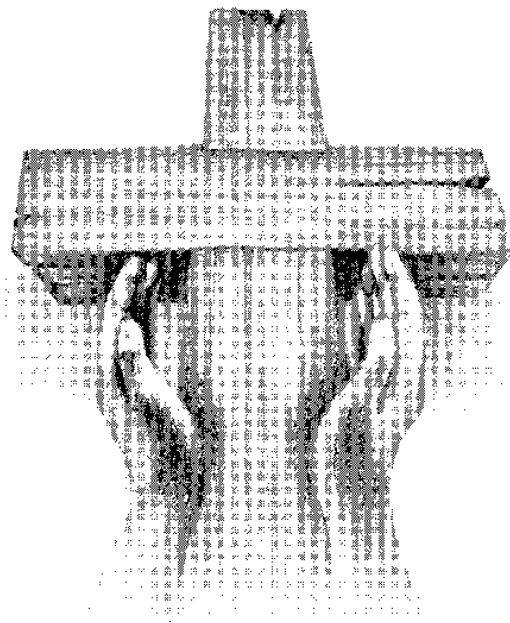




Provided by the Church of the Lutheran Confession - Board of Missions

A Survey of the New Testament





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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 1 – Introduction and Overview

Introduction

The purpose of this course is to become better acquainted with the New Testament and how it presents the coming of Christ as the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies and types. On the evening on which Jesus was arrested, He spoke to His twelve apostles (minus Judas Iscariot) about the Holy Spirit. He said: **“I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever – the Spirit of truth”** (John 14:16-17). **“He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you”** (John 14:26). **“He will testify of Me”** (John 15:26). **“He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you”** (John 16:13-14).

Because of this promise of Jesus, we can be confident that what these apostles and their associates wrote about Jesus is the truth. The New Testament is the collection of the writings of the apostles and their associates that were recognized from the beginning as the Word of God Himself, communicated by the Holy Spirit Himself to the men who had been chosen by Jesus Himself to be His witnesses.

The apostle Paul was not one of the original twelve apostles, but Jesus chose him also to be His witness. Paul said of his writings: **“We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches”** (1 Corinthians 2:12-13). Notice that Paul claims that it was not only general ideas that the Holy Spirit gave to him, but that the very words Paul used in his teaching came from God Himself.

In one of his letters, Jesus’ apostle Peter put the letters of the apostle Paul on the same level as the Scriptures of the Old Testament. He wrote: **“Consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation – as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures”** (2 Peter 3:15-16).

That is why we say that the New Testament, as well as the Old Testament, is the very Word of God. It is breathed out by God to specially chosen apostles and prophets, so that believers in Jesus would have an absolutely reliable source of God’s truth for their faith and life. Jesus

said to His disciples: “**If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free**” (John 8:31-32). The apostle John said of his writings: “**These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name**” (John 20:31).

Before we look at the individual books themselves, here is an overview of New Testament history that shows where the various books fit into the history. The books of the New Testament are written in **bold face** with **CAPITAL LETTERS** so that it will be easy to see where they fit into the history.

To get the most out of this course, it is important to read and study the Bible itself, chapter by chapter, verse by verse. In contrast to the Old Testament, the New Testament is not long. You should be able to read every chapter and every verse of the New Testament during this course.

As we begin this study of the New Testament, we pray: “Blessed Lord, You have given us Your Holy Scriptures for our learning. May we so hear them, read, learn, and take them to heart, that being strengthened and comforted by Your holy Word, we may cling to the blessed hope of everlasting life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen” (*Christian Worship – A Lutheran Hymnal*, p. 25).

An Overview

The Books of the New Testament

The books of the New Testament can be divided into five groups:

One: The four Gospels: There are 3 similar ones. We call them the synoptic gospels (**MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE**), and there is 1 that is different from the others (**JOHN**). These four Gospels give us the account of Jesus’ birth, life, death, and resurrection.

MATTHEW was one of the 12, a tax collector. He wrote chiefly for Jewish Christians; therefore he quotes the Old Testament frequently.

MARK was a younger man, a companion of Paul, and later he was Peter’s helper. He wrote chiefly for Gentile Christians in Rome, stressing the mighty deeds of Jesus.

LUKE was a physician and Paul’s companion. He wrote the Gospel of **Luke** and **Acts** for a Greek man named Theophilus. Luke stresses that Jesus is the Savior of the world – of every man, woman, and child.

JOHN was one of the 12. He was Jesus’ closest friend. He wrote his Gospel much latter than the others, therefore he provides additional information. John shows that Jesus is both true God and true man.

- Two:** The book of **ACTS**. It tells how the Good News of Jesus traveled from Jerusalem to Rome after Jesus' ascension to heaven.
- Three:** The 13 letters of Paul: **ROMANS** through **PHILEMON**. These letters proclaim and explain the message of Christ's forgiveness to the early Christian congregations.
- Four:** The letters of others, such as **JAMES, PETER, JOHN, JUDE**, and whoever wrote **HEBREWS**.
- Five:** The book of **REVELATION**. This book contains visions received by John when he was in exile on the island of Patmos. It pictures the ultimate victory of Christ and His kingdom over all the forces of evil. It ends with a prayer for Christ's return: "**Come, Lord Jesus.**"

The Order of Events in New Testament History

The New Testament books cover quite a brief period of time compared with the Old Testament. The New Testament covers about one century: from around 5 BC to 95 AD.

Here is the possible order in which the books of the New Testament were written, and the order of events surrounding these books:

5 or 4 BC – The birth of Jesus Christ.

30 AD – Jesus died and rose again; the Holy Spirit came on Pentecost; the Good News spread. (Some give 33 AD as the year of our Lord's death.)

32 – Stephen died as the first martyr; Saul (Paul) was converted to the Christian faith.

43 – Paul and Barnabas worked as pastors in Antioch of Syria in the first mixed congregation, that is, made up of Jews and non-Jews (Gentiles).

45 – Jesus' brother James wrote the letter of **JAMES** to Jewish Christians.

The message of **JAMES** is a call to repentance from the mere profession of faith to a true and living faith in Jesus that produces good works.

46-48 – Paul went on his first mission journey with Barnabas and Mark to Galatia.

48 – Paul wrote his letter to the **GALATIANS** from Antioch in Syria.

Paul wrote this letter to the Galatians because false teachers, called Judaizers, were telling the Galatians that they must keep all the laws of Moses to be saved. In this letter, Paul defended the true Gospel: that we are saved alone by grace through faith in Christ, not by keeping the law.

49 – The first synod (that is, convention or gathering) of Christians met in Jerusalem (Acts 15).

49-51 – Paul went on his second mission journey with Silas, Timothy, and Luke to Macedonia and Greece. At Corinth Paul wrote **1** and **2 THESSALONIANS**.

The main subject of these two letters is the end of the world and some of the signs that are to precede that last day.

52-56 – Paul went on his third mission journey. He spent 3 years in Ephesus and went to Greece. During this third journey, Paul wrote his three longest letters:

From Ephesus Paul wrote **1 CORINTHIANS**. In this letter, Paul deals with many problems in that congregation, such as sexual sin, divisions, excommunication, marriage, the Lord's Supper, worship services, and the resurrection of the dead.

From Philippi Paul wrote **2 CORINTHIANS**. In this letter, Paul discussed his ministry as an apostle of Jesus and reveals much of his feelings and thinking.

From Corinth Paul wrote **ROMANS**, which is a summary of his Gospel preaching for a congregation he had not yet met. Since this letter to the Romans is a summary of the Gospel, more passages from this book are quoted in our catechism than from any other.

56-58 – Paul was in prison in Caesarea, awaiting trial.

58-59 – Paul went on his voyage to Rome as a prisoner, suffering a shipwreck near Malta.

59-61 – Paul was a prisoner in Rome, awaiting trial. He enjoyed much freedom, however.

As a prisoner in Rome, Paul wrote his letter to the **COLOSSIANS**. In this letter, he exalts Jesus as the Head of the Church and urges the Colossians to find everything they need in Jesus.

At the same time, Paul wrote a letter to a man from Colossi named **PHILEMON** about a slave named Onesimus who had run away from Philemon and met Paul in Rome.

At the same time Paul wrote his letter to the **EPHESIANS**, which is very similar to his letter to the Colossians. In Ephesians Paul speaks of the glory of Christ's Church, which is the body of Christ, the Head.

Toward the end of this imprisonment, Paul wrote his letter to the **PHILIPPIANS**. This is a letter of joy because of the wonderful Gospel of Jesus Christ.

50-60 – Perhaps during these years **MATTHEW** and **MARK** wrote their Gospels of Jesus' life.

62-63 – After Paul was released from prison, he went on more mission journeys, perhaps even to Spain.

During this time, Paul wrote **1 TIMOTHY** and **TITUS**. These are letters to guide his assistants in how they should carry on the work of proclaiming the Gospel.

61-64 – Peter wrote **1 PETER** and **2 PETER** to persecuted Christians. He died in 64.

1 PETER is a letter of hope amid sufferings and persecutions. Peter calls on the Christians to obey the government, even if it is persecuting them; he asks them to live holy Christian lives, and to look beyond this life to the glories of heaven. **2 PETER** is chiefly a warning against false teachings.

65-67 – Paul wrote **2 TIMOTHY** shortly before his execution by the Roman government.

2 TIMOTHY is Paul's last word and a farewell to his dear young friend.

65-70 – Luke wrote **LUKE** and **ACTS** for a Greek man named Theophilus, based on his research.

About this same time, **JUDE**, another brother of Jesus, wrote his short letter.

JUDE is a severe warning against false teachers.

About this same time, an unknown author wrote the letter to the **HEBREWS**.

The theme of **HEBREWS** is how much better the New Testament is than the Old Testament. It was written to warn Jews against going back to living under the law of Moses and Jewish ceremonies. Most importantly, this letter proves that Jesus is our great High Priest who kept the Law for us and sacrificed Himself for our sins.

70 – Jerusalem and its Temple were destroyed by the Roman armies, just as Jesus had said.

90-100 – The Apostle **JOHN** wrote his Gospel, three letters, and **REVELATION**.

In **1 JOHN**, he asks us to test our lives to see if they are truly Christian.

2 JOHN is a short letter about brotherly love and a warning against false teachings.

3 JOHN is a short letter to Gaius about a church problem.

The Apocrypha

The Old Testament as we know it was complete by the time of Ezra. It has three parts: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings (which is also called Psalms). The Old Testament was

translated from Hebrew into Greek around 250 BC This Greek translation, known as the Septuagint, is quoted very often in the New Testament.

14 books not in the Hebrew Old Testament were added to the Greek Septuagint. These books are not quoted in the New Testament as part of Scripture, but some Bibles print them between the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Roman Catholic Church accepts these 14 books, known as the *Apocrypha*, as part of the Bible.

These books are books of the Apocrypha: 1 and 2 Esdras (or 3 and 4 Ezra), Tobit, Judith, an addition to Esther, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus or the Wisdom of Jesus Sirach, Baruch, the Son of the Three Holy Children, History of Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, the Prayer of Manasses, and 1 and 2 Maccabees. Some of these books help us understand the history between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Besides these apocryphal books, there were other books written by Jews during this period: the Books of Enoch, the Assumption of Moses, the Ascension of Isaiah, the Book of Jubilees, the Psalms of Solomon, the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, and the Sibylline Oracles. These books have little value for us today.

There are also some books that are called the Christian Apocrypha or *Pseudepigrapha*. These books were written many years after the apostles, but false teachers claimed they were written by the apostles or during the days of the apostles. These books include the Gospel of Thomas, the Acts of Paul, the Acts of Peter, and a book called Barnabas. There is even supposed to be a Gospel of Judas (Judas Iscariot). All of these books were rejected by the early Christians as not having come from the Holy Spirit and therefore unworthy of being included in the Bible. But there are many so-called Christian scholars today who claim that these books are just as good as the books we have in the Bible. These false teachers deceive many simple Christians by their lies.

Questions

1. Why should we believe that the New Testament is the Word of God?
2. Why was the New Testament written?
3. What are the five main divisions of the New Testament?
4. Name the persons the Holy Spirit used to write the New Testament books.
5. Who wrote most of the letters that are found in the New Testament?
6. What do James and Jude have in common?
7. Why was the letter to the Hebrews written?
8. Which books of the New Testament were the last to be written?
9. Why do some Bibles include the books known as the Apocrypha?
10. Why do we not regard the Apocrypha as the Word of God?
11. Why should we not trust books such as the Gospel of Thomas?



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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 2 – Jesus as a Child

Background

The last Old Testament prophet was Malachi. He lived about 420 BC. He predicted the sudden coming of the Christ: **“The Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant”** (Malachi 3:1). But for 400 years the Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One), did not come. Meanwhile the land of Palestine had become part of the huge Roman Empire. This was the time of which the prophet Daniel had spoken. He had predicted four world kingdoms: Babylonia, Persia, Macedonia, and Rome. Daniel had said: **“In the days of these kings (Roman) the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed”** (Daniel 2:44).

And so, it came to pass. In the days of the powerful Roman Empire, God set up His everlasting kingdom by sending His own Son, Jesus Christ, into the world. He sent Jesus to be born as a baby, to grow up, and to suffer and die and rise again. In this way Jesus came to establish God’s kingdom of forgiveness, which we also call the New Testament. This New Testament is God’s agreement or promise to forgive sins for Christ’s sake. Jesus kept the holy Law of God in our place, and He suffered the punishment that our sins deserve and rose again from the dead to conquer death for us.

The Rulers in the Land of Jesus

During the time of Jesus and the New Testament the following emperors ruled over the Roman Empire:

Caesar Augustus or Octavian (27 BC - 14 AD) – In his reign Jesus was born.

Tiberius (14-37 AD) – In his reign Jesus died and rose again.

Gaius Caligula (37-41) – He was a madman during part of his reign.

Claudius (41-54) – During his reign Paul made his mission journeys.

Nero (54-68) – In his reign most of the New Testament books were written. Nero was the first emperor to persecute the Christians.

Galba (68-69)

Otho (68-69)

Vitellius (68-69)

Vespasian (69-79) – In his reign Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed.

Titus (79-91) – Titus was the Roman general who destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD.

Domitian (91-96) – In his reign the apostle John was exiled to the island of Patmos.

Nerva (96-98)

Trajan (98-117) – Under Trajan the Roman Empire reached its largest extent.
Other rulers in Palestine during this period include:

Herod the Great, a descendant of Esau (37 – 4 BC) – He wanted to kill the baby Jesus.

Herod Archelaus (4 BC - 6 AD) – He ruled over only Judea and Samaria.

Herod Antipas (4 BC - 39 AD) – He ruled over Galilee and Perea. He ordered the
beheading of John the Baptist. Jesus called him a fox.

Annas (6-15) – He was high priest for a time and had a big influence on those who
followed him.

Caiaphas (18-36) – He was Annas' son-in-law; he was the high priest who condemned
Jesus to death.

Pontius Pilate (27-37) – He was the Roman governor of Judea who permitted Jesus'
crucifixion.

Herod Agrippa I (41-44) – He ruled over all Palestine. He executed John's brother James.

Herod Agrippa II (50-100) – He ruled over parts of Palestine. Paul talked to him.

Felix (52-58) – He was the Roman governor who had meetings with Paul when Paul was a
prisoner.

Festus (58-60) – He was the Roman governor who sent Paul to Rome to be judged by
Caesar.

Using a Harmony of the Gospels

In our study of the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) we shall use what is called a harmony of the four Gospels. A harmony is an attempt to put together one single account of Jesus' life from all four Gospels. It means that we will be studying all four Gospels at the same time. We will compare one Gospel with the others. We should not regard a harmony as being written by the Holy Spirit. It is our attempt to gather all the words from the four Gospels into one account. Because the Holy Spirit did not lead the Gospel writers to record events in the same order, we cannot be sure that the order of events in our harmony is absolutely correct. The value of a harmony, however, is that we study what all the Gospels say about each event.

There are many Bible teachers today who say that the four Gospels contradict one another. But we believe this is impossible, because we believe that the Holy Spirit breathed out the words of all four Gospels. The Holy Spirit certainly does not contradict Himself. What we have in the four Gospels is four accounts of the life of Jesus. Each account is presented from a different viewpoint and with a different audience in mind:

- **Matthew** wrote particularly for Jewish Christians.
- **Mark** wrote for Roman Christians.
- **Luke** wrote for Greek-speaking Christians, with the whole world in mind.
- **John** wrote his Gospel after the other three Gospels had already been in use for some time. Thus, John generally does not repeat what has already been told, but he presents other events and background information that are not in the other Gospels.

When four people record the same event, they will not all stress the same points. What they write will depend on where they were when they observed the event. What they write will depend on the audience that will read what they have written. What they write will depend also on what aspect of the event is most important or most interesting to them. The Holy Spirit chose to use four different authors to give us the account of the life of God's Son on earth. These four authors do not claim to tell us everything they knew about Jesus. John, the last of the four to write, says at the end of his Gospel: **"Truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book"** (John 20:30). **"There are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written"** (John 21:25).

We shall be using a harmony of the Gospels that was prepared by a Lutheran scholar named William Beck. His harmony is entitled *The Christ of the Gospels*. If you have access to this book, it may be helpful to have it at hand for our study of the four Gospels, but it is not necessary. We will read all four Gospels in our study, and we will use Beck's harmony as a possible order of events. The headings of these lessons are taken from Beck's harmony.

Jesus as a Child

In this section Luke presents Jesus' birth and childhood from Mary's point of view. Matthew presents the events from Joseph's point of view. John takes us behind the scenes so that we see that Jesus was God before He became human flesh and blood.

Read the listed passages as you study each of the events below:

Introduction (Mark 1:1; Luke 1:1-4; John 1:1-18)

John takes us back to eternity and teaches us that Jesus is eternal God. Before He became a human being, He was the eternal Son of God, Co-Creator of the universe. He created the universe together with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Note that the Gospel of John begins just like Genesis.

The Son of Man (Matthew 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-28)

Matthew gives Jesus' legal ancestry through Joseph.

Luke gives Jesus' blood ancestry through Heli, the father of Mary.

The angel Gabriel comes to Zacharias, the priest (Luke 1:5-25)

The priest's son, John, was to be a Nazarite, like Samson and Samuel were. See Numbers 6.

John was also to be Jesus' forerunner. This was foretold by Isaiah and Malachi.

Since Zacharias did not believe God's promise, God removed his ability to talk until after John was born.

The angel Gabriel comes to Mary (Luke 1:26-38)

A virgin is a girl or woman who has not had sexual relations with a man.

Jewish betrothals were as binding as marriage and could be broken only by divorce.

Notice that Jesus had no human father. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in Mary's womb.

In contrast to Zacharias, Mary believed the angel's amazing message.

Mary visits Elizabeth (Luke 1:39-56)

Elizabeth rightly calls Mary "**the mother of my Lord**" (v. ____ – Mary is the mother of Him who is God).

Mary's song is called the *Magnificat* (Latin for "magnifies").

John is born (Luke 1:57-79)

Zacharias' song is called the *Benedictus* (Latin for "blessed").

An angel comes to Joseph (Matthew 1:18-25)

Since Mary was expecting a baby, Joseph suspected that she was living with another man.

Because he did not want to ruin her reputation, he intended to divorce her secretly.

Joseph at first did not know that Mary's child was "**of the Holy Spirit**" (v. ____).

Jesus is born (Luke 2:1-7)

According to Caesar's law, all citizens had to register in their family town.

The shepherds (Luke 2:8-20)

God announces the good news of Jesus' birth to poor, humble shepherds, not to the mighty.

The Gospel is the Good News of salvation for all people in the world.

The shepherds were also missionaries; they told others the Good News about Jesus.

In the Temple (Luke 2:1-39)

All Jewish boy babies had to be circumcised on the eighth day.

All mothers had to be purified after the birth (boy babies: after 40 days; girl babies: after 80 days).

The firstborn child was to be sanctified through an offering.

Mary's offering was two turtledoves or two pigeons because she was poor (see Leviticus 12:8).

Simeon's song is called the *Nunc Dimittis* (Latin for "now you let us depart").

Although Jesus is God and therefore above all law, He willingly kept all the Old Testament laws as our Substitute, so that He would be perfect in every way. See Galatians 4:4-5.

The wise men (Matthew 2:1-12)

An unreliable tradition says that these wise men (Magi) were three kings and gives them each a name. The Bible, however, does not say how many wise men came to find Jesus. It also does not give their names.

The wise men were astronomers or stargazers. Regarding the star, see Numbers 24:17.

Jesus may have been as old as two when these wise men came, living in a house in Bethlehem.

To Egypt! (Matthew 2:13-23)

Herod the Great was a very suspicious man. He had killed many of his own family members because he was afraid they would take the kingdom from him.

Since the wise men called Jesus a king, Herod killed all the babies in Bethlehem.

God protected His Son, our Savior, through Joseph's dreams.

After Herod the Great died in 4 BC, Joseph, Mary, and Jesus returned to Judea.

Because Herod Archelaus was ruling Judea, Joseph, Mary, and Jesus moved to Nazareth.

Herod Antipas was the ruler in Galilee, where Nazareth was located.

The boy Jesus (Luke 2:40-52)

Although Jesus was the Son of God without sin, He grew up as a true boy: **"Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men"** (v. ____)

We know no details about Jesus' childhood, other than his trip to Jerusalem at age 12.

Mary calls Joseph Jesus' father, even though Joseph was not His biological father. Jesus gently corrected His mother by referring to God as His Father.

Jesus obeyed the 4th Commandment by being perfectly obedient to His earthly parents. His obedience was part of His work of substitution for us sinners, who cannot be obedient.

Questions

1. Who was the Roman Emperor when Jesus was born?
2. Who was the Roman Emperor when Jesus died?
3. What is meant by a harmony of the Gospels?
4. Why can we be sure the four Gospels do not conflict with one another?
5. What is the difference between the age of Jesus as God and the age of Jesus as man?
6. How did Mary react differently from Zacharias to the message from the angel Gabriel?
7. How did Elizabeth greet Mary when Mary visited her?
8. How did the baby John in Elizabeth's womb react to Mary's visit?
9. Why was it important that Jesus be born in Bethlehem?
10. What did Joseph think when he learned that Mary was pregnant?
11. Who were the first people to be told about the birth of Jesus?
12. Why was Jesus taken to the Temple when He was forty days old?
13. How did the wise men learn that the new-born King was in Bethlehem?
14. Why did Joseph and Mary move to the land of Egypt?
15. Why did Joseph and Mary live in Nazareth rather than in Bethlehem?



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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 3 – John the Baptist and Jesus

The Ministry of Jesus

Read the listed passages as you study each of the events below:

John the Baptist prepares the way (Matthew 3:1-12; Mark 1:2-8; Luke 1:80, 3:1-18)

These events took place in the year 26 AD. Tiberius was co-regent with Augustus for about two years before Augustus died in 14 AD. Thus, Tiberius' fifteenth year would be about 26 AD. At that time Palestine was divided into four parts and the ruler of each part was called a tetrarch (ruler of a fourth part):

- Judea and Samaria – The ruler was Herod Archelaus from 4 BC to 6 AD. After 6 AD this part was ruled by procurators or governors. Pontius Pilate began to be procurator in about 26 AD.
- Iturea and Trachonitis – The ruler was Philip (4 BC - 34 AD), but not the same Philip whose wife Herodias was stolen from him by Herod Antipas.
- Abilene in Syria – The ruler was Lysanias (4 BC - 37 AD).
- Galilee and Perea – The ruler was Herod Antipas (4 BC - 39 AD).

John the Baptist had strange clothes and food. His message: **“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!”** (Matthew [3:2](#)). John's baptism was a means of grace – a way by which God conveyed to men the forgiveness of sins, which was later to be won through Christ. John was the forerunner of the Messiah. He said: **“He who is coming after me is mightier than I.”** (Matthew [3:11](#)). He baptized those who confessed their sins, but he refused to baptize those who were unrepentant. He rebuked those who wanted to go through the motions of religion without bringing forth good fruit in their lives. Notice that John was no pacifist. He did not demand that soldiers give up their work in order to become believers in Christ.

John the Baptist baptizes Jesus (Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-23)

John refused to baptize Jesus at first, because he knew that Jesus was a holy person. Yet Jesus wanted to be baptized because He was taking our place and doing everything that was necessary for us to do. In Jesus' baptism the Triune God showed Himself: the Father in the voice from heaven; the Son in Jesus; the Holy Spirit in the dove that came down on Jesus. So also our baptisms are in the name of the Triune God: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We become the children of God the Father, we put on Christ as our covering,

and the Holy Spirit comes to live within us. What is always true of Jesus becomes true of us in baptism: we become God's beloved children in whom He is well-pleased through the forgiveness of our sins.

At Jesus' baptism it became obvious that He was the Christ (the Messiah), not anointed with oil, but with the Holy Spirit; He was anointed to be our High Priest, Prophet, and King. **"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him"** (Acts 10:38). Jesus did not become the Christ at His baptism, however. He was already the Christ when He was conceived and born.

The devil tempts Jesus (Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13)

Jesus was physically weak when He was tempted by Satan, but He overcame Satan with the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. The first Adam failed when he was tempted, even though he was in the best of places and in the best of health. Jesus, the second Adam, succeeded when tempted, even though he was in the wilderness and physically weak. Jesus was truly tempted, just as we are, yet without sin. See Hebrews 4:15.

All three verses of Scripture that Jesus quoted are from Deuteronomy (8:3; 6:16; 6:13). The devil also quoted Scripture (Psalm 91:11-12), but he quoted God's Word incorrectly in a wicked attempt to get Jesus to sin.

The three temptations:

1. Turn stones to bread. But Jesus' miracles were not for Himself alone.
2. Jump off the temple. But Jesus had no promise of protection if He dared God to protect Him. That would be tempting God.
3. Worship Satan to receive the kingdoms of this world. But we should worship God only.

We are to fight against the devil as Jesus did, using the same weapons, which is the Word of God.

The Word became flesh (John 1:1-18)

This is a very important section of Scripture, teaching us that Jesus is true God from eternity, but at a certain time He who has always been God became a human being. This is the incarnation. John the Baptist was the man God chose to tell people who Jesus was.

Note: The man John who wrote the Gospel of John is not the same man as John the Baptist.

The Lamb of God (John 1:19-34)

John the Baptist confesses that he is not the Christ, but only the one to prepare the way for the Christ. John points to Jesus as the Christ: **"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"** (v. 29). Lambs were used for Old Testament sacrifices. Here

is God's choice for a sacrifice, as prophesied in Isaiah 53. Jesus was not only the Lamb of God; John also called Him the Son of God because he saw the Spirit come down on Him at His baptism, even as God had told him beforehand.

The first disciples (John 1:35-51)

Two of John the Baptist's disciples began to follow Jesus. Most likely these two were Andrew and John (the author of this Gospel – John never calls himself by name in his own Gospel). Andrew told his brother Simon (also known as Peter and Cephas): **“We have found the Messiah”** (v. 41). It is possible that John told a similar thing to his brother James. On the next day Jesus called Philip, and Philip invited Nathanael (Bartholomew) to come to Jesus. Philip confessed: **“We have found Him of whom Moses...and also the prophets wrote”** (v. 45). It is amazing how quickly these first disciples recognized that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, even before they saw any miracles.

Jesus changes water to wine (John 2:1-12)

In the presence of His mother and His first disciples Jesus did His first sign or miracle. He **“manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him”** (v. 11). This account shows that Jesus is neither against weddings nor is he against the moderate drinking of alcohol. Notice that Jesus gently rebuked His mother for trying to tell Him what to do in His office as the Messiah.

Jesus cleanses the Temple (John 2:13-22)

This is the first time that Jesus cleansed the Temple. He did it once again shortly before He was killed. At Passover time, people needed animals for sacrifices. Supplying such animals had become a profitable business. This is one time when Jesus used physical force in His ministry. When Jews challenged his authority over the temple, Jesus predicted for the first time His own death and resurrection as the sign of His authority. Notice that as the Temple was God's dwelling place on earth, Jesus is God Himself on the earth. **“In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily”** (Colossians 2:9).

Nicodemus (John 2:23 – 3:21)

The Pharisees kept the Law very strictly, and they also added many of their own rules to the Law. They believed in keeping themselves separate from others whom they considered less holy than themselves.

Jesus told Nicodemus some of the most profound Christian truths, such as: **“You must be born again”** (v. 3:7). **“That which is born of the flesh is flesh”** (v. 3:6). **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life”** (v. 3:16).

Being born of water and Spirit refers to baptism.

Jesus compared His coming crucifixion on Calvary to Moses' lifting up of the brass snake on the pole. The serpent was put on a pole. Jesus was nailed to a cross. The serpent looked like the cause of death. Jesus was made a curse for us as our sin-bearer. By looking up at the brass snake, the Israelites were saved. By looking up at our crucified Savior in faith, we are saved.

Nicodemus later became a believer in Jesus and helped to bury His body (see John 7:50-52, 19:39-40).

John is happy in Jesus (John 3:22-36)

John, his disciples, and Jesus' disciples all baptized people. John's disciples became jealous because Jesus was attracting a greater crowd than their master John. But John said: **"He must increase, but I must decrease"** (v. 30). This is a good motto for every Christian, particularly every pastor and teacher and church leader.

John taught his disciples and the general public the absolute truth concerning Jesus: **"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him"** (v. 26). We can be saved only by faith in Jesus Christ, our Savior.

John in prison (Matthew 4:12, 14:3-4; Mark 1:14, 6:17-18; Luke 3:19-20; John 4:1-3)

Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee (Luke 3:1), stole his brother Philip's wife. Philip was the tetrarch of Ituraea and Trachonitis. John rebuked Herod for his adultery. As a result, Herod Antipas put John in prison, and there John remained for the rest of his life.

According to other historical accounts of the period, this prison was in the forbidding fortress of Machaerus east of the Dead Sea. After John had been imprisoned, Jesus left Judea and carried out His ministry in Galilee.

According to many Bible scholars, the events of this lesson took place from late 26 AD to the spring of 27 AD.

Questions

1. What was unusual about the lifestyle of John the Baptist?
2. What was the message of John the Baptist?
3. Why is “Lamb of God” a very good name for Jesus?
4. How did the three Persons of God reveal themselves at Jesus’ baptism?
5. What did Jesus use to overcome the temptations of the devil?
6. What is meant by the sentence: “The Word became flesh”?
7. What did Jesus’ first disciples know about Him from the beginning?
8. What do Jesus’ miracles show us about Him?
9. In what way did Jesus’ body resemble the Temple at Jerusalem?
10. What are the points of comparison between the snake on a pole and Jesus on the cross?
11. Why does each one of us need to be born again?
12. In what ways is John the Baptist a model for every Christian pastor?



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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 4 – Jesus' First Tour of Galilee

Jesus' public ministry began at the Jordan River when He was baptized. Then He went to Cana and Capernaum in Galilee, then to Jerusalem for the Passover of 26 AD. (where He talked to Nicodemus); then He spent some time in Judea. He was accompanied by perhaps six disciples during these journeys.

After John the Baptist was imprisoned, Jesus returned to Galilee via Samaria, where he talked to a woman at Jacob's well near Sychar (the ancient city of Shechem in the Old Testament). When Jesus then began teaching in the synagogues of Galilee, His disciples apparently went back to their work of fishing. Jesus healed an officer's son in Cana. When Jesus talked in His home synagogue at Nazareth, His neighbors rejected Him and even tried to lynch Him. Then Jesus left Nazareth and made His home in Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee, where He gathered His disciples once more and made them His permanent helpers and **"fishers of men"** (Matthew 4:19; Mark 1:17).

Around Capernaum Jesus talked about the good news of the kingdom in synagogues and on the seashore, He drove evil spirits out of many people, He healed many sick, and He attracted great crowds of people. When He boldly forgave the sins of a paralyzed man lowered from the roof, the Pharisees and teachers of the Law began to persecute Him and call Him a blasphemer. Their opposition to Him grew when Jesus called Matthew, a tax collector, to be His disciple; when Jesus ate with other tax collectors; when He failed to fast as the Pharisees did; when He healed the sick on the Sabbath (as He did in Jerusalem when He went there for a festival during this time); and when His disciples ate grain from the field on the Sabbath. Finally, the Pharisees made plans with Herod's men to kill Jesus. Jesus then went away to a hill near the Sea of Galilee. But the crowds kept following Him wherever He went.

This whole period of Jesus' ministry is well summed up by the apostle Peter in his sermon in the home of Cornelius recorded in Acts 10:38: **"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him."**

These things probably happened from the summer of 27 AD to the summer of 28 AD. We do not know the exact order of all these events, but the following order is probably close to the order in which they took place.

Read the listed passages as you study each of the events below:

The Samaritan woman (John 4:3-42)

The Samaritans were despised as half-breeds by the Jews. Their religion was partly false, because they accepted only the five books of Moses as their Bible. They worshiped on Mt. Gerizim rather than at Jerusalem. The origin of the Samaritans is explained in 2 Kings 17:24-41.

Normally Jews would cross to the east side of the Jordan river so they would not have to go through Samaria. Jesus, on the other hand, did not avoid the Samaritans, **“but He needed to go through Samaria”** (John 4:4) as He was sent to save all mankind.

Jesus asked this woman for a drink of water and then offered her a drink of LIVING WATER. He then pointed out her sin, told her about the true worship of God, and revealed Himself to her as the Messiah. She then told the good news to the villagers, and they believed in Jesus as the Savior of the world.

Jesus returns to Galilee (Matthew 4:12, 17; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:14-15; John 4:43-45)

Jesus' message: **“The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel”** (Mark 1:15).

An officer's son (John 4:46-54)

Jesus gave the officer from Capernaum a word only. He believed Him and his son was healed.

Nazareth rejects Jesus (Luke 4:16-30; John 4:44)

This was a typical synagogue Sabbath service and Jesus was the guest speaker. Standing, Jesus read from the book of Isaiah. He then sat down to explain that He was the fulfillment of this prophecy. The people were impressed by His words, but they ended up rejecting His message and even trying to lynch Him.

At home in Capernaum (Matthew 4:13-16; Luke 4:31)

Jesus moved from Nazareth to Capernaum, which became the center of His activities.

“Follow Me” (Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20)

Jesus found four of His friends and invited them to become **“fishers of men”** (Matthew 4:19; Mark 1:17). At least three of these men had been disciples of John the Baptist: Andrew, Peter, John. Perhaps also James.

Jesus drives out a devil (Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-37)

In those days there were many people, some of them believers, who were bodily possessed by the devil or evil spirits. Perhaps the devil was trying to imitate Jesus, who became flesh. Jesus always drove out these evil spirits.

Peter's mother-in-law (Matthew 8:14-17; Mark 1:29-34; Luke 4:38-41)

Jesus did a lot of healing on this very busy day.

Preaching in Galilee (Matthew 4:23-24; Mark 1:35-39; Luke 4:42-44)

Although Jesus was surrounded by crowds of people, He still took the time to go off by himself and pray. He then preached the good news of the kingdom in all the villages of Galilee.

Note that Jesus did not stay in Capernaum to pursue a healing ministry, but he said to his disciples: **“Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth”** (Mark 1:38) and **“I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent”** (Luke 4:43). Healing was not Jesus’ purpose but preaching the Gospel. The healings simply bore witness to the truth of Jesus’ words.

Fishers of men (Luke 5:1-11)

Jesus didn’t need a church building; He preached from a boat near the shore. Although Peter had caught nothing during the night, he now went fishing because Jesus told him to. Jesus’ word gave Peter a catch of many fish; Jesus’ word also has the power to catch men.

Jesus heals a leper (Matthew 8:2-4; Mark 1:40-45; Luke 5:12-16)

Leprosy was a terrible incurable skin disease. In Old Testament times Miriam, Moses’ sister, was leprous for a time. Naaman, the Syrian general, was a leper until he was cured by the Lord through the prophet Elisha. Lepers had to live separately from everyone else and they had to cry: **“Unclean, unclean!”** when anyone came near to them so a healthy person would not get too close (see Leviticus 13-14). When lepers were somehow healed, they had to show themselves to the priests, who would then thoroughly examine them and declare them clean.

Jesus forgives sins (Matthew 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26)

When Jesus returned to Capernaum, a crowd gathered immediately. Four friends lowered a paralyzed man from the roof. Jesus took care of the needs of his soul before He took care of the needs of his body, that is, Jesus forgave his sins. When the Pharisees questioned Jesus’ authority to forgive sins and accused Him of blasphemy, Jesus healed the man to show He had authority to both heal physically and spiritually.

Matthew becomes a disciple (Matthew 9:9-13; Mark 2:13-17; Luke 5:27-32)

Matthew was a publican, that is, a tax collector. The Jews despised the tax collectors because they gathered money for the hated Roman Emperor and very often they cheated the people by collecting more than a person owed and pocketing the rest. When Jesus was invited to Matthew’s house for a feast together with other publicans, the

Pharisees criticized Him for eating with sinners. Jesus' answer: **"Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick"** (Matthew 9:12; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32).

The Bridegroom (Matthew 9:14-17; Mark 2:18-22; Luke 5:33-39)

Jesus teaches why His disciples do not fast like the Pharisees and the disciples of John the Baptist. Can the friends of the Bridegroom fast when their Bridegroom is with them? When He is taken away from them, then it is fitting to fast.

Sick for 38 years (John 5:1-15)

The Bible does not say what festival this was in Jerusalem. Perhaps it was the Passover of 28 AD. The Jewish leaders criticized Jesus because He healed this sick man on the Sabbath. This is the first of many times that Jesus was criticized for breaking the Jewish Sabbath laws which were not part of God's original commandment, but laws that the Jews had added to God's word.

The Son of God (John 5:16-47)

Jesus speaks profound words to the Jews. He spoke about Himself as the Son of God. He spoke about the spiritual resurrection that comes through the Son's Word. He spoke about the physical resurrection at the last day. He talks about the testimony of John the Baptist concerning the Messiah. And He talked about the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament and the fact that they spoke about Him.

The Lord of the Sabbath (Matthew 12:1-9; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5)

Jesus responds to the Pharisees who criticize His disciples for "working" on the Sabbath because they picked the heads of grain as they walked through the fields. How bitter! The Jews already were in opposition to Jesus!

The shriveled hand (Matthew 12:9-15; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11)

Jesus again heals a man on the Sabbath after asking His critics a question that angered them: **"Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil?"** (Mark 3:4; Luke 6:9).

The Herodians were Jews who supported the rule of Herod Antipas in Galilee. Normally the Pharisees, who opposed Roman rule, would have nothing to do with the Herodians, but Jesus, their common enemy, brought them together to plot against Him.

