

# ***“What’s A Disciple To Do?”***

*(Life Lessons from Paul’s Patterns)*

Acts 28:30

June 12, 2016

**INTRO:** What are you plans for the next 30-35 years?

I’m serious... what do you plan to DO with your life?

Today you’re going to be blessed with a biblical blueprint worth buying into & embracing...

**T/S:** What you believe is who you will become!

## **BIG IDEA:**

**“Christians are Ambassadors who have been saved BY Christ, to BE servant-witnesses OF Christ, by GOING & MAKING Christ-like DISCIPLES... for the rest of their lives!”**  
(read Ephesians 2:8-10)

**PREVIEW:** Life Lessons from Paul’s Patterns

- A. **Paul’s Life** *(Delivered by Christ)*
- B. **Paul’s Love** *(Developed by Christ)*
- C. **Paul’s Letters** *(Discipled by Christ)*

**T/S:** Today, as we near the end of the book of Acts, we're going to slow down to gain perspective... as we look at the Past, Present (Acts 28:30), and peer into the future... ALL through the prism of Paul's life & ministry.

**CONTEXT:** (Acts 28:23-28)

*<sup>23</sup> When they had appointed a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. <sup>24</sup> And some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved. <sup>25</sup> And disagreeing among themselves, they departed after Paul had made one statement: "The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet:*

*<sup>26</sup> "Go to this people, and say, "You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive." <sup>27</sup> For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.' <sup>28</sup> Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen."*

**A. Ignited, Invited, Invested...**

- a. **Inform**
- b. **Inspect**
- c. **Inspire**

**B. Caesarea to Rome...**

- a. Sign-up
- b. Ship-out
- c. Storm-tossed
- d. Ship-wrecked
- e. See-Rome

**C. Paul invited... now investing...**

- a. **Welcoming**
- b. **Warning**
- c. **Walking-away**

**TEXT: Acts 28:30**

***He/Paul lived there two whole years  
at his own expense, and welcomed all  
who came to him***

**Let's ask & answer a couple helpful questions today:**

**1. What did Paul do for two whole years?**

**2. What are disciples to do?**

- Per God's Word
- Per Christ's life, death & resurrection
- Per the biblical examples given to us

**T/S: Let's begin by looking at the N.T. timeline:**

### **Bible Timeline**

30 AD	The Ascension
30 AD	The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost
<b>31 AD</b>	<b>Stephen's Speech, Stoning and Death</b>
<b>31 AD</b>	<b>Saul Persecutes the Church</b>
31 AD	Philip and the Ethiopian
<b>34 AD</b>	<b>Saul's Conversion</b>
<b>48 AD</b>	<b>Paul's First Missionary Journey</b>
48 AD	Paul preaches in Pisidian Antioch
48 AD	Paul and Barnabas in Iconium
48 AD	Paul and Barnabas in Lystra and Derbe
48 AD	Paul and Barnabas Return to Syrian Antioch
48 AD	Return to Syrian Antioch
<b>48 AD</b>	<b>The Council at Jerusalem</b>
<b>49 AD</b>	<b>Paul's Second Missionary Journey</b>
49 AD	Paul in Philippi
49 AD	Paul in Thessalonica, Berea, Athens
<b>51 AD</b>	<b>Paul in Corinth</b>
<b>54 AD</b>	<b>Paul in Ephesus</b>
<b>57 AD</b>	<b>Paul in Macedonia and Greece</b>
<b>59 AD</b>	<b>Paul Returns to Jerusalem</b>
<b>60 AD</b>	<b>Paul imprisoned in Caesarea</b>
<b>62 AD</b>	<b>Paul Sails for Rome</b>
<b>62 AD</b>	<b>Paul Preaches at Rome</b>

**T/S:** So... what's a disciple to do?  
Let's get some life-lessons from Paul's patterns.

## ***I. PAUL'S LIFE***

- |              |            |      |                        |
|--------------|------------|------|------------------------|
| a. <b>BC</b> | (Acts 8)   | 31AD | <b><i>Stoner</i></b>   |
| b. <b>@</b>  | (Acts 9)   | 34AD | <b><i>Saint</i></b>    |
| c. <b>AD</b> | (Acts 10+) | 62AD | <b><i>Sent-one</i></b> |

## ***II. PAUL'S LOVE***

- |                   |          |
|-------------------|----------|
| a. <b>Miracle</b> | (Grace)  |
| b. <b>Messiah</b> | (God)    |
| c. <b>Mission</b> | (Gospel) |
- i. Great Commandments
  - ii. Great Commission
  - iii. Great Conflict
  - iv. Great Church!

### III. **PAUL'S LETTERS...** (in this "2 years")

#### a. **Acts** (Paul IS Acts...)

- i. Saved (just like us)
- ii. Sent (just like us)
- iii. Sanctified (just like us)

#### b. **Galatians**

**Purpose:** refute the Judaizers

**Key Verse:** *"So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law" (5:1).*

#### **The Blueprint**

1. **Authenticity of the gospel** (1:1-2:21)
2. **Superiority of the gospel** (3:1-4:31)
3. **Freedom of the gospel** (5:1-6:18)

- i. No other gospel (or be damned)
- ii. Crucified with Christ... no longer live
- iii. Filled with the Fruit of the Spirit
- iv. Bear one another's burdens

#### c. **1 Thessalonians**

**Purpose:** strengthen & mature the Thessalonian Christians

**Key Verse:** *"For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died" (4:14).*

### The Blueprint

1. **Faithfulness to the Lord** (1:1-3:13)
2. **Watchfulness for the Lord** (4:1-5:28)
  - i. Election & Powerful witness(es)
  - ii. God-pleasing vs. man-pleasing
  - iii. Discipling in Koinonia
  - iv. Encouragement & Love
  - v. Christ's imminent RETURN

## d. 2 Thessalonians

**Purpose:** clear up confusion about the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ

**Key Verse:** *"May the Lord lead your hearts into a full understanding and expression of the love of God and the patient endurance that comes from Christ" (3:5).*

### The Blueprint

1. **The bright hope of Christ's return** (1:1-2:17)
2. **Living in the light of Christ's return** (3:1-18)

- i. Judgment is coming
- ii. Deception & Rebellion
- iii. Salvation & Sanctification
- iv. Encouragement & Confidence
- v. Obedience & Perseverance