Questions

1. If you have access to a map of the Holy Land at the time of Jesus, locate the following: Jerusalem, the Jordan River, Nazareth, Capernaum, and Cana.
2. In what way did Samaritans differ from Jews in their beliefs?
3. How did Jesus begin His conversation with the Samaritan woman?
4. How did Jesus turn the conversation into a discussion of the spiritual?
5. How did this woman spread the news of Jesus to the community?
6. What was remarkable about the faith of the officer from Capernaum?
7. What led the people in Nazareth to reject Jesus and His teaching?
8. What does it mean to become a fisher of men?
9. Why did Jesus give Peter, James and John such a miraculous catch of fish?
10. Why did the Pharisees accuse Jesus of blasphemy in the healing of the paralyzed man?
11. What two kinds of resurrections does Jesus discuss in John 5:16-47?
12. Why was Jesus accused of breaking the Sabbath laws?



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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 5 – The Twelve Apostles and Jesus' Sermon on the Mount

Read the listed passages as you study each of the events below:

Many are healed (Matthew 4:25; Matthew 12:15-21; Mark 3:7-12; Luke 6:17-19)

Although the Pharisees were already planning to kill Jesus, Jesus was very popular with the common people. They came from Galilee, Judea, Idumea, Perea, the Ten Towns (the Decapolis), and the regions of Tyre and Sidon. Jesus healed all who came to Him for help.

The twelve apostles (Matthew 5:1; Matthew 10:2-4; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-17)

Jesus prayed all night on a mountain. In the morning He chose some of His disciples to be His apostles. Disciples are followers of Jesus. Apostles are those *sent out* by Jesus on some spiritual mission. The word “apostle” comes from the Greek word meaning “sent”.

Peter/Simon/Cephas – Peter and Cephas both mean “Rock”. He was a natural leader and spokesman for the apostles. He was a fisherman from Bethsaida, a son of Jonah, the brother of Andrew. He was impulsive by nature. He was one of the inner three disciples (along with James and John). He was married. He denied Jesus. He was the preacher on Pentecost. He worked in Jerusalem, Lydda, Joppa, Antioch of Syria – chiefly among the Jews. Most likely he spent his last days in Rome and was crucified there by Nero. Tradition said he was crucified upside down because he did not feel worthy to suffer the same death as his Lord Jesus. Peter wrote two Bible letters, and He probably was involved with writing of the Gospel of Mark. The Roman Catholic Church falsely claims (based on Matthew 16:19) that Peter was the first pope.

Andrew – Peter’s brother. He was at first a disciple of John the Baptist. He introduced Peter to Jesus. He was a fisherman from Bethsaida with his brother Peter.

James – the son of Zebedee and Salome (most likely the sister of Jesus’ mother Mary). He was the brother of John. He was a fisherman and one of the inner three disciples (along with Peter and John). Jesus called him and his brother John “the Sons of Thunder” (Boanerges). He was the first apostle to die as a martyr, killed by Herod Agrippa I (see Acts 12:1-2).

John – the son of Zebedee and Salome and the brother of James. He was a fisherman and one of the inner three disciples (along with Peter and James). He was perhaps the closest friend of Jesus on earth (in his Gospel, he calls himself “**that disciple whom Jesus loved**” John 21:7). He was at first a disciple of John the Baptist. He took care of Jesus’ mother Mary after Jesus died at Jesus’ request. He outlived all the other apostles. He

worked in Jerusalem and later in Ephesus. He wrote his Gospel and three Bible letters in his old age. He was exiled to the island of Patmos where he received Revelation in 95 AD.

Philip – from Bethsaida. He was a close friend of Nathanael (also known as Bartholomew). He is different from the deacon Philip who baptized the Ethiopian eunuch.

Bartholomew/Nathanael – a good friend of Philip. He was from Cana of Galilee. Jesus called him a genuine Israelite without any deceit (John 1:47).

Matthew/Levi – a tax collector (also called “publican”). He was probably well-educated. He is the author of the first Gospel, which he wrote especially for the Jews.

Thomas – his name means “Twin” (Didymus). He was the one who did not believe that Jesus rose from the dead when the other disciples told him. There is strong evidence that Thomas later brought the Gospel to India, where some believers are known as “Thomas Christians”.

James the Less – the son of Alphaeus and Mary. He is not James, the brother of the Jesus, who did not believe in Him until after His resurrection.

Thaddaeus/Lebbaeus/Judas (Jude) – the son of a man named James. He is not Jude (who wrote the Bible letter), the brother of James and Jesus.

Simon – known as Simon the Zealot, probably because he once belonged to the group of Jewish patriots known as Zealots who were plotting the overthrow of the Roman government.

Judas Iscariot – from Kerieth in Judea. He was the treasurer of the apostles and a thief who stole from their money. He was the one who betrayed Jesus and hanged himself in despair.

The Sermon on the Mount

This sermon is found in chapters 5 through 7 in the Gospel of Matthew. Luke presents the same sermon in condensed form in his 6th chapter. As any good teacher would do, Jesus repeated certain parts of His sermon at various other times. We see this repetition in Luke chapter 11. The Sermon on the Mount is one of the best-known parts of the Bible, but it is very often misunderstood as a moral code for the world. It is important to remember that this sermon was addressed to persons who were already believers in Jesus (to His disciples). It is only believers in Christ to whom the blessings apply. It is only believers in Christ who are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. It is only Christians who can begin to live the kind of life and have the kind of attitude that Jesus describes in this sermon.

The Sermon on the Mount: Blessings and Woes – The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:2-12; Luke 6:20-26)

We should not think of Jesus as describing eight different classes of believers in these verses; all Christians are really the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, the merciful, etc., at least imperfectly in this life. God gives all the blessings listed in these verses to every believer.

The Sermon on the Mount: Salt and Light (Matthew 5:13-16; Luke 11:33)

Our Christianity should be evident in the way we act, what we say, and what is important to us. We are not to hide our Christian faith when we are with others.

The Sermon on the Mount: Jesus and the Law (Matthew 5:17-20)

Much of the Sermon on the Mount is a discussion of the Law of God. Jesus kept the law perfectly for us. God enables us, who are righteous by faith in Jesus, to keep the Law to some extent, but only imperfectly, because of our sinful flesh.

The Sermon on the Mount: Murder (Matthew 5:21-26)

Anger is murder. Name-calling is murder. We are to bring no gifts to God with anger in our hearts. We are to hold no grudges but settle quarrels quickly.

The Sermon on the Mount: Adultery (Matthew 5:27-32)

Lust in the heart is already adultery. Our soul's salvation is more important even than our bodily members, like our eyes or hands.

The government may make laws about sexual matters, marriage, and divorce that are contrary to God's plan for marriage, but a Christian should continue to regard marriage as a lifelong union between one man and one woman.

The Sermon on the Mount: Swearing (Matthew 5:33-36)

Swearing is using God's name to strengthen what you are saying. Our simple "Yes" or "No" should be trustworthy and sufficient without needing swearing an oath in God's name.

The Sermon on the Mount: Love of Enemies (Matthew 5:38-48; Luke 6:27-30, 32-36)

Christians should not be interested in revenge or getting even. Christians should try to imitate God, who is good to both good and evil. We are to love our enemies, not just those who love us. True love for God and man is the perfection that we should strive for.

The Sermon on the Mount: Self-Praise (Matthew 6:1-4; Matthew 6:16-18)

We should not do good works in order to be seen by others and to be praised by them. We should not be "do-gooders" like Boy Scouts, who make a big deal of their good works and strive to earn merit badges. We should not imitate Roman Catholic monks and nuns, who want to be known as being holier than others because of their vows, such as their vows of poverty and celibacy.

We should not put on a show of suffering, as Pharisees did when they fasted.

The Sermon on the Mount: Prayer (Matthew 6:5-15; Matthew 7:7-11; Luke 11:5-13)

Prayer is not meant to be a way of showing off your godliness and devotion. The best prayer is between God and the individual.

Vain repetitions such as the recital of the Rosary are worthless. Jesus gave His disciples a prayer to use as a model: the Lord's Prayer. Jesus wants us to pray.

God gives good gifts to those who ask Him.

The Sermon on the Mount: True Treasures (Matthew 6:19-24; Luke 11:34-36)

Who is our Master, God or Money? Where is our treasure, in heaven or on earth?

The Sermon on the Mount: Worrying (Matthew 6:25-34)

If God takes care of birds and flowers, will He not also take care of us?

The Sermon on the Mount: Self-Criticism (Matthew 7:1-5; Luke 6:37-42)

It is easy to find fault with others, but we should be more concerned with the log in our own eye than with the speck in someone else's eye. And we should show love to our neighbor in every way.

The Sermon on the Mount: Pearls to Pigs (Matthew 7:6)

When men resist the Word of God consistently, we should not bother to argue with them.

The Sermon on the Mount: The Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12; Luke 6:31)

This is perhaps the best-known of all Jesus' teachings. It provides a good summary of the Second Table of the Law: Love your neighbor as yourself.

The Sermon on the Mount: The Narrow Gate (Matthew 7:13-14)

There is a broad way that leads to hell. The road to heaven is more difficult but infinitely better.

The Sermon on the Mount: False Teachers (Matthew 7:15-23; Luke 6:43-46)

Don't be fooled by the disguise of false teachers. Their teachings give them away. Don't be taken in by hypocritical words. There are those who say many things to the Lord, but who do not do His will.

The Sermon on the Mount: The Foundation (Matthew 7:24-27; Luke 6:47-49)

Will you build on rock or sand? One will last, and one will not.

The Sermon on the Mount: The Audience (Matthew 7:28-8:1; Luke 7:1)

Jesus spoke with authority, which amazed the people.

Questions

1. What did Jesus do on the night before He chose His twelve apostles?
2. Which of the twelve apostles wrote portions of the New Testament?
3. To whom was Jesus speaking in His Sermon on the Mount?
4. How did Jesus explain the Fifth and Sixth Commandments in His Sermon?
5. In what way are we to love others? And who is to be our example?
6. What instructions did Jesus give concerning prayer?
7. What lesson can we learn from the birds and the flowers?
8. What is the so-called "Golden Rule"?
9. How did Jesus describe false teachers?
10. How can a person "build his house on rock rather than sand"?
11. In what way was the preaching of Jesus different from that of the Jewish scribes?



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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 6 – Miracles and Parables in Galilee

The miracles of Jesus

When God performs a miracle, He does not show any greater power than He does otherwise, but He shows it in an unusual manner. Many things that we take for granted are really miracles in a sense. For example, when plants grow from small seeds, this is really a miracle because man cannot fully explain how it grows and man cannot duplicate it. We become used to such things and we call them “natural”; We say they happen according to the laws of nature. But when God displays His power and wisdom in an unusual way – in a way different from the ordinary and contrary to the laws of nature – we call this a miracle.

There are many miracles in the Bible. They happened for the most part at certain periods in history, such as in the time of Moses and Joshua, in the time of Elijah and Elisha, and in the time of Jesus and His apostles. The prophets and apostles performed miracles in the name of God and Christ, but Jesus did His works in His own name, as the true Son of God.

In our day many consider the miracles of Jesus impossible. But the angel Gabriel told Jesus’ mother Mary: **“For with God nothing will be impossible”** (Luke 1:37). He who created this amazing world also can control all the things in it as He pleases; He even has the power to raise people from the dead.

Jesus’ first miracle was to change the water into wine at a wedding in Cana. After that He did many other wonders, such as healing the sick, guiding fish into the net, quieting the storm, driving out evil spirits, multiplying food provisions, and even raising people from the dead, such as the widow’s son, the daughter of Jairus, Lazarus, and even Himself.

Jesus’ miracles were intended to strengthen the faith of His disciples and to confirm the words that He spoke. His miracles did not convince His enemies to believe in Him but only led them to harden themselves against Him. The Holy Spirit works through the means of grace: His Word and sacraments. If men reject the means of grace, they will not believe even if someone should rise from the dead (Luke 16:31).

The parables of Jesus

Parables are earthly stories with heavenly or spiritual meanings. Jesus used this method of teaching when opposition to His message grew stronger. These parables are in many cases like the pillar of cloud and fire in the Old Testament that gave light to the Israelites but darkness to the Egyptians. Those who had some understanding received even more

knowledge, but those who could not understand the parables became even more opposed to Christ.

Usually we cannot “prove” any Bible teaching based a parable, especially when the meaning of the parable is not explained by Jesus Himself, and the full meaning of a parable is not always absolutely clear in all points. To understand a parable, it is important to look at the point of comparison that the parable is making and at the circumstance in which the parable is told. Jesus used parables to illustrate teachings that are taught in other places in the Bible. We should cite these other, more clear passages to show that a teaching is true.

Jesus’ parables had to do with farming, vineyards, fishing, servants, judges, kings, and other important figures. They are easily remembered stories so that the messages we learn from them are likely to stick with us.

Read the listed passages as you study each of the events below:

A believing captain (Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10)

This captain was a Gentile, but he built the synagogue in Capernaum for the Jews. The remains of a later synagogue are still to be found in Capernaum today. This man’s faith in Jesus was so strong that Jesus said He had not found such faith among the Jews. Jesus’ word alone was sufficient for this captain; he did not need Jesus to come to his house.

The faith of this Gentile captain led Jesus to think of the New Testament Church into which many such Gentiles would be gathered in from the east and the west. Jesus healed the captain’s servant, as He said He would.

Jesus raises a widow’s son (Luke 7:11-17)

In the town of Nain, which was about 40 kilometers (25 miles) from Capernaum, a parade of death meets a parade of life. Life overpowered death. This is probably the first time that Jesus broke the bonds of death. Imagine the feeling of the people after witnessing this miracle. **“So he who was dead sat up and began to speak”** (v. 15).

John the Baptist sends two disciples to Jesus (Matthew 11:2-6; Luke 7:18-23)

Did John send these two men to Jesus to strengthen his own faith, or to strengthen the faith of the two disciples? Most likely, John wanted reassurance that Jesus truly was the promised Messiah. John may have wondered why he was stuck in prison if Jesus was really the promised Savior. Jesus pointed to His miracles as proof of who He was.

Jesus talks about John the Baptist (Matthew 11:7-19; Luke 7:24-35)

John the Baptist was not a man who lived in luxury, but the Elijah who was to come (Malachi 4:5). He was the forerunner of Christ. He was the greatest of all the Old Testament prophets. John and Jesus were different outwardly: John fasted and Jesus ate and drank, but the Jewish leaders rejected both of them.

“She loved much.” (Luke 7:36-50)

Jesus ate in the home of a Pharisee named Simon, for He sought to seek and save Pharisees as well as tax collectors. A woman with a bad reputation showed up at Simon's house and showed her love for Jesus. Jesus' story was about two people very much like Simon and this woman: one who loved much and one who loved little. All our sins have been forgiven also. Should we not love Jesus very much?

Note: Jesus' story makes it clear that forgiveness comes first and then our love for God. This woman did not earn forgiveness by showing love for Jesus, but the great love she showed for Jesus showed that she had *already* been forgiven much.

Through Galilee (Luke 8:1-3)

Jesus and His disciples were supported in part by the generosity of women whom Jesus had helped, such as Mary from Magdala, Joanna (Chuza's wife), Susanna, and others.

Power over the devil (Matthew 12:22-37; Mark 3:20-30; Luke 11:14-15, 17-23)

Jesus' intense healing and teaching activity led His family to think He was out of His mind.

When He drove out evil spirits, the Pharisees said He was working through Beelzebub (the devil). Jesus responded by saying that He worked with the power of the Holy Spirit. Their false accusations led Jesus to warn them against the sin against the Holy Spirit, which cannot be forgiven.

The sign of Jonah (Matthew 12:38-45; Luke 11:16; Luke 11:24-26, 29-32)

Jesus would not do any miracles for His enemies at their request. Instead, He gave them the sign of the prophet Jonah: three days in the belly of the fish. So Jesus would be three days in the earth before His resurrection. This was Jesus' second prediction of His resurrection.

The mother and brothers of Jesus (Matthew 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 11:27-28, 8:19-21)

Jesus had four brothers and several sisters. They probably children of Joseph and Mary who were born after Jesus. Jesus' brothers were: James, who later became the head of the Jerusalem congregation and wrote the Bible letter of James; Judas (or Jude), the author of the Bible letter of Jude; Simon, who became head of the Jerusalem congregation after his brother James was killed; and Joseph/Joses.

Jesus' brothers did not believe in Him until after His resurrection. Notice that Jesus considered His family of believers as more important than His earthly family.

The parable of the sower and the seed (Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23; Mark 4:1-9, 13-20; Luke 8:4-9, 11-15)

This is the first parable of Jesus. As Jesus explained, the seed is God's Word. The comparisons are these:

- a) the seed on the path eaten by birds: the devil steals God's Word
- b) the seed in rocky soil: hard times come and some lose their faith
- c) the seed among thorns: the cares and riches choke God's Word
- d) the seed on good soil: some hear the Word and keep it

Why Jesus spoke in parables (Matthew 13:10-17, 34-35; Mark 4:10-12, 21-25, 33-34; Luke 8:10, 16-18)

"For whoever has, to him more will be given" (Matthew 13:12).

The parable of the seed growing by itself (Mark 4:26-29)

This parable is found only in the Gospel of Mark. It explains the quiet working of the kingdom of God on this earth. We do not always see the results of the Word of God that we preach, but God promises it will produce fruit (see Isaiah 55:10-11).

The parable of the mustard seed and the parable of yeast (Matthew 13:31-33; Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18-21)

These parables picture outward growth and inward growth.

The parable of weeds in the wheat (Matthew 13:24-30; Matthew 13:36-43)

In this parable the seeds are not God's words, but people. This parable has sometimes been used to prove that Christian congregations should not exercise church discipline. But remember: **"The field is the world"** (v. 38). Believers and unbelievers cannot be separated from one another in this world, but surely openly impenitent sinners are to be excluded from the Christian congregation. Jesus makes this clear in Matthew chapter 18. But even in the church, some hypocrites remain among the true believers until the day of judgment.

The parables of the hidden treasure, the pearl of great price, and the dragnet (Matthew 13:44-53)

Some believe these parables show the reaction of men who find Jesus Christ (represented by the treasure and the pearl). Others believe they show the value Jesus' places on His church and His great sacrifice to redeem us.

The dragnet shows how good and evil are found side by side, even in the church, and will remain together until the day of judgment.

Questions

1. What are miracles?
2. What are parables?
3. What was remarkable about the faith of the captain from Capernaum?
4. What happened when a parade of death met a parade of life at Nain?
5. How did Jesus show that He put His spiritual family above His physical family?
6. What did Jesus mean when He referred to the sign of Jonah?
7. Why did Jesus teach using parables?

8. What happens when the Word of God is spoken in the world?
9. Explain the parable of the weeds in the wheat.



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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 7 – Around the Sea of Galilee

The Sea of Galilee

This small freshwater lake has many names: Chinnereth, Gennesaret, the Sea of Galilee, the Sea of Tiberias. It is 22.5 km (14 miles) long and 13 km (8 miles) wide at its widest point. Many fish live in it. At the time of Jesus, the chief industry of the towns along its shores was fishing. Figs, olives, dates, and pomegranates grow on the southern hills.

The following are some of the towns on the shore or near the shore of the Sea of Galilee:

Capernaum, Jesus' home for several years. A Gentile captain built a synagogue here. Jairus, whose daughter Jesus raised from the dead, was the ruler of this synagogue. Ruins of a later synagogue built in Capernaum can still be seen today.

Tiberias, the capital city of Herod Antipas, who killed John the Baptist. Tiberias was named for the Roman Emperor who was ruling when Jesus was crucified.

Bethsaida of Galilee, the fishing town, the home of Peter, Andrew, and Philip.

Bethsaida on the other side of the Jordan River. Jesus fed the five thousand near this town.

Magdala, also called Magadan and Dalmanutha. It was the home of Mary Magdalene (Mary of Magdala), out of whom Jesus drove seven evil spirits. She was the first to see the risen Jesus on Easter Sunday.

Gergesa/Gerasa, on the eastern shore of the lake. Jesus healed the man with a legion of devils near this place by sending them into a herd of pigs.

Chorazin, near Capernaum, where many of Jesus' miracles took place.

Jesus later rebuked Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida for rejecting His words. Jesus spent most of His three or four years of ministry in and around these towns of Galilee.

Read the listed passages as you study each of the events below:

Wind and water obey Him (Matthew 8:18, 23-27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25)

In this story we see Jesus as both God and man in one person. He showed Himself to be man by falling asleep in the boat after a hard day's work, but He also proved Himself to be God by calming the winds and waves by His mere command. Surely only God can control nature in this way.

In the Nicene Creed we confess that Jesus is “God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God.” In the same Nicene Creed we confess that this Jesus “was made man.”

In the Athanasian Creed we confess that “our Lord Jesus Christ ... is God and man; God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and Man of the substance of His mother, born in the world; perfect God and perfect Man ... Who, although he is God and Man, yet He is not two, but one Christ.”

The Gerasenes/Gadarenes (Matthew 8:28 – 9:1; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39)

There were two men bodily possessed by devils, but one was more prominent. His name was Legion (a legion is a group of over six thousand soldiers). Jesus healed him by sending his devils into the pigs, who promptly rushed down to the Sea of Galilee and drowned. The residents of Gergesa were more concerned about the loss of their pigs than the health of their countryman, so they asked Jesus to leave. The healed man now became a missionary for Christ in the region of the Ten Towns (the Decapolis).

The daughter of Jairus (Matthew 9:18-26; Mark 5:21-43; Luke 8:40-56)

Jesus performed two miracles in this account: the raising of the girl from the dead and the healing of the woman with a flow of blood.

Notice what Jesus says about death: it is only a sleep. And so it is for the Christian, for the Christian’s body will rise to eternal life.

The bleeding woman was healed by touching Jesus’ clothing in faith. It is probable that Jesus generally wore the following pieces of clothing: a headgear (a kind of turban); sandals for His feet; an inner garment which fit closely and went down to His feet (this was without seam, woven from the top down as one piece, see John 19:23-24); a girdle (a belt); the square outer garment with the fringes on the four corners. It was probably one of these fringes (or tassels), that the diseased woman touched. When Jesus was crucified, the four soldiers divided the four cheaper garments among them, and cast lots for the more expensive inner garment, which they thought was too valuable to be torn into four pieces.

The raising of Jairus’ daughter is the second of the three recorded miracles of Jesus in which he raised someone from the dead.

Two blind men (Matthew 9:27-31)

Notice that Jesus gives the strange command that they should not tell others about their healing. Apparently Jesus did this so as not to attract such large crowds that He was hindered in His chief work of preaching the Gospel.

A mute man (Matthew 9:32-34)

Again the Pharisees accused Jesus of working miracles with the power of the devil.

Jesus’ last visit to Nazareth (Matthew 13:54-58; Mark 6:1-6)

Do you remember what happened to Jesus in Nazareth when He preached His first sermon there? The people rejected him (see Lesson 4 ***Nazareth rejects Jesus*** – Luke 4:16-30; John 4:44). On this last visit to Nazareth His hometown people still rejected Him.

Pray for workers (Matthew 9:35-38; Mark 6:6)

Jesus traveled around to all the villages of Galilee, preaching and healing. The work was too much for one man alone. Other workers were needed. The same is true also today. Let us continue to pray for workers – Gospel preachers – to bring the Lord’s Word to all the countries of the world.

Jesus sends out the twelve (Matthew 10:1,5–11:1; Mark 6:7-13; Luke 9:1-6)

The disciples (followers) become apostles (men sent out). They were sent out two by two into the country of Israel. Judas Iscariot, who later betrayed Jesus, was one of the twelve that was sent out.

Their message: the kingdom of heaven is here in Jesus.

Their activity: to preach and to heal.

Their equipment and provisions: almost nothing.

Their method: stay where they first find welcome. Leave when they are no longer welcome.

Their encouragement: the Spirit will speak through you. The hairs on your head are all counted.

Warnings: there will be persecution by mankind in general, by the Jews, even by family members.

Their reward: they will be confessed before Jesus’ Father in heaven.

Therefore: LET US TAKE UP OUR CROSS AND FOLLOW CHRIST FOREVER.

Herod kills John (Matthew 14:5-12; Mark 6:19-29)

John the Baptist was imprisoned and beheaded at Machaerus, a fortified, hill-top fortress near the Dead Sea. Herod Antipas made the mistake of promising to do whatever the daughter of Herodias asked without knowing what that might be. But if we promise to do something evil, it is better to break the oath than to commit the evil.

Has John come back? (Matthew 14:1-2; Mark 6:14-16; Luke 9:7-9)

Herod Antipas had a guilty conscience. He thought Jesus was really John, alive again.

Looking for rest (Matthew 14:13-14; Mark 6:30-34; Luke 9:10-11; John 6:1-2)

After the apostles returned from their mission, Jesus wanted them to take a rest, but this was impossible. When Jesus saw the crowds around Him, He simply had to help them, as always.

Jesus feeds five thousand (Matthew 14:15-21; Mark 6:35-44; Luke 9:12-17; John 6:3-14)

Jesus provided for the physical needs of those who come to hear His Word. He first asked His disciples what to do with the crowds to test them. They failed the test. Then Jesus multiplied the loaves and fish, and there were 12 baskets left.

Jesus walks on water (Matthew 14:22-34; Mark 6:45-53; John 6:15-21)

The people whom Jesus fed wanted to crown Him as their “Bread King”, but Jesus didn’t want this; it was not His mission to meet our earthly needs. Jesus sent His disciples across the lake, dismissed the crowd, and then prayed. The people’s desire to crown Him king was a temptation from Satan, and Jesus felt the need to prayer.

Later Jesus walked on the water towards the disciples, and even Peter walked on the water for a time. When Peter began to sink because of weakness of faith, Jesus rescued him. This is a good picture of the Christian’s spiritual situation in life.

Healings (Matthew 14:35-36; Mark 6:54-56)

Jesus is now on the western side of the Sea of Galilee and again a large crowd gathers around Him.

Bread from heaven (John 6:22-7:1)

Jesus rebukes the people for looking only for physical bread instead of the spiritual food He wants to give them. Jesus’ hard sayings about the absolute necessity of believing in Him turned away many of His followers, but the twelve remained faithful. Peter said to Jesus: **“You have the words of eternal life”** (John 6:68).

Eating Jesus’ flesh and drinking Jesus’ blood does not refer to the Lord’s Supper, which Jesus instituted later. Eating Jesus’ flesh and drinking Jesus’ blood refers to believing in Jesus and in Jesus’ sacrifice to take away our sin by His suffering and death (compare v. 54 with vv. 29, 40, and 47).

Questions

1. What do we learn about Jesus from the fact that He fell asleep during a storm at sea?
2. Why did people of the regions of the Gerasenes ask Jesus to leave their country?
3. Why did Jesus say Jairus' dead daughter was sleeping?
4. How did the Pharisees try to explain away Jesus' amazing miracles?
5. How can we use Jesus' instructions to the twelve in our mission work today?
6. What can we learn from the beheading of John the Baptist?
7. Why might God have permitted John the Baptist to be beheaded?
8. Why did Jesus not allow Himself to be crowned as king after the feeding of the five thousand?
9. Why was Peter able to walk on water at first?
10. What did Jesus mean when He talked about eating His flesh and drinking His blood?
11. How do we know that Jesus was not talking about the Lord's Supper when he talked about eating His flesh and drinking His blood?
12. What were the hard sayings in Jesus' teaching in John chapter 6?



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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 8 – Jesus Withdraws from Galilee

Jesus Withdraws

As soon as Jesus' apostles returned from their preaching tour, Jesus wanted to give them a little vacation, but the crowds made this impossible as long as they stayed in Galilee. Therefore, after Jesus fed the five thousand and did some other healing and teaching in Galilee, He and His disciples went far away to the region of Tyre and Sidon in the north-west. From there they went all the way to the Ten Towns (Decapolis) in the east. Near the Sea of Galilee Jesus fed the four thousand. He then went across the lake to Magdala, and then across the lake again to Bethsaida. Then He and His disciples went far north to the region around Caesarea of Philip (Caesarea Philippi). Since Mt. Hermon, which is over 2750 meters (9000 feet) above sea level, is in that region, it is likely that Mt. Hermon was the scene of Jesus' transfiguration, which was witnessed by Peter, James, and John. Meanwhile the other nine disciples were unable to help a father who was concerned about his son who was afflicted in his body by Satan. During this time Jesus was spending less time with the crowds and more time training His apostles and instructing them concerning His coming suffering, death, and resurrection.

Jesus' Teaching Concerning His Church

In the Bible the word "church" does not refer to a building or to an organization. It refers to a gathering of people – almost always a group who believe in Jesus. Jesus told His disciples that He would build His Church on the rock of Peter's confession of Christ.

The Roman Catholic Church has tried to use these words to prove that Jesus named Peter the head of His Church on earth, and that Jesus intended Peter to pass on this authority to others after him, thus establishing the office of the pope as ruler of the Church. But Peter did not act as such a head during his lifetime, nor did any of his so-called successors (the pastors in Rome) until several hundreds of years later.

It is true that Jesus gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven to Peter, but He also gave these same keys to all of His disciples (see Matthew 18). The ministry of the keys is the authority to forgive sins and retain sins in the name of Christ.

The Roman Catholic Church promotes and tolerates false teachings of all kinds, and the pope himself is the foretold Antichrist, as we shall see when we study the second chapter of 2 Thessalonians.

Read the listed passages as you study each of the events below:

Unclean hands (Matthew 15:1-20; Mark 7:1-23)

The Jews elders passed down the tradition of washing one's hands up to the wrist before every meal. The most famous the Jewish elders, Shammai and Hillel, disagreed on many things, but they agreed on the necessity of this hand-washing. The Jews criticized Jesus' disciples for not following this tradition.

Jesus then pointed out to them that their tradition of Corban (promising a gift to God) was annulling the Fourth Commandment of God.

Jesus also explained that food cannot make a man unclean; what comes out of the mouth makes a man unclean, or rather, reveals one's unclean heart.

The Syrophenician Woman (Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30)

A heathen woman asked Jesus to heal her daughter. Jesus' refusal appeared cruel, but He did this to draw out her faith. She confessed her unworthiness. She agreed with Jesus that she was but a house dog, but even as such a house dog she could eat the crumbs from the master's table. Her faith was great, and Jesus healed her daughter.

A deaf man with a speech impediment (Matthew 15:29-31; Mark 7:31-37)

Jesus did many miracles in Decapolis. Jesus healed a deaf man who had trouble talking by saying the word "**Ephphatha**" (Mark 7:34).

Jesus feeds four thousand (Matthew 15:32-39; Mark 8:1-9)

This time Jesus used 7 loaves and a few fish, and there were 7 baskets of leftovers.

A proof from heaven (Matthew 15:39-16:4; Mark 8:10-13)

Jesus gave His enemies no sign other than the sign of Jonah (His coming resurrection).

The yeast of the Pharisees (Matthew 16:5-12; Mark 8:13-21)

The disciples forgot to bring bread with them on their trip across the lake. When Jesus warned them of the yeast (leaven) of false teaching, the disciples thought that Jesus was scolding them for having forgotten to bring bread, but they should have realized that He who had fed the five thousand and the four thousand would not be concerned about their lack of earthly bread. Jesus was concerned about the false teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

A blind man (Mark 8:22-26)

Jesus used outward means to carry out this healing, and He did it in two steps. Jesus had no set pattern for healing, so that He would not be suspected of using some kind of magical spell.

"You are the Son of God" (Matthew 16:13-20; Mark 8:27-30; Luke 9:18-21)

Jesus now went far north to the Caesarea of Philip in order to be alone with His disciples. In response to Jesus' questioning Peter confessed his faith in Jesus as the Christ and Savior. Jesus then called the confession of Peter (which means "a piece rock") the bedrock on which He would build His church¹ and said He would give him the keys of the kingdom of heaven, that is, the ministry of the keys to open or close heaven. Later Jesus promised these same keys to all of His disciples (see Matthew 18). In fact, they have been given to all Christians even to this very day (John 20:23).

"I will die and rise again" (Matthew 16:21-23; Mark 8:31-33; Luke 9:22)

For the first time Jesus plainly foretold His coming suffering, death, and resurrection. Previously He had talked about His death and resurrection like the temple that would be rebuilt in three days, the lifting up of the Son of Man like the bronze serpent, and the experience of Jonah in the fish's belly (the sign of Jonah). Peter rebuked Jesus for wanting to carry out this plan, but Jesus then called Peter Satan for trying to get Jesus to give up God's eternal plan for man's salvation.

Take up your cross (Matthew 16:24-28; Mark 8:34-9:1; Luke 9:23-27)

This is the second time Jesus spoke of the cross of Christians². This cross is the suffering that comes to us just because we are Christians – the slander, persecution, and possibly even death we face because of our faith. We must all expect such a cross, but eternal life is more precious than the whole world: **"What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"** (Matthew 16:26, Mark 8:36, compare to Luke 9:25).

Jesus then said that some of His disciples would see Him come in power. This probably refers to Pentecost, the spread of the Gospel in the early church, and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

Jesus shows His glory (the Transfiguration) (Matthew 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36)

There are two trios: first Jesus, talking with Moses and Elijah; then also Peter, James, and John. On this high mountain the Father said of Jesus: **"This is My beloved Son... Hear Him!"** (Matthew 17:5, Mark 9:7, Luke 9:35).

Jesus again foretold His resurrection and explained that John the Baptist was the Elijah that was promised as the forerunner of the Messiah.

¹ The name "Peter" comes from the masculine Greek noun *Petros* (Πέτρος), which refers to a separate *piece* of rock. Jesus said He would build His church on "this *petra* (πέτρα)", a feminine noun that refers to a *mass* of rock or bedrock, and not to a separate piece of rock. This difference shows that Jesus was not saying that He would build His church on Peter (and his successors), as the Roman Catholic Church falsely claims, but on Peter's confession of who Jesus is. Jesus is the only foundation (or bedrock) of the church (1 Corinthians 3:11).

² see ***Jesus sends out the twelve*** (Matthew 10:1,5-11:1; Mark 6:7-13; Luke 9:1-6) in lesson 7

The epileptic boy (Matthew 17:14-21; Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9:37-43)

Even though Jesus had given His apostles power to drive out evil spirits, Jesus' nine disciples failed to heal this epileptic boy because of their lack of faith in Jesus' promise. Because of our own weaknesses, we should remember these words of the boy's father: **"Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"** (Mark 9:24).

"I will die and rise again" (Matthew 17:22-23; Mark 9:30-32; Luke 9:43-45)

Jesus solemnly repeated His prediction (see above), but the apostles did not understand.

A coin in a fish's mouth (Matthew 17:24-27)

Jesus produced the required Temple tax money in a highly unusual way.

"Who is the greatest?" (Matthew 18:1-5; Mark 9:33-37; Luke 9:46-48)

Why do Christians argue about who is better than the other? The greatest of all is the child and the childlike – the simple humble believer who is willing to serve his neighbor.

"He is for us" (Mark 9:38-41; Luke 9:49-50)

Jesus did not forbid the casting out of devils in His name, even when it was done by someone who was not one of the apostles.

Do I lead others to sin? (Matthew 18:6-14; Mark 9:42-50; Luke 17:1-3)

Jesus talked about offenses. Causing offense means causing someone to stumble in his faith. Causing little children to lose their faith is certainly a horrible sin.

Tell him his fault (Matthew 18:15-20)

Jesus presents the Christian way to deal with those who continue to sin. He gives four steps of brotherly admonition:

1. Talk to the person privately. Your aim is to have them acknowledge their sin so that you can forgive him.
2. If they continue in their sin, take one or two witnesses with you.
3. If they continue in their sin, present the matter to the larger group of Christians (the church).
4. If they continue in their sin, regard the person as a heathen.

Forgive (Matthew 18:21-35; Luke 17:3-4)

Jesus forgave our huge debt of 10 000 talents (a talent was the pay for about 20 years of work). Therefore, we should forgive others the small debts of 100 denarii (a denarius was the pay for a day of work). Whenever we say the Fifth Petition of the Lord's Prayer, we should remember this parable.

Questions

1. Whose rules were Jesus and His disciples transgressing when they did not wash their hands in the prescribed way?
2. Whose rules were the Pharisees transgressing with their teaching about Corban?
3. Why did Jesus deal as He did with the Syro-Phoenician woman?
4. What mistake did Jesus' disciples make when Jesus talked about leaven?
5. In what way is false teaching like leaven?
6. What did Jesus mean by saying He would give the keys to Peter?
7. In what way is the Roman Catholic teaching about the keys a false doctrine?
8. Why did Jesus refer to Peter as Satan?
9. What was special about the Transfiguration of Jesus?
10. What incident led Jesus to set up a child as an example?
11. What are some actions that might cause a believer to lose his faith?
12. What is the purpose of brotherly admonition?
13. Why should we be willing to forgive the faults of our neighbor?



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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 9 – Jesus in Judea

From October to December (29 AD)

When Jesus was in Caesarea Philippi with His disciples, He told them of His coming suffering and death. From that time on, Jesus' thoughts turned towards Jerusalem, where His death would take place. He was in Jerusalem for three festivals (feasts) before His death: The Feast of Booths (or Tabernacles) in October, the Feast of Lights/Dedication (Hanukkah) in December, and the Feast of Passover in the spring when He offered up His life. Between these visits He spent some time in Judea and Perea and perhaps a little time in Galilee.

The Feast of Booths commemorated the wilderness wanderings of the children of Israel on their way to the Promised Land in the days of Moses. At this festival many Jews from other lands came. They stayed in tents that they set up all around Jerusalem.

The Feast of Lights/Dedication (Hanukkah) was the Day of Independence for the Jews. It was celebrated in honor of the Jewish patriot, Judas Maccabaeus, who led the Jews to independence in the war against the Seleucid rulers (167-165 BC). At that time the temple in Jerusalem was rededicated to the Lord after being in the hands of the heathen.

During this period Jesus had many arguments with the Jewish leaders. Many of the common people were undecided and did not know what to believe about Jesus. They were having arguments among themselves as to who and what Jesus was.

Read the listed passages as you study each of the events below:

To Jerusalem! (Matthew 19:1; Mark 10:1; Luke 9:51-56; John 7:2-10)

Jesus' unbelieving brothers (James, Jude, Joses, and Simon) wanted Him to show Himself to the people in Jerusalem in order to gain a larger following for Himself, but Jesus did not go with them to the Feast of Booths. He went to Jerusalem later, more privately.

In Samaria Jesus rebuked James and John for wanting to curse the people who did not welcome Jesus.

I will follow, but (Matthew 8:19-22; Luke 9:57-62)

Jesus talks frankly to three would-be followers:

The over-eager one – Jesus tells him what following Him will mean.

The one who wanted to bury his father – **“Let the dead bury their dead”** (Matthew 8:22; Luke 9:60).

The one who wanted to say good-bye first – Looking back is not fitting for a disciple of Jesus.

At the Festival of Booths (Matthew 19:1; Mark 10:1; John 7:11-52)

The crowds in Jerusalem were looking for Jesus when suddenly He appeared. Jesus said that His teaching is God's teaching. He asked why they wanted to kill Him? The Pharisees wanted to arrest Jesus, but the officers sent to arrest Him were impressed by His teaching; they said no one ever spoke like Him. On the last day of the Feast Jesus invited thirsty souls to come to Him for spiritual drink. Almost all the Jewish leaders rebuked Jesus, but Nicodemus defended Him.

The adulteress – forgiveness of sin but no condoning of sin (John 7:53 – 8:11)

Jesus argues with the Jews (John 8:12-59)

Jesus: I am the Light of the world.

The Jews: Who says so?

Jesus: There are two witnesses, the Father and I.

The Jews: Where is Your Father?

Jesus: You don't know Me or My Father.

Jesus: I'm going away. You will die in your sins because you do not believe in Me.

The Jews: Who are you?

Jesus: When you have lifted Me up, you will know who I am.

Jesus: If you continue in My Word, you shall be free.

The Jews: We are free now.

Jesus: You are slaves of sin.

The Jews: We are Abraham's children.

Jesus: If you were Abraham's children, you would do as he did.

The Jews: God is our Father.

Jesus: If God were your father, you would love Me. Your father is the devil.

The Jews: You are crazy.

Jesus: No, I honor the Father. If a man keeps My saying, he shall not see death.

The Jews: Didn't Abraham die? Are You greater than Abraham?

Jesus: Abraham saw My day and was glad.

The Jews: You aren't fifty years old yet. When did You see Abraham?

Jesus: Before Abraham was, I am.

Then they all started throwing stones at Him.

A blind man sees (John 9:1-41)

Jesus gave sight to a man born blind. Then this is what happened:

Neighbors: How did it happen that you see?

The man born blind: Jesus did it.

The Pharisees: How did it happen that you see?

The man born blind: Jesus did it.

The Pharisees: This man is a sinner. He heals on the Sabbath. Who do you think He is?

The man born blind: He is a prophet.

The Pharisees: Was your son born blind? How is it that he can see?

Parents: Our son was born blind. Now he can see. We don't know how. Ask him.

(The parents said this because they were afraid of being excommunicated.)

The Pharisees: God healed you. Jesus is a sinner.

The man born blind: I don't know about that. I know this. I was blind. Now I see.

The Pharisees: How did He do it?

The man born blind: I told you before. Do you want to become His disciples?

The Pharisees: You are His disciple. We are Moses' disciples. We don't know about Jesus.

The man born blind: That's strange. He healed me, and you don't know He is of God.

The Pharisees: You were born in sins, and you want to teach us? You are excommunicated.

Jesus: Do you believe in the Son of God?

The man born blind: Who is He?

Jesus: I am He.

The man born blind: I believe.

Jesus: I make the blind see and I make those who see blind.

The Pharisees: Are we blind?

Jesus: If you were blind, I could make you see. Since you claim to see, I can't help you.

The Good Shepherd (John 10:1-21)

Jesus says: I am the Door of the sheep. I am the Good Shepherd who gives His life for the sheep.

Jesus says: Of My own free will I give My life, and of My own free will I take it again.

Both His death and resurrection were voluntary.

Seventy missionaries (Matthew 11:20-30; Luke 10:1-24)

Jesus again sends His disciples out two by two. His instructions for them are similar to His earlier instructions for the twelve. They return happy in success. Jesus says: **“Rejoice because your names are written in heaven”** (Luke 10:6).

Jesus rebukes Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum for their lack of repentance. Jesus invites all to find spiritual rest in Him and His teachings.

The good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)

Jesus’ parable was intended to show the lawyer that God’s standard is higher than the lawyer thought.

Mary listens to Jesus (Luke 10:38-42)

It is more important to be served by Jesus than to serve Him. The Word of God is the one thing needed.

The Lord’s Prayer (Luke 11:1-4)

This is the second time that Jesus taught this prayer to His disciples.

Warnings (Luke 11:37-54)

Since most of the Pharisees, scribes, and lawyers rejected Jesus and His teaching, Jesus pronounced severe woes on them to make them aware of their sins.

Don’t be afraid of men (Luke 12:1-12)

Don’t fear those who kill the body, but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. This does not refer to Satan, but to God himself.

Don’t be greedy (Luke 12:13-34)

Jesus refused to settle a civil case brought to Him having to do with property rights. He did take the opportunity, however, to warn against the sin of greed. In this connection He told the parable of the foolish man who built new barns and Jesus repeated many of the teachings He had presented in His Sermon the Mount.

It is important that we make use of our present time of grace, for we never know how long a time we will have to repent of our sins and put our trust in Christ.

Questions

1. Give a brief description of the three festivals mentioned in this section of the New Testament.
2. What did Jesus' brothers think of their brother Jesus and His mission?
3. Why did the officers sent to arrest Jesus not arrest Him?
4. How did Jesus prove that the Jews who argued with Him were not true children of Abraham?
5. How did Jesus prove that the Jews who argued with Him were not really children of God?
6. What did Jesus mean when He said: "Before Abraham was, I am"?
7. How did the man born blind confess Christ after he was healed?
8. In what two ways did the man born blind receive sight?
9. What can we learn about mission work today from Jesus' instructions to the seventy?
10. Why can the Law of God not save any of us?
11. Why do those facing death because of Christ not have to be afraid?
12. In what way was the man who built new barns in Jesus' parable foolish?



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

New Testament Survey
Lesson 10 – Jesus in Judea and Perea

Perea

Perea and Galilee were ruled at this time by Herod Antipas, whom Jesus called a fox. Jesus spent much of His time during the last period of His life in Perea, from the Feast of Booths in October to the Passover in April. He taught in the form of parables or sermons. Some of His teaching is almost the same as what He had said earlier in Galilee.

Read the listed passages as you study each of the events below:

Sorrow ahead (Luke 12:49-53)

Would there be peace on earth through Jesus? Not at all! Rather, there will be divisions in the family because of Him. Jesus is the Prince of Peace, but His peace is not of this world. He establishes peace between God and man and offers this peace in His Word of forgiveness.

Signs of the times (Luke 12:54-59)

Jesus repeats things He had said before in His Sermon on the Mount, and in Magdala, but doesn't a good teacher say the same good things many times?

Repent (Luke 13:1-5)

Jesus discusses two catastrophes that had just occurred: Pilate's slaughter of some Galileans and the fall of the tower of Siloam. Do such terrible things happen to people because of some particular sin they had committed? No! We all deserve the worst from God. Let us therefore repent of our sins and trust in God's grace in Jesus.

Another year (Luke 13:6-9)

The Lord is very patient, but the time for repentance finally runs out. The Lord was patient with the Jews, but when they continued to resist Christ and His apostles, judgment finally struck them in 70 AD.

Sick for eighteen years (Luke 13:10-17)

Jesus healed a crippled woman on the Sabbath. The ruler of the synagogue wanted to forbid people from coming to get healed on the Sabbath. Jesus rebuked the hypocrisy of His enemies, and they were put to shame.

"I and the Father are One" (Matthew 19:1-2; Mark 10:1; John 10:22-42)

Jesus spoke on Solomon's Porch in the temple at the Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah) in December. It was on this occasion that Jesus quoted a verse from the Bible (Psalm 82:6) and said: **"The Scriptures cannot be broken."** He also said many wonderful words about His sheep who hear His voice and to whom He will give eternal life.

The narrow door (Luke 13:22-30)

We should not ask questions out of curiosity, such as: How many are going to be saved? Rather, we should make sure that we ourselves are entering by the narrow gate, not the wide gate that leads to destruction. Many people deceive themselves; they think they are Christians, but they are not. Just being acquainted with Christ and knowing His name is not enough.

Jesus warns Jerusalem (Luke 13:31-35)

Herod Antipas wanted to kill Jesus, but Jesus knew that Herod would not kill Him. Jesus knew He would die in Jerusalem, where many of the prophets were killed.

That Jerusalem rejected Jesus was not His fault. **"The Lord is ... not willing that any should perish"** (2 Peter 3:9). Jesus wanted to save the people of Jerusalem, but they refused.

Dinner is ready! (Luke 14:1-24)

Jesus healed a sick man on the Sabbath in the home of a Pharisee. At this same time Jesus talked about the way the guests chose the best seats for themselves. Instead of choosing the best for ourselves, we should be humble and take the lowest seat. Jesus also said that we should not invite others to a meal only for the purpose of having them invite us to their homes in return. Rather, we should invite those who cannot invite us back, the poor and the needy.

Jesus then told a parable about a man who gave a great dinner. Many were invited, but everyone presented excuses. As a result, there was still room, and so the servants went out into the streets, the highways, and the hedges to invite others. The dinner was ready.

Leave everything (Luke 14:25-35)

Jesus again talks about the cross of Christians (v. 27) as He had at an earlier time¹. Jesus' disciples must bear their cross, and they must hate everything for His sake, putting Him first. Following Christ must be more important than family, self, sufferings, possessions.

But Jesus' disciples should also first count the cost before following Him, even as a man building a tower, or a king going to war.

Lost – a sheep (Luke 15:1-7)

¹ See ***Take Up Your Cross*** (Matthew 16:24-28; Mark 8:34-9:1; Luke 9:23-27) in lesson 8

Jesus received sinners and ate with them. The Pharisees criticized Him for this, not realizing that they were just as sinful as the sinners Jesus received. In this connection Jesus told three parables about looking for the lost and being happy when the lost is found.

Out of 100 sheep, one was lost. Go, look for that one, and be happy when you find him. Christians are to seek the lost, just as Jesus did, and we should rejoice with the angels in heaven when one sinner repents.

Lost – a coin (Luke 15:8-10)

In this parable one piece of silver was lost and found again. Rejoice!

Lost – a son (Luke 15:11-32)

This is perhaps the most famous of all Jesus' parables. It is the Gospel in a nutshell. There are two selfish sons in this parable. One was self-indulgent and squandered all his money on his pleasures, but later he repented. The other son stayed at home and was self-righteous. He did not rejoice when the lost was found. Did he repent later on? The parable does not tell us.

This parable gives us a good example of confession and absolution. As the father treated his lost son that was found, so God treats us when we confess our sins: He clothes us in Christ's righteousness and feeds us with eternal life.

The dishonest manager (Luke 16:1-17)

This man was wise in material things. If only we were as wise in eternal things as he was in material things!

Notice how important it is that we be faithful in little things.

Jesus repeats a former teaching: You cannot serve God and money.²

Husband and wife (Matthew 19:3-12; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18)

Jesus repeats what He had said in His Sermon on the Mount: divorce is not God-pleasing³.

Jesus says it is normal for most people to marry, but there are exceptions.

The rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31)

Not all rich men are lost, and not all poor men are saved. This rich man was lost because he despised Moses and the Prophets, that is, the Word of God. Notice how Jesus exalts

² See ***The Sermon on the Mount: True Treasures*** (Matthew 6:19-24; Luke 11:34-36) in Lesson 5.

³ See ***The Sermon on the Mount: Adultery*** (Matthew 5:27-32) in Lesson 5.

the power of God's Word: it has the power to conversion; it is more powerful even than the resurrection of a dead man.

In this same parable Jesus also teaches that there is a wide chasm between heaven and hell.

Faith and duty (Luke 17:5-10)

Notice what Jesus says: Even if we were able to do every single thing that God has commanded us to do, we would deserve no special treatment from Him; we would only have done our duty. Since we fall far short of even doing our duty, what do we deserve? Nothing but eternal punishment! So how can we be saved? Not by doing our duty and then being rewarded for it, but only by trusting in God's mercy in Christ.

Our Lutheran fathers confessed in the Augsburg Confession of 1530: *"Faith should produce good works and we must do all such good works as God has commanded, but we should do them for God's sake and not place our trust in them as if thereby to merit favor before God. For we receive forgiveness of sin and righteousness only through faith in Christ... It is taught among us that good works should and must be done, not that we are to rely on them to earn grace but that we may do God's will and glorify Him. It is always faith alone that apprehends grace and forgiveness of sin."* (The Book of Concord, Kolb-Wengert Edition, Article VI: New Obedience, Article XX: Good Works).

Questions

1. Which one of the four Gospels provides the most information on Jesus' travels in Perea?
2. What did Jesus mean when He said was bringing a sword into the world?
3. What is God's purpose in allowing tragedies to occur in the world?
4. What was Jesus' response to those who accused Him of breaking the Sabbath?
5. What comforting promise did Jesus give to those who listen to His voice?
6. Why was Jesus so troubled when He thought about Jerusalem?
7. What is the meaning of the parable about the great dinner?
8. What was the difference between the two sons in Jesus' parable?
9. How does Jesus' story of the rich man & Lazarus explain the power and efficacy of God's Word?
10. Why should believers in Jesus do good works?



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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 11 – On the Way to Jerusalem

On the Way to Jerusalem

The events of this lesson very likely took place in February and March of the year of our Lord's death, 30 AD. After Jesus was in Jerusalem for the Feast of Lights/Dedication (Hanukkah) in December, He traveled in Perea. The Jewish leaders were already thinking of killing Him.

While He was in Perea, He heard about the sickness of His friend Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, who lived in Bethany, a suburb of Jerusalem. When Jesus did not go to see Lazarus right away, His disciples thought it was because the Jewish leaders were planning to kill Him. But Jesus was waiting for another reason: He wanted to raise Lazarus from the dead for the glory of God.

Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead after he had been dead for four days. Instead of convincing His enemies, this amazing miracle, only drove them to greater hatred. Remember, that was the point of Jesus' earlier parable of the rich man and Lazarus: if a man does not believe God's Word, neither will he believe even if someone should rise from the dead. The high priest Caiaphas advised the Jewish leaders that the only solution was that one man (Jesus) should die for the people rather than that the whole nation should perish. The Holy Spirit thus used this unbelieving priest to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus' substitutionary death for the world.

Jesus then left Bethany and spent some time in a little town called Ephraim. No doubt He also did some traveling in Samaria and Judea and Perea. As the Passover drew near, however, Jesus made His way for the last time to Jerusalem. On the way He healed lepers, told parables, blessed little children, instructed His disciples about the dangers of wealth, predicted for the third time in plain words His coming suffering, death, and resurrection. He also explained the meaning of His death: that it was to be a ransom for all people. His death was to buy back (redeem) the whole world from its slavery to sin, Satan, and death.

In Jericho Jesus healed two blind men, one named Bartimaeus. In Jericho also He stayed at the home of Zacchaeus, the tax collector who climbed a tree to see Jesus. Zacchaeus was among the many lost now saved by the Lord. Near Jerusalem Jesus told a parable that showed that the Jews were rejecting Him. Jesus predicted that God's judgment would come on them because of their unbelief.

Finally on Saturday, April 1, Jesus reached Bethany. There at a dinner Mary, Lazarus' sister, anointed Jesus' body for His burial, which was less than a week away. Judas Iscariot was already opposed to Jesus, and the Jews were planning to kill both Jesus and Lazarus.

Read the listed passages as you study each of the events below:

Jesus raises Lazarus (John 11:1-54)

Jesus did not come right away when Lazarus was sick, even though his sisters certainly wanted Him to come. Sometimes God also delays answering our prayers for some good reason. Notice that Jesus calls the death of a Christian a falling asleep. Indeed, it is a "sleep" because the voice of Jesus will one day wake us up to eternal life in body and soul. Jesus says wonderful words about how faith in Him overcomes death forever! Lazarus' body was already decaying when Jesus called him forth. Think of that!

In this account we see Jesus' human emotions ("**Jesus wept**" v. 35) and we also see His divine power. Jesus simply said: "**Lazarus, come forth**" (v. 43), and the dead man obeyed. This is the third of Jesus' three great miracles of raising the dead. This amazing miracle strengthened the faith of some, but only hardened His enemies in their hatred of Him and their determination to put him to death.

Caiaphas, the high priest, hated Jesus and wanted Him dead for selfish and sinful reasons. But God used the words of Caiaphas to proclaim the truth of God: that one Man, Jesus, would die for the people – all people – so that we all would not perish because of our sins.

Only one thanks God (Luke 17:11-19)

Ten lepers used Jesus' name rightly by calling on Him in their trouble, but only one used His name rightly by thanking Him for having been healed. How often do we say, "Thank you!" to our Lord and Savior? Ingratitude is one of the most common sins.

Where is the kingdom? (Luke 17:20-21)

The kingdom of God comes in quietness when Jesus' word is spoken. Thus, the kingdom of God was at work among the Jews at this very time, but they couldn't see it. Most Jews wrongly expected the Messiah's kingdom to be a political kingdom of earthly power.

God hears (Luke 18:1-8)

If even an unjust judge hears a complaining widow after a long time, how much more will our good and just God hear His own children and answer them speedily! In His own way and at His own time Jesus will make all unjust things right. But there is a question Jesus leaves unanswered: When Jesus comes to His people at His second coming, will He find faith on the earth?

The parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector (Luke 18:9-14)

Jesus told this parable for self-righteous people. The Pharisee's "prayer" was a recital of his own good deeds. He thought he was better than others and so he received no forgiveness from God. The tax collector, however, recognized his grievous sins against God and asked God for mercy. He went down to his house "**justified**" (v. 14), that is, declared righteous, pardoned, forgiven.

Jesus loves children (Matthew 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-17)

Jesus wanted the infants to be brought to Him. The kingdom of God is for infants too. Although Jesus said nothing directly concerning baptism at this time, we generally read this account when an infant is baptized because it emphasizes Jesus' love and concern for little children.

The Baptists and others say we must become adults before we can take part in God's kingdom, but Jesus says that adults must become like children before they can be a part of God's kingdom. What every believer needs is a childlike simplicity of faith.

The rich young leader (Matthew 19:16-30; Mark 10:17-31; Luke 18:18-30)

This man asked an important question: What must I do to gain eternal life? Jesus' answer directed him to God's Law: "**Keep the commandments**" (Matthew 19:17). By saying this, Jesus wanted the man to realize that he had not kept them. But the man insisted that he had always kept the commandments. Then Jesus told him to sell all his goods, give them to the poor, and then follow Him. The man then went away sorrowful; he was not even able to keep the First Commandment, for his riches were more important to him than anything else.

Jesus then shocked His disciples by saying that it was impossible for a rich man to be saved. But Jesus then went on to say that with God all things are possible. Jesus assured His disciples that God would provide for all follow him, both in this life and in the life to come.

The last will be first (Matthew 20:1-16)

In this parable the owner of the vineyard hired workers for a denarius a day (a fair wage for one day at that time). Although his workers began working at various times during the day, the pay for each one was the same: one denarius. Those who worked longest complained, but the owner replied that they should not be angry just because he was generous to those who worked fewer hours. They were receiving what they were promised. So also all believers receive the same gift of eternal life, whether they have been Christians all their lives or were converted only at the last hour of their lives. We are all saved by grace, not by merit.

"I will die and rise again" (Matthew 20:17-19; Mark 10:32-34; Luke 18:31-34)

For the third time Jesus predicts exactly what is going to happen to Him in Jerusalem.

The cup of suffering (Matthew 20:20-28; Mark 10:35-45)

James and John and their mother Salome ask Jesus for a special honor. But Jesus makes no promises to them. The other disciples become angry with James and John because of this request. At this point they did not realize that following Jesus would mean great suffering for them, just as Jesus Himself was about to suffer.

Jesus told His disciples that just as He came to serve, not to be served, so also they should not strive for honor but be willing to serve others. How did Jesus serve us? He gave His life as a ransom, as payment for our sins.

Two blind men at Jericho (Matthew 20:29-34; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43)

One of these men was Bartimaeus.

Zacchaeus, the repentant tax collector (Luke 19:1-10)

Take note of the fruits of faith in the life of Zacchaeus after he learned to know who Jesus was.

The parable of judgment on Jerusalem (Luke 19:11-28)

Mary anoints Jesus (Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 11:55-12:11)

Mary listened carefully to Jesus when He visited before (Luke 10:38-42). She knew what was going to happen to Him, so she anointed His body for His burial in advance. When Judas and others objected to this “waste”, Jesus defended her.

Questions

1. What reason did Jesus give for delaying His response to Mary and Martha?
2. How was Jesus’ humanity and His deity revealed at the grave of Lazarus?
3. How did God use the words of the high priest to proclaim the Gospel?
4. How does the story of the unjust judge teach us that God answers prayer?
5. Why did the Pharisee in the Temple go home without being forgiven?
6. How did Jesus reveal His love for little children?
7. Why were Jesus’ disciples shocked by what Jesus said about rich people?
8. What does it mean that Jesus came not to be served, but to serve?
9. How are Jesus’ words to Mary being fulfilled at this very moment?



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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 12 – Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday of Holy Week

The Holy Week in Jesus' Life

Every week of Jesus' life was holy, but the last week in Jesus' life has come to be called Holy Week, no doubt because of the great things He did in that week to make us holy.

First, there was **Palm Sunday** when Jesus entered Jerusalem as the Messiah-King foretold in Old Testament prophecy. He came in a lowly and meek way on a donkey, not as a mighty conqueror on a white horse or elephant. Many Jews from other places were in Jerusalem for the coming Passover, and they called Him "**Son of David**" and "**King of Israel**". They did not fully understand what they were saying; not even Jesus' disciples really understood what was happening until later. (For God's promise to David of an everlasting kingdom, see 2 Samuel 7.)

Jesus knew that the enthusiasm of the people was fickle. He knew that He and His Gospel would be rejected by Jerusalem, so He shed tears as He entered the city. He knew that God's judgment would fall on the city 40 years later, in 70 AD. Even on Palm Sunday the Pharisees and rulers opposed the Messiah God had sent them, and they tried to prevent others from praising Him.

On **Monday** Jesus did two things that symbolized God's judgment on Jerusalem and the Jews. He cursed a fig tree that had nothing but leaves. This was a picture of the religion of Jerusalem that looked good outwardly, but had no good fruit. He also cleaned out the Temple courtyard once more, as He had done before at the very beginning of His ministry.

Tuesday was the last big day of teaching in Jesus' life. It was the day the Pharisees, Sadducees, lawyers, and Herodians joined forces to try to trap Him. They wanted Jesus to do or say something for which they could put Him to death. Jesus answered all their questions frankly and truthfully and put them all to shame. He also asked them some questions that they could not answer. Jesus told His last parables on this Tuesday. These parables were spoken against the Jewish leaders. Jesus also very sharply and bluntly warned His disciples against the false religion and hypocrisy of the Pharisees. He spoke eight horrible words of woe against the Pharisees, and then closed His remarks by repeating what He had once said before: "**O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!**" (Matthew 23:37, see Luke 13:34).

In Lesson 13 we shall continue to study what Jesus said on this Holy Tuesday, particularly what He said about the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world.

Read the listed passages as you study each of the events below:

Palm Sunday, April 2, 30 AD

The King is coming (Matthew 21:1-8; Mark 11:1-8; Luke 19:29-36; John 12:12, 14-18)

Jesus sent two disciples to get a donkey and her colt. Jesus rode the colt into Jerusalem, as prophesied by Isaiah and Zechariah. The people put clothes and tree branches on the road as a carpet for the Messiah.

It was customary for pilgrims to Jerusalem to recite Psalm 118:25-28 and Psalm 103:17 as they approached the Temple for festivals. These words (Hosanna, Blessed is He, etc.) certainly are fitting for this occasion. The Hebrew word “Hosanna” means “Save Us”. The “Blessed Is He” is known as the *Benedictus*. Both the Hosanna and the Benedictus have become part of the standard order of service in many Christian congregations.

“Stop Them” (Matthew 21:9-11, 14-17; Mark 11:9-11; Luke 19:37-44; John 12:13, 19)

Great crowds, including children, sang Hosanna to the Son of David. The Pharisees urged silence, but Jesus refused to quiet the crowds. His hour had come.

Jesus had to weep because He knew their attitude toward Him would result in the total destruction of Jerusalem.

Holy Monday, April 3, 30 AD

Nothing but leaves (Matthew 21:18-19; Mark 11:12-14)

It was not the fig season yet, but this fig tree had leaves already, which usually means it has figs but this tree had no figs. Jesus cursed the fig tree that looked like it should have fruit but had nothing but leaves. This fig tree was a picture of the Pharisees and their hypocrisy.

Jesus cleanses the Temple for the second time (Matthew 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-19; Luke 19:45-48, 21:37-38)

We read about the first cleansing in Lesson 3¹. Evidently it did not stay cleansed in the intervening months, and it had to be cleansed again. So Jesus again drove out the buyers and sellers from the Temple courtyard.

Notice that during this Holy Week Jesus stayed overnight at Bethany, the town of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, whom He had recently raised from the dead.

¹ See ***Jesus cleanses the Temple*** (John 2:13-22) in Lesson 3

Holy Tuesday, April 4, 30 AD

A fig tree is withered (Matthew 21:20-22; Mark 11:20-25)

On their way to Jerusalem early in the morning the disciples saw that the cursed fig tree had dried up. Jesus used this sign to speak about the power of faith and prayer.

Acceptable prayers are spoken with faith and with a forgiving attitude toward others.

From heaven (Matthew 21:23-27; Mark 11:27-33; Luke 20:1-8)

The Jewish leaders asked Jesus for His credentials. Jesus answered them by asking them about John the Baptist. If John the Baptist was from heaven, then they could know where Jesus got His authority, for John testified that Jesus was greater than him. The leaders were afraid to answer Jesus' question. If they said John's baptism was from heaven, that would mean that they should have believed what John said about Jesus. If they said it was from men, that would mean that they disagreed with the common people, who regarded John as a prophet from God.

The parable of the two brothers (Matthew 21:28-32)

One brother said he would not work, but he did go work later. This son pictured the tax collectors, who repented at the preaching of John, although their earlier life was sinful. The other brother said he would work, but he did not work. This son pictured the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, who never did repent.

The parable of God's vineyard (Matthew 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-19)

God made Israel His vineyard. He put the people under the priests and the elders (see Isaiah 5 for a similar picture of God and His people). When God sent His Old Testament prophets to demand the fruits from the vineyard, they were beaten or killed. When God sent His Son, they killed Him too (as they would on Friday of this very week). Therefore, the kingdom was taken from the Jews and given to the heathen.

Notice that Jesus is the rejected Cornerstone around which God is going to build His Church. This was already foretold in Psalm 118:22, the same psalm from which we hear the Hosanna and the Benedictus. **"The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone"** (Psalm 118:22).

The parable of the wedding feast (Matthew 22:1-14)

This parable is similar to an earlier parable about a dinner to which the invited guests refused to come². The difference here is that the feast is a wedding feast involving wedding garments.

² See ***Dinner is ready!*** (Luke 14:1-24) in Lesson 10.

The Gospel is a message that tells us that all things are ready; salvation has been won. But the Jews, who were the ones first invited, refused to come, and therefore the invitation goes out to the Gentiles. But some of them also do not accept the gift of God in Christ, which is pictured by the wedding garment. In order to enter heaven, we need to wear the robe of Christ's righteousness. See Isaiah 61:10.

Taxes (Matthew 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17; Luke 20:20-26)

In their attempts to trap Jesus in His talk, the Pharisees tried to get Jesus to speak words against the Roman government. They themselves had no love for the Roman government; in fact, they would no doubt have accepted Jesus as their leader if He had led them in a revolt against the Romans. But Jesus was not trapped. His answer solved the problem they raised about paying taxes to Caesar. We are to give to God what is God's, and to Caesar what is Caesar's. With these words Jesus teaches us the principle of the separation of church and state.

The final resurrection from the dead (Matthew 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27; Luke 20:27-38)

After the Pharisees failed to trap Jesus, the Sadducees made an attempt of their own. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead or in angels or evil spirits and accepted only the five books of Moses as their Bible. When they told a story about a woman who had many husbands in succession, they were trying to poke fun at the idea of the resurrection. Jesus pointed out that there is no marriage in the hereafter. He showed them that the power of God is greater than they think. He also proved the resurrection of the dead from the book of Exodus, a book they accepted. See Exodus 3.

The greatest commandment (Matthew 22:34-40, 46; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 20:39-40)

The Pharisees and Sadducees had failed to trap Jesus. Then a law expert (a scribe) asked Jesus a question about the law. Jesus told him the greatest commandment was the First Table (Love God) and next to it was the Second Table (Love Your Neighbor). The lawyer accepted Jesus' answer, and Jesus told him that he was not far from God's kingdom.

Jesus' question about David's Son (Matthew 22:41-46; Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44)

Knowing that His enemies did not accept Him as the Christ (the Messiah), Jesus asked how the promised Messiah could be both David's Son and David's Lord at the same time, as Psalm 110 indicates. Do you know the answer to His question?

Jesus' warning against the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 23:1-12; Mark 12:37-40; Luke 20:45-47)

Since the scribes and Pharisees held positions of authority in the land, Jesus told His disciples to obey the laws of the land, but Jesus told them not to follow the bad example of their leaders. These leaders did not practice what they preached. Their only concern seemed to be the honor and praise they received from the people. Jesus disciples had a better Teacher, Jesus, who was also a good example.

Questions

1. Why did Jesus ride into Jerusalem on a colt?
2. Why was it fitting for the Palm Sunday crowd to shout “**Hosanna!**”?
3. List the differences between the first and second cleansing of the Temple in Jerusalem.
4. Why did the Jewish leaders fail to answer Jesus’ question about John?
5. What was Jesus foretelling with His parable of the vineyard?
6. For what purpose were Jesus’ enemies trying to trap Him in what He said?
7. Why did the Jewish leaders fail to answer Jesus’ question about the Son of David?
8. What was the main concern of the scribes and Pharisees?
9. How will life be different for us after resurrection on the Last Day?
10. What was Jesus’ teaching about our duty to the government?



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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 13 – Jesus Talks about Future Events

What the Future Would Bring

On Holy Tuesday, Jesus' last day of public teaching, He kept thinking of future events:

1. that the Jews would reject Him
2. that many Gentiles would accept Him
3. that God would send judgment on the impenitent Jews
4. that the whole world would be judged on the Last Day, and His people saved

The request of certain Greeks to see Jesus prompted Him to think of all the fruit (all the believers) that His coming death and resurrection would produce among the Gentiles. The voice of God from heaven, which sounded like thunder to the people, reminded Jesus of the glory that would come to God's name from all nations after He was lifted up, that is, crucified.

But His own people rejected Him. There were some who accepted Him, but the majority rejected their Messiah and Savior. Those who rejected Him could only expect judgment and condemnation. Jesus looked ahead with sadness to the destruction of Jerusalem, which was to take place 40 years later, in 70 AD. Jesus also spoke of His own second coming in glory and power that would take place at the end of the world. Jesus told His two last parables to keep His believers both waiting and working until the end, when Jesus as Judge shall divide His sheep from the goats and every man will either enjoy eternal life or suffer everlasting punishment.

Meanwhile, the high priest Caiaphas, the leaders of the people, and the traitor Judas made their plans to arrest the Lord and put Him to death. According to God's design this had to happen during the time of the Passover, for Jesus is the true Passover Lamb whose blood smeared on our hearts by faith saves us from everlasting death.

Read the listed passages as you study each of the events below:

***Woe!* (Matthew 23:13-39)**

These are terrifying words, but they are designed to warn Jesus' followers against hypocrisy and to lead the hypocrites to repentance.

Note that in verse 34, Jesus says that it is He who sends the prophets!

***A cent* (Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4)**

Quantity is not what Jesus look at in a gift of money given for His cause. God sees the trust in the giver's heart that is willing to part with a great percentage – even all. Should we give to God only leftovers?

“We want to see Jesus” (John 12:20-26)

When Jesus hears that Gentiles want to see Him, He thinks of the fruit of His death. A kernel of wheat must be put into the ground and die before it produces fruit. Similarly, Jesus must die and rise again to produce fruit: believers from all over the world.

Following Jesus means hating your life, serving Christ, and being honored by God.

The Light (John 12:27-36)

Jesus was troubled by His coming suffering, but He did not pray to be released from that suffering. A voice came from heaven, as at Jesus' baptism and at His transfiguration. This time the voice said (like thunder): **“I have glorified My name and will glorify it”** (v. 28).

Jesus then told how His death would mean the defeat of Satan and that it would produce fruit. He also warned the Jews to accept His light while He was still with them.

The Jews don't believe (John 12:37-50)

Despite all of Jesus' many miracles, the Jews did not believe Him as Isaiah had foretold. Yet some Jews, even leaders like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, believed in Jesus secretly. It is impossible for one truly to believe in God if he does not believe in God's Son, Jesus. When anyone rejects Jesus or His Word, that Word of Jesus will condemn him on the Last Day.

The Temple will be destroyed (Matthew 24:1-2; Mark 13:1-2; Luke 21:5-6)

The disciples admired the beautiful Temple built by Herod the Great for Jewish worship, but Jesus said it would be destroyed. When the Roman general Titus (who later became Roman emperor) surrounded Jerusalem with his armies in 70 AD, he did not want to destroy the Temple. He even promised to give the Temple back to the Jews if they would stop fighting. But the Jews continued to resist the Romans, and Titus changed his mind. The Temple was totally destroyed, and the ground of the city was plowed up by the Romans.

Sorrow ahead! (Matthew 24:3-14; Mark 13:3-13; Luke 21:7-19)

Jesus told His disciples that terrible things would occur in the future. We can think of these events as signs reminding us of the end – both of Jerusalem and the end of the world.

Among these signs:

1. Deceivers coming in Christ's name, false Christs
2. Wars and reports of wars

3. Famines, plagues, and earthquakes
4. Persecution and martyrdom of Jesus' followers
5. Hatred and separation between friends and families
6. False teachers
7. Love for Christ growing cold

Jesus said these signs would take place while the present generation was still alive. One very positive thing would take place: the preaching of the Gospel of Christ in the whole world. See Colossians 1:6, 23.

Jerusalem will be destroyed (Matthew 24:15-22; Mark 13:14-20; Luke 21:20-24)

Jesus' followers in Judea and Jerusalem should watch for one key sign: the abomination in the holy place. The Gospel of Luke explains that this means that Jerusalem would be surrounded with (Roman) armies. When this took place, all believers in Christ were instructed to leave Jerusalem at once. They were to flee to the mountains.

The Christians in Jerusalem in 70 AD followed Jesus' instructions when the Roman armies surrounded Jerusalem. They escaped to a town called Pella on the other side of the Jordan River where they were safe. The destruction of Jerusalem was the greatest disaster in history, and there will never be greater misery on earth. Over one million Jews were killed by civil war, by famine, and by the Romans. About 100,000 Jews were sold into slavery. The whole gruesome story is told by the historian Josephus, who was an eyewitness and published his account in 75 AD.

Jesus will come again (Matthew 24:23-35; Mark 13:21-31; Luke 17:22-25, 21:25-33)

There are no signs by which we can attempt to predict when the end of the world will come. We know there will be many false signs and false teachers who claim to know the time of the end. But when Jesus truly comes again, there will be no advance warning. His coming will be like lightning throughout the earth. But first the Son of Man must suffer and be rejected. His second coming, however, will be in power and glory.

People will not expect Him (Matthew 24:36-41; Mark 13:32; Luke 17:26-37)

The Last Day will come unexpectedly like the judgment came in the days of Noah and in the days of Lot. **"Remember Lot's wife"** (Luke 17:32). We need not be concerned about earthly things on that day. On that day friends and associates on earth will be forever separated, for believers in Christ will be separated from unbelievers.

Be ready! (Matthew 24:42-51; Mark 13:33-37; Luke 12:35-48, 21:34-36)

Since we do not know when Jesus will come, it is important that we always be ready for His coming. We need to be ready, like servants who are waiting for their master to return. Those who are ready will be blessed. Jesus is coming like a thief in the night. The wise managers and stewards of the house are those disciples who feed the Church with good spiritual nourishment until He returns. The unwatchful and the unfaithful managers

will be cut off. Many stripes and few stripes will be given on that day – many stripes to those who knew better but did not act according to their knowledge.

The Bridegroom is coming (Matthew 25:1-13)

This parable teaches us to wait for our Lord to return. He is our Bridegroom. There are both wise and foolish virgin girls who wait for Him to return – five wise, five foolish. The wise had oil for their lamps, but the foolish did not. Therefore, the foolish girls were locked out of the wedding feast, and only the wise were allowed to enter.

Three kinds of workers (Matthew 25:14-30)

This parable teaches us to work until our Lord returns. The man with 5 talents¹ ended up with 10 + 1 + the joy of his master. The man with 2 ended up with 4 + the joy of his master. The man with 1 ended up with nothing + weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Jesus will judge the world (Matthew 25:31-46)

All the world, both the living and the dead, will be divided into two groups: sheep and goats. The sheep are believers in Jesus; the goats are unbelievers.

To the sheep Jesus says: **“Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world”** (v. 34). Jesus defends His sheep before the world and publishes the good works they have done to Him by being good to His “brothers”, that is, other believers in Jesus. And the sins of His sheep are forgotten.

To the goats He says: **“Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels”** (v. 41). The goats are condemned for their lack of good works. Without faith in Christ, it is impossible to please God. Unbelievers are unable to do any good works in the sight of God no matter how good what they do may seem to us. Note that hell was not prepared for people, but rather for the devil and his angels.

Questions

1. For what purpose did Jesus denounce the Pharisees as He did?
2. What is God’s desire for all people everywhere?
3. What did Jesus teach His disciples in connection with the widow’s gift?
4. What did Jesus think about when He heard the request of the Greeks?
5. What are some of the reasons for the Jewish rejection of Jesus?
6. How were Jesus’ words about the destruction of the temple fulfilled?
7. Why can we not use the various signs mentioned by Jesus to determine when Jesus will return?
8. What would lead the Christians in Jerusalem to get out of the city?
9. What happened to those who remained in Jerusalem?

¹ A talent was the equivalent of 20 years wages for a laborer.

10. How did Jesus prepare His disciples for the end of the world?
11. Who are the sheep and who are the goats in Jesus' teaching about Judgment Day?



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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 14 – Jesus on Maundy Thursday

Wednesday and Thursday of Holy Week

On Wednesday of Holy Week Jesus apparently did not make His usual trip to Jerusalem from Bethany. He no doubt stayed in Bethany and rested in preparation for the events of the next two days. The disciples had heard Jesus say He would be crucified on Friday. It must have been a rather sad group gathered in Bethany on that day.

The Thursday of Holy Week is called Maundy Thursday. This strange name probably comes from the Latin word *mandare* which means “to command.” It was on Maundy Thursday that Jesus gave a new commandment to His disciples: “**A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another**” (John 13:34).