## e. **1 Corinthians**

**Purpose:** identify & fix problems in the Corinthian church

**Key Verse:** *"I appeal to you, dear brothers and sisters, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, to live in harmony with each other. Let there be no divisions in the church. Rather, be of one mind, united in thought and purpose" (1:10).*

### The Blueprint

#### 1. **PAUL ADDRESSES CHURCH PROBLEMS**

- 1. Divisions in the church
- 2. Disorder in the church

#### 2. **PAUL ANSWERS CHURCH QUESTIONS**

- 1. Marriage
- 2. Freedom
- 3. Worship
- 4. Resurrection
  - i. Stop it! (sin & division)
  - ii. Foolishness without the Spirit...
  - iii. Weaker brother principle
  - iv. Spiritual gifts (amidst one body)
  - v. The way of LOVE



## f. 2 Corinthians

**Purpose:** affirm Paul's ministry & refute the false teachers

**Key Verse:** *"So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead 'Come back to God!'" (5:20)*

### The Blueprint

1. **Paul defends his actions** ([1:1-2:11](#))
2. **Paul defends his ministry** ([2:12-7:16](#))
3. **Paul defends the collection** ([8:1-9:15](#))
4. **Paul defends his authority** ([10:1-13:14](#))
  - i. Aroma of Christ vs. Blinded by Satan
  - ii. Treasure in clay pots...
  - iii. New, Ambassadors, Min. of reconciliation
  - iv. Suffering servants
  - v. Grace is sufficient

## g. Romans:

**Purpose:** To explain the gospel to the Romans...

**Key Verse:** *"Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us" (5:1).*

## The Blueprint

A. **WHAT TO BELIEVE** ([1:1-11:36](#))

B. **HOW TO BEHAVE** ([12:1-16:27](#))

- i. G – Greeting (salutation)
- ii. O – Off-ense (Sin)
- iii. S - Saved (Salvation)
- iv. P - Purifying (Sanctification)
- v. E - Everything (Sovereignty)
- vi. L - Love (Servitude... love is a verb!)
- vii. ! - Warning (Sharks are all around you)

### **Romans in a Nutshell (1:16-18)**

*<sup>16</sup> For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. <sup>17</sup> For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”*

*<sup>18</sup> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.*

## **T/S:**

I want you to consider two profound words of wisdom in regards to Romans... the first comes from Martin Luther, 500 years ago, and is directed at the Pastor. The second quotes Rick Warren and it is directed to all of us.

**1. Martin Luther on Romans 1:** “The first duty of a preacher of the Gospel is, through his revealing of the law and of sin, to rebuke and to turn into sin everything in life that does not have the Spirit and faith-in-Christ as its base. Thereby he will lead people to a recognition of their miserable condition, and thus they will become humble and yearn for help. This is what Paul does. He begins in chapter 1 by rebuking the gross sins and unbelief which are in plain view... He says that, thru the Gospel, God is revealing His wrath from heaven upon all mankind because of the godless and unjust lives they live. For although they know and recognize there is a God, yet human nature, without grace, is so evil that it neither thanks nor honors God. This nature blinds itself and continually falls into wickedness, and is un- ashamed of itself...”

**2. Rick Warren on the book of Romans in its entirety:**  
“The best way to approach Romans is by seeing it as a letter written to you.”

**T/S:**     **In this 2 year window...** Paul writes 4 more letters... Over the next 4 weeks we will spend a week to join Paul in his letters to:

- A.   **Philippians**
- B.   **Ephesians**
- C.   **Colossians**
- D.   **Philemon**

**CLOSE:**

Paul's "themes" in the 6 letters already written:

**A. Galatians:**

- i. Law
- ii. Faith
- iii. Freedom
- iv. Holy Spirit

**B. I & II Thessalonians:**

- i. Persecution
- ii. Ministry (Paul's)
- iii. Hope
- iv. Being Prepared (BE ready!)
- v. More Persecution...
- vi. Christ's Return!
- vii. Rebellion
- viii. Persistence

**C. I & II Corinthians:**

- i. Loyalties
- ii. Immorality
- iii. More Liberty
- iv. Worship
- v. Resurrection
- vi. Trials
- vii. Church Discipline
- viii. More Hope
- ix. Giving / Stewardship
- x. Sound Doctrine

**D. Romans:**

- i. Sin
- ii. Salvation
- iii. Sovereignty
- iv. Sanctification
- v. Service

**T/S: SO.... What's a disciple to do?**

**Answer: BE....**

- A. Captured by grace & Crucified with Christ
- B. RADICALLY: transformed AND unified  
("ekklesia in koinonia")
- C. Faithfully Obedient – *No matter what!*
- D. Divinely Devoted to Christ-like Discipling
- E. LOVE our King & SERVE His kingdom!

**Let's Pray!**

## Upon the Undisturbed Liberty He Had to Preach the Gospel to All Comers in His Own House for Two Years Together

28:30-31

We are here taking our leave of the history of blessed Paul; and therefore, since God saw it not fit that we should know any more of him, we should carefully take notice of every particular of the circumstances in which we must here leave him.

I. It cannot but be a trouble to us that **we must leave him in bonds for Christ**, nay, and that we have no prospect given us of his being set at liberty. **Two whole years of that good man's life are here spent in confinement, and, for aught that appears, he was never enquired after, all that time, by those whose prisoner he was.** He appealed to Caesar, in hope of a speedy discharge from his imprisonment, **the governors having signified to his imperial majesty concerning the prisoner that he had done nothing worthy of death or bonds, and yet he is detained a prisoner.**

*So little reason have we to  
trust in men...*

...especially despised prisoners in great men; witness the case of Joseph, whom the chief butler remembered not, but forgot, [Genesis 40:23](#).

**How or by what means he obtained his liberty we are not told, only that two years he was a prisoner. Tradition says that after his discharge he went from Italy to Spain, thence to Crete, and so with Timothy into Judea, and thence went to visit the churches in Asia, and at length came a second time to Rome, and there was beheaded in the last year of Nero.**

But Baronius himself owns that there is no certainty of any thing concerning him betwixt his release from this imprisonment and his martyrdom; but **it is said by some that Nero, having, when he began to play the tyrant, set himself against the Christians, and persecuted them (and he was the first of the emperors that made a law against them, as Tertullian says, Apol. cap. 5), the church at Rome was much weakened by that persecution, and this brought Paul the second time to Rome, to re-establish the church there, and to comfort the souls of the disciples that were left, and so he fell a second time into Nero's hand.**

**And Chrysostom relates that a young woman that was one of Nero's misses (to speak modishly) being converted, by Paul's preaching, to the Christian faith, and so brought off from the lewd**

**course of life she had lived, Nero was incensed against Paul for it, and ordered him first to be imprisoned, and then put to death.**

But to keep to this short account here given of it,

1. It would grieve one to think that such a useful man as Paul was should be so long in restraint. **Two years he was a prisoner under Felix (ch. 24:27), and, besides all the time that passed between that and his coming to Rome, he is here two years more a prisoner under Nero.** How many churches might Paul have planted, how many cities and nations might he have brought over to Christ, in these five years' time (for so much it was at least), if he had been at liberty! But God is wise, and will show that he is not debtor to the most useful instruments he employs, but can and will carry on his own interest, both without their services and by their sufferings. **Even Paul's bonds fell out to the furtherance of the gospel, Philippians 1:12-14.**

2. Yet even Paul's imprisonment was in some respects a kindness to him, for these two years he dwelt in his own hired house, and that was more, for aught I know, than ever he had done before. He had always been accustomed to sojourn in the houses of others, now he has a house of his own-his own while he pays the rent of it; and such a retirement as this would be a refreshment to one who had been all his days an itinerant. He had been accustomed to be always upon the remove, seldom staid long at a place, but now he



lived for two years in the same house; so that the bringing of him into this prison was like Christ's call to his disciples to come into a desert place, and rest awhile, [Mark 6:31](#). When he was at liberty, he was in continual fear by reason of the lying in wait of the Jews (ch. [20:19](#)), but **now his prison was his castle**. Thus out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong sweetness.

II. Yet it is a pleasure to us (for we are sure it was to him) that, **though we leave him in bonds for Christ, yet we leave him at work for Christ**, and this made his bonds easy that he was not by them bound out from serving God and doing good. **His prison becomes a temple, a church, and then it is to him a palace. His hands are tied, but, thanks be to God, his mouth is not stopped**; a faithful zealous minister can better bear any hardship than being silenced. Here is **Paul a prisoner, and yet a preacher; he is bound, but the word of the Lord is not bound**.

*When he wrote his epistle to the Romans,  
he said he longed to see them, that he  
might impart unto them some spiritual gift  
([Romans 1:11](#)).*

He was glad to see some of them ([v. 15](#)), but it would not be half his joy unless he could impart to them some

spiritual gift, which here he has an opportunity to do, and then **he will not complain of his confinement.** Observe,

**1. To whom he preached: to all that had a mind to hear him, whether Jews or Gentiles.** Whether he had liberty to go to other houses to preach does not appear; it is likely not; but whoever would had liberty to come to his house to hear, and they were welcome: **QUOTE: He received all that came to him. Note, Ministers' doors should be open to such as desire to receive instruction from them, and they should be glad of an opportunity to advise those that are in care about their souls.** Paul could not preach in a synagogue, or any public place of meeting that was sumptuous and capacious, but he preached in a poor cottage of his own.

**QUOTE:** Note, **When we cannot do what we would in the service of God we must do what we can... He was ready to preach on the first day of the week to Christians, on the seventh day to Jews, and to all who would come on any day of the week;** and he might hope the better to speed because they came in unto him, which supposed a desire to be instructed and a willingness to learn, and where these are it is probable that some good may be done.

**2. What he preached. He does not fill their heads with curious speculations, nor with matters of state and politics, but he keeps to his text, minds his business as an apostle.**

(1.) He is God's ambassador, and therefore preaches the kingdom of God, does all he can to preach it up, negotiates the affairs of it, in order to the advancing of all its true interests. **He meddles not with the affairs of the kingdoms of men;** let those treat of them whose work it is. **He preaches the kingdom of God among men, and the word of that kingdom;** the same that he defended in his public disputes, **testifying the kingdom of God** (v. 23), he enforced in his public preaching, as that which, if received aright, will make us all wise and good, wiser and better, which is the end of preaching.

(2.) He is an agent for Christ, a friend of the bridegroom, and therefore teaches those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ-the whole history of Christ, **his incarnation, doctrine, life, miracles, death, resurrection, ascension; all that relates to the mystery of godliness.** Paul stuck still to his principle-to know and preach nothing but Christ, and him crucified.

Ministers, when in their preaching they are tempted to diverge from that which is their main business, should reduce themselves with this question, What does this concern the Lord Jesus Christ? What tendency has it to bring us to him, and to keep us walking in him? For we preach not ourselves, but Christ.

### **3. With what liberty he preached.**

(1.) Divine grace gave him a liberty of spirit. He preached with all confidence, as one that was himself well assured of the truth of what he

**preached**-that it was what he durst stand by; and of the worth of it-that it was what he durst suffer for. **He was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.**

**(2.) Divine Providence gave him a liberty of speech:** No man forbidding him, giving him any check for what he did or laying any restraint upon him. **The Jews that used to forbid him to speak to the Gentiles had no authority here;** and the Roman government as yet took no cognizance of the profession of Christianity as a crime. **Herein we must acknowledge the hand of God,**

**[1.] Setting bounds to the rage of persecutors;** where he does not turn the heart, yet he can tie the hand and bridle the tongue. Nero was a bloody man, and there were many, both Jews and Gentiles, in Rome, that hated Christianity; and yet so it was, unaccountably, that Paul though a prisoner was connived at in preaching the gospel, and it was not construed a breach of the peace. Thus God makes the wrath of men to praise him, and restrains the remainder of it, **Psa. 76:10. Though there were so many that had it in their power to forbid Paul's preaching (even the common soldier that kept him might have done it), yet God so ordered it, that no man did forbid him.**

**[2.] See God here providing comfort for the relief of the persecuted.** Though it was a very low and narrow sphere of opportunity that Paul was here placed in, compared with what he had been in, yet, such as it was, he was not molested nor

disturbed in it. **Though it was not a wide door that was opened to him, yet it was kept open, and no man was suffered to shut it; and it was to many an effectual door, so that there were saints even in Caesar's household, [Philippians 4:22](#)**. When the city of our solemnities is thus made a quiet habitation at any time, and we are fed from day to day with the bread of life, no man forbidding us, we must give thanks to God for it and prepare for changes, still longing for that holy mountain in which there shall never be any pricking brier nor grieving thorn.