This Thursday was the day for the eating of the Passover lamb. Jesus sent Peter and John to Jerusalem to prepare for this meal. Jesus and His disciples then ate the Passover in a large upper room, concerning which Judas had no advance information. As Jesus for the last time celebrated the Passover with His disciples, He warned Judas for the last time and then instituted a new meal, which we call the Lord’s Supper or Holy Communion. Judas had no doubt by this time already gone out to carry out his horrible plan, although there are some Bible students who believe he was still present at the Lord’s Supper, partaking of it to his own harm.

After the meal Jesus talked to His disciples at length, warning them of what was to come, encouraging them to continue to follow Him and His teachings, and promising the coming of the Holy Spirit. These are very wonderful words of comfort coming from the mouth of Jesus, recorded for us in the Gospel of John (chapters 14-16). Jesus then prayed what has been called His High Priestly Prayer (John 17).

Later that same night Jesus and His disciples left the upper room and walked on the road to the Mount of Olives. They crossed the Kidron Creek and entered the Garden of Gethsemane. There Jesus prayed in great sorrow: “**O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will**” (Matthew 26:39). From this prayer we can begin to understand what it meant for Jesus as the Lamb of God to be burdened with the sin of the world and to be punished for it by God.

Then came Judas and the soldiers and servants. We see the betrayer’s kiss. We see our Lord and Savior arrested and tied up like a common criminal and led away to face the Jewish authorities. Remember that Jesus was put into this situation by our sin, and that He was willing to drink this bitter cup of suffering because of His love for us sinners.

Read the listed passages as you study each of the events below:

The plot (Matthew 26:1-5, 14-16; Mark 14:1-2, 10-11; Luke 22:1-6; John 13:1)

Notice how the devil, man's worst enemy, uses one of Jesus' own disciples together with the leaders of the people and the high priest in order to put Jesus to death. But Jesus knew what was going on. All that Satan accomplished by his murderous plans was his own defeat, for the suffering and death of Jesus destroyed Satan's power:

"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14-15).

The Passover (Matthew 26:17-20; Mark 14:12-17; Luke 22:7-17)

The first Passover lambs were killed in connection with the tenth plague in Egypt, the killing of the firstborn in Egypt. The blood of the Passover lambs saved the Israelites from death. Jesus is our Passover Lamb, whom we "eat" by trusting in His saving blood. **"For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us"** (1 Corinthians 5:7). Martin Luther's hymn says: "Here the true Paschal Lamb we see, Whom God so freely gave us; He died on the accursed tree – So strong His love! – to save us. See, His blood doth mark our door; Faith points to it, Death passes o'er, And Satan cannot harm us. Hallelujah!"

Jesus washes the disciples' feet (Luke 22:24-30; John 13:2-20)

There was a quarrel among the disciples as to who was best, possibly in connection with the seating arrangement at the Passover feast. Jesus gave them a lesson in humility: He washed their feet as their servant. Jesus said they should serve one another in the same way.

Jesus hints that one of His own disciples will betray Him when He said that not all of them were clean (John 13:10-11). He wants His disciples to know that He knows all the evils that are going to happen to Him ahead of time.

"Is it I?" (Matthew 26:21-25; Mark 14:18-21; Luke 22:21-23; John 13:21-32)

According to a Bible scholar named Alfred Edersheim, the seating arrangement was probably around a U-shaped table, with Jesus on one side of the table, John at His right, Judas at His left, with Peter sitting opposite from them.

Jesus said plainly that one of them would betray Him, and that the one who betrays Him should never have been born! Jesus told both John and Judas who it was, but Judas went out into the night without anyone suspecting it was him.

After Judas left the room, Jesus said: **"Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately"** (John 13:31-32). This showed that Jesus was looking beyond His coming suffering to the glorious result that would follow: His own resurrection, the

forgiveness of sins He won for the whole world, and the fruit of Christians throughout the world trusting in His sacrifice and living Christian lives to the glory of God.

The Lord's Supper (Matthew 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:18-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25)

Jesus gave His disciples some unleavened bread to eat and some grape wine to drink. As He gave them the bread, He said: **"Take, eat; this is My body"** (Matthew 26:26). As He gave them the wine, He said: **"This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins"** (Matthew 26:28). Jesus told His disciples to repeat this meal over and over again in memory of Him. Thus, Jesus still gives us His body and His blood for the forgiveness of our sins in this Sacrament. And this He can do because of His death in our place on the very next day.

Jesus warns Peter (Luke 22:31-38; John 13:33-38)

Jesus warns all His disciples about the troubles that lie ahead. Even though they will face troubles, Jesus gives tell them: Love each other!

Jesus gives a special warning to Peter, who boasted that he loved the Lord more than the others. Satan wants you, Peter, to disown your Lord, and you will, this very night!

"I am going away." (John 14:1-31)

Among Jesus' comforting words: **"I go to prepare a place for you ... that where I am, there you may be also"** (vv. 2-3). **"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me"** (v. 6). **"Because I live, you will live also"** (v. 19).

"The Holy Spirit ... will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (vv. 26-27).

The vine and the branch (John 15:1-27)

Jesus' comforting words continue: **"I am the vine, you are the branches. ... Without Me you can do nothing"** (v. 5). **"You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit"** (v. 16). **"The Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father ... will testify of Me"** (v. 26).

Sorrow will turn into joy (John 16:1-33)

Jesus' comforting words continue: **"The Spirit of truth ... will guide you into all truth"** (v. 13). **"You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy"** (v. 20). **"Whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you"** (v. 23). **"In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world"** (v. 33).

Jesus prays the High Priestly Prayer (John 17:1-26)

Jesus prays for Himself, then for His disciples, and then for all believers of all time.

Excerpts: **“This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (v. 3).** **“O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was” (v. 5).** **“The world has hated them because they are not of the world” (v. 14).** **“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth” (v. 17).** **“I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me” (v. 24).**

“You will deny Me” (Matthew 26:30-35; Mark 14:26-31; John 18:1)

Jesus told His disciples that all of them would turn against Him on that night. But Jesus reminded His disciples more than once that He would rise again. Peter boasted of his loyalty to the Lord, and so did His other disciples. But later they all forsook Him and fled.

Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:39-46; John 18:1)

Jesus took His disciples across the Kidron Creek to the Garden of Gethsemane, where He often went with His disciples. Leaving eight of His disciples behind, Jesus took Peter, James, and John with Him to watch and pray with Him. But as He prayed, they fell asleep. Three times Jesus asked His Father to remove the horrible cup of suffering from Him, but only if it was His Father’s will. Do you think it was easy for Jesus to be our Savior and to be punished for all human sin? God was able to remove this cup, but He was not willing to do so, for it was God’s eternal plan to save the human race from sin and death through the suffering and death of His Son Jesus, and so there was no other way. Hebrews 5:7 tell us that Jesus **“offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear.”** Jesus’ prayer was heard, but the Father’s answer was not to take the cup from Him, but only to strengthen Him through a visit from an angel.

In our own struggles we should pray as Jesus prayed: **“Not My will, but Yours, be done”** (Luke 22:42).

Judas betrays Jesus (Matthew 26:47-50; Mark 14:43-45; Luke 22:46-48; John 18:2-9)

The arrest (Matthew 26:50-57; Mark 14:46-53; Luke 22:49-54; John 18:10-14)

Jesus showed His power one last time when they all fell backward to the ground at His voice. Because He chose not to use His power, we see that Jesus willingly gave Himself into their hands. Remember that Jesus did all of this for us.

Questions

1. How did the devil contribute to his own defeat?
2. Why was it important for Jesus to suffer and die during Passover time?
3. In what ways is it true that Jesus is our Passover?
4. What did Jesus teach His disciples by washing their feet?
5. How can we be sure that Jesus did all that He could to save Judas Iscariot?
6. How do we know Jesus wants us to observe the Lord’s Supper today?
7. Summarize what Jesus told His disciples about the Holy Spirit (John chapters 14-16).

8. When was the sorrow of the disciples turned into joy?
9. What does the scene in Gethsemane reveal to us about Jesus?
10. What evidence shows that Jesus willingly gave Himself up?



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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 15 – Our Suffering Savior on Good Friday

Good Friday

After Jesus was arrested, His disciples ran away. Peter and John, however, followed at a distance to see what would happen. On that day Peter disowned his Lord three times. John witnessed the crucifixion. Judas hanged himself.

Jesus had a preliminary hearing before Annas, a former high priest who was the father-in-law of the current high priest, Caiaphas. At this hearing Jesus was slapped on the face; this was only the beginning of the physical abuse Jesus endured that night for us.

Jesus was then sent to Caiaphas for trial. At this trial the Jewish leaders resorted to false witnesses in order to condemn Him. But these liars could not agree. Finally, as a last resort, Caiaphas asked Jesus under oath whether He was the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus swore that He was the Christ, and they immediately convicted Him of blasphemy. Jesus was thus condemned for telling the truth. It would have been blasphemy if anyone else had answered as Jesus did.

Apparently, the night trial was not really legal. Therefore, there was another trial after sunrise. The Jewish high court again condemned Jesus for blasphemy.

Jesus was then led to the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, for another trial. This trial was necessary because the Jews at that time did not have the authority to put anyone to death. Jesus was not accused of blasphemy at His trial before Pilate. The Romans did not consider blasphemy to be a crime for which someone should be put to death. Therefore, Jesus was now charged with rebelling against the Roman Caesar because He claimed to be a king. This charge was a lie, and the Jewish leaders knew it was a lie.

By questioning Jesus, Pilate determined that this charge was a lie, and that Jesus was no threat to Caesar. Jesus' kingdom was not of this world. Pilate became convinced that Jesus was not guilty of any crime. He knew that the Jewish leaders were envious of Jesus, and that is why they wanted Him to be put to death.

Pilate tried various methods to get Jesus released: he sent Him to Herod Antipas; he gave the people a choice between releasing Jesus or the notorious criminal, Barabbas; and he tried to arouse the people's pity. But Pilate was too much of a coward to do the just thing and release Jesus. He finally gave in to the insistent voices of the Jewish leaders and to the mob they incited, and Pilot ordered the crucifixion of Jesus.

Crucifixion was a terrible way to die. It involved great bodily suffering, as well as public shame and ridicule. Jesus endured this physical suffering without any drugs or pain killers. But Jesus' physical suffering was as nothing compared with the spiritual suffering He endured as the Substitute for sinners. Jesus, the Son of God, was truly forsaken by God, as He cried out from the cross. He was cursed by God as all sinners deserve to be cursed. The apostle Paul wrote: **"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us"** (Galatians 3:13). Again Paul wrote: **"For He (God) made Him (Jesus) to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him"** (2 Corinthians 5:21). The prophet Isaiah had described the scene over 700 years earlier and the reason for it. **"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. ... the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. ... Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief** (Isaiah 53:5-6, 10). These are the things we should think about as we read about Jesus' suffering.

But finally, the suffering of hell passed. Jesus cried out in victory: **"It is finished!"** (John 19:30). He then willingly gave Himself over to death. It was a Good Friday indeed on which our Lord died, for by that death He won life for us. **"Our Lord Jesus Christ ... died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him"** (1 Thessalonians 5:9-10).

Jesus did not stay dead. He rose again on the third day, just as He had said. Strangely enough, His enemies remembered His predictions and guarded His tomb, but His disciples seem to have forgotten His promises in their hopelessness and despair. They did not expect him to rise again, even though He had told them He would.

The hours

It seems that when Matthew, Mark, and Luke refer to time, they use the Jewish method, which begins in the morning around 6:00 a.m. Thus, "the sixth hour" would be noon. It seems John, however, who wrote his Gospel at a later time, used the Roman method of counting time, which starts at midnight or noon. Thus, when John says "the sixth hour", it would be either 6:00 a.m. or 6:00 p.m. In either case, the times given by the Gospel writers were only approximate.

Read the listed passages as you study each of the events below:

Peter follows Jesus (Matthew 26:58; Mark 14:54; Luke 22:54-55; John 18:15-16, 18)

John knew the high priest and was permitted to enter the courtyard. John talked to the girl who watched the door so that Peter was also permitted to enter.

Before Annas (John 18:19-24)

At this hearing Jesus was slapped on the face unjustly by an attendant.

The first trial before the Jewish court (Matthew 26:57,59-68; Mark 14:53, 55-65; Luke 22:63-65)

Here we have an example of perjury just as at Naboth's trial (see 1 Kings 21:1-16) and at Stephen's trial (Acts 6:8-15). What a terrible travesty of justice: the judges looking for false witnesses! But Jesus was not convicted by their lies, but He was convicted because He told the truth under oath that He was (and is) the Messiah. Notice how Jesus was mocked as a prophet and beaten as a criminal. Later they made fun of Jesus as a king (with a "crown" and a robe).

Peter denies Jesus (Matthew 26:69-75; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:56-62; John 18:17, 25-27)

The first time he simply denied Jesus. The second time he swore his denial. The third time he cursed and swore as he denied his Lord in fear. But when Jesus looked at Peter, he immediately regretted what he had done.

The second meeting of the Jewish court (Matthew 27:1-2; Mark 15:1; Luke 22:66 – 23:1)

The end of Judas Iscariot (Matthew 27:3-10; Acts 1:18)

There is a similarity between Peter's denial of Jesus and Judas' betrayal of Jesus. But there is also a difference. Judas regretted his action, but he did not turn to Jesus in repentance, as Peter did.

Before Pilate (Matthew 27:11-14; Mark 15:2-5; Luke 23:2-4; John 18:28-38)

A new charge was brought against Jesus: rebellion and insurrection. If we remember what Jesus said on the previous Tuesday about giving to Caesar what is Caesar's, it becomes obvious that the charge was false. Jesus explained that His kingdom was not an earthly kingdom, but a kingdom of truth. Pilate did not fully understand what Jesus meant, but he did know that Jesus was innocent of the charges brought against Him.

Before Herod Antipas (Luke 23:5-16)

Jesus did not say a single thing in Herod's court. Herod wanted Jesus to entertain him by doing a miracle, but that did not happen. Pilate and Herod became friends in dealing with this Jesus problem.

Barabbas (Matthew 27:15-26; Mark 15:6-15; Luke 23:17-25; John 18:39-40)

Pilate offered the Jews a choice between releasing Barabbas or Jesus. To Pilate's surprise, they chose to release Barabbas and called for Jesus to be crucified. They told Pilate they would bear the responsibility for Jesus' death.

Trying to arouse sympathy for Jesus (Matthew 27:26-31; Mark 15:15-20; Luke 23:25; John 19:1-16)

Pilate had Jesus scourged and then brought Him out to the crowd, thinking they would be satisfied. But they threatened Pilate by referring to Caesar, and Pilate, in his weakness, gave in to their desire.

On the way to Golgotha (Matthew 27:31-32; Mark 15:20-21; Luke 23:26-32; John 19:16-17)

By this time Jesus must have been very weak. He started out carrying His own cross, but soon Simon carried it for Him. Jesus told the sorrowful women not to weep for Him but for themselves and their children. Jesus was referring to the coming destruction of Jerusalem that took place in 70 AD.

The crucifixion (Matthew 27:33-43; Mark 15:22-32; Luke 23:33-38; John 19:17-24)

Jesus was numbered with the criminals. Pilate chose the words for the title on the cross and would not change them. The soldiers divided Jesus' clothing.

Jesus' first word from the cross: "**Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do**" (Luke 23:34).

A robber turns to Jesus (Matthew 27:44; Mark 15:32; Luke 23:39-43)

One robber rebuked the other for making fun of Jesus. Then he turned to Jesus in prayer, and Jesus spoke to him the second word: "**Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise**" (Luke 23:43).

Jesus makes provision for His mother (John 19:25-27)

Even while He was dying, Jesus obeyed the Fourth Commandment for us, providing for His mother by giving her to His disciple John. His third word was to Mary and John; To Mary He said: "**Woman, behold your son!**" (v. 26), to John He said: "**Behold your mother!**" (v. 27).

The three dark hours from noon to three (Matthew 27:45-49; Mark 15:33-36; Luke 23:44-46; John 19:28-30)

The fourth word reveals the depth of Jesus' spiritual suffering for us. Jesus endured the pains of hell in our place: "**Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?**" (Matthew 27:46). This was a clear reference to Psalm 22.

The fifth word shows us Jesus' human nature: "**I thirst**" (John 19:28). He was given sour wine.

The sixth word: "**It is finished!**" (John 19:30).

The seventh word: "**Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit**" (Luke 23:46).

The death of Jesus and accompanying events (Matthew 27:50-56; Mark 15:37-41; Luke 23:46-49; John 19:30)

At Jesus' death the curtain in the temple was torn from top to bottom. This indicated that heaven has been opened for sinners through Jesus' death as the sacrifice that atoned for sin. Note the words that the people said and that certain dead persons in the Jerusalem area rose from the dead. These resurrected people appeared alive in the city after Jesus' own resurrection on Sunday.

Questions

1. What led Peter to deny his Lord?
2. What is the difference between the remorse of Judas and the remorse of Peter?
3. How was Jesus' mission as a prophet of God ridiculed?
4. What three charges were brought against Jesus when He was led to Pilate?
5. Prove that all of these charges were lies.
6. Why was Jesus silent in the court of Herod Antipas?
7. List the attempts Pilate made to release Jesus.
8. Why did these attempts fail?
9. For whom did Jesus want the women who were weeping for Him to weep? Why?
10. Which of the seven words explain the depths of Jesus' suffering?
11. What do the seven words say about the purpose of Jesus' death?
12. What do the seven words say about the results of Jesus' death?
13. What is the significance of the tearing of the Temple curtain?



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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 16 – Our Risen Savior and Lord

Jesus' Resurrection from the Dead

After Jesus died and was buried, He was made alive again and descended into hell to proclaim His victory. This descent into hell was not part of His humiliation, but it was the first step in His exaltation. 1 Peter 3:18-20 tells us: **"For Christ also suffered once for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, by which also He went and preached (made a proclamation) to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah."** Colossians 2:15: **"Having disarmed principalities and powers, He (God) made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in Him (Christ)."**

Then, early Sunday morning Jesus rose from the dead. No one saw Him. After Jesus had left His grave, the angel came to roll the stone away and to frighten the guards. The women who had come to anoint Jesus' dead body with spices were the first to see the empty tomb and to hear the Easter message of the angels: **"He is not here, for He is risen"** (Matthew 28:6). When Mary of Magdala saw the stone rolled away, she immediately ran to get Peter and John. When Peter and John ran to the grave, they found it empty, but they did not see any angels.

During the forty days after His resurrection Jesus appeared alive many times to His disciples, both as a group and individually. The Bible mentions the following appearances, which are listed in their probable order:

1. To Mary of Magdala, on Easter Sunday. She at first thought Him to be a gardener (Mark 16:9-11, John 20:11-18).
2. To some of the other women, on Easter Sunday, as they were returning from the tomb (Matthew 28:9-10).
3. To Cleopas and his friend, on Easter Sunday afternoon, as they walked to Emmaus (Mark 16:12-13, Luke 24:13-35).
4. To Peter alone, on Easter Sunday afternoon (1 Corinthians 15:5; Luke 24:34).
5. To ten of His apostles, plus Cleopas and other disciples, on Easter Sunday evening (Thomas absent) (Luke 24:36-49, John 20:19-24).
6. To the eleven apostles, and perhaps other disciples, one week later, in Jerusalem (Thomas present) (Mark 16:14-15, John 20:26-29, 1 Corinthians 15:5).
7. To seven apostles, by the Sea of Galilee (John 21:1-23 – the "third time" v. 14).
8. To over 500 disciples at one time (1 Corinthians 15:6).

9. To His apostles on a mountain in Galilee, where He commissioned His disciples to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:16-20, 1 Corinthians 15:7). (It is very likely that this occurred at the same time as the appearance listed as #8.)
10. To His brother James, who with His other brothers was now associated with His disciples (1 Corinthians 15:7).
11. To many of His disciples at the Mount of Olives, where He ascended to heaven (Mark 16:19, Luke 24:50-52, Acts 1:6-11).
12. To the apostle Paul on the road to Damascus, after His ascension (1 Corinthians 15:8).

Why did Jesus have to rise again? Wasn't His work finished when He died on the cross?

Jesus' resurrection is God's announcement to the whole world that the sins of the world have been removed. Jesus went to His death with the sin of the world on His back, and He could not rise again from the dead unless He had fully atoned for all this sin by His suffering and death as man's Substitute. Thus, the resurrection of Jesus proves that His mission was a success and not a failure. Jesus succeeded in doing what no mere man could ever have done: He fully atoned for the sin of the world.

The letters of the New Testament are full of the joy of Jesus' resurrection. This was the really important good news. It changed Jesus' followers from sad and defeated disciples of a condemned criminal into the joyful and bold ambassadors of the Son of God, with the message of the forgiveness of sins for the whole world. Paul wrote later: **"If Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished"** (1 Corinthians 15:17-18). **"And we are found false witnesses of God"** (1 Corinthians 15:15). Without the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, there is no Christian Gospel.

Read the listed passages as you study each of the events below:

No bone broken (John 19:31-37)

The murderers of the Messiah were careful not to break the Sabbath laws. Jesus' body was taken down before the Sabbath began.

Sometimes it was days before the person who was crucified died. But Jesus died soon of His own free will. Since Jesus was already dead, the soldiers did not break His bones, as they did the other two criminals so that they would die quickly, and the bodies could be removed before the Sabbath began.

Both the fact that His bones were not broken and that He was pierced with a spear had been foretold in prophecy, thus proving to us once more that Jesus is the true Messiah.

Jesus is buried (Matthew 27:57-61; Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-56; John 19:38-42)

Joseph and Nicodemus were two secret disciples. They now confessed Jesus openly and stepped forward to bury His body. The fact that they were rich men fulfilled the prophecy in Isaiah 53:9.

The guard (Matthew 27:62-66)

Even though Jesus' disciples did not believe Jesus' prophecy that He would rise on the third day, Jesus' enemies remembered it and took precautions to prevent anyone from stealing His body so they could claim He had been resurrected.

Jesus rises from the dead (Matthew 28:1-8; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-9; John 20:1-2)

On Saturday evening some of the women had bought spices for Jesus' dead body, but by Sunday morning Jesus was no longer dead. He escaped from the tomb, an earthquake took place, bodies of dead believers came out of their tombs, an angel rolled the stone away, and the guards fled in terror. These things were unable to keep the Lord of life among the dead.

When Mary of Magdala saw that the stone was rolled away, she feared foul play and went to get Peter and John. The other women proceeded to the grave and found the tomb empty. Two angels told them what had happened and reminded them of what Jesus had said. Jesus had risen from the dead, as He said He would. He is alive now!

Peter and John (Luke 24:12; John 20:3-10)

John outran Peter to the tomb but was not bold enough to go in. Peter came and entered the tomb and found it empty. There was no sign of any struggle or foul play. But they did not see Jesus nor did they hear any message from an angel.

"Mary" (Mark 16:9-11; John 20:11-18)

Mary of Magdala returned to the tomb and found it empty. She thought Jesus' body had been stolen, and she wept. Two angels asked her why she was crying. And then Jesus Himself appeared to her to comfort her. Jesus asked her why she was weeping, but at first she thought He was the gardener. When He said "**Mary**" to her, she knew that it was Jesus. She then told the other disciples that she had seen Jesus, but at first they did not believe her.

The other women see Jesus (Matthew 28:9-10; Luke 24:9-11)

As the other women returned from the empty tomb, Jesus met them and reminded them that He had told them He would rise, and that they all would see Him in Galilee, as He had promised. But the other disciples did not believe the women's story either.

The guards (Matthew 28:11-15)

Perhaps the best proof of Jesus' resurrection is the lie told by these guards: that they had been sleeping when the disciples stole Jesus' body. Can you find any holes in their story? They were paid for this lie.

On the way to Emmaus (Mark 16:12-13; Luke 24:13-35)

Even though they had already heard that Jesus' tomb was empty and that angels had told the women that Jesus had risen, Cleopas and an unnamed disciple were sad as they walked to Emmaus on Sunday afternoon. A Stranger joined them and scolded them for being sad when there were so many Old Testament prophecies that talked about the sufferings of the Messiah, which be followed by triumphant glory. They did not know that this Stranger was the risen and living Jesus until they ate with Him in Emmaus. But Jesus then vanished, and they quickly returned to Jerusalem to tell the others what had happened.

Behind locked doors (Mark 16:14; Luke 24:36-48; John 20:19-23)

Out of fear, Jesus' apostles and other disciples tried to hide from the Jewish authorities who had called for Jesus' crucifixion. Jesus came through the locked doors and greeted them with the message of peace. Gradually they became convinced that He had truly risen from the dead and that He was alive before their very eyes. He showed them His hands, His feet, and His pierced side to prove that He was indeed the very person who had been crucified. He showed them that all of these events had been foretold in the Old Testament.

On this same evening Jesus gave His disciples the authority to forgive sins and retain sins in His name. This same power of the keys to open and close heaven is given to us now as Jesus' disciples.

Thomas sees Jesus (John 20:24-29)

Thomas had not been with the others on Easter Sunday. He did not believe what the others said about Jesus' resurrection. One week later Thomas was with the others, and Jesus came in the same way as before. Thomas received the proof he said he needed, and he confessed: "**My Lord and my God!**" (v. 28). Jesus then pronounced a blessing on all those who would believe in Him and in His resurrection without actually seeing Him in the flesh. This means all of Jesus' followers today, including us. Jesus' disciples then went to Galilee to see Him again at the place appointed by Him.

Breakfast with Jesus (Matthew 28:16; John 21:1-14)

Seven disciples went fishing and caught nothing until Jesus appeared and told them where to cast the net for a catch. The result was 153 fine fish and breakfast with their risen Lord. Now we are fishers of men.

“Do you love Me?” (John 21:15-24)

Peter had denied Jesus three times. Now he was given the opportunity to confess Him three times. Jesus then told Peter that he would be put to death by crucifixion for Jesus' sake.

“Make disciples!” – The Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-18)

Having full authority over all things in heaven and earth, Jesus, on a mountain in Galilee, commissioned His disciples to make more disciples among all nations everywhere by baptizing them and teaching them His Word. The teaching was to be thorough, covering all the things they had learned from Jesus. Jesus promised to be with them and their successors even to the time of His return at the end of time. This continues to be our assignment from our Lord and Savior even now and will remain our assignment until Jesus appears again visibly on the Day of Judgment.

Jesus goes up to heaven (Mark 16:19-20; Luke 24:49-52; Acts 1:3-12)

At the Mount of Olives Jesus ascended visibly into the sky. He will return in the same way. We should not think of Jesus as being enclosed or limited to a certain spot in the heavens. The right hand of God is everywhere. His sitting at the right hand of God means that He has all power, that He is everywhere, and that He can be present with His blessings wherever He wants to be – for example, where two or three of His followers are gathered together in His name He is there.

Jesus is the promised Savior (John 20:30-31; John 21:25)

We are reminded by these words that the purpose of the Gospels – and in fact of the whole Bible – is to convince us that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior of the world. This means that He is also *our* Savior from sin and that He wants to be the Lord of our lives.

Questions

1. What is meant by Christ's descent into hell?
2. Why did the guards tell a lie about Jesus' empty tomb?
3. Why were the women going out to see Jesus' tomb?
4. Who remembered Jesus' promise that He would rise on the third day?
5. Why is it so important that Jesus rose from the dead in His body?
6. Why did Jesus appear to so many people after He rose from the dead?
7. Why did the Stranger call the two walking to Emmaus fools?
8. What did Jesus' disciples say about the reports of the women that Jesus had risen?
9. What authority did Jesus give His disciples on Easter Sunday evening?
10. How did Jesus spend His first forty days after He rose?
11. What convinced Thomas that Jesus had risen from the dead?
12. What is meant by the Great Commission?

13. What is meant by sitting at the right hand of God?
14. Why did the apostle John write his Gospel?



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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 17 – The Beginning of the New Testament Church

The Book of Acts

The book of Acts is really the second part of Luke's Gospel. The physician Luke was a companion of Paul on his mission journeys. Luke wrote both the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts for a new convert named Theophilus. Acts was probably written between 60 and 70 AD.

The theme of the book of Acts is the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ from Jerusalem, which was the center of Judaism, to Rome, which was the center of the ancient world. We read how the apostles of our Lord carried out His command to preach the Gospel to every creature, beginning at Jerusalem. They started preaching to Jews, then to Greek-speaking Jews called Hellenists, then to Samaritans, then to Gentiles of all kinds. The chief agents of this work of God whose stories are told in Acts are: Peter, James, John, Stephen, Philip, James (the brother of the Lord), Barnabas, and Paul. The era covered by the book is the thirty years from 30 AD to 60 AD.

The Holy Spirit: the Hero of the Book of Acts

When Jesus ascended into heaven, He promised to send the Holy Spirit. This promise was kept ten days later at the Jewish festival of Pentecost, which means 50th, because it was 50 days after Passover. On Pentecost the Holy Spirit came down in a visible and audible way to the followers of Jesus who were gathered together in Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit then began through them His great work of proclaiming to the world the message of the crucified and risen Messiah in whom there is forgiveness of sins for all people. Therefore, the book of Acts can rightly be called "the Gospel of the Holy Spirit".

The Holy Spirit was of course active before Pentecost. He created the world. He spoke through the Old Testament prophets. He empowered the Virgin Mary to conceive and give birth to the Son of God. He was with Jesus in His ministry. On Easter Sunday evening Jesus gave His disciples the Holy Spirit and the ministry of the keys. But on Pentecost the Holy Spirit was given to the disciples of Jesus in an especially rich measure. It was the Holy Spirit who guided and directed the activity of Jesus' apostles and the early Christians. He opened their mouths to proclaim the Word of God. Later, the Holy Spirit guided their pens in the writing of the New Testament.

The Gospel proclaimed by the Holy Spirit had two different effects: the conversion of many and the opposition of many. It has these effects today, as it will until the end of the world.

Those upon whom the Holy Spirit works and in whom He creates faith in the Gospel by means of the Gospel are the Church of God, that is, the believers in Christ, the dwelling places of the Holy Spirit; they are the beloved children of God and heirs of the Father.

The Preaching of Jesus' Apostles

Notice that the message of the apostles was centered on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and their meaning for all sinners, namely, the forgiveness of sins. Their message, especially to the Jews who treasured the Old Testament, was that Jesus was the Messiah promised to the Jewish people. The apostles often quoted Old Testament prophecies and showed how Jesus was the fulfillment of those prophecies. Jesus had promised to confirm the preaching of the apostles through signs and miracles. In the early months and years after Pentecost there were many such signs.

Read the listed passages in Acts as you study each of the events below:

Jesus promises the Holy Spirit to His disciples (Acts 1:1-8)

"Wait for the promise of the Father" (v. 4).

"You shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now" (v. 5).

"When the Holy Spirit has come upon you, ... you shall be witnesses to Me" (v. 8).

Jesus ascends to heaven at the Mount of Olives (1:9-12) – (Beck suggests May 18, 30 AD as the date)

"He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight" (v. 9).

Two angels said: **"This same Jesus ... will so come in like manner as you saw Him go" (v. 11).**

The eleven apostles, Jesus' brothers, other disciples, Mary and other women wait (1:13-14)

The total number of those waiting in Jerusalem was 120.

The disciple Matthias is chosen to become an apostle to replace Judas Iscariot (1:15-26, Ps. 69:25, 109:8)

Peter: **"One of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection" (v. 22).**

The Holy Spirit is poured out on the disciples at Pentecost (2:1-13)

The threefold miracle:

"a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind" (v. 2).

"divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them" (v. 3).

"they began to speak with other tongues (languages)" (v. 4).

The speaking in tongues on Pentecost was the speaking of unlearned foreign languages.

The Holy Spirit uses Peter to preach **Sermon One** (2:14-36)

“This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel” (v. 16, see Joel 2:28-32)

“Him ... you ... have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up” (vv. 23-24, see Ps. 16:8-11)

“Being exalted to the right hand of God” (v. 32).

“God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ” (v. 36, see Ps. 110:1)

Note: The sermons of the apostles were generally based on Old Testament prophecies.

Peter preaches the Good News of forgiveness to the troubled Jews (2:37-41)

“They were cut to the heart, and said ... : ‘What shall we do?’” (v. 37).

Peter: **“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized ... for the remission of sins” (v. 38).**

“That day about three thousand souls were added to them” (v. 41).

The first Christian congregation rejoices in the Gospel (2:42-47)

“They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship” (v. 42).

Note: True Christian fellowship is based on a continuing in apostolic doctrine today also.

“All who believed were together, and had all things in common” (v. 44).

Note: This was a voluntary communism, much different from that in communist countries today (which is forced upon the people).

Peter and John are given power by Christ to heal a lame beggar (3:1-11)

Peter: **“Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you” (v. 6).**

Peter: **“In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk” (v. 6).**

“They were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him” (v. 10).

Note: In the early days of the Church the apostles voluntarily kept the Old Testament customs.

Peter uses this opportunity to preach **Sermon Two** (3:12-26, see Deut. 18:15-20; Genesis 12:3)

Peter: **“You ... killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead” (vv. 14-15).**

“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out” (v. 19).

“God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him (through our preaching) to bless you” (v. 26).

The Jewish leaders put Peter and John into prison (4:1-4)

Peter testifies to the Jewish leaders (4:5-12, see Ps. 118:22)

“By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole” (v. 10).

“There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (v. 12).

Note: The true Gospel is both inclusive and exclusive. Forgiveness of sins is for all, but only those who trust in Jesus will receive it. Jesus is the world’s only Savior.

The Jewish leaders command Peter and John not to preach the Gospel (4:13-22)

The leaders: **“That a notable miracle has been done through them is evident to all” (v. 16).**

Nevertheless **“they ... commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus” (v. 18).**

Peter and John: **“We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (v. 20).**

The Christians pray for boldness to speak the Word of God (4:23-37, see Gen. 1, Ps. 2)

“Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them” (v. 24).

“Against ... Jesus ... both Herod and Pontius Pilate ... were gathered together” (v. 27).

“Grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word” (v. 29).

“With great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus” (v. 33).

“Barnabas ... having land sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles’ feet” (vv. 36-37).

God shows His hatred of hypocrisy by killing Ananias and Sapphira (5:1-11)

They **“sold a possession ... and brought a certain part of it and laid it at the apostles’ feet” (vv. 1-2).**

But they wanted people to think that they had given all the proceeds to the apostles.

Peter: **“Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit? ... You have lied to God” (vv. 3-4).**

Note: Their sin was hypocrisy: pretending to give all while they were only giving only a part.

Note: Peter pointed out that they had the right to keep part of the money if they wanted.

Note: Peter plainly taught that the Holy Spirit is God. A lie to the Holy Spirit is a lie to God.

“Ananias ... fell down and breathed his last” (v. 5). Later Sapphira **“breathed her last”** (v. 10).

“Great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things” (v. 11).

The apostles are given power to work many miracles of healing (5:12-16)

“Believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women” (v. 14).

The Jewish leaders imprison the apostles and question them (5:17-28)

They **“put them in the common prison. But ... an angel ... opened the prison doors”** (vv. 18-19).

The report: **“The men whom you put in prison are ... teaching the people”** (v. 25).

The high priest: **“Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? ... You have filled Jerusalem with this doctrine”** (v. 28).

Questions:

1. For whom did Luke write his Gospel and the book of Acts?
2. What is the theme of the book of Acts?
3. What is the special work of the Holy Spirit?
4. What is meant by the baptism with the Holy Spirit?
5. What miracles took place on the day of Pentecost?
6. What was the main point of Peter’s sermon on Pentecost?
7. Why were Peter and John put into prison?
8. Why did Peter and John openly disobey the orders given to them?
9. What did Peter say that tells us that there is only one Savior?
10. What was the sin of Ananias and Sapphira?
11. What was the purpose of the miracles done by the apostles?



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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 18 – The Gospel Triumphs over Persecution

The Persecution of Christians

In Lesson 13 we heard Jesus predict persecution for His disciples. He said: **“They will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name’s sake”** (Luke 21:12). Again, on Maundy Thursday (Lesson 14) Jesus told His disciples: **“They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me”** (John 16:2-3).

Jesus’ words were fulfilled almost immediately. The persecutors were the Jewish leaders – the same ones that had killed Christ. They put Peter and John into prison after the healing of the crippled beggar. Then they threatened them and commanded them not to preach the Gospel of Jesus. Soon all the apostles were put into prison and threatened with death. On that occasion their lives were preserved through the advice of Gamaliel, a famous Jewish teacher of that time.

Then a great persecution came as a consequence of the bold preaching of Stephen, one of the seven deacons chosen by the congregation to distribute food to the poor. When Stephen repeated Jesus’ prophecies of the destruction of the Temple and defended his position by quoting the Scriptures, the Jewish leaders were furious and stoned him to death. The Pharisee Saul, a student of Gamaliel, became the chief persecutor; he was guilty of torturing and killing many Christians. He even traveled as far as Damascus in Syria in his effort to exterminate Christians.

The persecution of Christians has never entirely ceased. The first centuries of the church (50-300 AD) witnessed many persecutions by Jewish authorities and Roman authorities, including the Roman Emperor Diocletian, who made one last effort to destroy Christianity altogether. When the Roman Emperor Constantine himself became a Christian in 312 AD, official persecution came to an end.

The next great period of persecution occurred during the Reformation era, when the Roman Catholic Church itself persecuted those who revived the true teaching of the Gospel: that we are saved alone by faith in Christ, apart from works. Martin Luther himself was declared an outlaw, and many thousands of Christians were put to death by the forces of the church and the state.

Today persecution is taking place in many parts of the world. Christians are being beaten, tortured, and killed officially and unofficially, especially in countries ruled by Muslims or Hindus. Christians in Nigeria, India, Myanmar, and China are in great danger of persecution at the present time. In the United States and some European countries faithful confessional Christians are often ridiculed and blacklisted because of their confession of Christian teachings.

How God Turns Persecution into Good

The persecution of Christians after Stephen's death drove them out of Jerusalem into other areas of Judea and into Samaria. Wherever the Christians were driven, they took the Gospel with them. Thus, persecution led to the spread of the Gospel. The deacon Philip brought God's Word to Samaria. He was then led by the Holy Spirit to a desert road, where he met a man from Ethiopia and brought the Gospel to him. From there he traveled to Azotus and Caesarea. The Gospel also reached such places in Syria as Damascus and Antioch.

The greatest of all triumphs over persecution occurred when the risen Jesus Himself appeared to Saul, the persecutor, and changed him from a violent persecutor into the apostle Paul, the most zealous Christian missionary to the Gentiles. As could be expected, Saul was considered a traitor by the Jews, and he became the chief target of their persecution. But Saul escaped from them and returned for the time being to his hometown of Tarsus.