**- Matthew Henry's Commentary**

Too often those who enjoy the most spiritual privileges are not ready when they must make spiritual decisions.

But their unbelief did not put an end to Paul's ministry of the Gospel!

**Paul announced that the Gospel some of the Jews had rejected would be proclaimed to the Gentiles, "and they will hear it!"**

*This is one of the major themes of Acts, how the Gospel moved from the Jews to the Gentiles and from Jerusalem to Rome.*

Without the Book of Acts, we would turn in the New Testament from the Gospel of John to Romans and ask, "How did the Gospel ever get from the Jews in Jerusalem to the Gentiles in Rome?"

**Paul kept "open house" and received anybody who wanted to discuss the things of the kingdom of God. He was chained to a guard who was relieved every 4-6 hours, but who was forced to listen as Paul preached and taught and prayed. No wonder some of them were saved! ([Phil. 1:12-14](#); [4:22](#))**

*During these two years in Rome, Paul wrote [Philippians](#), [Ephesians](#), [Colossians](#), & [Philemon](#).*

He expected to be released ([Phil. 1:23-27](#); [2:24](#); [Phile. 22](#)) and most students agree that he was.

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**During this time, he had Timothy with him** ([Phil. 1:1](#); [2:19](#); [Col. 1:1](#)), **as well as John Mark, Luke, Aristarchus, Epaphras, Justus, and Demas** ([Col. 4:10-14](#); [Phile. 24](#)).

**He also met Philemon's runaway slave Onesimus and led him to faith in Christ** ([Phile. 10-21](#)).

**Epaphroditus brought a gift to him from the Philippian church and almost died ministering to Paul** ([Phil. 2:25-30](#); [4:18](#)).

**Tychicus was Paul's "mailman" who delivered Ephesians** ([Eph. 6:21](#)), **Colossians, and Philemon** ([Col. 4:7-9](#)).

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Dr. Luke ended his book before Paul's case had been heard, so he could not give us the results of the trial.

**We have every reason to believe that Paul was indeed released and that he resumed his ministry, probably traveling as far as Spain** ([Rom. 15:24](#), [28](#)).

**(AFTER the TWO YEARS...)**

**During this period (a.d. 63-66/67),-he wrote letters to Timothy and Titus.**

**He left Titus in Crete** ([Titus 1:5](#)), Trophimus sick in Miletus ([2 Tim. 4:20](#)), **and Timothy in Ephesus** ([1 Tim. 1:3](#)). He planned to meet some of his helpers at Nicopolis ([Titus 3:12-13](#)) after he had visited some of the churches he had established. **Wherever he went, he sought to bring Jews and Gentiles to faith in Jesus Christ.**

*He was arrested again, probably about the year 67, and this time his situation was changed drastically. He did not live in a house, but was chained in a prison and treated like a criminal* ([2 Tim. 1:16](#); [2:9](#)).

Winter was coming, and he asked Timothy to bring him his cloak ([2 Tim. 4:13](#)). But **the saddest thing about this second imprisonment was his being forsaken by the believers in Rome** ([2 Tim. 4:16-17](#)).

*The great apostle to the Gentiles  
was abandoned by the very people  
he came to assist.*

Even **Demas forsook him, only Luke was with him** ([2 Tim. 4:10-11](#)).



**The family of Onesiphorus ministered to his needs**  
([2 Tim. 1:16-18](#)), **but he longed for Timothy and Mark**  
to come to be at his side ([2 Tim. 1:4](#); [4:9](#), [21](#)).

**Paul knew that the end was coming** ([2 Tim. 4:6-8](#)).

**Tradition tells us that he was beheaded at Rome in  
a.d. 67/68.**

*Luke did not write his book simply to  
record ancient history. He wrote to  
encourage the church in every age to be  
faithful to the Lord and carry the Gospel to  
the ends of the earth.*

"What was begun with so much heroism ought  
to be continued with ardent zeal," said **Charles  
Spurgeon**, "since we are assured that the same  
Lord is mighty still to carry on His heavenly  
designs."

*"Lo, I am with you always!"*

**- Bible Exposition Commentary**

**Verse 30.** *Paul dwelt two whole years.* Doubtless in the  
custody of the soldiers. Why he was not prosecuted before

the emperor during this time is not known. It is evident, however, [Acts 28:21](#), that the Jews were not disposed to carry the case before Nero; and the matter, during this time, was suffered quietly to sleep. There is great probability that the Jews durst not prosecute him before the emperor. It is clear that they had never been in favour of the appeal to Rome, and that they had no hope of gaining their cause. Probably they might remember the former treatment of the Roman emperor of their people, [Acts 18:2](#); they might remember that they were despised at the Roman capital, and not choose to encounter the scorn and indignation of the Roman court; and as there was no prosecution, Paul was suffered to live in quietness and safety.

*In his own hired house.* In a house which he was permitted to hire, and occupy as his own. Probably in this he was assisted by the kindness of his Roman friends.

*And received all, etc.* Received all hospitably and kindly who came to him to show him kindness, or to listen to his instructions. It is evident from this, that he was still a prisoner, and was not permitted to go at large.

**Verse 31.** *Preaching the kingdom of God.* [Acts 20:25](#).

***With all confidence. Openly and boldly, without any one to hinder him. It is known, also, that Paul was not unsuccessful even when a prisoner at Rome. Several persons were converted by his preaching even in the court of the emperor.*** The things which had happened to him, he says, [Philippians 1:12-14](#), had fallen out rather to the furtherance of the gospel, so that his bonds in Christ were manifested in all the palace, and in all other places; and ***many brethren in the Lord, says he, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.*** In this situation he was remembered with deep interest by the church of Philippi, who sent Epaphroditus to him with a contribution to supply his wants. Of their kindness he speaks in terms of the tenderest gratitude in [Philippians 2:25](#), [4:18](#).

***During his confinement, also, he was the means of the conversion of Onesimus, a runaway slave of Philemon***, of Colosse in Phrygia, [Philemon 1:10](#) whom he sent back to his master with a letter to himself, and with an epistle to the church at that place. [Colossians 4:8,9,18](#).

Who can but be deeply affected when he comes to the conclusion of this inspired book of revivals, and of the history of the spread of the Christian religion, and of the account of that wonderful man-the apostle Paul?

Instead of pouring forth the sigh of unavailing regret that the sacred historian has carried us no farther onward, we should rather speak the language of praise that he has

given, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, a history of the church for thirty years after the ascension of the Saviour; that he has recorded the accounts of the first great revivals of religion; that he has presented us the examples of the early missionary zeal; that he has informed us how the early Christians endured persecution and toil; that he has conducted us from land to land, and from city to city, showing us everywhere how the gospel was propagated, until we are led to the seat of the Roman power, and see the great apostle of Christianity there proclaiming, in that mighty capital of the world, the name of Jesus as the Saviour of men.

Perhaps there could be no more appropriate close to the book of the inspired history, than thus to have conducted the apostle of the Gentiles, and to have recorded the spread of Christianity, to the capital of the Roman world, and to leave the principal agent in the establishment of the Christian religion in that seat of intelligence, and influence, and power. It is the conducting of Christianity to the very height of its earthly victories; and having shown its power in the provinces of the empire, it was proper for the inspired author of this ecclesiastical history to close the account with the record of its achievements in the capital.

Why Luke closed his history here is not known. It may have been that he was not afterwards the companion of Paul; or that he might have been himself removed by death. It is agreed on all hands that he did not attend Paul in his

subsequent travels; and we should infer, from the conclusion of this book, that he did not survive the apostle, as it is almost incredible, if he did, that he did not mention his release and death.

**It is the uniform account of antiquity, that Luke, after the transactions with which the Acts of the Apostles closes, passed over into Achaia, where he lived a year or two, and there died at the age of eighty-four years.**

Everything in regard to the apostle Paul, after the account with which Luke closes this book, is involved in doubt and uncertainty. By what means he was set at liberty is not known; and there is a great contradiction of statements in regard to his subsequent travels, and even the time of his death. It is generally agreed, indeed, that he was set at liberty in the year of our Lord 63. After this, some of the Fathers assert that he travelled over Italy, and passed into Spain. But this account is involved in great uncertainty.

**In the year of our Lord 64, a dreadful fire happened at Rome, which continued for six or seven days. It was generally supposed that the city had been set on fire by order of the emperor Nero. In order to divert the attention of the people from this charge against himself, he accused the Christians of having been the authors of the conflagration, and excited against them a most furious and bloody persecution.**

In this persecution, it is generally supposed that Paul and Peter suffered death; the former by being beheaded, and the latter by crucifixion.

Paul is supposed to have been beheaded rather than crucified, because he was a Roman citizen, and because it was unlawful to put a Roman citizen to death on a cross.

*"Death is swallowed up in victory"*

[1 Corinthians 15:54.](#)

To Paul now, what are all his sorrows, and persecutions, and toils in the cause of his Master? What but a source of thanksgiving that he was permitted thus to labour to spread the gospel through the world? **So may we live, imitating his life of zeal, and self-denial, and faithfulness, that, when he rises from the dead, we may participate with him in the glories of the resurrection** of the just!

(\*) "kingdom of Jesus" [Acts 4:31](#), [Ephesians 6:19](#)

**- Barnes' Notes on the New Testament.**

**Bold Preaching and Teaching ([28:30-31](#))**

ACTS DOES NOT conclude on the note of Jewish rejection of the gospel. Rather, Luke's conclusion presents a more

glorious reality: The Gentiles hear the gospel, and Paul has two years of bold witness about "the kingdom of God and ... the Lord Jesus Christ" ([v. 31](#)).

*At the start of Acts Luke gave his key verse ([1:8](#)), which predicted that through the Holy Spirit the gospel would be proclaimed "to the ends of the earth." The book ends with that prediction being fulfilled.*

Paul had more freedom than a typical prisoner because he was able to live in his own rented house and welcome all who came to see him ([v. 30](#)). Bruce, Marshall, and others think that the Greek here is better translated "at his own expense" (see NRSV, REB), that is, "on his own earnings" rather than "in his own rented house" (NIV; cf. NASB). Marshall points out that "prisoners could in certain circumstances carry on their own trades." Perhaps Paul was able to carry on his "tentmaking" although this would have been awkward if he was continually chained by the wrist to a soldier. **Paul probably wrote his Prison Letters—Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon—at this time,** though scholars are not unanimous about this.

Why does the book of Acts end so abruptly? Is it because Acts was written shortly after the two years mentioned in

this conclusion? There is a strong case for this, and many scholars date the book of Acts in the early to mid-sixties. We cannot be sure of what Paul did after the events described in Acts. Tradition affirms that he was released from this imprisonment, had more evangelistic campaigns, and probably visited friends in Macedonia and Asia. Did he go to Spain during this time, as he had wished to ([Rom. 15:24, 28](#))? We cannot be sure.

Paul was probably arrested again and wrote the Pastoral Letters during his second imprisonment in Rome. The last of these, 2 Timothy, speaks of his impending death. He was martyred some time between A.D. 64 and 67.

**Evangelism basics:** After a somewhat detailed description of Paul's attempts at building bridges with and evangelizing the Jewish community in Rome, **Luke closes his two-volume work with two short verses that give us a picture of how evangelism happens** ([vv. 30-31](#)).

*This is an appropriate way for Luke to end his book, for, as we said above, this was the great activity that formed its agenda, beginning with the Great Commission ([1:8](#)).*

**The gospel was taken to Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria, and then to the ends of the earth. Now it has**



come to the most politically powerful city in the world.  
There too evangelism takes place.

It is helpful for us as well to close this commentary by gleaning from **these two verses** what it means to evangelize. They **tell us some things about the type of person who is effective in evangelism and about the message and the methods used.**

*Pervading this whole passage is the theme of the priority of evangelism for the Christian.*

### Contemporary Significance

Jewish people are among the most gospel-resistant people in the world.

In the book of Acts one of the burning issues was whether Gentiles needed to become Jews when they became Christians. I think today one of the important points that needs stressing is that Jews do not have to become Gentiles when they become Christians.