Today also the Lord uses persecution to spread the Gospel. It often happens that Christianity makes its largest gains when Christians are being persecuted. People see how loyal Christians remain to Jesus Christ even under pressure, and this has a great impact. One Christian from the early centuries said that the blood of martyrs is the seed of the church. This has proved to be true in many places, such as China today.

Read the listed passages as you study each of the events below.

Peter testifies again to the Jewish leaders (Acts 5:29-32)

Peter said: **"We ought to obey God rather than men"** (v. 29).

Note: We also are permitted to disobey superiors when they forbid something commanded by God or when they command something forbidden by God.

Peter testified: **"The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins"** (vv. 30-31).

Note: The Apostles always proclaimed the same message: the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the benefits for those who trust in Him: forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation.

Gamaliel advises the Jewish leaders to let the apostles go (5:33-42)

Gamaliel said: **“If this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it”** (vv. 38-39).

The apostles rejoiced **“that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name”** (v. 41).

The Jerusalem congregation elects seven deacons to assist the apostles (6:1-7)

There was a quarrel between the Greek-speaking Jews and the Hebrew-speaking Jews about the food distribution to poor widows.

The twelve said: **“It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables”** (v. 2).

The twelve said: **“Seek out from among you seven men of good reputation”** (v. 3).

They chose Stephen, Philip, and five others.

“The number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem” (v. 7).

The Jewish leaders arrest Stephen because of his preaching (6:8-15)

“They were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke” (v. 10).

“They stirred up the people ... and ... seized him, and brought him to the council” (v. 12).

Stephen preaches **Sermon Three** in his own defense (7:1-53)

The Jewish leaders accused Stephen of speaking against Moses and the Temple.

Stephen told the story of Moses from the Scriptures:

The four patriarchs (vv. 1-16), Moses himself (vv. 17-36), the prophecy (vv. 37), resistance (vv. 38-43).

“The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me ... Him you shall hear” (v. 37).

Stephen told the story of the Temple:

The tabernacle and the Temple (vv. 44-47), resistance (vv. 48-50).

Conclusion: **“You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did ... They killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers”** (vv. 51-52).

Stephen becomes the first Christian martyr (7:54-60) This may have taken place in 32 AD.

“They gnashed at him with their teeth” (v. 54).

Stephen **“saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God”** (v. 55).

They **“stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of ... Saul”** (v. 58).

Stephen said: **“Lord Jesus, receive my spirit”** and **“Lord, do not charge them with this sin”** (vv. 59-60).

Persecution spreads the Gospel throughout Judea and Samaria (8:1-4)

“Those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word” (v. 4).

Deacon Philip has great success in Samaria, converting even Simon the sorcerer (8:5-13)

“They believed Philip as he preached ... the name of Jesus Christ” (v. 12).

“Simon himself also believed and ... was baptized” (v. 13).

The Holy Spirit is given to the Samaritans in some visible way (8:14-17)

“Peter and John ... prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit” (vv. 14-15).

Simon the sorcerer wants to buy the power of the Holy Spirit (8:18-25) (The sin of simony)

Simon **“offered them money”** (v. 18) and said: **“Give me this power also”** (v. 19).

Peter: **“Your money perish with you ... Repent therefore of this your wickedness”** (vv. 20, 22).

Deacon Philip preaches the Gospel to an official from Ethiopia (8:26-40)

“A man of Ethiopia ... , sitting in his chariot ... was reading Isaiah the prophet” (vv. 27-28, Is. 53)

“Philip, ... beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him” (v. 35).

“Both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him” (v. 38).

“He went on his way rejoicing” (v. 39).

Note: The Gospel is beginning to go out among non-Jews.

Saul, the persecutor, is converted by the risen Jesus, the one being persecuted (9:1-9)

Saul was heading to Damascus to bring Christians **“bound to Jerusalem”** (v. 2).

The voice of Jesus: **“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”** (v. 4).

Saul: **“Who are You, Lord?”** Jesus: **“I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting”** (v. 5).

Saul: **“Lord, what do You want me to do?”** (v. 6).

“They led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus” (v. 8). He was **“without sight”** (v. 9).

Ananias is led by God to baptize Saul and welcome him as a Christian (9:10-22)

God tells Ananias to go to Saul and restore his eyesight.

Ananias: **“I have heard ... how much harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem”** (v. 13).

God: **“He is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles”** (v. 15).

Saul received his sight, was baptized, and **“preached the Christ in the synagogues”** (v. 20).

Saul is threatened by the Damascus Jews but escapes (9:23-25)

Saul escapes from the Jews at Jerusalem (9:26-31)

Barnabas introduces Saul to the Christians. Saul preaches Christ and is sent to Tarsus.

Questions

1. When is it right to disobey our superiors in the government and in the church?
2. What good purposes are accomplished by God through persecution?
3. How prevalent is the persecution of Christians in today's world?
4. What did the apostles consider to be their main task in Jerusalem?
5. Why was Stephen put to death by the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem?
6. In what way do Stephen's last words remind us of Jesus on the cross?
7. How did the persecution in Jerusalem serve to spread the Gospel?
8. How did God bless the testimony of Deacon Philip?
9. What was the main topic in the sermons preached by Peter, Stephen, and Philip?
10. How did Jesus convince Saul that He had risen from the dead?
11. How did the Jewish leaders treat Saul after he became a follower of Jesus?
12. What is meant by the saying: “The blood of the martyrs became the seed of the church”?



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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 19 – The Gospel Goes Out to the Gentiles

A Light to the Gentiles

Before He ascended to heaven, Jesus said to His apostles: **“You shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth”** (Acts 1:8). On the day of Pentecost many Jews from many different countries heard the Gospel in Jerusalem from the apostles. The Bible does not tell us what happened to these Jews afterwards, but no doubt they took the Gospel back to their home countries. The apostles themselves stayed in Jerusalem for some time, even after persecution had driven the Jewish Christians from Jerusalem into Judea, Samaria, Galilee, and Syria.

One of the seven deacons, Philip, brought the Gospel to an Ethiopian eunuch, who probably took the Gospel to his country in Africa. After Saul became a Christian, he took the Gospel to his hometown, Tarsus in Cilicia.

At first the apostles restricted their preaching to Jews and to Gentiles who had become proselytes (converts) to the Jewish religion. They also brought the Gospel to the Samaritans, who only accepted the five books of Moses. But the vast heathen world was not yet their mission field. It took a special vision of God to the apostle Peter for the apostles to realize that the Gospel of Jesus was intended also and equally for non-Jews (Gentiles).

Cornelius was a Gentile soldier in Caesarea who had accepted Jewish teaching but knew very little about Jesus and the Gospel. God directed Cornelius by a vision to contact Peter and invite him to come to Caesarea to bring the Word of God to him and his family and friends. God directed Peter by a vision to accept this invitation and go to Cornelius' home to preach the Gospel there. As the people gathered in the home of Cornelius heard the Gospel, the Holy Spirit worked faith in Jesus in their hearts. The Holy Spirit also blessed them with the same miracles that had taken place on Pentecost in Jerusalem as a testimony to Peter and the other apostles. Now the apostles knew that their mission was to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews. In fact, God wanted to join both the believing Jews and the believing Gentiles into one Christian family: the Holy Christian Church.

Soon the Gospel was being preached to Greek Gentiles in Antioch of Syria, and they were brought to Christ in large numbers. The church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas from Jerusalem to Antioch to guide the growing congregation. Barnabas then went to Tarsus to get Saul to join him in this work. Antioch in Syria became the center for mission work to the Gentiles.

Back in Jerusalem times were hard for the Christians. Many were very poor, and they gladly accepted help from the Christians in Antioch. Herod Agrippa I, who was now ruling over all Palestine, tried to please the unbelieving Jews by executing the apostle James, Zebedee's son. James was the first apostle to be put to death for his faith in Christ. This took place in 44 AD. Herod Agrippa I tried to kill Peter also, but Peter escaped from Herod's hands through the intervention of an angel of God.

Read the listed passages as you study each of the events below.

Peter heals Aeneas at Lydda and raises Dorcas from the dead at Joppa (Acts 9:32-43)

Note: Dorcas societies, which provide clothing to the poor, are named after this woman who made coats and garments for others.

Cornelius, a Gentile soldier in Caesarea, sees a vision from the Lord (10:1-8)

As a result of this vision Cornelius sent three men to fetch Peter from Joppa.

Peter receives the vision of the sheet from heaven containing unclean food (10:9-18)

The voice said to Peter: **"Rise, Peter; kill and eat"** (v. 13). At first Peter refused.

Again the voice spoke: **"What God has cleansed you must not call common"** (v. 15).

Note: In this way God Himself did away with the Jewish food laws.

Peter and six others go to Caesarea with the three men from Cornelius (10:19-33)

This was contrary to Jewish practice, but Peter explained: **"God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean"** (v. 28).

*Peter preaches **Sermon 4** to Cornelius and his friends* (10:34-43)

"I perceive that God shows no partiality" (v. 34).

"We are witnesses of all things which He did" (v. 39).

"Him they killed by hanging on a tree. Him God raised up the third day" (vv. 39-40).

"Whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins" (v. 43).

The Holy Spirit is poured out on these Gentiles, just as at Pentecost (10:44-48)

Peter: **"Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized?"** (v. 47).

Peter explains the events in Caesarea to the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem (11:1-18)

"If God gave them the same gift as He gave us ... , who was I that I could withstand God?" (v. 17).

Certain Gentiles in Antioch of Syria are brought to faith in Christ (11:19-21)

Note: First the Gospel went to the Jews only; then also some Greeks believed.

Barnabas goes to Antioch and seeks the assistance of Saul (11:22-26) [43 AD]

The Antioch Christians send relief to Jerusalem through Saul and Barnabas (11:27-30)

King Herod Agrippa I kills the apostle James and imprisons Peter (12:1-5)

The hatred of the unbelieving Jews for the Christians is obvious; this execution pleased the Jews.

The angel of the Lord delivers Peter from the prison (12:6-11)

“Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers” (v. 6).

The angel led Peter out of prison and through the iron gate of the city.

Peter appears to the disciples gathered in Mary's home – Mary was Mark's mother (12:12-19)

When Peter knocked at the door, the maid Rhoda recognized his voice, but no one believed her at first.

Peter told them to notify James (the brother of the Lord), who had become the head elder of the Jerusalem congregation.

Herod commanded the prison keepers to be put to death because of Peter's escape.

Herod Agrippa I dies of a terrible disease (12:20-25) [44 AD]

“He was eaten by worms and died. But the word of God grew and multiplied” (v. 23-24).

The Letter of James, the Brother of the Lord

The letter of James in the New Testament was probably addressed to Jewish Christians in Jerusalem and Judea in the early years of the Christian Church when there were as yet not many Gentiles in the Church. It was probably written in the years from 30 to 45 AD and so the very first letter of the New Testament to be written.

The author was James, the brother of Jesus, that is, a half-brother, having the same mother but not the same father. Mary had three other sons also: Simon, Judas/Jude¹, and Joses/Joseph², as well as some daughters. This James is sometimes known as “James the Just”.

There are three Important men in the Bible whose names were James:

- James, the brother of John, whose father and mother were Zebedee and Salome (Mary's sister).

¹ He is called Judas in Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3, but the name is translated as Jude in Jude 1:1.

² He is called Joseph in Matthew 13:55 and Joses in Mark 6:3.

- James, the son of Alphaeus, known as “James the Less”. He was one of the twelve apostles.
- James, the brother of Jesus, the author of this letter.

This James did not believe in Jesus until after His resurrection. After Jesus rose from the dead, He appeared to James (1 Corinthians 15:7). James waited for the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem along with the apostles, his three brothers, and the women, including Mary (Acts 1:14). James became a leader in the congregation at Jerusalem. By 44 AD, when Peter was imprisoned, James was the head elder of the Jerusalem congregation.

In order to win his fellow-Jews for faith in Christ, James continued to practice the Jewish customs and to obey the Jewish laws until his death as a martyr in 66 AD. Four years after his death Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed by the Romans, which made Jewish worship impossible. Jude (Judas), who wrote a New Testament letter, was a brother of this James.

The books of the New Testament can be divided into two kinds: those accepted by all Christians from the very beginning, and those spoken against by some in the early church. The letter of James is one of those books that was spoken against and not accepted by all Christians from the beginning.

In his letter James preaches against the sin of hypocrisy in a way very similar to how Jesus, his brother, preached against it. This was a sin very prominent among the Pharisees and other leading Jews in Jerusalem. In many ways the teaching of James is similar to Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount.

Read the book of James and note the following divisions:

Do not blame God for your sins; they are your own fault (1:13-15).

We should not only hear the Word of God but do the Word of God (1:22-25).

We should not favor the rich over the poor (2:1-13).

Faith without works is dead (2:14-26).

Is it possible to control the tongue? (3:1-10).

Humility, not pride, is the Christian way (4:1-12).

We should not make plans for the future without thinking of God (4:13-16).

We should be patient like Job (5:7-11).

We should pray like Elijah (5:13-18).

It is important that we admonish our erring brother (5:19-20).

James and Paul

Many Christians have been troubled by the fact that James and Paul do not seem to agree on the relationship between faith and good works. But they do *not* disagree at all in their teaching. Paul's emphasis is on the Gospel's teaching that we receive forgiveness of sins and salvation alone by faith in Christ without the works of the law. James does not disagree with this teaching, but James emphasizes that genuine faith in Christ always results in the doing of good works. James says: **"I will show you my faith by my works"** (James 2:18). Thus, a man is declared righteous in the sight of God through faith in Christ without any consideration of his works, but a man shows his faith in Christ before men by what he does, just as Abraham showed that he believed God's promise of the Savior by obediently being willing to offer up his son Isaac as an offering to God. Paul does not disagree with James, for Paul also speaks of **"faith working through love"** (Galatians 5:6).

Both Paul and James teach the power of the Gospel of Christ to bring people to faith in Christ. Paul wrote: **"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"** (Romans 10:17). In a similar way James wrote: **"Of His own will He (God) brought us forth by the word of truth ... Therefore ... receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls"** (James 1:18-21).

Questions

1. What is the difference between Jews and Gentiles?
2. Why were the apostles hesitant to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles?
3. How did the Lord persuade Peter to visit the Gentile Cornelius?
4. What amazing thing happened as Peter preached the Gospel in Cornelius' home?
5. What was the subject matter of Peter's sermon in Cornelius' home?
6. Why was it wise for Peter to take six men with him on his visit?
7. Why did the church in Jerusalem send Barnabas to Antioch in Syria?
8. What made the congregation in Antioch different from the congregation in Jerusalem?
9. What was Herod Agrippa I hoping to do to Peter?
10. How did Peter escape from the hands of Herod Agrippa I?
11. Which James wrote the letter of James in the New Testament?
12. List some of the topics discussed by James in his letter.
13. What did James mean when he said that faith without works is dead?



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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 20 – Paul’s First Mission Journey and the First Church Convention

The great missionary Paul and his first mission journey

The young Pharisee Saul consented to the stoning of Stephen, the first Christian martyr of the New Testament church. Soon Saul himself became an active persecutor of Christians everywhere. But after Saul saw the risen Christ on the road to Damascus, he became a Christian and a preacher of the Gospel. Saul’s conversion is so important that the book of Acts has three accounts of it (see Acts 9, 26, and 28). Saul’s Roman name was Paul, and Paul is the name we know best.

Paul was chosen by God to be His first and greatest missionary to the heathen world. God guided Paul’s life so that he was especially suited for this task. He was a Roman citizen, brought up in the Greek city of Tarsus and so he was fluent in the Greek language, and he was a Jew by race and religion, taught by Gamaliel in Jerusalem. Paul knew how to become all things to all men, so that he might be able to gain them for the Gospel (1 Corinthians 9:22).

Paul did not become a missionary to the Gentiles immediately after his conversion. He first preached to Jews in Damascus and Jerusalem (and he also spent some time in Arabia). Then he lived in Tarsus, his hometown, until he was called by Barnabas and the congregation in Antioch of Syria to be one of their pastors. After they had worked there for some time, the Antioch congregation sent Paul and Barnabas to bring the Gospel of Christ to other places where the people knew nothing about Christ and the hope of salvation through Him.

On this first mission journey Paul and Barnabas first went to the island of Cyprus, where Barnabas had grown up. After the Lord granted them some success there, they crossed over to the Roman province of Galatia in Asia Minor. Today this is part of the country of Turkey.

When Barnabas and Paul came to a town, their first course of action was to go to the Jewish synagogue. In the several centuries before Jesus was born the Jewish people had scattered in all directions, and wherever there were at least ten Jewish men in a town, they established a synagogue (a meeting place) where the Old Testament was read and studied. These synagogues also attracted non-Jewish people who would regularly attend the Saturday services where the Old Testament was read and explained. Since Barnabas and Paul were themselves Jews, they wanted to share the good news of Jesus first of all with their fellow-Jews. But what usually happened is that most of the Jews would reject their message, while the Gentile synagogue worshipers would be eager to hear more about Jesus and the good news of their salvation, and these Gentiles would spread the good news to other

Gentiles. The success of Paul and Barnabas among the Gentiles led many of the Jews to become hostile to Paul and Barnabas and the Jews would stir up persecution against them.

The Gospel (Good News) that Paul and Barnabas proclaimed and taught can be summed up in these words recorded in Acts 13:38-39: **“Through this Man (Jesus) is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.”** God blessed their preaching of this Gospel, and the result was several Christian congregations that consisted of some Jews but even more Gentiles.

Read the listed passages as you study each of the events below. If you have any questions, ask them.

The congregation in Antioch of Syria sends Paul and Barnabas to the Gentiles (Acts 13:1-3).

The Holy Spirit said: **“Separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them”** (v. 2). John Mark accompanied them as their assistant.

Paul and Barnabas bring the Gospel to Cyprus (13:4-12).

Antioch in Syria: their home base.

Seleucia: the seaport of Antioch.

Salamis in Cyprus: they preach the Word of God in the synagogue.

Paphos, the home of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus.

The sorcerer, Elymas (Bar-Jesus) opposes their Gospel presentation to Sergius Paulus.

Paul said to Elymas: **“You son of the devil ... you shall be blind”** (vv. 10-11).

“The proconsul believed, when he saw what had been done” to Elymas (v. 12).

Paul preaches Sermon 5 at the synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia (13:13-52).

Perga in Pamphylia – At this point John Mark leaves the group and returns to Jerusalem.

Antioch in Pisidia – Paul and Barnabas attend a synagogue service and are asked to speak.

Paul’s sermon had four main parts:

1. The history of the Jewish people (vv. 16-22).
2. The history of Jesus and how God in Him fulfilled the promises (vv. 23-37).
3. The significance of all of this for the audience: the forgiveness of sins (vv. 38-39).
4. A strong warning not to neglect this good news (vv. 40-41).

The Gentiles ask Paul and Barnabas to return the next Sabbath.

“On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God” (v. 44).

The Jews **“were filled with envy ... they opposed the things spoken by Paul”** (v. 45).

Paul and Barnabas: **“It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles”** (v. 46).

The Gentiles happily receive the Gospel, but the Jews drive Paul and Barnabas out of the city.

“As many as had been appointed to eternal life believed” (v. 48). Faith is a matter of God’s grace.

Paul and Barnabas bring the Gospel to other towns in Galatia and then return home (14:1-28)

Iconium – They enter the synagogue; some Jews and Greeks believe; others try to stone them.

“The unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles” (v. 2).

“Part sided with the Jews, and part with the apostles” (v. 4).

Lystra – There is no synagogue; the people speak the Lycaonian language.

Paul heals a crippled man, and the people worship Barnabas as Zeus, Paul as Hermes.

Paul: **“We ... preach to you that should turn from these useless things to the living God ... He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good ... , filling our hearts with food and gladness” (vv. 15, 17).**

Jews from Antioch and Iconium persuade the Lystrans to stone Paul.

Derbe – Paul gets up and they go to Derbe, where **“they made many disciples” (v. 21).**

Lystra, Iconium, Antioch in Pisidia, Perga, Attalia – the return trip.

Paul and Barnabas: **“We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God” (v. 22).**

They **“appointed elders in every church” (v. 23).**

Antioch in Syria – **“They reported ... that God ... had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles” (v. 27).**

The first church convention

The first mission journey resulted in the founding of several Christian congregations where the Gentiles outnumbered the Jews. The problem was that some Jews thought these Gentiles should have to become Jews first before they could be Christians. That is, they thought they should have to be circumcised and follow other Jewish customs to be saved. We call these people “Judaizers”; most of them came from Jerusalem.

A major controversy developed in Antioch of Syria between these Judaizers on the one hand, and Paul and Barnabas on the other hand. Paul and Barnabas believed that if the Gentiles believed in Jesus as their Savior, they were Christians and they did not have to become Jews to be saved. They decided to bring this matter up at a meeting of Christians in Jerusalem (probably 49 AD). The Judaizers were present at this first convention, as well as Paul, Barnabas, Peter and other apostles, James (the brother of Jesus and head elder in Jerusalem), and other believers in Jerusalem and perhaps believers from other places.

Paul, Barnabas, Peter, and James all spoke out for freedom from Jewish laws. Peter declared: **“We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they”** and not through the keeping of Jewish laws (Acts 15:11). They then agreed to ask the Gentile Christians to refrain from certain practices that were especially distasteful

to Jews out of love for their fellow believers. This eased the tensions between the Gentile and Jewish Christians in the early church.

Read the listed passages as you study each of the events below. If you have any questions, ask them.

The first church convention (Acts 15:1-35)

Antioch in Syria – The Judaizers say: **“Unless you are circumcised ... , you cannot be saved”** (v. 1).

Paul and Barnabas disagree with them.

The Antioch congregation send Paul and Barnabas and others to Jerusalem to discuss this matter with the apostles and other Christians.

Phoenicia, Samaria – The report of mission work among the Gentiles causes **“great joy”** (v. 3).

Jerusalem

Paul and Barnabas report that God had brought many Gentiles to faith in Jesus.

The Judaizers: **“It is necessary to circumcise them”** and obey other Jewish laws (v. 5).

After a long discussion:

Peter: **“God chose ... that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe”** (v. 7).

Peter: **“God acknowledged them (Gentiles) by giving them the Holy Spirit”** (v. 8).

Peter: **“Why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples?”** (v. 10).

Paul and Barnabas declare how many miracles God worked among the Gentiles.

James agrees with Peter and Paul and quotes the Old Testament as proof.

James: **“We should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning”** (v. 19).

James suggests that out of love for the scattered Jews the Gentiles should:

“abstain from things polluted by idols”

“abstain ... from sexual immorality”

“abstain ... from things strangled”

“abstain ... from blood.” (v. 20).

The proposal of James is adopted and a letter is written with this resolution.

The letter is brought to Antioch in Syria and other places by Paul and Barnabas, together with two delegates from Jerusalem: Judas Barsabas and Silas.

Antioch in Syria – **“When they had read it, they rejoiced over its encouragement”** (v. 31).

Questions

1. If you have access to a map that shows the places listed in this lesson, please examine it, and note of where Paul and Barnabas took the Gospel.

2. How were Paul and Barnabas called for mission work among the Gentiles?
3. Why was it natural for them to travel to Cyprus first?
4. How did God confirm their preaching of the Gospel in Cyprus?
5. Which place in a city did Paul and Barnabas usually visit first?
6. Which different kinds of people attended a synagogue service?
7. What was the main point of Paul's sermon in Antioch in Pisidia?
8. Why did many of the Jews in Antioch in Pisidia oppose their teaching?
9. Why did the people in Lystra at first try to worship the missionaries?
10. Name some of the difficulties the two missionaries encountered.
11. What doctrinal problem led to the convention in Jerusalem?
12. How was this doctrinal question resolved?
13. Why did the letter from Jerusalem make the Christians in Antioch of Syria happy?



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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 21 – Paul’s Letter to the Galatians – the Charter of Christian Liberty

The Background

At the first church convention in Jerusalem in 49 A.D. they considered the question: Is it necessary that Gentile Christians be circumcised and keep the Jewish laws to be saved? The Judaizers said: Yes. But the convention said: No. The letter that was drawn up said of the Judaizers: **“Some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, ‘You must be circumcised and keep the law’ – to whom we gave no such commandment”** (Acts 15:24). By the grace of God all the leaders of the church agreed: Paul, Barnabas, Peter, and James, the brother of Jesus and head elder of the congregation at Jerusalem.

But by this time the Judaizers had already spread their false teaching to the congregations founded by Paul and Barnabas in Galatia: the congregations in Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. Since the false teaching of the Judaizers is the chief topic of Paul’s letter to the Galatians, it is most likely that Paul wrote his letter to the Galatians right before the Jerusalem convention, as he does not mention the decision of the convention which dealt with this matter. We cannot know for sure when or where Paul wrote this letter, but the following order of events is likely:

1. Paul (Saul) persecuted the Christians after Stephen’s death in 32 AD.
2. Paul became a Christian on the road to Damascus (32 AD).
3. Paul preached at Damascus and went to Arabia (32-35 AD).
4. Paul was in Jerusalem for 15 days, saw Peter and James (Jesus’ brother), and preached boldly but very briefly in Jerusalem (35 AD).
5. Paul was at home in Tarsus of Cilicia (35-43 AD).
6. Paul and Barnabas were pastors in Antioch of Syria (43-46 AD).
7. [Meanwhile Herod Agrippa I killed James (the brother of John) and imprisoned Peter (44 AD).]
8. Paul and Barnabas came from Antioch to Jerusalem with help for the poor. At this time Paul had a private conference with James, Peter, and John. Titus, Paul’s Greek companion, was not compelled to be circumcised (46 AD).
9. Paul and Barnabas went on their first mission journey (Lesson 20) to Cyprus and Galatia (46-47 AD).

10. After Paul and Barnabas had returned to Antioch in Syria, Peter made a visit to Antioch and ate with the Gentile Christians (48 AD).
11. Judaizers from Jerusalem and Judea came to Antioch in Syria and also to Galatia, insisting on the circumcision of Gentile Christians (48 AD).
12. Peter and then also Barnabas and others stopped eating with the Gentile Christians because of the Judaizers, and Paul rebuked Peter publicly (48 AD).
13. Paul wrote this letter to the Galatians to counteract the influence of the Judaizers (48 AD).
14. Paul and Barnabas and delegates from Antioch in Syria attended the convention in Jerusalem (Lesson 20) to discuss this same question (49 AD).

Note: It is also possible, but not likely, that Paul wrote the letter to the Galatians later, but the above order of events seems to fit the evidence the best. It is not necessary, however, to agree on matters of this kind (that is, when exactly this letter was written).

The Judaizers in Galatia

These are some of the things that were taught by the Judaizers in Galatia:

1. Paul was only a second-rate apostle and was trying to make the Gospel too easy in order to gain more converts.
2. Jesus did not free men from the Jewish law; circumcision and the keeping of the laws are necessary for salvation; faith in Christ is not enough.
3. Paul's message of freedom from the Jewish law would mean moral chaos.

Because of these false views Paul found it necessary to write this letter to the Galatians.

1. He proved that he was a true apostle and a reliable teacher (Chapters 1 & 2).
2. He defended the true Gospel: that we are saved alone by the grace of God and by faith in Christ, not by doing the works of the Law (Chapters 3 & 4).
3. He showed that true faith in Christ shows itself in a life of love and good works (Chapters 5 & 6).

The message of Galatians can be summarized in this one verse: **“Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage”** (Galatians 5:1). Because Martin Luther was involved in a similar struggle with the Roman Catholic Church, this letter was his favorite letter.

Read all the book of Galatians (chapters 1-6) along with the notes below. If you have any questions, ask them.

Paul proves that he is a true apostle and a reliable teacher (Chapters 1 & 2).

Introduction: Paul; to the Galatians; grace and peace from God (1:1-5).

Paul rebukes the Galatians for accepting the false teaching of the Judaizers (1:6-7).

“You are turning away so soon ... to a different gospel, which is not another” (vv. 6-7).

Paul curses the false teachers for preaching a false Gospel (1:7-10).

“If anyone preaches any other gospel to you ... , let him be accursed” (v. 9).

Paul says he received the Gospel directly from God, not from other men (1:11-24).

“It came through the revelation of Jesus Christ” (v. 12).

Paul says that on a trip to Jerusalem he was accepted as an apostle by the leaders (2:1-10).

“They gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship” (v. 9).

Paul recounts the time when he had to rebuke Peter publicly (2:11-21).

Paul: **“Why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?”** (v. 14).

Paul: **“A man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ”** (v. 16).

Paul defends the true Gospel of God’s free grace (Chapters 3 & 4).

You Galatians received the Spirit and witnessed miracles by faith, not by works of law (3:1-5).

Abraham was justified by faith; all believers in Christ are Abraham’s children (3:6-9).

“Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness” (v. 6).

“Only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham” (v. 7).

The law curses us, but Christ saves us by becoming a curse in our place (3:10-14).

“Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them” (v. 10).

“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us” (v. 13).

God’s promise of Christ to Abraham came 430 years before the giving of the law on Sinai; this law did not change God’s promise to Abraham (3:15-18).

“The law ... cannot annul the covenant” (v. 17).

The law of God served a temporary purpose until the coming of Christ (3:19-24).

The coming of Christ breaks down all barriers between Jews and Gentiles (3:25-29).

“You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus” (v. 26).

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (v. 28).

All believers in Christ are now free adopted sons and daughters of God, neither underage minors (as the Jews were) nor slaves of law (as all unbelievers are) (4:1-31).

“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons” (vv. 4-5).

Paul shows that true faith in Christ produces good fruit (Chapters 5 & 6).

The believer in Christ will not submit to circumcision as something he must do to be saved (5:1-12).

“If you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing ... You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace” (v. 2, 4).

The believer in Christ will love his neighbor and fight against his flesh (5:13-26).

“Do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another” (v. 13).

“The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh” (v. 17).

The believer in Christ will try to help his neighbor and do good to all people (6:1-10).

“Let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith” (v. 10).

Conclusion in Paul’s own handwriting (6:11-18).

“God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (v. 14).

Questions

1. What was the false teaching of the Judaizers?
2. How had this teaching been proved false at the Jerusalem convention?
3. Why did Paul find it necessary to find fault with Peter?
4. What is the only way sinners can escape the curse of the law?
5. What does it mean that Jesus became a curse for us?
6. Which came first: the Law or the Gospel?
7. Quote a passage that teaches that non-Jews can also be children of Abraham.
8. Under what circumstances should a person refuse to be circumcised?
9. What will the Christian want to do out of love for the Lord?



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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 22 – Paul’s Second Mission Journey – the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Europe

The Gospel in Europe

The Gospel of Jesus probably reached the continent of Europe shortly after Pentecost when Jews from Rome (who had been in Jerusalem for the feast) returned to their homes with Peter’s words still ringing in their ears. But the great spread of the Gospel in Europe was due chiefly to the work of the missionary Paul. Strangely enough, Paul did not even plan to go to Europe on his second mission journey. He thought that he would go to the provinces of Asia or Bithynia after visiting the churches in Galatia that had been founded on his first journey. But God had a different plan. God prevented him from going to Asia or Bithynia, and instead led him by a vision to cross over from the continent of Asia to the continent of Europe, to the province of Macedonia.

So Paul visited five of the chief cities of Macedonia and Greece on his second mission journey (49-51 AD). The Gospel then spread from these cities until almost all Europe eventually became Christian – at least in name.

The five chief cities were:

Philippi – a Roman colony, that is, a settlement of Roman soldiers who enjoyed Roman citizenship and were in Philippi for the security of the Roman Empire. There was no Jewish synagogue in Philippi. Among Paul’s converts in Philippi were Lydia and the jailer of Philippi.

Thessalonica – the capital of the province of Macedonia and the home of the Roman proconsul. Thessalonica was a commercial and trading center located on the main road from Rome to Byzantium. There was a Jewish synagogue there. Among Paul’s converts in Thessalonica was Jason.

Berea – There was a Jewish synagogue in Berea. The Jews there studied the Old Testament and accepted Paul’s teaching.

Athens – the cultural center of Greece (Achaia). Athens was a place of famous shrines to idol gods and goddesses, including one to the “Unknown God”. Athens was a city of philosophers and scholars. There was a Jewish synagogue there. Among Paul’s converts in Athens were Dionysius and Damaris.

Corinth – the trading and commercial center of Greece. Corinth was a very immoral city. It was the capital of the province of Achaia and the home of the proconsul. There was a

Jewish synagogue there. Paul stayed there for 1½ years. Among his converts in Corinth were Aquila and Priscilla, Justus, Crispus.

Paul's Companions

On his first mission journey Paul had been accompanied by Barnabas and, for a time, Mark. On his second journey Paul refused to take Mark along because he had left them on the first journey. Barnabas wanted to give Mark another chance. Their disagreement was so strong that they parted ways and went on separate journeys. Barnabas and Mark went to Cyprus. Paul took Silas as his new partner and went to Galatia. Years later Paul again considered Mark a useful helper, see 2 Timothy 4:11.

At Lystra Paul found a young helper named Timothy to join them. At Troas Luke joined Paul's company; notice the **"we"** in Acts 16:10 which shows that Luke, the author of Acts, had now joined them. Luke accompanied Paul on this journey only from Troas to Philippi.

Read the listed passages as you study each of the events below. If you have any questions, ask them.

On the continent of Asia (Acts 15:36 – 16:10)

Antioch in Syria – where Paul and Barnabas quarreled and separated.

Syria and Cilicia – Paul and Silas strengthened the churches in their faith.

Derbe – In the churches of Galatia Paul read the resolution of the convention about Jewish laws.

Lystra – Here Timothy joined the group. Since he had a Jewish mother, he was circumcised in order that he might be more acceptable to the Jews as a missionary. Note the difference between Timothy, who was circumcised, and Titus, who was not.

Galatia and Phrygia – Paul and Silas were forbidden to go into the province of Asia.

Mysia – **"They tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them"** (16:7).

Troas – Paul saw a vision, a Macedonian crying: **"Come over to Macedonia and help us"** (16:9).

At Troas Luke joined Paul, Silas, and Timothy.

In the province of Macedonia in Europe (16:11 – 17:14)

Samothrace – An island.

Neapolis – In Macedonia.

Philippi – Mission work began by talking to a few women by the riverside.

Lydia, a seller of purple dye from Thyatira, believed Paul's message: **"The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul"** (16:14). She was baptized, and the missionaries stayed in her home. Lydia had been a God-fearer, that is, a Gentile who had been attracted to the God of the Jews.

A slave girl with a gift of fortune telling followed the missionaries. Paul said to the evil spirit in her: **“I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her”** (16:18). Because her masters had lost all their profit, they brought Paul and Silas to the city officials, who illegally whipped them and threw them into prison. **“At midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God”** (16:25).

During a great earthquake the prisoners were set free. The jailer was going to kill himself, but Paul stopped him. The jailer then asked them: **“What must I do to be saved?”** (16:30). Paul replied: **“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household”** (16:31). The jailer and his family were baptized. Paul was asked to leave the city, but Luke and Timothy stayed there for a time.

Amphipolis and Apollonia – Other towns in Macedonia.

Thessalonica – Paul preached in the synagogue for three weeks that Jesus is the promised Christ.

Some believed, but others started rioting against them and attacked Jason’s home. Paul was charged with disturbing the peace because he claimed that Jesus was a king. Paul and Silas escaped by night and went to Berea. During their time in Thessalonica Timothy arrived from Philippi, bringing money and food. See Philippians 4:15-16.

Berea – The Jews there studied their Old Testament and compared it with what Paul was saying: **“They searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so”** (17:11). Many believed, but unbelievers from Thessalonica came and stirred up the people. Paul then traveled to Athens, while Silas and Timothy stayed in Berea.

In the province of Achaia (17:15 – 18:18)

Athens – Paul talked with the Jews in the synagogue, with the common people, and with the philosophers in the marketplace. **“He preached to them Jesus and the resurrection”** (17:18). Since they were curious about this new religion, they asked Paul to address them at the Areopagus (which means “Hill of Ares [also called Mars]”).

Sermon 6 (17:22-31): Let me tell you about the Unknown God. The true God is Lord of heaven and earth. He gives to all everything they have. All persons on earth, including Jews, Greeks, and barbarians, are of one blood. All peoples are called to repent of their sins before Judgment Day arrives. God will judge the world through Jesus Christ, whom He raised from the dead.

Many made fun of the idea of a resurrection from the dead. But there were a few converts, such as Dionysius and Damaris. Timothy and Silas joined Paul, but he sent them to Macedonia.

Corinth – Paul worked with Aquila and Priscilla as a tentmaker. After Silas and Timothy returned from Macedonia, Paul was able to spend more time preaching the Gospel. But

again, most of the Jews opposed Paul and his teaching. Paul said to them: **“Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles”** (18:6).

Then Paul held services in the home of Justus, who lived near the synagogue, and even Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, was brought to faith in Jesus. God told Paul in a vision: **“I have many people in this city”** (18:10). Paul was able to remain in Corinth for a whole year and a half, and there were many converts.

After some time, the unbelieving Jews accused Paul of promoting an illegal religion in the court of the proconsul Gallio. But Gallio refused to get involved in a religious controversy, saying: **“I do not want to be a judge of such matters”** (18:15).

Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, was beaten up in front of Gallio, but Gallio paid no attention.

Cenchrea – Paul had his hair cut at this port of Corinth, for he had made a vow and was on his way to Jerusalem.

Back to Jerusalem and Antioch in Syria via Ephesus (18:19-22)

Ephesus – Aquila and Priscilla accompanied Paul to Ephesus. The Jews in Ephesus wanted to Paul to stay there, but he was eager to go to Jerusalem. But he promised: **“I will return to you again, God willing”** (18:21). On his third mission journey Paul did return to Ephesus and he stayed there for about three years.

Caesarea

Jerusalem – Paul went there for a Jewish feast.

Antioch in Syria

Questions

1. Why did Paul and Barnabas separate before going on a second journey?
2. How did this separation the benefit of the Gospel?
3. Who were Paul's companions on his second mission journey?
4. Why was Timothy circumcised, even though Titus was not circumcised?
5. Why did Paul go to Macedonia instead of to Bithynia or Asia?
6. Why did Paul go to a riverside in Philippi instead of to the Jewish synagogue, as he usually did?
7. Who brought about Lydia's conversion in Philippi?
8. How did the Lord rescue Paul and Silas from prison in Philippi?
9. Why did Paul leave Thessalonica to go to Berea?
10. How were the Jews in Berea different from the Jews in other towns?
11. Why did Paul not refer to the Old Testament in his sermon to the Athens?
12. How did the Lord encourage Paul to stay in Corinth for a longer time?
13. What did Paul use as his place for preaching in Corinth?
14. How did Paul support himself in Corinth?
15. Why did Gallio refuse to settle a quarrel between Paul and the Jewish leaders in Corinth?



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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 23 – Paul’s Letters to the Thessalonians – Guidance for the Last Days

The Background of These Letters

In Lesson 22 we saw what kind of city Thessalonica was and how a congregation of Christians was founded there on Paul’s second mission journey. Paul had been permitted to preach in the Jewish synagogue for three Saturdays before the majority of the Jews rejected him. Very likely he was able to preach to the Gentiles for some time after that, until the unbelieving Jews stirred up the rabble of the city against him and attacked Jason’s home. The Thessalonian Christians had to suffer persecution because of their open confession of Christ. Because of this severe persecution, they longed especially for the return of the Lord Jesus and the end of the world.

After Paul was forced to leave Thessalonica, he went to Berea and Athens. But he was still very much concerned about the Christians in Thessalonica. Therefore, when Timothy came from Berea to Athens to join Paul, Paul sent him to Thessalonica to find out how things were going in the congregation there. Paul was afraid that all their afflictions and troubles might lead them to desert the Christian faith. Timothy returned from Thessalonica and reported to Paul, who was by this time in Corinth during his 18-month stay there. Timothy had both good news and bad news.

The good news was that the Thessalonian Christians had remained faithful to the Gospel of Christ and to His missionary Paul, and that they showed great love to one another, so that they were good examples to all the other Christians.

But Timothy reported some problems as well:

1. Sexual immorality. This is not surprising because of the prevalence of sexual immorality in their culture.
2. The false idea that Jesus was coming right away.
3. A wrong idea about the deaths of Christians. Some of them believed that those who died before the coming of Christ would miss out on the benefits.
4. Continued persecution by the unbelieving Jews.
5. Giving up their former occupations and living a disorderly life, being busybodies in their neighbors’ affairs and expecting others to provide for their bodily needs.

Paul’s first letter to the Thessalonians is his response to Timothy’s report. This letter contains a long thanksgiving that recalls the history of the Thessalonian congregation

(Chapters 1-3) as well as instruction and admonition with respect to the problems reported by Timothy (Chapters 4-5). Paul wrote this letter from Corinth in 50 AD.

Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians was written after Paul received news of further problems in Thessalonica. False ideas had been spread in the congregation concerning the Lord's second coming. Paul wrote his second letter to give further instruction on this matter and to encourage them to remain firm in their faith. Unique to this letter is Paul's extensive discussion of the coming of **"the man of sin,"** also known as **"the son perdition"** and commonly called the Antichrist – someone who opposes Christ and makes the attempt to replace or displace Him.

The Last Things: Eschatology

Every chapter of Paul's two letters to the Thessalonians mentions the last things, that is, things related to Christ's second coming, the judgment on the last day, the resurrection of the dead, and death. All these subjects are lumped together under the term "eschatology". For example:

1 Thessalonians 1: **"to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come"** (v. 10).

1 Thessalonians 2: **"What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?"** (v. 19).

1 Thessalonians 3: **"so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints"** (v. 13).

1 Thessalonians 4: **"The Lord Himself will descend from heaven ... and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air"** (vv. 16-17). This is sometimes called "the rapture", but almost all who talk about the rapture have wrong ideas of what is going to happen then.

1 Thessalonians 5: **"The day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night"** (v. 2).

2 Thessalonians 1: **"when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels"** (v. 7).

2 Thessalonians 2: **"That day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed"** (v. 3).

2 Thessalonians 3: **"But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one"** (v. 3).

The Antichrist

The Antichrist is given this name only in the first letter of John (1 John 2:18), but he was foretold already by God to the prophet Daniel (Daniel 7:8, 20-22, 24-27) as one who would oppose the Christ and trouble Christians. Paul gives this description of the Antichrist in 2

Thessalonians 2:4: He **“opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.”**

The history of the Christian Church indicates that there is only one that fulfills this prophecy, and that is the Roman pope or the institution of the papacy. The pope calls himself the vicar of Christ on earth, the ruler of Christ’s Church on earth, and even claims to be infallible when he is teaching the Church. Despite his fine-sounding words, the pope is actually opposed to the true Gospel of Christ. The Roman Catholic Council of Trent, which began to meet during Martin Luther’s lifetime, denounced the true Gospel that Luther was teaching from the Bible, and cursed all those who teach that we are saved by faith in Christ alone, apart from the deeds of the law, as Romans chapter 3 clearly teaches.

Read 1 and 2 Thessalonians with the notes below. If you have questions, do not hesitate to ask them.

I. Paul’s Thanksgiving Recalling the History of the Congregation (1 Thessalonians 1-3)

Greetings (1:1)

Paul, Silas, Timothy – to the Thessalonians – grace and peace.

The founding of the congregation (1:2 – 2:12)

Your becoming Christians goes back to **“your election by God”** (v. 1:4). God chose you to be His.

“You became followers ... of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction” (v. 1:6).

“You turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God” (v. 1:9).

“We speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts” (v. 2:4).

“You are witnesses ... how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves” (v. 2:10).

“We exhorted, ... as a father does his own children, that you would walk worthy of God”
(vv. 2:11-12).

The severe persecution (2:13-16)

“When you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it”
(v. 13).

“You also suffered ... from your own countrymen” (v. 14).

“The Judeans ... killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us” (vv. 14-15).

Paul's separation from the congregation (2:17 – 3:5)

"We wanted to come to you, ... but Satan hindered us" (v. 2:18).

"We ... sent Timothy ... to encourage you concerning your faith" (vv. 3:1-2).

Timothy's report (3:6-10)

"Timothy ... brought us good news of your faith and love" (v. 6).

Concluding prayer (3:11-13)

II. Paul's Admonitions Regarding the Problems Reported by Timothy (1 Thessalonians 4-5)

With regard to moral problems (4:1-12)

"This is the will of God ... : that you should abstain from sexual immorality" (v. 3).

"God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness" (v. 7).

"You yourselves are taught by God to love one another" (v. 9).

"Aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands" (v. 11).

With regard to the last things – eschatology (4:13 – 5:11)

"God will bring with Him (Jesus) those who sleep in Jesus" (v. 4:14).

"We who are alive ... will by no means precede those who are asleep" (v. 4:15).

"Thus we shall always be with the Lord" (v. 4:17).

"Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober" (v. 5:6).

**"God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ"
(v. 5:9).**

With regard to congregational life (5:12-22)

**"Recognize those who ... are over you in the Lord ... and esteem them very highly in love"
(v. 12-13).**

"Always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all" (v. 15).

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks" (vv. 16-18).

Concluding prayer and benediction (5:23-28)

III. Paul's Thanksgiving and Prayer for the Thessalonians in View of Persecution (2 Thessalonians 1)

"We ourselves boast of you ... for your patience ... in all your persecutions" (vv. 4).

The unbelievers “shall be punished with everlasting destruction ... when He comes” (vv. 9-10).

“He comes ... to be admired among all those who believe” (v. 10).

IV. Paul’s Warning that the Coming of Christ Will Be Preceded by the Coming of Antichrist (2 Thessalonians 2)

“Now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed” (v. 6). (the Roman Empire?)

“The Lord will consume (the Antichrist) with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming” (v. 8).

“They did not receive the love of the truth ... For this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie” (vv. 10-11).

V. Paul’s Admonitions Regarding the Success of the Word and Their Disorder (2 Thessalonians 3)

“Pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified” (v. 1).

“If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat” (v. 10).

“There are some who walk among you ... , not working at all, but are busybodies” (v. 11).

Questions

1. What topic is mentioned in every chapter of Paul’s two letters to the Thessalonians?
2. How were the Thessalonians tested soon after they turned to Christ?
3. Who were the main persecutors of the Christians in the early days of the Church?
4. Why did Paul write his first letter to the Thessalonians?
5. What word from God did Paul bring regarding sexual immorality?
6. What will happen on the day that Jesus returns?
7. What will happen to unbelievers on the last day and beyond?
8. How did Paul describe the coming Antichrist or man of sin?
9. How is the prophecy of Antichrist being fulfilled in our day?
10. How do we know that God disapproves of laziness?



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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 24 – Paul’s Third Mission Journey – Chiefly in Ephesus

Paul in Ephesus

On his second missionary journey Paul had wanted to work in Ephesus, which was the center of the province of Asia, but God had directed him to Macedonia instead. At the end of his second journey Paul stopped briefly in Ephesus on his way from Corinth to Jerusalem. He promised the Jews there that he would return. He left his fellow-tentmakers Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus.

After spending some time in Antioch of Syria and the Galatian cities, Paul returned to Ephesus. He learned that during his absence an eloquent preacher from Alexandria in Egypt named Apollos had come to Ephesus and taught the Jews in the synagogue. Apollos was a Christian, but he knew only a part of the Good News. Priscilla and Aquila invited him into their home and taught him more fully. Apollos was then sent to Corinth where he watered the congregation Paul had planted by teaching forcefully that Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah. Apollos knew the Old Testament Scriptures very well. Martin Luther thought that Apollos might have written the New Testament letter to the Hebrews.

When Paul came to Ephesus, he began his work by instructing twelve Christians who had not yet heard of the Holy Spirit. These men then experienced a Pentecost-like experience by speaking in tongues.

Paul was able to stay in Ephesus for about three years. Ephesus became the center of mission activity throughout the province of Asia. It is very likely that during these three years Christian congregations were formed in nearby cities such as Miletus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, and Colosse. One of Paul’s associates named Epaphras preached the Gospel in Colosse and founded a congregation there. During the time that Paul was in Ephesus, he also supervised other congregations, such as the congregations in Corinth, Philippi, and Thessalonica.

Paul had three major conflicts during his three years in Ephesus. The first conflict was with the unbelieving Jews. After three months they succeeded in removing Paul from the synagogue. After that Paul taught daily in the school of Tyrannus.

Paul’s second conflict was with sorcery or black magic. God showed the people of Ephesus that there was a great difference between their sorcery and the genuine miracles God performed through Paul. Many were convinced, and they publicly burned of their expensive magic books.

Paul's third conflict was with the state religion of Ephesus: the worship of Artemis (Diana) of the Ephesians. The spread of the Gospel in Asia was hurting the business of the silversmiths, who made shrines for the worship of Artemis. Demetrius, the leader of the silversmiths, stirred up the silversmiths and other Ephesians. This led to a riot in the theater. After several hours of mindless shouting, a city official quieted the people. He told them to bring charges against Paul in an orderly way if they had something against him. Paul and his associates escaped without harm.

Impending Trouble

As Paul was about to return to Jerusalem after visiting the congregations in Macedonia and Achaia, he was threatened by grave danger. Already in Corinth some of the unbelieving Jews had plotted to kill him. Prophets in every congregation he visited told Paul to expect severe suffering in the near future. Paul met the pastors of Ephesus at Miletus and told them that they would see him no more. And at both at Tyre and at Caesarea Paul was again warned of trouble to come, namely, he would be handed over to the Gentiles by the unbelieving Jews, just like Jesus Himself had been handed over.

Read the listed passages as you study each of the events below. If you have questions, do not hesitate to ask them.

Revisiting the churches in Galatia (Acts 18:23)

At Antioch in Syria, the congregations in Galatia – Paul strengthened the disciples there.

Apollos, Priscilla, and Aquila prepare the way for Paul in Ephesus (Acts 18:24 – 19:7).

At Ephesus:

Apollos taught in the Jewish synagogue in Ephesus.

Since Apollos' knowledge of Jesus was incomplete, Aquila and Priscilla instructed him.

After Apollos left for Corinth, Paul arrived in Ephesus.

Paul instructed twelve men who had not heard of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps they had been taught by Apollos before he had been instructed by Aquila and Priscilla.

"The Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues" (v. 19:6).

The first conflict in Ephesus: the unbelieving Jews (Acts 19:8-10)

At Ephesus:

Paul was able to use the Jewish synagogue for three months.

When the majority rejected him, Paul taught God's Word in the school of Tyrannus.

Although Paul supported himself in Ephesus, he spared enough time to teach daily.

Many Jews and Greeks from Asia (the province) heard the Gospel of Jesus through him or through his associates or converts.

“All who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus” (v. 10).

The second conflict in Ephesus: sorcery and magic (Acts 19:11-20)

At Ephesus:

“God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul” (v. 11).

Seven Jewish exorcists tried to imitate Paul by using the name of Jesus.

A man with an evil spirit jumped on them and wounded them.

The evil spirit: **“Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?” (v. 15).**

Many Ephesians gave up their sorcery, burned their magic books, and turned to Jesus.

“The value ... totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver” (v. 19).

The third conflict in Ephesus: the state religion, the worship of Diana or Artemis (Acts 19:21-41)

At Ephesus:

Paul’s plan was to go to Macedonia, Achaia, Jerusalem, and then Rome.

Paul sent Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia.

Demetrius stirred up the silversmiths against Paul because they were losing business.

The whole city was aroused and shouted: **“Great is Diana of the Ephesians.” (vv. 28, 34).**

Paul’s associates, Gaius and Aristarchus, were led to the theater.

Some Asiarchs (officials) prevented Paul from facing the mob in the theater.

A Jew named Alexander was unable to quiet the rioting crowd.

The town clerk quieted the mob, scolded Demetrius, and told the people to go home.

(Note: The temple of Artemis in Ephesus was one of the seven wonders of the world.)

Paul in Macedonia and Achaia (Acts 20:1-5)

Macedonia (including Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea):

“He encouraged them with many words” (v. 2).

Achaia:

Paul spent three months there, chiefly in Corinth, planning a trip to Jerusalem next.

A Jewish plot against Paul led him to return to Macedonia first.

Macedonia:

We learn from Paul’s letters that he was gathering an offering for the poor in Jerusalem.

Seven associates joined Paul for this journey to Jerusalem with the offering:

Sopater of Berea;

Aristarchus of Thessalonica;

Secundus of Thessalonica;
Gaius of Derbe;
Timothy of Lystra;
Tychicus of Ephesus;
Trophimus of Ephesus.

Philippi:

Luke rejoined the group. (The words **“we”** and **“us”** are used after this point.)

Paul on the continent of Asia again (Acts 20:6-38)

Troas:

Paul **“talked a long while”** at a Sunday evening meeting (v. 11).

A young man named Eutychus fell asleep and fell from the third story and died.

Paul went down, embraced him, and then said: **“His life is in him”** (v. 10).

Paul went on with his talk **“till daybreak”** (v. 11).

Assos:

Paul went by foot, while the others took a boat.

Mitylene, Chios, Samos, Trogyllium:

Miletus:

Since Paul wanted to get to Jerusalem by Pentecost, he bypassed Ephesus.

The leaders of the Ephesian church came to visit Paul at Miletus.

Paul preached a farewell **Sermon No. 7** to these leaders (20:18-35).

“I ... taught you ... repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus” (vv. 20-21).

“Chains and tribulations await me. ... You ... will see my face no more” (v. 23, 25).

“I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God” (v. 27).

“The Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God” (v. 28).

“After my departure savage wolves will come in among you” (v. 29).

“Remember ... that He said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” (v. 35).

They wept, and kissed him, and accompanied him to the ship.

The trip to Jerusalem (Acts 21:1-17)

Coos, Rhodes, Patara, Cyprus:

Tyre:

While Paul was there seven days, he was warned not to go to Jerusalem.

The whole congregation came out to the shore to send Paul on his way.

Ptolemais:

Caesarea:

The evangelist Philip and his four unmarried daughters lived there.

The prophet Agabus foretold Paul's imprisonment in Jerusalem.

Luke and many others pleaded with Paul not to go to Jerusalem.

Paul: **"I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem"** (v. 13).

The others then said: **"The will of the Lord be done"** (v. 14).

Jerusalem:

Paul and his associates stayed with Mnason, who had been a believer for a long time.

Questions

1. How did Paul support himself during his time at Ephesus?
2. Who was Apollos, and how is he described in the Bible?
3. Why did Paul stop speaking at the synagogue in Ephesus?
4. What led the Christians at Ephesus to burn their magic books?
5. Who caused the riot in Ephesus?
6. How did God protect Paul from the rioters?
7. Why was Paul traveling with so many associates on his way to Jerusalem?
8. What does it mean when the book of Acts switches from "they" to "we"?
9. What did Paul say about his preaching to the elders from Ephesus?
10. What was Paul's prophecy concerning the future of the congregation in Ephesus?
11. What did the many prophets tell Paul as he was on his way to Jerusalem?
12. Why did Paul feel it was his duty to go to Jerusalem?



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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 25 – The Three Great Letters of Paul’s Third Mission Journey

The Three Great Letters

On Paul’s third mission journey he wrote three letters that have become an integral part of our New Testament:

1. During his three years at Ephesus, Paul wrote First Corinthians.
2. When he was in Macedonia on his way to Corinth, Paul wrote Second Corinthians.
3. During his three months at Corinth, Paul wrote Romans to a congregation he had not met.

These three letters teach just about every Christian doctrine.

The letter to the Romans, in particular, is a summary of the main teachings of Christianity. It is the catechism of the Bible. That is why passages from this letter are so often quoted in Christian catechisms and statements of doctrine. Martin Luther said of Paul’s letter to the Romans: “This epistle is really the chief part of the New Testament and is truly the purest Gospel. It is worthy not only that every Christian should know it word for word, by heart, but also that he should occupy himself with it every day, as the daily bread of the soul.”

The two letters to the Corinthians, on the other hand, are applications of the Gospel to all kinds of practical problems.

The Background of First Corinthians

The congregation at Corinth was founded on Paul’s second mission journey. He stayed there for a year and a half (see Lesson 22). Among Paul’s converts in Corinth were Justus, Crispus, Aquila, and Priscilla.

Various events led up to Paul’s writing this letter to the Corinthians:

While Paul was in Antioch in Syria between his second and third mission journeys, Apollos of Alexandria came to Ephesus and was instructed by Aquila and Priscilla.

Apollos went to Corinth from Ephesus and preached the Gospel there with success.

Paul arrived at Ephesus on his third mission journey, and Apollos also returned to Ephesus from Corinth at some time during the next two years (1 Corinthians 16:12).

During his three years at Ephesus, it seems that Paul made a brief trip to Corinth, probably for two reasons (2 Corinthians 12:14; 13:1):

There was a problem of fornication in the congregation.

He made plans for gathering a collection for the Jerusalem Christians.

Paul wrote a letter to the Corinthians (which the Holy Spirit did not preserve for us) in which he told them to excommunicate the fornicators from the congregation (1 Corinthians 5:9).

Paul sent Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia and thought that Timothy might also go to Corinth (Acts 19:21-22; 1 Corinthians 4:17). Very likely Timothy did not get there.

Chloe's family came to Ephesus from Corinth and reported terrible problems to Paul (1 Corinthians 1:11):

The congregation was split into four opposing groups:

Paul's group – probably the original members converted by Paul

Apollos' group – probably the members converted or impressed by Apollos

Peter's group – probably transfers from some eastern church

Christ's group – perhaps outsiders who proclaimed Christian freedom to do almost anything, including sin.

A member of the congregation was living in adultery with his own stepmother, and the congregation was doing nothing about it.

Members were suing one another in heathen courts instead of settling their problems within the congregation.

Members were committing adultery with prostitutes.

In the first six chapters of First Corinthians Paul deals with these problems one by one:

Divisions in the church – chapters 1-4

The case of incest – chapter 5

Lawsuits of members – chapter 6:1-11

Adultery with prostitutes – chapter 6:12-20

The more responsible members at Corinth wrote a letter to Paul in which they asked him questions about various problems (1 Corinthians 7:1):

Marriage questions, such as:

Should Christians be married?

May Christians divorce their spouses?

What about mixed marriages between Christians and non-Christians?

What about the unmarried girls?

Is it advisable to remarry when one's spouse dies?

Eating meat offered as sacrifice to idols

Should pastors have other jobs?

The role of women in the church services

Some women were refusing to wear the customary head covering.

The proper celebration of the Lord's Supper

It seems they had a common potluck meal¹ called the love feast together with the Lord's Supper. But some went away hungry, others got drunk, and they were split into factions or cliques.

What are the best spiritual gifts, and how are they to be used?

Examples of gifts: the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge
faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles
prophecy, discerning of spirits
kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues

How to conduct the church services:

There was complete disorder; some women were taking over the leadership.

Will there be a resurrection of the dead bodies?

Some of the Corinthians members were denying or doubting this teaching.

The gathering of a collection for the poor Christians in Jerusalem.

Paul discussed all these matters in chapters 7-16 of 1 Corinthians.

Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, members of the Corinthian congregation, delivered the letter from the church in Corinth to Paul in Ephesus and added their own oral report.

At Easter time in 54 or 55 A.D. Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians to give God's answers to all these problems.

Some Likely Dates in New Testament History

Pentecost – 33 AD

Paul's conversion – 36 AD

Paul's first mission journey – 45-48 AD

The council in Jerusalem – 49 AD

Paul's second mission journey – 49-51 AD (chiefly in Corinth)

Paul's third mission journey – 52-55 AD (chiefly in Ephesus)

¹ A "potluck" is a shared meal where each invited family brings a prepared dish to share.

Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea – 55-57 AD

Paul's voyage to Rome – 57-58 AD

Paul's imprisonment in Rome – 58-60 AD

Paul's last mission journeys – 60-67 AD

Paul's execution – 67 or 68 AD

Questions

1. What makes Paul's letter to the Romans different from most Bible books?
2. Where was Paul when he wrote his letter to the Roman Christians?
3. Why did Paul write his first letter to the Corinthians?
4. How did Paul learn about the problems in the congregation at Corinth?
5. Where was Paul when he wrote his first letter to the Corinthians?
6. Which of the problems in Corinth are of major concern in your locale today?



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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 26 – First Corinthians – Problems, Problems, Problems

The Problems in Corinth

In the previous lesson, Lesson 25, we listed the problems in Corinth that faced Paul. Some of these problems were reported by Chloe's family. Others were reported through a letter written by members of the congregation and sent to Paul through Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, who also added their own oral report. Paul's letter consists of his answer to these problems, as given to him by the Holy Spirit. We can use God's Word in this letter to help us resolve similar problems that arise in our congregations today.

Read the listed passages as you study each of the sections below. If you have questions, do not hesitate to ask them.

Introduction (1 Corinthians 1:1-9)

Paul and Sosthenes – to the Corinthian saints (Christians) – grace and peace from God.

Paul thanks God for having given them the Gospel of Christ.

The Four Divisions in the Congregation (1:10-16; 3:1-23; 4:1-21)

"I plead with you ... that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions"

(v. 1: ____)

"Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you?" (v. 1: ____)

"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase" (v. 3: ____)

"For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ"

(v. 3: ____)

"Let no one boast in men. For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come – all are yours. And you are Christ's, and Christ is God's" (vv. 3: ____)

"It is required in stewards that one be found faithful" (v. 4: ____)

"What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?"

(v. 4: ____ In other words, should I come to you with the Law, or with the Gospel?)

The Foolishness and the Weakness of the Gospel (1:17-31; 2:1-16)

"The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing" (v. 1: ____)

"It pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe"

(v. 1:___)

"We preach CHRIST CRUCIFIED, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the POWER of God and the WISDOM of God" (vv. 1:23-24).

"The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God" (v. 2:___ Yet through the Gospel, taught by the Holy Spirit, God gives us Jesus as our Savior and Life.

"You are in Christ Jesus, wisdom from God – righteousness, sanctification, redemption"

(v. 1:___)

"not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches" (v. 2:___)

The Case of Adultery in the Congregation (5:1-13)

"There is sexual immorality among you ... that a man has his father's wife" (v. ___)

"You are puffed up, and have not rather mourned" (v. ___)

"A little leaven leavens the whole lump" (v. ___)

Therefore, God's Word is this: **"Put away from yourselves the evil person"** (v. ___)

Note: This is an example of excommunication: the members were no longer to associate with the impenitent sinner. The purpose: **"that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus"** (v. ___)

The members could still have dealings with non-members guilty of the same sins.

The Case of Lawsuits among Members (6:1-8)

"Brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers!" (v. ___)

"Why do you not rather accept wrong?" (v. ___)

Sexual Immorality and Other Gross Sins (6:9-20)

"Neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites ... will inherit the kingdom of God" (vv. _____)

"Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. ... You were bought at a price" (vv. _____)

"Flee sexual immorality" (v. 18) as Joseph fled from adultery with Potiphar's wife.

Marriage Questions (7:1-40)

"Let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband" (v. ___)

"If they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry" (v. ___. This is for the unmarried.

"A wife is not to depart from her husband. ... A husband is not to divorce his wife" (vv. _____)

In a mixed marriage, **“if the unbeliever departs, let him depart”** (v. ____ But the believer should not.

There are times and situations when it is better not to marry.

“If her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes” (v. ____

Eating Meat That Has Been Sacrificed to Idols (8:1-13; 10:1-33)

Eating this meat may be allowed, but not if it involves idolatry or leads a weak member to eat it, contrary to what his conscience tells him. It is never right to sin against conscience.

“Flee from idolatry. ... Give no offense ... to the church of God” (vv. 10:____

Giving Up Rights for the Sake of the Gospel (9:1-27)

“The Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel”

(v. ____

“Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel”

(v. ____

“I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some” (v. ____

Note: Paul and Barnabas could have married and been paid for their work, but they chose not to.

The Proper Celebration of the Lord’s Supper (10:16-22; 11:17-34)

“Is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? ... Is it not the communion of the body?”

(v. 10:____

Paul condemns their practice because they were divided, some were hungry, and some drunk.

Paul repeats the words by which Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper.

He says those who partake unworthily are **“guilty of the body and blood of the Lord”** (v. 11:____

Therefore **“let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup”**

(v. 11:____

“He who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself”
(v. 11:____

The Role of Women in the Church Services (11:1-16; 14:33-36)

“The head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, the head of Christ is God” (v. 11:___

“Man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman”
(vv. 11:___

The woman should dress and behave in a way that shows agreement with this arrangement.

The women **“are not permitted to speak”** (v. 14:34). Women therefore should not be preachers.

The Various Kinds and Proper Use of Special Spiritual Gifts (12:1-31; 13:1-13; 14:1-40)

All believers have the Holy Spirit: **“No one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit”**
(v. 12:___

“There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit” (v. 12:4). Compare the body with its members.

Paul’s list: apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles, gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. These gifts are given **“for the profit of all”** (v. 12:___

The use of these gifts should be guided by love, as described in Chapter 13.

“Love ... bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (v. 13:___

The best gifts are those that the believer can use for the benefit of others.

“Let all things be done for edification” (v. 14:___

There is little purpose in speaking a language that no one can understand.

“Let all things be done decently and in order” (v. 14:___

The Importance of Christ’s Resurrection and the Final Resurrection of the Dead (15:1-58)

The Gospel: **“Christ died for our sins. ... He was buried. ... He rose again the third day”**
(vv. ___

“If Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. ... But now CHRIST IS RISEN.” (vv. _____

Sown in corruption, raised in incorruption. Sown in dishonor, raised in glory. Sown in weakness, raised in power. Sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body. (Like planting)

“The trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ... Death is swallowed up in victory. ... O death, where is your sting?” (vv. ____

The Collection for the Poor Believers in Jerusalem (16:1-12)

“Let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as He may prosper” (v. ____

Closing Remarks (16:13-24) “Let all that you do be done with love” (v. ____

Questions

1. What difference was there between the ministries of Paul and Apollos in Corinth?
2. Why was it wrong for the congregation at Corinth to split up into factions?
3. Why does Paul call the Gospel the foolishness of preaching?
4. How does the Holy Spirit impart God’s wisdom to us?
5. For what purpose was the adulterer in Corinth excommunicated?
6. What is the only way to deal with sexual immorality?
7. Prove that polygamy and homosexual behavior are unacceptable to God.
8. What right did Paul give up for the sake of the Gospel?
9. How were the Corinthians misusing the spiritual gifts God gave them?
10. What changes needed to be made in their way of worship?
11. Why is the physical resurrection of the dead important?
12. What are the differences between the body after death and the body after resurrection?
13. What evidence is there that Jesus rose from the dead bodily?



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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 27 – Second Corinthians – The Ministry of Paul

The Background of Second Corinthians

The following events led to Paul's writing his second letter to the Corinthians:

1. Paul wrote First Corinthians in Ephesus around Easter in 55 AD. (See Lesson 25.)
2. Paul sent Titus to Corinth either with this letter or shortly afterwards.
3. Paul left Ephesus for Troas and expected Titus to meet him there and report to him how things were progressing in Corinth. 2 Corinthians 2:12-13.
4. Paul was so concerned about Corinth that he hurried on from Troas to Philippi. 2 Corinthians 2:13; 7:5.
5. At Philippi Titus returned to Paul and gave his report. 2 Corinthians 7:6-7, 13-16.
6. In general Titus' report was very favorable:

Most of the congregation accepted Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians. 2 Corinthians 7:8-11.

The man who had been guilty of fornication had repented of his sin. 2 Corinthians 2:6-11; 7:12.

The congregation wanted to see Paul again and renew their fellowship. 2 Corinthians 7:7.

7. Titus reported that some problems remained:

A minority group had not listened to Paul's instructions. 2 Corinthians 10:7.

This group viciously opposed Paul and misinterpreted his words and actions. 2 Corinthians 1:15-18; 10:10.

This group claimed that Paul was not a true apostle. He did not accept pay as did the other apostles. 2 Corinthians 11:5-12; 12:11-13.

Because of the disorder in Corinth the projected collection for the poor Christians in Jerusalem had come to a standstill. 2 Corinthians 8-9.

8. Therefore, Paul wrote Second Corinthians from Philippi in 55 AD.

Chapters 1-7: He rejoiced at the good news brought by Titus.

Chapters 8-9: He encouraged them to carry out the collection.

Chapters 10-13: He defended his apostolic authority over against his enemies.

The Ministry of Paul

Paul's second letter to the Corinthians tells us a lot about Paul. Large sections of the letter are autobiographical.

Chapter 1: The troubles in Ephesus made him despair of his life at times. But God delivered him.

Chapter 2: He was so concerned about the Corinthians that he wrote his first letter to them with tears and anguish. He could find no rest in Troas because he had not yet heard anything from Corinth in response to his first letter. Even though he had opportunity for mission work in Troas, he hurried on to Philippi in the hope of finding Titus.

Chapters 4-6: As an apostle, Paul could not pervert the Gospel of Christ. Christ was his Master, and he was willing to suffer for Christ's sake. As an ambassador for Christ, Paul spoke the words Christ gave him. As their spiritual father, Paul pleaded with them as a father with his children.

Chapters 10-13: Paul explained what it was like to be Christ's apostle. On the one hand, he was severely persecuted. But on the other hand, he was given special revelations and even a special vision of heaven itself. But so that he would not become proud of these revelations, God gave him a thorn in the flesh (a bodily ailment?) to keep him humble.

The Purpose of Excommunication

In his first letter Paul had instructed the congregation in Corinth to excommunicate (put out of the congregation) the man who was guilty of open adultery and was not sorry for it. The purpose of this action was to make the man realize the seriousness of his sin and lead him to repentance. In this case the excommunication had its desired effect. The man was sorry for his sin, and Paul instructed the congregation not to delay receiving him back again into fellowship. It is important for Christian congregations today to learn when and how to practice excommunication and also when and how to receive a repentant sinner back into fellowship. Jesus' teaching in Matthew 18:15-18 gives us direction.

Read the listed passages as you study each of the sections below. If you have questions, do not hesitate to ask them.

Rejoicing at the Good News Brought by Titus (Chapters 1-7)

Paul and Timothy – to the Christians in Corinth – grace and peace (1:1-2).

Thanks to God who saved us from death in Ephesus (1:3-11).

“We should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead” (v. __
God **“comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort”** others (v.
__

Paul's change in travel plans (1:12 – 2:4).

Original plan: from Ephesus to Corinth to Macedonia to Corinth again.

The change: from Ephesus to Macedonia to Corinth.

"Our word to you was not Yes and No. ... All the promises of God in Him are Yes"

(vv. _____)

"To spare you I came no more to Corinth" (v. _____)

Instructions concerning the excommunicated member who had repented (2:5-11).

"You ought rather to forgive and comfort him. ... Whom you forgive, I also forgive"

(vv. _____)

Paul's trip from Troas to Philippi (2:12-17).

"I had no rest in my spirit, because I did not find Titus my brother" (v. _____)

"Thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ" (v. _____)

Paul's letters of recommendation (3:1-3).

"You are an epistle of Christ, ... written not with ink but by the Spirit" (v. _____)

A comparison of the ministry of the Law and the ministry of the Gospel (3:4-18).

We are **"ministers of the new covenant. ... The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life"**

(v. _____)

The sufferings and the glory of an apostle of Christ (4:1 – 5:10).

"We do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord" (v. _____)

"We have this treasure in earthen vessels" (v. _____)

"Perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken" (vv. _____)

"We walk by faith, not by sight" (v. _____)

The motive, message, and method of an apostle (5:11 – 6:10).

"The love of Christ compels us" (v. _____)

"If One died for all, then all died; and He died for all" (v. _____)

Jesus' death for all is as good as if we had died for our sins. We are set free.

"God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation" (v. _____)

The whole world has been declared forgiven by God because of Christ's work.

"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (v. _____)

"We are ambassadors for Chris. ... We implore you ..., be reconciled to God" (v. _____)

The call for separation from evil (6:11 – 7:4).

"Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. ... Be separate" (vv. _____)

"Having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh" (v. _____)

Paul's reaction to Titus' report (7:5-16).

"I rejoice ... that your sorrow led to repentance" (v. _____)

Encouragement for the Collection for the Jerusalem Christians (Chapters 8-9)

The good example of the Christians in Macedonia (8:1-7).

The motivation to give: the grace of Christ (8:8-15).

“Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor” (v. ____)

The sending of Titus and two others to assist in the collection (8:16 – 9:4)

God’s blessing on their giving (9:6-15).

Paul’s Defense of His Apostolic Authority (Chapters 10-13)

Paul discusses the charges of his opponents (10:1-18).

“Not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends” (v. ____)

Paul’s “foolish” boasting of the revelations given to him, along with severe trials (11:1 – 12:21).

“He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you’ (v. ____)

Paul’s coming visit to Corinth (13:1-14).

Questions

1. Why was Paul so upset when he did not find Titus at Troas?
2. What good news did Titus give Paul when they finally met?
3. Why had it been difficult for Paul to write 1 Corinthians?
4. Why had Paul changed his travel plans with respect to Corinth?
5. What had happened to the man that had been excommunicated?
6. What did Paul urge the congregation to do now for this man?
7. How are Christians like letters from Christ?
8. What is the main distinction between God’s law and God’s Gospel?
9. Who has been reconciled to whom? How was this accomplished?
10. What does Paul say about separation from unbelievers?
11. How had the Macedonians given a good example in their giving?
12. What should motivate us to give ourselves and what we have to God?
13. What special blessings had God given to Paul?
14. What was the purpose of the thorn in the flesh?
15. Make a list of the sufferings endured by Paul for the Gospel.



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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 28 – Romans 1-4 – Law and Gospel

Paul's Letter to the Romans

For the background of this letter, see Lesson 25.

Paul's letter to the Romans can be divided into seven parts:

1. Paul's introduction of himself and the stating of his theme (1:1-17)
2. God's **Law** condemns both Gentiles and Jews – all are sinners (1:18 – 3:20)
3. God's **Gospel** brings righteousness through faith in Christ Jesus (3:21 – 4:25)
4. The believer is **free** from God's wrath, from sin, from the Law, and from death (5:1 – 8:39)
5. God's ways with the **Jews** and the **Gentiles** (9:1 – 11:36)
6. How believers ought to **conduct** themselves (12:1 – 15:13)
7. Conclusion: Paul's plans, greetings, and last warnings (15:14 – 16:27)

Read each of the sections below. If you have questions, do not hesitate to ask them.

Paul's Introduction of Himself, and the Stating of His Theme (1:1-17)

Greetings (1:1-7)

Paul – to the saints in Rome – grace and peace.

Paul's intention to preach the Gospel in Rome (1: 8-15)

"I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift" (v. ____

"I am ready to preach the Gospel to you who are in Rome also" (v. ____

The theme of the letter to the Romans (1:16-17)

"I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.

IT IS THE POWER OF GOD FOR SALVATION FOR EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES. ...

IN IT THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IS REVEALED" (vv. ____

God's Law Condemns Both Gentiles and Jews – All Are Sinners (1:18 – 3:20)

Paul has announced his theme: the Gospel of Christ, the Good News of what Jesus has done for us. But before he presents the Gospel to us, he teaches the Law of God and points out all our sins to us so that we see the need for the Gospel. It is because we are such hopeless sinners that the Gospel is such Good News.

He shows how the heathen world had fallen away from God. Then he shows how all moralists, who look down on others, are also condemned by God's Law. This also includes the Jews, who had God's Law but did not obey it. Then Paul quotes the Old Testament to prove that every single person in the entire world, both Gentile and Jew, is a sinner in the sight of God.

God is angry with the heathen world because of their sin (1:18-32)

"The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness" (v. ____

Even though they knew God from His creation, **"they did not glorify Him as God"** (v. ____

They **"worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator"** (v. ____

As a judgment on their idolatry, God gave them up to their grossly sinful ways.

It is at this point that God condemns all homosexual behavior of men and women.

God is also angry with the moralists, who condemn others but not themselves (2:1-10)

"You are inexcusable. ... In whatever you judge another you condemn yourself" (v. ____

"Do you think ... that you will escape the judgment of God?" (v. ____

God is angry with the Jews who cannot keep the Law that God gave them (2:11-29)

"Not the hearers of the Law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the Law" (v. ____

Some Gentiles, having the Law in their hearts, keep the Law better than the Jews.

"You who make your boast in the Law, do you dishonor God through breaking" it? (v. ____

Thus, God is angry with all sinners, whether outwardly good or evil; all are sinners (3:1-20)

"We have ... charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin" (v. ____

Various Old Testament passages are quoted to show **"there is none who does good"** (v. ____

"By the deeds of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight, FOR BY THE LAW IS THE KNOWLEDGE OF SIN" (Use of Law as mirror) (v. ____

God's Gospel Brings Righteousness through Faith in Jesus Christ (3:21 – 4:25)

This section is really the main part of the letter, for in this section Paul tells the Romans what the Gospel of Christ really is: God's free gift to sinners, namely, the perfect righteousness given to all that was won for everyone by Jesus' suffering and death on the cross. The only way to receive this gift is by faith, that is, by trusting in Jesus and what He did for all sinners.

Paul uses the term “justify”, which means that God declares the whole world just (righteous) and holy, because Jesus absorbed in His body the punishment for all sins of all sinners. Even Old Testament believers like Abraham and David were saved through their faith in the Good News that God declares sinners forgiven and righteous because of the sacrificial death of Christ.