**Conclusion: evangelism basics.**

*The description of Paul's evangelism in [verses 30-31](#) shows us various factors that go to make an effective evangelistic process and that are as relevant today as they were in the first century.*

**1. People under God's sovereignty have confidence to evangelize.** Acts affirms the sovereignty of God in the various situations Christians faced: in the first persecution of believers, which resulted in a prayer that reflected on sovereignty ([4:24-30](#)); in the scattering of believers that became the scattering of the seed of the gospel as refugees were transformed into missionaries ([8:1, 4](#)); in the mysterious way in which Paul was brought to Rome (chs. 27-28).

### **QUOTE:**

*Evangelism thrives under the shadow of sovereignty.*

We know that God is marching on with his agenda, even through what humans consider tragedies, and we may join in the stream of God's sovereignty by being active in his agenda.

# *To one who lives under sovereignty, success is obedience to God.*

That is, **even though Paul was bound to a chain in Rome, he was a success... With his confidence in God's sovereignty, Paul carried on with his ministry as if nothing had happened!** In Rome he probably continued his tentmaking, wrote his four great Prison Letters (including Ephesians, "the Quintessence of Paulinism" ), and carried on his openhearted ministry as he welcomed all who came to him ([v. 30](#)). The palace guards ended up talking about Christ, and the other Christians were "encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly" ([Phil. 1:13-14](#)). Thus **Paul affirmed: "What has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel"** ([1:12](#)).

## **QUOTE:**

*The depth & effectiveness of Paul's ministry was greatly enhanced by this mingling of deprivation, sovereignty, and obedience. This has been so throughout the history of the church.*

It is well-known that suffering is often the context out of which great creativity emerges. When you add to that the operation of the sovereign God, who can turn tragedies into triumphs, you **realize that deprivation is not something to fear but an occasion for God to express his glory.**

Next to the Bible probably the best-selling Christian book in history has been John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Bunyan (1628-88) spent a total of twelve years in prison. He was arrested a year after his second marriage. When he went to prison, he left his young wife to look after the four children from his first marriage. In prison he went through downcast times, but he did not give up on life. In order to support his wife and children he made and sold hundreds of long-tagged thread laces for riding boots and other footwear. In the first six years of his imprisonment he wrote nine books. During his second imprisonment of six years he published only two books, possibly because he was working on his greatest work, *Pilgrim's Progress*.

He wrote to people outside who sought his counsel after reading his books. He conducted worship services for others in the prison (and sometimes was given leave from the prison to secretly conduct services outside too!). He shaped the rail of his prison stool into a flute, carefully hollowing the wood and using his candle flame to burn the small holes in the barrel. He would play the flute when the jailer was not around and would hurriedly put it back when he came to find out what the strange noise was! Buoyed by

the vision of God's sovereignty, Bunyan made the best of his situation in prison.

**Though we belong to the triumphant kingdom of the Lord of the universe, we may sometimes feel as if we are living under circumstances of defeat. The witness of Acts should encourage us to see obedience to God as the ultimate success and triumph in life.**

Some churches in the West that were once powerful in national life are gradually losing their power and political clout.

*I see Christians bemoaning this fact and responding sometimes aggressively against this loss of earthly power. Perhaps they should not be worried, for great spiritual power is often unleashed from environments of great deprivation.*

**Paul's (and Bunyan's) imprisonment shows us that the greatest activities of life can be successfully carried out in such situations.**

**2. The message is about the kingdom of God and Jesus Christ.** Luke summarizes the message preached as being about "the kingdom of God and ... the Lord

Jesus Christ" ([v. 31](#)). This too has much to tell us today. The kingdom of God has been a neglected topic among evangelicals in this century. But mission theologian Arthur Glasser, after tracing various emphases that characterized evangelical mission theology in the postwar era, states that the reaffirming of the kingdom of God was the most significant trend.

*Preaching about the kingdom of God presents the greater purpose of God rather than just what God can do to an individual.*

It affirms that God is working out his purposes through the vicissitudes of history and that his plan will finally be accomplished, with his kingdom ruling the world.

**We ask people to join in this great march forward with the Lord of the universe.** In this world, where people are wracked by the fear of demons, enemies, economic reversals, and failure, this is liberating news.

**QUOTE:** *If the truth of the kingdom were added to our evangelistic preaching, our evangelism would yield much stronger Christians. In today's evangelism we tend to focus on how Jesus meets our personal needs.*

This topic is, of course, appropriate. **But sooner or later Christians are going to find that God does not meet some needs they consider to be urgent.** At such times they may be are tempted to stray from Christ and seek help elsewhere. **But if the grand picture of the kingdom is firmly rooted in their minds, they will never forsake the Lord** of the universe for a smaller, less powerful deity or force.

*Also necessary to evangelistic preaching is a focus on Jesus.*

Again we do not only tell what he can do for us in connection with our present needs. We also describe who he is and what he has done and is doing in the world. ***We must emphasize the Jesus as preached in Acts.*** **Such a portrayal of Christ will leave us feeling secure, confident, and complete.**

***3. The method is to be open to people and to preach and to teach.*** We noted how Paul opened his home and welcomed all who came to him ([v. 30](#); cf. [20:20](#), [31](#)). Elsewhere we called this **the openhearted approach to ministry.** ***If we are to truly identify with those whom we are trying to reach, we must open our lives to them as Paul did.***

In such situations, Paul preached and taught ([v. 31](#)).

**Preaching** (*kerysso*) refers to a proclamation of the message that appeals primarily to the will of the individual. In **teaching** (*didasko*) the emphasis is more on challenging the mind.