We are saved by grace, because of Christ’s redemption, received by faith (3:21-31)

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (vv. _____)

Notice that all those who have sinned are all justified or declared just.

“We conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from deeds of the Law” (v. ____)

Notice that only those who have faith in Jesus enjoy this justification of all.

Abraham received justification by faith in God’s promise, not by good deeds (4:1-5, 9-25)

“Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness” (v. ____)

This is a quotation from Genesis 15:6, which teaches justification by faith.

“To him who believes on Him ..., his faith is accounted for righteousness” (v. ____)

“Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt” (v. ____)

When a man works for wages, his pay is not a gift, but a debt.

But through faith in Jesus, one receives a gift of undeserved grace.

Abraham was justified by faith in God’s promise before he was circumcised.

Abraham was **“fully convinced that what He had promised He was able to perform”** (v. ____)

David teaches the same thing in Psalm 32 (4:6-8)

“Blessed are those ... whose sins are covered, ... to whom the LORD shall not impute sin”

(vv. _____)

Universal (or Objective) Justification and Individual (or Subjective) Justification

Universal justification = God declares the whole world righteous because of Christ’s work.

Individual justification = Each one receives the benefits of this justification by faith.

In one sense all are saved because Jesus died for all.

In another sense all are not saved because unbelievers refuse God’s gift of justification in Christ.

The Lutheran Emphasis on Justification by Faith

This teaching of justification by grace, for Christ’s sake, through faith, was forgotten very early in the history of the church. The early Christians began talking about doing good in

order to merit forgiveness and salvation. St. Augustine restored the true teaching for a time, but after his death the Roman church again lost sight of Paul's teaching.

Through their study of the Scriptures, Martin Luther and the other reformers at his time recovered the pure teaching of justification by faith apart from the deeds of the Law, as taught by Paul. But by this time the Roman Catholic Church was so contaminated by the concept of salvation by works that Luther and other reformers like him were excommunicated by the Roman church as false teachers. To this day the Roman Church condemns the teaching that we are justified (declared righteous) and forgiven by God through faith in Jesus Christ alone, apart from good works or works of the Law. Many Lutherans in our time have also fallen away from this teaching. May God help us, so that we may always teach this doctrine as Paul taught it to the Romans.

Our Lutheran confessions teach justification by faith. For example, the Augsburg Confession (1530) says: *"It is taught among us that we cannot obtain forgiveness of sin and righteousness before God by our own merits, works, or satisfactions, but that we receive forgiveness of sin and become righteous before God by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith, when we believe that Christ suffered for us and that for His sake our sin is forgiven and righteousness and eternal life are given to us."*

Some of the Lutheran hymns that we use in the United States also clearly teach this doctrine, particularly those written by Martin Luther and his associates. Here are some stanzas by a man named Paul Speratus, who was a friend of Martin Luther.

"Salvation unto us has come By God's free grace and favor;
Good works cannot avert our doom, They help and save us never.
Faith looks to Jesus Christ alone, Who did for all the world atone;
He is our one Redeemer."

"Since Christ hath full atonement made And brought to us salvation,
Each Christian therefore may be glad And build on this foundation.
Thy grace alone, dear Lord, I plead, Thy death is now my life indeed,
For Thou hast paid my ransom."

"Faith clings to Jesus' cross alone And rests in Him unceasing;
And by its fruits true faith is known, With love and hope increasing.
Yet faith alone doth justify, Works serve thy neighbor and supply
The proof that faith is living."

Questions

1. Why did the apostle Paul want to go to Rome?
2. What is the theme of Paul's letter to the Romans?
3. What does Paul say the Gospel is able to accomplish?
4. What does Paul mean when he speaks of the righteousness of God?
5. Why does Paul spend so much time in his letter discussing God's law?
6. In what ways were the Jews and Gentiles different from each other?
7. In what ways were the Jews and Gentiles the same?
8. What does Paul say about the man who finds fault with others?
9. How many people are sinners? How many people are justified in Christ?
10. What is the only way to receive the benefits of what Jesus did?
11. What does Paul say about Abraham and David?
12. What is the difference between wages and grace?
13. What does the word "imputation" mean?
14. What is the chief blessing of the Lutheran Reformation?



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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 29 – Romans 5-11 – The Fruits of Faith and the Tragedy of Israel

Chapters 5-8: Freedom from God's Anger, the Power of Sin, the Threats of God's Law, and Even Death

The Fruits of Faith

The great apostle to the Gentiles has already explained the Law and the Gospel in the first part of this letter. Paul has explained that a person receives the benefits of the Gospel only by faith in Christ, apart from the deeds of the Law. In this section he discusses the fruits of faith. We are saved alone by grace, because of Christ, through faith. But it is wrong to think that faith is a mere knowledge of what Christ has done.

Martin Luther once said: "Faith is a divine work in us which changes us and makes us to be born anew of God. It kills the Old Adam and makes us altogether different men. It is a living, busy, active, mighty thing, this faith. It is impossible for it not to be doing good works continually. It does not ask whether good works are to be done, but before the question is asked, it has already done them, and is constantly doing them. Faith is a living, daring confidence in God's grace."

Read each of the sections below. If you have questions, do not hesitate to ask them.

Chapter 5: Freedom from God's Anger

In Chapter 5 Paul tells us that believers in Christ are free from God's anger. Believers in Christ have these blessings: peace with God, access to God, joy and comfort in time of trouble, and hope for the future; the believer has all of these things because God loved us even when we were His enemies and He sent His Son to die for us.

"Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"

(v. __)

"We have access by faith into this grace in which we stand" (v. __ (We can pray.)

We **"rejoice in hope of the glory of God"** (v. __ (We have the sure hope of eternal life in heaven.)

We **"glory in tribulations"** (v. __ (We know that our Savior-God works all things for our good.)

"Having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him"

(v. __)

"We were reconciled to God through the death of His Son" (v. __)

"We have now received the reconciliation" (v. __)

The Grand Comparison between Adam and Jesus Christ (Romans 5:12-21)

As one man's offense	So one Man's righteous act
Resulted in condemnation	Resulted in justification of life
For all persons	For all persons

This comparison shows us that Adam was a real person – as real as Jesus Himself. Adam brought sin into the world; Jesus Christ brought forgiveness of sin to the world. As Adam's sin affected everybody, so also Christ's righteousness is for all.

All persons have been reconciled to God through the vicarious death of Jesus Christ.

Only those who trust in Christ and what He did receive by faith the reconciliation and its benefits.

“Where sin abounded, grace abounded much more” (v. ____

All of this is ours only **“through Jesus Christ our Lord”** (v. ____

A Reformation hymn, written by Lazarus Spengler, summarizes the comparison of Adam and Christ:

“As by one man all mankind fell
And, born in sin, was doomed to hell,
So by one Man, who took our place,
We all received the gift of grace.”

Chapter 6: Freedom from the Power of Sin

In Chapter 6 Paul considers the question that some people raise. They say that if Jesus died to give us the forgiveness of sin, then we may as well sin all we please, since there is forgiveness for us anyway. Paul says: **“Certainly not!”** He says that Christ ended the power of sin by His suffering on the cross. When we are baptized in Jesus' name, we are set free from the power of sin. Sin is no longer our master. Christ has brought us out from the land of bondage and made us willing slaves of our gracious God and His Son Jesus.

“Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not!” (vv. ____

“Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!” (v. ____

“Just as Christ was raised from the dead, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (v. ____

“Do not let sin reign in your mortal body” (v. ____

“Having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness” (v. ____

“Having been set free from sin, you have your fruit to holiness” (v. ____

“So now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness” (v. ____

“The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life” (v. ____

All of this is ours **“in Christ Jesus our Lord”** (v. ____

Chapter 7: Freedom from the Threats of God's Law

In Chapter 7 Paul teaches us that our Lord has set us free from the threats of the Law. We are no longer under the Law, and the curse of the Law no longer hangs over our heads. The

Holy Spirit now guides us as servants of God to do the things contained in the Law **“in the newness of the Spirit.”** Nevertheless, because of the Old Adam (the sinful flesh) that remains within us, we do not altogether succeed in doing God's will. Therefore, there remains for every Christian the continual struggle against the flesh. This struggle must continue until the end of our lives on earth.

The Law keeps on reminding us of our sin, especially the commandment: **“You shall not covet”**

(v. ____

“I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells” (v. ____

“The good I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice” (v. ____

“I delight in the law of God according to the inward man” (v. ____

“With the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin” (v. ____

Nevertheless, we are delivered **“through Jesus Christ our Lord”** (v. ____

The following hymn pictures the continued struggle between the old man and the new man:

“I know that sin and guilt combine To reign o'er ev'ry thought of mine

And turn from good to ill; I know that, when I try to be

Upright and just and true to Thee, I am a sinner still.”

Chapter 8: Even Freedom from Death

In Chapter 8 Paul comforts the believers who are struggling against their sinful flesh. He assures us that Christ has set us free from death itself. He teaches us that we are not condemned for our sin as long as we, in the power of the Spirit, are fighting against our sinful flesh. If we give up the struggle, however, and let the sinful flesh reign in our lives, then we shall die. We must go through many struggles as Christians, but we are not alone. God has given us His Holy Spirit. In fact, God Himself is working all things together for the good of His chosen people. Since God has from eternity chosen to bring us to faith in Christ, we can trust Him to keep us in that faith to the very end despite the many obstacles along the way.

“There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus” (v. ____

“The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death”

(v. ____

“Those who are in the flesh cannot please God” (v. ____

“If you live according to the flesh, you will die” (v. ____

“If by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live” (v. ____

(Those who walk after the flesh let the flesh reign, instead of overcoming the flesh in the Spirit.)

“We are (adopted) children of God ... – heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ” (vv. ____

"All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called"
(v. ____

(The called are, in this order: foreknown, predestined, called, justified, and glorified – all by grace.)

"If God is for us, who can be against us?" (v. ____

"He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (v. ____

"I am persuaded that neither death nor life, ... nor any other created, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (v. ____

Note: To be foreknown by God means to be known in love with an aim to save.

Chapters 9-11: Israel's Rejection of Christ and Mission Work among the Gentiles

In this section Paul shows how Israel's rejection of Christ has led to the preaching of the Gospel of Christ among the Gentiles. The tragedy of Israel rejection of Jesus is Israel's own fault. Most of the Jewish people remained convinced that the way to salvation was their obedience to Law God had given them, which they did not really obey at all. What God wanted was for them to repent of their sins and turn to Jesus as the Savior that God had promised in the Old Testament from the beginning.

Since the Jews as a people rejected the Gospel, Paul and the other early Christians went to the non-Jews (the Gentiles), and the Holy Spirit brought many of these Gentiles into the one Church of Jesus. The Jewish Christians became a minority group in Christ's Church, even though they were the first ones to hear the Good News. Nevertheless, the Lord is still inviting the Jewish people today to receive their Messiah.

When a person comes to faith in Christ and is finally saved, it is due entirely to God's grace. On the other hand, when a person rejects Christ and is finally lost, it is his or her own fault.

"They are not all Israel who are of Israel" (v. 9: __ Only some in Israel are believers in Christ.

"They, seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness" to the believers (vv. 10: ____

"There is a remnant according to the election of grace" (v. 11: __

"If by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace" (v. 11: __

"Through their fall, ... salvation has come to the Gentiles" (v. 11: ____

"There is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him" (v. 10: ____

"How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?" (v. 10: ____ (The need for missions)

"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (v. 10: ____

"God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all" (v. 11: ____

“How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!” (v. 11: ____

Questions

1. What does it mean that we are justified by Christ's blood?
2. What does it mean that we are justified by faith?
3. What must one believe in order to be justified by faith?
4. In what ways are Adam and Christ similar?
5. In what ways are Adam and Christ different?
6. Why is the Christian unable to do the good he wants to do as a Christian?
7. What does the Holy Spirit give the Christian the power to do?
8. What comfort does the Christian derive from the teaching of predestination?
9. What is the only way by which both Jews and Gentiles can be saved?
10. Why did most of the Jews reject their Messiah?
11. How does the Holy Spirit create faith in Christ in a person's heart?



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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 30 – Romans – Giving Our Lives to God

Doctrine and Practice

Many of the apostle Paul's letters are divided into two parts: the first part is doctrine, and the second part is practice. In other words, in the first part Paul presents the doctrinal principles; in the second part, he shows how to put those teachings into practice in our daily lives. This is also the pattern in Paul's letter to the Romans. Paul was writing to a congregation he had not yet visited so he was careful to lay out the doctrinal principles in depth in the first section (Romans 1-11). He follows that with the "practical" section that applies the doctrine to our lives (Romans 12-16).

In the first eleven chapters Paul presents the doctrine of the law, which shows us our sins, and then the Gospel, which gives us the forgiveness of sins in Christ. Next, he presents the Christian doctrine of sanctification, that is, the fight against sin and the old Adam until our dying days. Finally, he deals with the tragedy of the people of Israel and the relationship between the Jews and the Gentiles.

Read each of the sections below. If you have questions, do not hesitate to ask them.

Chapters 12:1-15:13: How Believers Ought to Conduct Themselves

Chapter 12: Christians Are Living Sacrifices

Now that our sins are forgiven through Christ's sacrifice and God has made us His dear children by giving us faith in Christ, how should we behave? How can we show our appreciation for God's grace in our daily thoughts, words, and actions? Notice very carefully that we do not do good works in order to be saved, but *because* we have already been saved by Jesus Christ. We do good works not to get to heaven, but to thank God for having already given us heaven as a gift in Jesus Christ. Our whole Christian life is to be a life of gratitude to God for His gifts to us.

The best way to show our appreciation to God is to give Him our bodies and all that we have. **"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice" (v. 1).**

In the Old Testament the Israelites brought dead animals to God for sacrifices. In the New Testament we are asked to offer ourselves as living sacrifices to God – not as sacrifices to take away sin, but as sacrifices of thanksgiving.

Frances Havergal, a woman in England, wrote these words:

"Take my life and let it be Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my moments and my days, Let them flow in ceaseless praise.
Take my love, my Lord, I pour At Thy feet its treasure store;
Take myself, and I will be Ever, only, all, for Thee."

Each one of us has different gifts through which we can serve God. Christ's Church is compared to a human body; each member of the body has its own function. The ear hears; the eye sees; the nose smells, etc.

"We, being many, are one body in Christ, ... having then gifts differing" (v. 5-6).

Such as: prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhortation, giving, leading, showing mercy.

All these gifts are to be used for the benefit of others according to the law of love.

"Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love" (v. 10).

"Bless those who persecute you" (v. 14).

"Do not avenge yourselves. ... 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord" (v. 19).

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him" (v. 20).

Chapter 13: Christians Are Good Citizens and Good Neighbors

Paul teaches us that we are to obey worldly governments. It is our Christian duty to obey all those whom God has placed over us in this life, such as the ruling authorities in the country in which we live, as well as all the local authorities and lesser officials. We should never disobey the laws of the land unless the government forbids obedience to one of God's commands. Our obedience to worldly governments includes the payment of taxes and proper respect for government officials. When Paul wrote these words, the Roman Emperor was Nero, who was one of the most incompetent rulers this world has ever known, yet the Christians were to honor him as a representative of God.

"Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities" (v. 1).

"He is God's minister to you for good" (v. 4).

"He is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil" (v. 4).

"Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due" (v. 7). Jesus taught this also.

As we live in this world, we should be good neighbors to all, always keeping in mind the second table of the law.

"You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (v. 9).

"Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law" (v. 10).

"Let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light" (v. 12).

"Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts" (v. 14).

Chapters 14-15:13: Christians Show Consideration for One Another (the strong and the weak)

By weak Christians Paul means those who feel it is wrong to do something that is really not wrong in itself. Some Christians in Rome felt that eating meat was wrong. Others felt it was their moral duty to observe certain religious festivals. The strong Christians knew that these rules were not required for New Testament Christians. Paul says that the weak should not impose their scruples on the strong, and the strong should not do anything to lead the weak to sin against their conscience. If someone does something that is not really wrong, but he thinks it is wrong, he is sinning against his conscience and therefore it is wrong for him to do it.

“Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat” (v. 3). (A word to strong Christians)

“Let not him who does not eat judge him who eats” (v. 3). (A word to weak Christians)

“None of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself” (v. 7).

“We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ” (v. 10).

“There is nothing unclean of itself” (v. 14).

“The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (v. 17).

“Let us pursue the things which make for peace and by which one may edify another” (v. 19).

(Romans 15:1-13)

“Receive one another, just as also Christ received us, to the glory of God” (v. 7).

Chapters 15:14 – 16:27: Conclusion: Paul’s Plans, Greetings, and Last Warnings

In this last part of the letter Paul discusses his future plans and sends greetings to his friends in Rome from himself and his friends in Corinth. He also warns the Christians against those who introduce false teaching and thus cause divisions among Christians.

“Whenever I journey to Spain, I shall come to you” (v. 15:24).

“Now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints” (v. 15:25). (presenting the offering to the poor).

“Greet Priscilla and Aquila” (v. 16:3) and many others. **“Greet one another with a holy kiss” (v. 16:16).**

“Note those who cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. ... By smooth words and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the simple” (v. 16:17-18).

Note: Every Christian should be careful to participate with and support only those religious groups that teach what God’s Word teaches. If a group teaches *anything* contrary to God’s Word, he should not participate with it or support it.

Questions

1. Why is it so important that Chapter 12 begins with the words **“therefore”** and **“by the mercies of God”**?
2. What is the best thing we can give to God out of appreciation for His gifts?
3. In what way is the human body a picture of Christ’s Church?
4. What is God’s will for every Christian with respect to the government?
5. When would it be God’s will to disobey the government?
6. How can God’s law be summarized in two sentences? In one word?
7. What is the difference between a strong Christian and a weak Christian?
8. What warnings does Paul give to the strong Christian?
9. What warnings does Paul give to the weak Christian?
10. What was Paul planning to do when he wrote this letter?
11. When should a Christian cease to have fellowship with other persons and groups, even if they are called Christians?



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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 31 – Paul in Jerusalem and Caesarea

The Journeys of Paul

We have now concluded our study of the three missionary journeys of Paul. Let us now summarize these journeys:

Paul's first journey – 45-48 AD - accompanied by Barnabas and Mark

To Cyprus, Pamphylia, and Galatia (Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe)

Between first and second journeys: Paul's letter to the **Galatians**; the convention in Jerusalem

Paul's second journey – 49-51 AD - accompanied by Silas, Timothy, Luke

To Galatia, Troas, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth (1½ years), Ephesus

From Corinth Paul wrote **1 Thessalonians** and **2 Thessalonians**.

Between second and third journeys: a feast in Jerusalem

Paul's third journey – 52-55 AD - accompanied by many, including Titus, Timothy, Luke

To Galatia, Ephesus (3 years), Troas, Macedonia, Achaia, Macedonia, Miletus, Jerusalem

Three conflicts in Ephesus: unbelieving Jews, practitioners of magic, silversmiths

Three letters: From Ephesus Paul wrote **1 Corinthians**. From Philippi Paul wrote **2 Corinthians**. From Corinth Paul wrote **Romans**.

On this journey Paul was gathering a collection for the poor Christians in Jerusalem.

When Paul wrote to the Romans from Corinth, he planned to go to Jerusalem to deliver his collection. Then he wanted to go to Rome, and from there to Spain. But God had other plans for Paul. Paul did not get to Rome until several years later when he traveled there as a prisoner awaiting trial. We cannot be sure that he ever got to Spain.

What happened? Already on the way to Jerusalem from Corinth Paul ran into trouble from the unbelieving Jews. The Holy Spirit told him directly and indirectly that he would suffer in Jerusalem. Although many of his Christian friends advised Paul not to go to Jerusalem, he considered it his duty to go to Jerusalem and present his offering for the poor in person.

Paul's Prison Term (55-60 AD)

When Paul reached Jerusalem, unbelieving Jews from Ephesus also arrived in Jerusalem. They stirred up the Jews in Jerusalem against Paul and accused him of bringing one of his companions, Trophimus, a Greek Gentile, into the Jewish Temple. Since this was considered a horrible crime, Paul was almost killed before being rescued by a Roman captain named Lysias.

Paul was put on trial (just like Jesus) before the Jewish Sanhedrin, the Roman governor, and Herod Agrippa II. During all this time Paul was a prisoner of the Roman government – first in Jerusalem, then in Caesarea, and then on his voyage to Rome. He was taken to Rome because he, as a Roman citizen, had appealed to Caesar for a final verdict. The Caesar at this time was Nero.

Read each of the sections below. If you have questions, do not hesitate to ask them.

In Jerusalem

Acts 21:18-19 – Paul presents the Gentile offering to the Jerusalem congregation and reports the progress of the Gospel among the Gentiles.

“He told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles” (v. 19).

Acts 21:20-25 – James (Jesus’ brother) and the Jerusalem elders ask Paul to take part in a Jewish Nazarite vow ceremony to show the Jews that Paul personally was still following Jewish laws and customs. Paul was willing to do this, even though he insisted that Gentile Christians should not be forced to obey Jewish laws and customs.

Acts 21:26-30 – Nevertheless, seven days later the Jews accuse Paul of bringing Gentiles into the Temple, and a mob begins to beat Paul severely.

They said, **“He also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place”** (v. 28). This was not true.

Acts 21:31-40 – The Roman commander Lysias rescues Paul from the mob and lets him speak to them.

“The multitude of the people followed after, crying out, ‘Away with him!’” (v. 36).

At first Lysias thought that Paul was an Egyptian rabble-rouser.

Paul spoke to Lysias in Greek, and to the Jewish mob in Hebrew.

Acts 22:1-21 – Paul defends his belief in Jesus Christ and his mission to the Gentiles.

He relates the account of his conversion to Christ on the road to Damascus.

He tells them that he had wanted to bring the good news of Jesus to the Jews, but God had told him to bring this good news to the Gentiles.

God had told Paul: **“Get out of Jerusalem quickly, ... I will send you far from here to the Gentiles”** (v. 18, 21).

Acts 22:22-30 – When Paul says the word **“Gentiles”**, the Jewish mob calls for Paul’s death.

Lysias wanted to learn the truth about Paul by scourging him, but Paul said he was a Roman.

Paul was born a Roman citizen; Lysias said he had to buy his citizenship.

Acts 23:1-10 – Paul tells the Jewish council he believes in the resurrection of the dead; this divided them.

The Pharisees believed in the resurrection and in angels, but the Sadducees did not.

A Pharisee said: **“If a spirit or an angel has spoken to him, let us not fight against God”** (v. 9).

Again, Lysias rescued Paul from the mob and brought him into the barracks.

Acts 23:11 – God tells Paul: **“As you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome.”**

Acts 23:12-15 – More than forty Jews vow to kill Paul and make their plans to do so.

“We will eat nothing until we have killed Paul” (v. 14).

The chief priests and elders went along with this plan.

Acts 23:16-22 – Paul’s nephew hears about the plot and informs both Paul and Lysias.

Acts 23:23-35 – Lysias sends Paul by night to Governor Felix in Caesarea.

Felix held the same position that Pontius Pilate had previously held.

Lysias’ letter to Felix: **“I rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman”** (v. 27).

“When it was told me that the Jews lay in wait for the man, I sent him to you” (v. 30).

Paul was escorted to Caesarea by 200 soldiers, 70 horsemen, and 200 spearmen.

In Caesarea

Acts 24:1-9 – Five days later the Jewish leaders and Tertullus accuse Paul of sedition before Felix.

Tertullus: **“We have found this man ... a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes”** (v. 5).

Acts 24:10-21 – Paul defends his belief in the resurrection and denies the charges against him.

“I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law” (v. 14).

“I came to bring alms and offerings to my nation” (v. 17).

Acts 24:22-23 – Felix allows Paul some liberty in Caesarea, although he remains a prisoner.

Acts 24:24-25 – Paul is invited to speak to Felix and his Jewish wife Drusilla.

“He reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come” (v. 25).

Felix: **“Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you”** (v. 25).

Felix kept Paul as a prisoner in the hope of receiving a bribe from the Christians.

Acts 24:26-27 – Paul stays a prisoner in Caesarea for two more years. Felix is replaced by Festus.

Acts 25:1-8 – Governor Festus hears the Jewish accusations against Paul.

“The Jews ... laid many serious complaints against Paul, which they could not prove” (v. 7).

Acts 25:9-12 – Paul appeals to the Roman Caesar Nero rather than return to Jerusalem.

Festus: **“You have appealed to Caesar? To Caesar you shall go”** (v. 12).

Acts 25:13-22 – Festus speaks to King Herod Agrippa II about Paul’s case.

Acts 25:23-27 – Paul defends himself before Agrippa II, Bernice, Festus, and others.

Acts 26:1-23 – Paul defends his faith in Jesus Christ and His resurrection from the dead.

He repeats the account of his conversion on the road to Damascus.

Acts 26:24-29 – Festus thinks Paul is out of his mind, but Agrippa II is not sure about that.

Acts 26:30-32 – Agrippa II and Festus agree that Paul is innocent; yet he must go to Caesar.

Note: Ancient historians, especially Josephus (an eyewitness of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD), give us more information concerning Festus, Felix, Herod Agrippa II, and Bernice.

Questions

1. What were the prophets telling Paul as he traveled to Jerusalem?
2. What kind of ceremony did Paul participate in to prove he personally was still following Jewish customs?
3. What was Paul accused of by the Jewish mob in the Temple?
4. How was Paul rescued from this mob?
5. Which word from Paul's lips led the mob to want him to be put to death?
6. How did Paul protect himself from being scourged?
7. What doctrinal difference was there between the Pharisees and the Sadducees?
8. How did Paul learn about the vow of his enemies?
9. Where was Paul taken suddenly to rescue him from those who made this vow?
10. To which officials was Paul permitted to tell his story?
11. Why was Paul kept prisoner in Caesarea for such a long time?
12. Why did Paul appeal his case to the emperor in Rome?
13. Why did Festus want Agrippa II to listen to Paul's account?
14. How did God overrule Paul's travel plans for his trip to Rome?



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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 32 – Paul’s Voyage to Rome and Two Letters (Acts 27-28; Colossians; Philemon)

Read each of the sections below. If you have questions, do not hesitate to ask them.

Acts 27:1 – 28:31: The Long Voyage to Rome

Paul made this journey to Rome as a prisoner of the Roman government. Luke and Aristarchus accompanied Paul. Luke, the author of Acts, was an eyewitness of the storm at sea and the shipwreck that followed. Three ships were involved in Paul’s journey from Caesarea to Rome in the years 58-59 AD.

Caesarea – leaving on ship #1, a ship of Adramyttium

Paul, together with other prisoners, is placed into the custody of Julius, a Roman centurion.

Sidon – Paul was permitted to leave the ship and visit friends.

Cyprus – The ship sailed north of the island. Contrary winds slowed them down.

Myra in Lycia – The prisoners were transferred to ship #2, a ship of Alexandria in Egypt.

Cnidus – Contrary winds continued to slow them down.

Salmone in Crete

Fair Havens near Lasea in Crete – By this time they were way behind schedule.

Paul’s advice: **“This voyage will end with disaster and much loss”** (v. 27:10). That is: Stay here.

But the owner of the ship wanted them to sail to Phoenix in Crete, a better harbor.

A strong northeasterly wind (**“Euroclydon”**) drove them far out to sea.

Clauda and beyond – a small island and then the depths of the Mediterranean Sea

They brought the skiff on board and undergirded the ship with cables.

The next day: They threw some of the contents overboard to lighten the tempest-tossed ship.

The next day: The ship’s passengers threw the ship’s tackle overboard.

Many days later: No stars or sun appeared. They gave up hope of being saved.

An angel of God to Paul: **“Do not be afraid; you must be brought before Caesar”** (v. 27:24).

Paul: **“There will be no loss of life among you, ... but only of the ship”** (v. 27:22).

Near the island of Malta – after fourteen days at sea

When they neared land, the sailors lowered the skiff into the sea in an attempt to escape, but Paul intervened.

Paul urged the 276 passengers to eat, and then they threw the remaining cargo overboard.

As the ship ran aground, the soldiers wanted to kill the prisoners, but Julius intervened.

All got safely to land, either by swimming or by finding planks or ship furniture to float in on.

Malta – an island south of Italy

The natives of the island were kind and welcomed the passengers with a fire to warm them.

Since the bite of a poisonous snake did not harm Paul, they thought he must be a god.

A citizen named Publius took care of them for three days.

Paul was given power to heal Publius’ father and many other islanders.

After three months they headed for Rome in ship #3 (Twin Brothers), another ship of Alexandria.

Syracuse, Rhegium, Puteoli, Appii Forum, and Three Inns

There were Christians in Puteoli; they stayed seven days.

Some Christians from Rome came to Appii Forum and Three Inns to welcome them.

Rome – where Paul remained a prisoner for two more years, awaiting trial before Caesar.

Paul was permitted to live in a house in Rome, constantly guarded by a Roman soldier.

Paul invited the Jewish leaders in Rome to visit him and discuss the cause of his imprisonment.

“He explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening” (v. 28:23).

Some believed in Jesus through Paul’s testimony, but others did not believe.

Paul warned those who did not believe him that they were rejecting the God of Israel.

Paul: **“The salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!”** (v. 28:28).

The book of Acts began with Gospel preaching in Jerusalem, the center of the Jewish world.

The book of Acts concludes with Gospel preaching in Rome, the center of the Gentile world.

The Four Letters of Prisoner Paul

During Paul's two-year stay in Rome, Paul wrote four letters which we have in our New Testament: **COLOSSIANS; PHILEMON; EPHESIANS; PHILIPPIANS**. We consider two of these letters in this lesson. We will consider the remaining two in the next lesson.

Paul's Letter to the Colossians – the letter that exalts Christ.

Colosse was a city in Asia Minor about 125 miles east of Ephesus. Paul himself had never met the Colossians. They had become Christians through the preaching of Epaphras, Paul's assistant. The congregation at Colosse was probably founded when Paul was in Ephesus on his third mission journey, for at that time **"all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks"** (Acts 19:10). While Paul was a prisoner in Rome, Epaphras visited him and informed him of the situation in Colosse.

The problem that brought Epaphras to Rome was a false teaching that had gained influence in Colosse. This false teaching had three elements:

1. It claimed to be a more profound teaching about God, containing secrets of the universe and the angels.
2. It stressed Jewish ceremonies: sabbaths, new moons.
3. It insisted on abstaining from certain foods and activities altogether.

Paul responded to this false teaching by showing that Christ gives us true wisdom. There is nothing better or more profound than Christ. The Old Testament ceremonies were only pictures of the reality in Christ.

Paul's letter to the Colossians was delivered to them by his assistant Tychicus and Philemon's slave, Onesimus.

Colossians 1:1-14: Introduction: Greetings, Thanksgiving, Prayer

"We do not cease to pray for you ... that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God" (vv. 9-10).

"In (Christ) we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins" (v. 14).

Colossians 1:15-23: The Full Glory of Christ, the Son of God

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation" (v. 15).

"By Him all things were created, ... visible and invisible" (v. 16).

"In Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the Church" (vv. 17-18).

“It pleased the Father ... by Him to reconcile all things to Himself” (vv. 19-20).

Colossians 1:24 – 2:5: The Full Glory of the Gospel of Christ

The mystery hidden from former ages is that the Jewish Messiah is Savior of the Gentiles also.

“Him we preach ... that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” (v. 1:28).

“In (Christ) are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (v. 2:3).

Colossians 2:6-23: The Glory of Christ Refutes the False Teaching in Colosse

“Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit” (v. 8).

“In Him (Christ) dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily ... you are complete in Him” (vv. 9-10).

“Sabbaths ... are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ” (vv. 16-17).

Do not **“subject yourselves to regulations ... according to the commandments and doctrines of men” (vv. 20, 22).**

Colossians 3:1 – 4:6: Live a New Life by Faith in Christ

“Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth” (v. 3:2).

“You have put off the old man with his deeds” (v. 3:9).

(fornication, idolatry, anger, blasphemy, filthy language, lying, covetousness)

You **“have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge” (v. 3:10).**

(tender mercies, kindness, humility, forgiving, love **“as the elect of God”** [v. 3:12].)

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom” (v. 3:16).

“Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus” (v. 3:17).

There are instructions for wives, husbands, children, fathers, slaves, and masters.

“Praying also for us, that God would open us a door for the word” (v. 4:3).

Colossians 4:7-18: Conclusion Names: Tychicus, Onesimys, Mark, Epaphras, Luke, Demas.

Paul's Letter to Philemon – the letter about a runaway slave

Philemon was a member of the Colossian congregation who owned slaves. The church met in his home. Philemon's slave, Onesimus (“Useful”), had run away to Rome and had taken some of his master's goods with him. While he was in Rome, he met Paul and became a Christian. He also became Paul's helper. Paul sends Onesimus back to his master with this letter. He pleads with Philemon to welcome back his slave with kindness and to consider his slave as fellow-Christian. Paul himself promises to make good whatever Onesimus has stolen. Paul even hints that Philemon might want to set him free. Onesimus himself delivered this letter to Philemon.

“That you might receive him forever, no longer as a slave but more than a slave – a beloved brother, especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord” (v. 15-16).

Questions

1. What advice did Paul give while they were sailing near Crete?
2. How did Paul know that they would lose no lives on this voyage?
3. How did both the soldiers and sailors attempt to save themselves while hurting the others?
4. What led the citizens of Malta to think that Paul was a god?
5. What opportunities did Paul have in Rome to preach the Gospel?
6. How had the people of Colosse learned about the Lord Jesus Christ?
7. What led Paul to write a letter to these Colossians?
8. What false teachings in Colosse did Paul attempt to correct?
9. List some of the terms Paul used to describe Jesus.
10. How does Paul give us a new understanding of the Third Commandment?
11. What does it mean to put off the old man and put on the new man?
12. Why did Paul write his letter to Philemon?
13. What does the Bible teach about the institution of slavery?



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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 33 – Two More Letters from the Prisoner Paul (Ephesians, Philippians)

Paul's Letter to the Ephesians

Paul wrote his letter to the Ephesians at the same time that he wrote his letter to Philemon and his letter to the Colossians. This was probably in the early months of his two-year stay in Rome (59-61 AD), while he was awaiting his trial before the Emperor Nero. This letter was delivered along with the other two letters by Tychicus, who was probably from Ephesus, and by Onesimus, Philemon's runaway slave, who was from Colosse.

Since this letter contains no personal greetings from Paul to any of the Ephesian Christians, it is probable that this letter was addressed not only to the Christians in Ephesus, but to all the Christian congregations in the province of Asia – such as those in Ephesus, Colosse, Hierapolis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. Thus, this letter could very well be the letter referred to in Colossians 4:16.

The letter to the Ephesians is very similar to the letter to the Colossians. The emphasis is slightly different, however. In his letter to the Colossians Paul emphasizes Christ, the Head of the Church. In his letter to the Ephesians Paul emphasizes **the Church as the Body of Christ**.

Another difference between the two letters is that in his letter to the Colossians, Paul was dealing with a specific false teaching, whereas his letter to the Ephesians is more general in nature.

The letter to the Ephesians can be divided into two parts: **the doctrinal portion** (chapters 1-3), which teaches what the Church of Christ is, and then **the application of the doctrine** (chapters 4-6), showing what being a member of Christ's Church means as far as our daily lives are concerned.

Read Paul's letter to the Ephesians. If you have questions, do not hesitate to ask them.

Ephesians 1-3 – What the Church Is – the doctrinal portion of the letter

Ephesians 1:1-2: Greetings – the usual pattern: author, to whom written, the word of greeting.

Ephesians 1:3-14: Paul praises God for all His blessings

"He (God) chose us in Him (Christ) before the foundation of the world" (v. 4).

"In Him (Christ) we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins" (v. 7).

“In Him (Christ) you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel” (v. 13).

“Having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise” (v. 13).

Note: In this section Paul teaches **the doctrine of election** by grace, also called **predestination**: namely, that those who believe in Christ **now** have the assurance that God chose them **from eternity** to be His children and promises to take them finally to heaven.

Ephesians 1:15-23: Paul thanks God and prays that the Ephesians will understand how good God is

“He (God) raised Him (Christ) from the dead and seated Him at His right hand” (v. 20).

He “gave Him (Christ) to be head over all things to the Church, which is His body” (vv. 22-23).

Paul prays that God **“may give to you the spirit of wisdom ... in the knowledge of Him” (v. 17).**

Ephesians 2:1-10: Paul reminds them that God has saved them by His grace

“You He (God) made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins” (v. 1).

“By grace you have been saved through faith ...; it is the gift of God, not of works” (vv. 8-9).

Note: In this section Paul teaches **the doctrine of conversion**: namely, that we are helpless to bring ourselves to faith in Jesus, and that God has brought us to faith by grace, by His working without our cooperation. Faith in Christ is a gift from God in undeserved love.

Ephesians 2:11-22: Paul shows how God has joined together Jews and Gentiles into one Church

“You who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ” (v. 13).

He **“has broken down the middle wall of separation, ... thus making peace” (vv. 14-15).**

“You are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God” (v. 19).

Ephesians 3:1-21: Paul prays again that the Gentiles might realize the great love of God

Paul understands **“that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body” (v. 6).**

He prays **“that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith” (v. 17).**

Note: The word “church” in this letter refers the “invisible” Church, that is, all the believers in Jesus throughout the whole world.

Ephesians 4-6 – The Application of the Doctrine: What Membership in the Church Involves

Ephesians 4:1-16: Strive for unity and use the gifts God has given to the Church for the good of all

"I ... beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called" (v. 1).

"Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (v. 3).

"one body and one Spirit, ... one hope ... one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God" (v. 4-6).

"To each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift" (v. 7).

"apostles ... prophets ... evangelists ... pastors and teachers" (v. 11).

These gifts are given so that we, **"speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things" (v. 15).**

Ephesians 4:17 – 5:20: Put on the new man, and put off the old man

"You ... have been taught by Him ... that you put off ... the old man" (vv. 4:20-22).

Also, **"that you put on the new man which was created according to God" (v. 4:24).**

Old man: lying, stealing, bad words, bitterness, malice, fornication, drunkenness, etc.

New man: truth, honest labor, good words, kindness, forgiving, love, giving thanks, etc.

"Forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you" (v. 4:32).

"Christ has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God" (v. 5:2).

"Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" (v. 5:11).

"Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns, ... giving thanks always for all things" (v. 5:19-20).

Ephesians 5:21 – 6:9: Be Christian in your specific station in life

"Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord" (v. 5:22).

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the Church" (v. 5:25).

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord" (v. 6:1).

"Fathers, ... bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (v. 6:4).

"Bondservants, be obedient. ... Masters, do the same, ... giving up threatening" (v. 5:9).

Ephesians 6:10-18: Fight against Satan and all the powers of evil

"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand" (v. 11).

belt, breastplate, sandals, shield, helmet, sword – weapons of defense and offense

"Take ... the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (v. 17).

"Praying always ... for all the saints – and for me" (vv. 18-19).

Ephesians 6:19-24: Concluding remarks

Tychicus delivered this letter containing greetings from Paul and friends.

The Doctrines of Election and Conversion

Chapter 1 of Ephesians contains an extended discussion of the doctrine of election (or predestination). We who are Christians today are given the comfort that we are Christians because God chose us from eternity to be His children, and He will therefore sustain our faith in Christ even to the end of our lives. The doctrine of election teaches us that our salvation is entirely a matter of God's grace. But the Bible nowhere teaches that God from eternity chose some persons to be damned. Rather, the Bible teaches that God wants everyone to be saved, that Jesus died for everyone, and that the Holy Spirit desires to bring the Gospel of Christ to all and to convert all.

Chapter 2 of Ephesians contains an extended discussion of the doctrine of conversion. It points out that by nature we are all dead in sins and, therefore, we cannot contribute one single thing to our own conversion. It is altogether a matter of grace, not our merit. Even our faith in Christ is entirely a gift from God; it is not a decision we are able to make on our own.

Most Protestant churches do not teach what God's Word teaches on these two doctrines. Followers of John Calvin tend to follow the teaching that God from eternity chose some to be saved and some to be damned. They therefore deny that God wants all to be saved, that Jesus died for all, and that the Holy Spirit earnestly desires to save all.

Followers of Jacob Arminius, such as John Wesley, tend to deny any thought of predestination or election. They teach that some people hear the Gospel and choose or decide to believe it of their own free will, whereas others hear the Gospel and decide to reject it. In Ephesians God clearly teaches that no one can decide to believe the Gospel.

It is very important that when we preach the Gospel of Christ to others, we are clear on what God teaches in His Word about these two doctrines. Thus, Paul's letter to the Ephesians is worthy of our careful study.

Paul's Letter to the Philippians

Paul wrote this letter to the congregation at Philippi towards the end of Paul's first imprisonment in Rome (61 AD). Paul had founded this congregation on his second mission journey. This was the congregation of Lydia and the jailer. It was chiefly a Gentile congregation. This congregation was very loyal to Paul and very generous to him. They had helped support him with gifts when he was in Thessalonica and Corinth and they had contributed a large amount to the collection for the poor Christians in Jerusalem, even though they themselves were poor. This congregation was the only one which Paul allowed to support him financially.

Why did Paul write this letter? A member of the congregation, Epaphroditus, had come to Rome to bring Paul a gift from the congregation and to devote his own life to Paul's service.

He had become sick, however, and had come close to death. But Epaphroditus gradually recovered from his ailment and was now ready to return to Philippi. Paul wrote this letter and sent it to Philippi with Epaphroditus, to thank the Philippians for their gift, to report on his prospects for release from prison, to encourage them to continue in the faith, and to warn them against false teachers.

Philippians 1:1-26: Greetings and good news from Prisoner Paul in Rome

"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, ... for your fellowship in the gospel" (vv. 3, 5).

"I pray, that your love may abound still more and more" (v. 9).

"Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice" (v. 18).

"To live is Christ, and to die is gain, ... having a desire to depart and be with Christ" (vv. 21, 23).

Philippians 1:27 – 2:18: Paul exhorts them to live in unity and humility, with Christ as model

"Let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ" (v. 1:27).

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (v. 2:5).

"He humbled Himself and became obedient. ... God highly exalted Him" (vv. 2:8-9).

"God ... works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure" (v. 2:13).

Philippians 2:19 – 3:1: Paul sends Epaphroditus and Timothy, and hopes himself to come also

Philippians 3:2 – 4:1: Paul warns them against the false teachers and rejoices in Christ

"Not having my own righteousness ... but that which is through faith in Christ" (v. 3:9).

Philippians 4:2-9: Paul admonishes them to settle their quarrels, rejoice, and think good thoughts

Philippians 4:10-22: Paul thanks the Philippians for their gift to him

Questions

1. What does the Bible teach about election in chapter one of Ephesians?
2. How does God bring people to faith in Christ?
3. How do we know that we cannot contribute to our own conversion?
4. How does Paul describe Christ's Church in his letter to the Ephesians?
5. How is it possible that Jews and Gentiles can be members of the same church?
6. What gifts has Christ given to His Church that are of benefit to all?
7. What sins do we commit because of the old man within us?
8. What fruits of faith does the Holy Spirit produce in us Christians?
9. Why should we always be willing to forgive one another?
10. What are the various stations in life for which Paul gives instructions?
11. What are the weapons God has given us for our battle against evil?
12. Why was Paul thankful even though he was a prisoner in Rome?
13. How did Paul describe Christ's humiliation and His exaltation?
14. How did the Philippians show their love to Paul in Rome?
15. What had Paul boasted in formerly? What did he boast in now?



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

New Testament Survey
Lesson 34 – Two Pastoral Letters
(First Timothy, Titus)

Between Paul's First and Second Imprisonments

When the book of Acts ends, Paul is still a prisoner in Rome; he is awaiting his trial before the Emperor Nero. We don't know exactly what happened to Paul then, but we can determine a probable order of events. Our information comes from Paul's two letters to Timothy, his letter to Titus, and some of the writings of early Christians that are not included in the Bible.

Rome: Paul's case came before Emperor Nero in 61 AD and the result was Paul's acquittal and release.

Spain: Paul then probably made his mission trip to Spain, as he had planned long before. In 96 AD a Roman pastor named Clement wrote that Paul had gone to the Far West, which in their day would have meant Spain. There is nothing in the Bible that talks about this probable journey.

Crete: Paul made a trip to the island of Crete. When he left Crete, he put Titus in charge of the congregations on that island (Titus 1:5).

Ephesus: Paul had once told the pastors of Ephesus that he would see their face no more (Acts 20:25). Although some of the Ephesian pastors probably no longer alive, it seems that Paul did return to Ephesus, if only for a short time. When Paul left Ephesus, he put Timothy in charge of the churches in this area (1 Timothy 1:3).

Macedonia: Paul then went to Macedonia, that is, to Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea (1 Timothy 1:3). It was in Macedonia that Paul wrote 1 Timothy, in 62 or 63 AD.

Timothy, Paul's Faithful Assistant

Timothy was born in Lystra of Galatia to a Greek father and a Jewish mother (Acts 16:1). His mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois taught him the Old Testament (2 Timothy 1:5). On Paul's second mission journey Timothy joined Paul's group as his assistant, and he continued as his assistant from that time on. He was with Paul in Rome during his first imprisonment.

Timothy was probably a timid young man, because Paul had to give him plenty of encouragement (1 Timothy 4:12). He also had stomach trouble (1 Timothy 5:23). After Paul was released from prison, he and Timothy went to Ephesus. Paul then went on to Macedonia and left Timothy in charge of the Ephesian Christians (1 Timothy 1:3).

In First Timothy, the veteran missionary Paul gives this young pastor good advice, as given to him by the Holy Spirit.

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

First Timothy

1 Timothy 1:1-2: Greetings

The usual order: the apostle Paul, to Timothy ("**a true son in the faith**"), grace, mercy, peace.

1 Timothy 1:3-11, 18-20: Dealing with False Teaching Concerning the Law

"Charge some that they teach no other doctrine" (v. 3). (Other doctrine is heterodox.)

"The law is good if one uses it lawfully" (v. 8).

Examples: **"Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan"** (v. 20).
(Excommunication)

1 Timothy 1:12-17: God's Grace in the Life of Paul

"I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man" (v. 13).

"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief" (v. 15).

1 Timothy 2:1- 8: Advice Regarding Gatherings of the Believers

"I exhort ... that ... prayers ... be made for all men, for ... all who are in authority" (vv. 1-2).

"God ... desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (vv. 3-4).

"Christ Jesus ... gave Himself a ransom for all" (vv. 5-6).

"I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands" (v. 8).

1 Timothy 2:9-15: Advice Regarding the Role of Women in the Gatherings

"I desire ... that the women adorn themselves with modest apparel" (v. 9).

"I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man" (v. 12).

This is why we do not have women pastors or let women vote in our congregations.

1 Timothy 3:1-16: The Qualifications of Pastors and Other Church Leaders

"A bishop (spiritual overseer) must be (a good Christian and) able to teach" (v. 2).

"Deacons (helpers) must be (good Christians and) holding the mystery of the faith" (vv. 8-9).

"Their wives (more likely the women deacons or deaconesses) must be ... faithful" (v. 11).

1 Timothy 4:1-11: The Proper Use of the Things That God Has Created

Some false teachers were **“forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods”** (v. 3).

“Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused” (v. 4).

“Bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things” (v. 8).

1 Timothy 4:12-16: Timothy’s Duties as a Pastor

“Be an example to the believers in word, in conduct” (v. 12).

“Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine” (v. 16).

1 Timothy 5:1 – 6:2: How to Deal with Different Kinds of Members

Examples: older men, younger men, older women, younger women.

“Honor widows who are really widows” (v. 3).

“If anyone does not provide for his own, ... he has denied the faith” (v. 8).

“I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house” (v. 14).

“Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor” (v. 17).

“Let ... bondservants ... count their own masters worthy of all honor” (v. 6:1).

1 Timothy 6:3-5: Dealing with False Teachers

“If anyone teaches otherwise ..., he is proud, knowing nothing” (vv. 3-4).

1 Timothy 6:6-21: Advice Concerning Timothy’s Personal Life

“Godliness with contentment is great gain” (v. 6).

“The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed” (v. 10).

“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life” (v. 12).

“O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust” (v. 20).

More Journeys

After Paul wrote 1 Timothy in Macedonia, he traveled to Nicopolis in Epirus, where he spent the winter. On this journey in 63 AD, Paul wrote his letter to Titus, whom he had left in Crete (Titus 1:5). Paul was going to send either Artemas or Tychicus to Crete to take Titus’ place. Paul wanted Titus to spend the winter with him in Nicopolis (Titus 3:12). The letter to Titus was delivered by Apollos and Zenas (Titus 3:13).

Titus, Paul’s Faithful Assistant

Titus was a Gentile Christian – probably from Antioch in Syria. He had gone up to Jerusalem with Paul and Barnabas in the days when Judaizing was beginning to trouble the church. Paul and Barnabas refused to circumcise Titus, because the Judaizers insisted that it was

necessary for salvation (Galatians 2:1-5). Titus accompanied Paul on his third mission journey and made several trips to Corinth to help solve the problems there; his name is found often in Paul's letters to the Corinthians. Later, Titus went to Dalmatia to do mission work there (2 Timothy 4:10).

The Christians in Crete were having difficulty putting their faith into practice. Paul encouraged Titus to oppose the false teaching and to urge the Christians in Crete to live their faith by doing good works. In many ways this letter to Titus is similar to Paul's first letter to Timothy. They are both called pastoral letters because both were written by an older pastor to younger pastors to guide them in their work.

Read Paul's letter to Titus. If you have questions, do not hesitate to ask them.

Titus

Titus 1:1-4: Greetings

"God ... cannot lie" (v. 2).

Titus 1:5-9: The Qualifications of Pastors and Other Church Leaders

"A bishop must be ... holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught" (vv. 7, 9).

Titus 1:10-16: Dealing with False Teachers

Their **"mouths must be stopped, ... teaching things which they ought not"** (v. 11).

"They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him" (v. 16).

Titus 2:1-10: How to Deal with Different Kinds of Members

Examples: older men, older women, young women, young men.

The older women were to **"admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children"** (v. 4).

"Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters ... that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things" (vv. 9-10).

Titus 2:11-15: The Proper Motivation for Good Works

"The grace of God ... (teaches) us that ... we should live soberly, righteously, and godly" (vv. 11-12).

"Jesus Christ ... gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works" (vv. 13-14).

Titus 3:1-8: Living as Good Citizens

"Remind them to be subject to ... authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work" (v. 1).

“According to His mercy He saved us, ... that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (v. 5, 7).

“Those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works” (v. 8).

Titus 3:9-11: Dealing with Heretics

“Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition” (v. 10).

Titus 3:12-15: Concluding Remarks

Paul’s Second Imprisonment

After writing to Titus, Paul stopped in Nicopolis (Titus 3:12). He spent the winter there. In the next year or so he spent some time in Troas (2 Timothy 4:13), Corinth (2 Timothy 4:20), and Miletus (2 Timothy 4:21). We do not know in what order he visited these congregations, nor what other places he might have visited during this time.

In 64 AD there was a great fire in Rome, which Emperor Nero himself may have started. Nero blamed the Christians for this fire and led his people in persecuting them. This persecution by Nero was the first of the ten great persecutions of the Christians authorized by the Roman emperors.

Tacitus, a Roman historian, described the persecution in this way: “They were not only put to death, but subjected to insults, in that they were either dressed in the skins of wild beasts and perished by the cruel mangling of dogs, or else put on crosses to be set on fire, and, as day declined, to be burned, being used as lights by night.”

Around this time Paul was again arrested and made a prisoner. During this second imprisonment he wrote his second letter to Timothy, which we shall discuss in a later lesson.

Questions

1. Why is the story of Paul such a good example of God’s grace?
2. What aptitude does a pastor need to have besides being a believer?
3. For whom does our Lord want us to pray?
4. What is true about every individual we see or know in this world?
5. What are the two things forbidden by God to women in the church?
6. What is the difference in qualifications between bishops and deacons?
7. Why does Paul encourage the young widows to consider marriage?
8. How does Paul describe false teachers?
9. Why is the love of money so dangerous for a Christian?
10. What has Christ redeemed us from? What has He redeemed us for?
11. What should the older women do for the younger women?
12. Why did the Roman government under Nero punish Christians?



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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 35 – The Two Letters of Peter and the Letter of Jude

A Summary of Peter's Life

Peter was originally a fisherman from Galilee. He was introduced to Jesus by his brother Andrew. Jesus immediately gave him the name Rock or Rocky (Peter, Cephas). His original name was Simon. Peter became a leader among Jesus' twelve apostles. In the Gospel accounts he did more talking than any of the others. He was impulsive and hasty in his actions and speech. This characteristic got him into trouble on numerous occasions, such as when he tried to walk on the water, when he wanted to build tents on the mountain of transfiguration, and when he told Jesus that He should not suffer and die. Peter's worst moment came when he denied his Lord on Maundy Thursday.

After Jesus rose from the dead, He appeared especially to Peter (when he was alone) on Easter Sunday. What Jesus said on that occasion is not reported in the Bible. On a later occasion Jesus asked Peter specifically three times whether he loved Him, to match the three times Peter had denied Jesus. When Peter affirmed his love for Jesus, Jesus gave instructions to Peter to feed His sheep and lambs.

On the day of Pentecost Peter preached the main sermon, and he remained in Jerusalem for some time as a leader of the congregation. Later God sent him to Cornelius, a Gentile soldier in Caesarea. Peter later testified at the convention in Jerusalem that Gentiles, as well as Jews, can be saved only by the grace of God (Acts 15:11). But Peter failed to put that into practice in Antioch when he stopped eating with the Gentile Christians after the arrival of some Jewish Christians from Jerusalem. At that time Paul rebuked Peter publicly (Galatians 2:11-14).

After those first years in Jerusalem, it seems Peter traveled to various places, accompanied by his wife (1 Corinthians 9:5). It is probable that he traveled to Rome around 60 AD.

The First Letter of Peter

It is likely that Peter wrote his first letter in Rome (which he calls "**Babylon**") while Paul was making his mission journey to Spain. Peter, together with Silas and Mark, wrote this letter to the Christians in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. By this time (61-64 AD) Christians were beginning to be persecuted by the Roman government and by the general public. They were blamed for all kinds of criminal acts just because they were Christians. The emperor Nero himself in 64 AD blamed the Christians for setting Rome on fire.

In this letter Peter tells the Christians not to rebel against the government, not to try to get even with those who harmed them, but to live holy, pure, and loving Christian lives, remembering how the Lord Jesus also endured sufferings unjustly without trying to get even with His enemies. Peter tells the Christians to look beyond this earthly suffering to the hope of heaven which Jesus has won for them and for us. We can call this letter therefore The Letter of Hope in the Midst of Sufferings and Persecutions.

Read Peter's first letter. If you have questions, do not hesitate to ask them.

1 Peter 1:1-2: Greetings

Contains the three parts: the writer, the ones being written to, greetings.

1 Peter 1:3-12: Peter praises God for all the blessings God has given them

You **"are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation"** (v. 5).

"You greatly rejoice, though now for a little while ... you have been grieved" (v. 6).

"Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible" (v. 8).

1 Peter 1:13-16: Live holy lives as the children of God

"As He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct" (v. 15).

1 Peter 1: 17-21: Remember the redemption of Christ

"You were ... redeemed ... with the precious blood of Christ" (vv. 18-19).

God **"raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory"** (v. 21).

1 Peter 1:22-25: Love one another in accordance with God's eternal Word

"Love one another ..., having been born again ... through the word of God" (vv. 22-23).

"The grass withers, ... but the word of the LORD endures forever" (vv. 24-25).

1 Peter 2:1-3: Grow up by the power of the Word

"Desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby" (v. 2).

1 Peter 2:4-10: Peter calls Christians kings and priests, and living stones in a new temple

"You ... are being built up a spiritual house, ... to offer up spiritual sacrifices" (v. 5).

"You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into ... light" (v. 9).

1 Peter 2:11-12: Peter tells the Christians that as heavenly citizens they are not of the world

"Abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul" (v. 11).

1 Peter 2:13-17: Obey the government

“Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake” (v. 13).

1 Peter 2:18-25: Slaves, be willing to suffer unjustly, just like Jesus

“Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example” (v. 21).

He **“Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree” (v. 24).**

1 Peter 3:1-7: Peter gives directions to wives and husbands

“Wives, ... be submissive to your own husbands ... as Sarah obeyed Abraham” (vv. 1, 6).

“Husbands, ... dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife” (v. 7).

1 Peter 3:8 – 4:6; Peter encourages Christians to be willing to suffer unjustly, like Jesus

“It is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil” (v. 17).

“Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God” (v. 18).

“Made alive ..., He went and preached to the spirits in prison” (v. 18) (His descent to hell).

“Jesus Christ ... has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God” (vv. 21-22).

1 Peter 4:7-11: The thought of the end of the world should make us serious Christians

1 Peter 4:12-19: As in the case of Christ, suffering will be followed by glory

1 Peter 5:1-5: Peter gives final instructions to the pastors and to all the flock

“Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, ... being examples to the flock” (vv. 2-3).

“All of you, you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility” (v. 5).

1 Peter 5:6-11: Cast your cares on God and resist the devil

“Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you” (v. 7).

“Be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion” (v. 8).

1 Peter 5:12-14: Final greetings from Peter, Mark, and Silas

“Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen.” (v. 14).

The Second Letter of Peter

Peter wrote this letter to the same people to whom he wrote the first letter. He probably wrote it in Rome, around 64 AD, shortly before he was crucified. Jesus had foretold how Peter would die in John 21. According to tradition, Peter was crucified upside down. Peter wrote this letter to warn against false teachings.

Read Peter's second letter. If you have questions, do not hesitate to ask them.

2 Peter 1:1-2: Greetings – following the usual pattern

2 Peter 1:3-4: The greatness of God's gifts to us

"His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness" (v. 3).

2 Peter 1:5-11: Strive to lead lives worthy of Christ

"Be even more diligent to make your call and election sure" (v. 10).

2 Peter 1:12-21: Let the Word of Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles guide you

"Shortly I must put off this my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me" (his death) (v. 14).

"We did not follow cunningly devised fables ..., but were eyewitnesses" (v. 16). (N. T. apostles)

"Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (v. 21). (O. T. prophets)

2 Peter 2:1-22: Do not be misled by the godless false teachers who will arise

"There will be false teachers among you, ... even denying the Lord who bought them" (v. 1).

"They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam" (v. 15).

2 Peter 3:1-7: Scoffers say that Jesus will not come again

2 Peter 3:8-10: God is delaying the day of judgment in order to save more people

"The Lord is ... not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (v. 9).

"The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night. ...; the earth ... will be burned up" (v. 10).

2 Peter 3:11-18: We are always to live in view of the end of the world

"We ... look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (v. 13).

"Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (v. 18).

The Letter of Jude

The Jude that wrote this short letter was not one of the apostles, but one of the brothers of our Lord. Jesus' other brothers were James, Simon, and Joseph/Joses (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3). Jude did not believe in Jesus until after His resurrection. He wrote this letter to the

same people as Peter. He told them that the false teachers Peter had predicted had truly come. He warns against these false teachers in strong and severe language.

Read the letter of Jude. If you have questions, do not hesitate to ask them.

Jude 1-4: Greetings and statement of Jude's purpose

Jude 5-13: The warning against false teachers

Jude 14-23: God will judge all those who deny Him

Jude 24-25: Final words of praise to God

Questions

1. Why should Christians rejoice even while they are being persecuted?
2. What is the standard of morality that Christians should strive for?
3. What is the only way by which anyone can attain eternal life?
4. What tremendous power is in the Word of God?
5. What is meant by the priesthood of all believers in Christ?
6. To whom should slaves that are mistreated look for an example of how they should live?
7. What was the purpose of Christ's suffering on the cross?
8. Why must we continue to fight against the devil and his allies?
9. How did Peter describe the transfiguration of Jesus?
10. What is meant by the new heavens and the new earth?
11. What do both Peter and Jude say about false teachers?
12. What will happen when Jesus returns to this earth?



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?



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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 37 – The Three Letters of John

The Life of John

John and Andrew were once disciples of John the Baptist (John 1:35). When John the Baptist pointed to Jesus and said: **“Behold the Lamb of God”**, they went to see Jesus and became His first followers.

John and his brother James were fishermen. They were sons of Zebedee and Salome. Jesus called them to be His disciples at the Sea of Galilee. John (together with James and Peter) was one of the three in the inner circle who went into Jairus’ home, accompanied Jesus on the Mountain of Transfiguration, and went with Him into the Garden of Gethsemane. John and James were called the Sons of Thunder, probably because they wanted fire to come down from heaven to destroy the Samaritans who rejected Jesus (Luke 9:54).

John sat next to Jesus at the Lord’s Supper. Jesus told him privately that Judas Iscariot was the betrayer. In his Gospel John calls himself **“the disciple whom Jesus loved”**, or **“the other disciple”**; he does not use his own name. We can consider John to be the most intimate friend of Jesus. He was no doubt a very young man during Jesus’ ministry, probably in his twenties. John witnessed Jesus’ crucifixion. While He was hanging on the cross, Jesus placed His mother Mary into John’s care.

After Jesus rose from the dead, John and Peter ran to the grave and found it empty. John was with the other disciples when Jesus appeared alive during the forty days after Easter. After Jesus ascended into heaven, John was with the others when God gave them the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. John became a leader in the Jerusalem congregation. He was with Peter when the lame man was healed at the temple gate, when they were summoned before the Council, and when they traveled to Samaria. John’s brother James was the first of the twelve to die for his faith.

John probably remained a leader in the Jerusalem congregation together with Peter and Jesus’ brother James until about 65 AD. It seems John then left Jerusalem and became the leader of the Christians in Ephesus. By this time Peter and Paul were dead.

Before 96 AD John was exiled to the island of Patmos. He returned to Ephesus in 96 AD and remained there until his death around the year 100 AD. He lived to be a very old man, probably the only one of the twelve to die a natural death. Tradition tells us that in his last days John kept telling the Christians: **“Little children, love one another.”**

John's Gospel, his three letters, and Revelation were probably all written between 90 and 100 AD. Thus, John wrote considerably later than when the rest of the New Testament was written. By this time Jerusalem had been destroyed (70 AD) by the Roman armies under Titus. The Christians had already undergone several persecutions.

John's Three Letters

John wrote his first letter to counter the influence of false teaching. Some Christians had left John's congregations and claimed to be better Christians than John. These false teachers taught that Jesus was true God, but not true man, or at least not true God and true man at the same time. Their leader was a man named Cerinthus. Cerinthus taught that Jesus was a mere man until His baptism. Then the Christ of God came upon Him and enabled Him to do miracles. This Christ then departed from Jesus again before His suffering. In other words, these teachers made a distinction between Jesus and the Christ. They claimed that Jesus was not the Christ, and that God's blood was not shed for us.

John addressed his second letter to an elect lady, probably meaning a Christian congregation. In this letter John encouraged the Christians to show brotherly love. He also warned them against the false teachers.

In his third letter John wrote to a friend named Gaius. John had sent some missionaries to Gaius' church and Gaius had received them kindly. But another man in the congregation, Diotrophes, had refused to welcome John's missionaries and even wanted to put anyone who did accept out of the congregation.

First John

John asks us to test our lives to see whether they are truly Christian lives.

Read all of First John. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask them.

1 John 1:1-4: Introduction

"That which we have seen and heard we declare to you" (v. 3).

1 John 1:5 – 2:28: Test yourselves to see whether you are walking in darkness or light

Are you walking in true righteousness?

"God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (v. 1:5).

"If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar" (v. 1:10).

"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin" (v. 1:7).

"If anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (v. 2:2).

"He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and ... also for the whole world" (v. 2:3).

"He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked" (v. 2:6).

Are you walking in true love?

"He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now" (v. 2:9).

"Do not love the world or the things in the world" (v. 2:15).

Are you walking in true belief?

"Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either" (v. 2:23).

1 John 2:29 – 4:6: Test yourselves to see whether you are true children of God

Are you walking in true righteousness?

"Beloved, now we are children of God. ... We know that ... we shall be like Him" (v. 3:2).

"Everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure" (v. 3:3).

"Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God" (v. 3:10).

"He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning" (v. 3:8).

Are you walking in true love?

"Whoever hates his brother is a murderer" (v. 3:15).

"He laid down His life for us. We also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (v. 3:16).

Are you walking in true belief?

"Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God" (v. 4:1).

1 John 4:7 – 5:12: Test yourselves to see whether you are loving children of a loving God

Are you walking in true righteousness?

"This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments" (v. 5:3).

Are you walking in true love?

"In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son" (v. 4:10).

"If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (v. 4:11).

"God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him" (v. 4:16).

"We love Him, because He first loved us" (v. 4:19).

"If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar" (v. 4:20).

Are you walking in true belief?

"Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God" (v. 4:15).

"He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life" (v. 5:12).

1 John 5:13-21: The certainties of a Christian

“These things I have written to you ... that you may know that you have eternal life” (v. 13).

“If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us” (v. 14).

“We know that whoever is born of God does not sin” (v. 18).

**“We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one”
(v. 19).**

“We know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding” (v. 20).

“Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen” (v. 21).

Second John – the letter to the elect lady

Read all of Second John. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask them.

“He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son” (v. 9).

“If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house” (v. 10).

Third John – the letter to Gaius

Read all of Third John. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask them.

“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth” (v. 4).

Diotrephes **“does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to” (v. 10).**

“Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good” (v. 11).

The Testimony of Eusebius – the first church historian

“At this time (the reign of Emperor Trajan), the disciple whom Jesus loved – John, apostle and evangelist – still lived on in Asia (Minor) and directed the churches there, following his return from exile. That he survived this long is confirmed by two reliable and orthodox witnesses: Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria. Irenaeus writes: ‘All the elders in Asia associated with John, the Lord’s disciple, testify that John taught them the truth, for he remained with them until the time of Trajan.’ ‘Now the church at Ephesus was founded by Paul, but John remained there until Trajan’s time, and it is a true witness of the apostolic tradition.’”

Questions

1. What does John call himself in his Gospel?
2. What three tests does John propose to his readers in his first letter?
3. What does he say about those who do not pass his tests?
4. What is the only way we can be cleansed from our many sins?
5. What does John have to say about the devil in his first letter?
6. What is the difference between God's love for us and our love for God?
7. What are some of the ways in which we show love to our neighbor?
8. What is all included in the term "idolatry"?
9. Which false doctrine is John warning about in his second letter?
10. What was the sin of Diotrephes that John spoke of in his third letter?



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

New Testament Survey

Lesson 38 – The Revelation of Jesus Christ to John

The Book of Revelation

The last book in the New Testament is different from all other New Testament books. It is not a book of history, such as the four Gospels and the book of Acts. It does not contain apostolic teaching and encouragement like the letters of Paul, Peter, John, and the brothers of our Lord, James and Titus. The book of Revelation is a book of prophecy like the Old Testament books of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Joel, and Zechariah. It is a book of visions, symbols, pictures, and numbers. It is filled with quotations from and references to the Old Testament – more than any other New Testament book. This book is called the Revelation of John, but it is more exact to call it the Revelation of Jesus Christ to John.

Towards the end of the first century the Roman Emperor was Domitian. He was the first of the emperors to demand that people worship the emperor. Christians could not go along with that, and their refusal resulted in severe persecution. Many Christians lost their lives; this was the age of the martyrs. The apostle John was not put to death, but he was exiled from Ephesus to the island of Patmos.

It was while John was on this island in 95 or 96 AD that he received the overwhelming visions he wrote about in Revelation. John wrote down what he saw and heard as God revealed it to him. The purpose was to strengthen the Christians of his time and of all times in their struggles against persecution. We are to gain the assurance from these visions that no matter how bad things look in this present world, the risen Lord is still in control. The ultimate victory over Satan and over all evil belongs to Christ and His Church of believers. At a time when things seem at their worst Christ will return in triumph; God's people will enjoy eternal bliss, and God's enemies will go down to in the lake of fire in absolute defeat.

Three things were prevalent in John's world: false teachers, harassment by the Jews, and persecution. But John assured his readers then and now: Do not be afraid, all of you who trust in Christ; you are on the winning side.

The book was originally addressed to seven congregations in the province of Asia. The book can also be divided into seven visions and the number seven also applies to many of the episodes within the seven visions, such as the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven bowls of wrath.

Read the entire book of Revelation, if possible. If you have questions, do not hesitate to ask them.

Revelation 1:1-8: Introduction

“The revelation of Jesus Christ ... to show His servants ... things which must shortly take place” (v. 1).

**“To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood ... to Him be glory”
(vv. 5-6).**

Revelation 1:9 – 3:22: The First Vision – Christ with His Church – The Seven Letters

“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End” (v. 1:11).

John saw the Christ in glory, who said: **“I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore” (v. 1:18).**

Letter 1 to Ephesus – still orthodox, intolerant of false teaching but:

“I have this against you, that you have left your first love” (v. 2:4).

Letter 2 to Smyrna – orthodox, severely persecuted, poor in material things

“Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life” (v. 2:10).

Letter 3 to Pergamos – a good start, Antipas a faithful martyr, now tolerant of false teaching

“You have those who hold the doctrine of Balaam ... also ... of the Nicolaitans” (vv. 2:14-15).

Letter 4 to Thyatira – good things, but tolerant of the false teaching of Jezebel

“You allow that woman Jezebel ... to teach and seduce My servants” (v. 2:20).

Letter 5 to Sardis – a dead church with only a living name, only **“a few names”**

“He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments” (v. 3:5).

Letter 6 to Philadelphia – orthodox and faithful, victims of Jewish hatred

“You ... have kept My word, and have not denied My name” (v. 3:8).

“Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown” (v. 3:11).

Letter 7 to Laodicea – an indifferent church, neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm

“I will vomit you out of My mouth – as many as I love, I rebuke” (vv. 3:16, 19).

Revelation 4:1 – 8:1: The Second Vision – The Seven Seals in a Scroll

The Vision of the Throne of God

“Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!” (v. 4:8).

The Vision of the Lamb and the Scroll with Seven Seals

“The Lion of the tribe of Judah ... has prevailed to open the scroll” (v. 5:5).

"You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe" (v. 5:9).

"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom" (v. 5:12).

The First Seal – a King riding on a white horse, conquering

The Second Seal – a man on a red horse with a sword

The Third Seal – a man on a black horse with a balance in his hand

The Fourth Seal – death riding on a pale horse

The Fifth Seal – martyrs in white robes who died for their faith

The Sixth Seal – an earthquake, the beginning of God's judgment on the earth

"The great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" (v. 6:17).

An interlude giving assurance to God's people

"A great multitude ... clothed with white robes" (v. 7:9).

"These ... washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (v. 7:14).

"God will wipe away every tear from their eyes" (v. 7:17).

The Seventh Seal – leading to the Third Vision

Revelation 8:2 – 11:19: The Third Vision – The Vision of the Seven Trumpets

The prayers of the saints (Christians) rise up to God.

The First Trumpet – hail and fire mixed with blood: God's judgment on sin

The Second Trumpet – a mountain burning with fire thrown into the sea

The Third Trumpet – the great star Wormwood fell from heaven: Satan deceiving the world

The Fourth Trumpet – the sun, moon, and stars darkened

"Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth!" (v. 8:13).

The Fifth Trumpet – smoke coming from the bottomless pit, also an army of locusts; Woe 1

The Sixth Trumpet – an army of horsemen from the East; Woe 2

An interlude giving assurance to God's people

Two witnesses of Christ die, but are raised up, and ascend into heaven.

The Seventh Trumpet – the voices of victory in heaven. Woe 3

"The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord" (v. 11:15).

Revelation 12:1 – 14:20: The Fourth Vision – The Battle between the Woman’s Seed and the Dragon

“She (the Church) bore a male Child (Jesus) who was to rule all nations” (v. 12:5).

“The dragon stood before the woman ... to devour her Child as soon as it was born” (v. 12:4).

“Her Child was caught up to God; ... the woman fled into the wilderness” (vv. 12:5-6).

“The great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan” (v. 12:9).

Although the dragon was defeated, he continued waging war against the woman and her seed.

“The dragon ... persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child” (v. 12:13).

“They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony” (v. 12:11).

The dragon now does his work through the two wild beasts (Chapter 13)

The first beast **“was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies” (v. 13:5).**

“It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them” (v. 13:7).

The second beast **“deceives those who dwell on the earth by ... signs” (v. 13:14).**

“The number of the beast ... is 666” (v. 13:18).

An interlude of visions giving comfort to God’s people:

“A Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand” (v. 14:1).

“These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes” (v. 14:4).

“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on” (v. 14:13).

Revelation 15:1 – 16:21: The Fifth Vision – The Seven Bowls of Wrath and the Church’s Final Victory

The First Bowl – a Foul and Loathsome Sore

The Second Bowl – the Death of Sea Creatures

The Third Bowl – The Waters Became Blood

The Fourth Bowl – The Sun Scorching Men with Fire

The Fifth Bowl – The Beast’s Kingdom in Darkness and Pain

The Sixth Bowl – The Drying Up of the Water, and Frogs Coming Out of Mouths

The Seventh Bowl – Thunders, Lightnings, Earthquake, Hail

Revelation 17:1 – 20:15: The Sixth Vision – Christ’s Victory over Babylon and All Evil

“These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them” (v. 17:14).

“Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons” (v. 18:2).

“Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice” (vv. 19:6-7).

“I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened” (v. 20:12).

“Anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire” (v. 20:15).

Revelation 21:1 – 22:7: The Seventh Vision – The New Heaven and the New Earth

“There shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain” (v. 21:4).

“He ... showed me the great city, holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God” (v. 21:10).

“There shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination” (v. 21:27).

“There shall be no more curse. ... They shall see His face” (vv. 22:3-4).

Revelation 22:8-21: Conclusion

“Surely I am coming quickly.” “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!” (v. 22:20).

Prevalent Wrong Interpretations of Revelation

The mistake many people make with respect to Revelation, is to start with Revelation and come up with ideas of how it is to be understood, and then they try to make the rest of the Bible fit their interpretation of Revelation. The proper way is to study the rest of the Bible first, determine what the Bible says from clear statements, and then fit the visions of Revelation into what the Bible clearly teaches. One should not allow what one thinks the visions of Revelation mean to alter the clear statements of Scripture found elsewhere.

For example, based on what is written in Revelation 20, some Bible teachers claim that there will be two bodily resurrections from the dead: a bodily resurrection of believers before a thousand-year reign of Christ on earth, and then another bodily resurrection of all the dead after this period of a thousand years. But Jesus taught clearly in John 5:28-29 that all the dead will rise from the dead on the same day; there will not be two bodily resurrections but only one.

Also, the idea of a thousand-year reign of Christ over a kingdom on this earth is contrary to Jesus’ plain words to Pontius Pilate that Jesus’ kingdom is not an earthly kingdom (John 18:36). We are not to understand the millennium (thousand years) of Revelation 20 literally,

but rather it denotes the time between Jesus' first visible appearance in the Holy Land and His second coming. We are living in this millennium at the present time.

The use of numbers in the book of Revelation is clearly symbolic. For example, the number of believers is listed as 144,000. This is 12 (sons of Jacob, Old Testament) times 12 (Jesus' apostles, New Testament) times ten times ten (the number of completeness – the Ten Commandments) to equal 144,000; this equals the total number of all believers in Christ from the beginning to the end, both before the birth of Christ and after the birth of Christ, all of them one holy Christian Church. It is a false interpretation to take this number literally and claim that only 144,000 will be saved and go to heaven.

There are many theories in the world and in various churches as to how Revelation should be understood. We must be on our guard against being deceived into believing something that is contrary to the clear teachings of Scripture elsewhere. It is not wrong for a Christian, even a Christian teacher, to admit that there are some details in Revelation that he does not fully comprehend. But the main theme of Revelation is plain: God and His believers will triumph over the devil and all his hosts. There is no better book for us to contemplate as we look ahead to the glories of the new heavens and the new earth promised by our Lord to all those who trust in Him.

Questions

1. What makes the book of Revelation different from most other Bible books?
2. What significance does the number seven have in Revelation?
3. Which of the seven congregations were most faithful to the Lord? Why?
4. Which were most unfaithful to the Lord? Why?
5. Who was the only one able to open the scroll with seven seals?
6. List some of the names given to Jesus in the book of Revelation.
7. What is the only way we can stand as holy in the presence of God?
8. How does Revelation describe the new heavens and new earth?
9. Who is the dragon of Revelation 12?
10. List some of the characteristics of the two beasts.
11. What is meant by the book of life and the lake of fire?
12. What will not be present in the holy city of Jerusalem?
13. Why must we reject the notion of an earthly kingdom ruled by Jesus for a thousand years?
14. What is the main theme of the book of Revelation?
15. Why is Revelation a good book to read in times of persecution?

Postface

This concludes our survey of the Old Testament and the New Testament. Remember that the central teaching of both Old Testament and New Testament is Jesus Christ, Son of God and Savior of the world. Jesus Himself said that the Old Testament testifies of Him (John 5:39). The purpose of the New Testament was stated by the apostle John in speaking of his own Gospel: **“These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name”** (John 20:31). And he wrote in his letter: **“This is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life”** (1 John 5:11-12).