### (Key Concept to Understand)

*Often in Acts evangelism is described as teaching (5:21, 25, 28). Especially when evangelizing people who do not have a Christian worldview, teaching is important in order for them to understand what Christians are saying and thus make an intelligent decision. However impressed they may be by our oratory in preaching, **they will interpret our message by sending its words through the grid of their own worldview**. They may make a decision in response to our invitation, but they have not understood the gospel.*

**The evangelistic discussions that Paul had with his audiences undoubtedly helped the truth of the gospel sink into their minds.**



Two days before writing this I spoke at a YFC evangelistic camp. About 70 percent of the youth in the audience were Buddhist, Hindu, or Muslim. I spoke on who Jesus is, explaining things that the Gospels said about him. The speakers before me had spoken on creation, the Fall, and the affects of sin on personal life and relationships. After my talk we had a seventy-five-minute discussion about what Christians believe. Much of what happened up to that time had been teaching truths about Christianity through talks and discussions. When an evangelist spoke the night after I had spoken, many people were ready to commit their lives to Christ. Though this was an evangelistic camp, **the teaching was/is as critical as the preaching.**

*Since a majority of the people in the West today have rejected Christianity, their worldview too is not Christian. Therefore witnesses in the post- Christian West face the same challenge that we in so-called non-Christian countries do.*

**A key to effective evangelism in both these environments is teaching people what Christians believe and being sensitive to their reactions.**

Teaching does not have to be boring! I have heard people say of some Christian communicators that they are teachers, not preachers. But what they really meant was that they were boring speakers.

Teachers must use a wide variety of means to attract and keep the attention of the audience.

**4. *The priority of evangelism.*** Luke's decision to close his book with a report of ongoing evangelism reminds us that...

**Evangelism is the passion that ignites our activity.**

***God has acted decisively in Christ to save the human race. Herein lies the ultimate answer to the problems of the human race. If we love this world as God does, we will want to tell it of this liberating good news. This business will consume our passion to the day we die.***

**- NIV Application Commentary**

# Survey of Galatians:

## Theme

**Christ's death has brought in the age of the new covenant (3:23-26; 4:4-5, 24), in which believers do not have to become Jews or follow the outward ceremonies of the Mosaic law (2:3, 11-12, 14; 4:10).** To require these things is to deny the heart of the gospel, which is justification by faith alone, not by obedience to the law (2:16; cf. 1:6-7). **In this new age, Christians are to live in the guidance and power of the Spirit (chs. 5-6).**

## Purpose, Occasion, and Background

**A crisis has hit the church in Galatia.** The church came into being as a result of God's Spirit at work in Paul's proclamation of the gospel (3:1-5; 4:13-15). But within the short space of time since Paul left (1:6), **the church has been visited or infiltrated by false teachers** whom Paul calls those "who trouble you" (1:7) or "those who unsettle you" (5:12). **These teachers have convinced the Galatians of a false gospel which requires them to be circumcised.** Paul sees that these pseudo-Christians merely want to win converts for their own prestige: **they want to win approval from the Jewish authorities by showing how effective they are in converting Gentiles to a form of Judaism (6:12).** **Since the Jewish establishment approves of the fact that they are making Gentiles Jewish, the false teachers have the best of both worlds:** they have created a sect of which they are the leaders, and they also escape any Jewish persecution. One further **effect**

**of this on the Galatians appears to have been the division within their church**, presumably over these issues of circumcision and law that the false teachers have raised ([5:15](#)).

Although the Galatians appear to have come under the spell of these teachers and have become convinced of their teaching ([1:6](#)), **Paul does not regard the situation as hopeless** ([3:4](#)). Nevertheless, **Paul is more critical of his audience here than in any other letter, and he chastises the Galatians for being foolish** ([3:1](#)) and provides numerous reasons why they should return to the truth.

The less important question, which makes little difference to how one interprets the letter, is, which Galatians? There was a *people group* of Galatians who lived in the northern part of what is now Turkey, but there was a *Roman province* called Galatia that extended into southern Turkey. The Galatians in the letter are probably those in the Roman province, especially the southern part, because Paul did much less in the way of missionary activity in the north, and he usually refers to places by their Roman imperial names.

### Key Themes

1. In his sin-bearing death, **Christ is a substitute for all Christians**, whom he brings into a new realm of freedom and life. [1:4](#); [2:20](#); [3:13](#)
2. This gospel of Christ is *for* humanity, but there is no sense in which it has its origin *in* humanity: it comes only from God. Paul is [1:1](#), [11-12](#), [15-20](#)

himself an illustration of this: **his conversion to Christ and his apostleship were not through human consultation but through the direct revelation of Christ.**

3. The **gospel is appropriated not by works of law but by *faith***, which is the route to justification. [2:16](#)

4. To require circumcision and other Mosaic ceremonies such as dietary laws and Jewish holidays as a supplement to faith is to fall back from the realm of grace, faith, and freedom, and to come under the whole law and its curse, since **comprehensive observance of the law is impossible.** [2:12-14](#), [16](#); [3:10](#); [4:10](#); [5:3](#)

5. **OT Scripture itself testifies to the truth of justification by faith**, both in the life of **Abraham and** in the prophecy of **Habakkuk.** [Gen. 15:6](#); [Hab. 2:4](#)

6. **The Christian life has its source in the believer having died with Christ to sin**, and thereby having renounced the flesh. [5:24](#); [6:14](#)

7. **The Spirit is the source of power and guidance in the Christian life**, and the work of the Spirit produces love and faith. [5:6](#), [16](#), [18](#), [25](#)

8. **The Christian life consists not in pleasing people but in pleasing Christ our master and being willing to suffer persecution for the sake of his cross.** [1:10](#); [6:12](#), [14](#)

## The Setting of Galatians

(c. A.D. 48)

**Paul's letter to the Galatians was likely written to the churches he had established during his first missionary journey (Acts 13:1-14:28). He probably wrote the letter from his home church in Antioch in Syria, sometime before the Jerusalem council (Acts 15:1-31).**

- ESV Study Bible

## Vital Statistics

### Purpose:

**To refute the Judaizers** (who taught that Gentile believers must obey the Jewish law in order to be saved), **and to call Christians to faith and freedom in Christ**

**Author: Paul**

### Original Audience:

The **churches in southern Galatia, founded on Paul's first missionary journey** (including Iconium, Lystra, Derbe)

### Date Written:

**Approximately A.D. 49, from Antioch**, prior to the Jerusalem council (A.D. 50)

## Setting:

The most pressing controversy in the early church was the relationship of new believers, particularly Gentiles, to the Jewish laws. This was especially a problem for the converts and for the young churches that Paul had founded on his first missionary journey. Paul wrote to correct this problem. Later, at the council in Jerusalem, the conflict was officially resolved by the church leaders.

**Key Verse:** *"So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law" (5:1).*

## Key People:

Paul, Peter, Barnabas, Titus, Abraham, false teachers

## Key Places:

Galatia, Jerusalem

## Special Features:

This letter is not addressed to any specific body of believers and was probably circulated to several churches in Galatia.

## The Blueprint

4. **Authenticity of the gospel** (1:1-2:21)
5. **Superiority of the gospel** (3:1-4:31)
6. **Freedom of the gospel** (5:1-6:18)

**In response to attacks from false teachers, Paul wrote to defend his apostleship and the authority of the gospel. The Galatians were beginning to turn from faith to legalism.** The struggle between the gospel and legalism is still a relevant issue. Many today would have us return to trying to earn God's favor through following rituals or obeying a set of rules. **As Christians, we are not boxed in but set free. To preserve our freedom, we must stay close to Christ and resist any who promote subtle ways for us to earn our salvation.**

## MEGATHEMES

THEME	EXPLANATION	IMPORTANCE
<b>Law</b>	A group of Jewish teachers insisted that non-Jewish believers must obey Jewish law and traditional rules. They believed a person was saved by following the law of Moses (with emphasis on circumcision, the sign of the covenant), in addition to faith in Christ. Paul opposed them by showing that the law can't save	We can't be saved by keeping the Old Testament law, even the Ten Commandments. The law served as a guide to point out our need to be forgiven. Christ fulfilled the obligations of the law for us. We must turn to him to be saved. He alone can make us right with God.



anyone.

### ***Faith***

We are saved from God's judgment and penalty for sin by God's gracious gift to us. We receive salvation by faith—trusting in him—not in anything else.

Becoming a Christian is in no way based on our initiative, wise choice, or good character. We can be right with God only by believing in him.

Your acceptance with God comes by believing in Christ alone. You must never add to or twist this truth. We are saved by faith, not by the good that we do.

Have you placed your whole trust and confidence in Christ? He alone can forgive you and bring you into a relationship with God.

### ***Freedom***

Galatians is our charter of Christian freedom. We are not under the jurisdiction of Jewish laws and traditions nor under the authority of Jerusalem. Faith in Christ brings true freedom from sin and from the futile attempt to be right

We are free in Christ, and yet freedom is a privilege. We are not free to disobey Christ or practice immorality, but we are free to serve the risen Christ. Let us use our freedom to love and to serve, not to do wrong.

with God by keeping the law.

**Holy Spirit**

We become Christians through the work of the Holy Spirit. He brings new life; even our faith to believe is a gift from him. The Holy Spirit instructs, guides, leads, and gives us power. He ends our bondage to evil desires, and he creates in us love, joy, peace, and many other wonderful changes.

When the Holy Spirit leads us, he produces his fruit in us. Just as we are saved by faith, not deeds, we also grow by faith. By believing, we can have the Holy Spirit within us, helping us live for Christ. Obey Christ by following the Holy Spirit's leading.

*Cities in Galatia*

Paul visited several cities in Galatia on each of his three missionary journeys. On his first journey he went through Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, and then retraced his steps; on his second journey he went by land from Antioch of Syria through the four cities in Galatia; on his third journey he also went through those cities on the main route to Ephesus.

**- Life Application Study Bible.**

# Survey of 1 & 2 Thessalonians:

## Theme

**The most prominent theme in 1 Thessalonians is the second coming of Jesus. It is mentioned in every chapter of the book (1:10; 2:19-20; 3:13; 4:13-18; 5:1-11, 23-24). At Jesus' future coming, the dead in Christ will rise and will be caught up along with the living to meet the Lord in the air (4:15-17). Unbelievers will be subject to his wrath, but Christians will be delivered from this, inheriting salvation instead (1:10; 5:2-4, 9-10). Those who are destined to participate as saints (lit., "holy ones") in the second coming must be holy and blameless (3:11-4:8; 5:23), and God, who is faithful, will produce holiness in the lives of those whom he calls (5:24).**

## Purpose, Occasion, and Background

**Thessalonica was the proud capital of the Roman province of Macedonia** and had a population of over 100,000. Its natural harbor and placement on the busy east-west Egnatian Way as well as 1key north-south trade routes meant that **it was a flourishing center of trade and philosophy**. It was a free city and was governed by local officials called "politarchs" (cf. [Acts 17:6, 8](#)). Religiously, the city was committed to the Greco-Roman pantheon and the imperial cult; Egyptian cults were also prominent. **There was a sizable population of Jews in Thessalonica (Acts 17:5).**

**Paul, Timothy, and Silas preached in the Thessalonian synagogue over three Sabbaths, and a number of Jews and God-fearing Gentiles believed ([Acts 17:4](#)). [First Thessalonians 1:9-10](#) suggests that Paul subsequently spent some weeks ministering fruitfully to pagan Gentiles. However, rioters instigated by Jewish opponents dragged Jason (Paul's host) and some other Christians before the politarchs and charged them with sedition against Caesar ([Acts 17:5-8](#)), **forcing the missionaries to leave Thessalonica prematurely** ([Acts 17:9-10](#)). Paul was concerned for the new Christians, and therefore a few months later he sent Timothy back to Thessalonica ([1 Thess. 3:1-2](#), [5](#); see note on [Acts 17:15](#)). Catching up with Paul in Corinth ([Acts 18:5](#)), Timothy updated him on the Thessalonian church ([1 Thess. 3:6](#)).**

Timothy reported that generally the church community was doing well. However, **not everything at Thessalonica was rosy. Some members of the church had died ([4:13](#))**, and because they were not fully informed about what would happen to deceased Christians at Christ's return ([3:10](#); [4:13](#)), **some apparently thought that those who had died would miss out on the second coming, and they had plunged into hopeless grieving for them ([4:13](#)).**

**In addition, Timothy related to Paul a Thessalonian question about *the timing of the day of the Lord* ([5:1-2](#)).** A number of scholars believe that the query reflected restless impatience or a false sense of security, but this view is countered by Paul's repeated assurances in [5:4-5](#), [9](#), along with the lack of threat or warning in [5:1-11](#). **Paul**

**reassures the Thessalonians that they are destined not for wrath but for salvation on the day of the Lord.** Some think that the Thessalonians were concerned that they would be unprepared for Jesus' return, **but [4:3-8](#) suggests that they were not concerned *enough* about holy living.** Perhaps the simplest explanation is that these new Christians were questioning their own final salvation in view of the recent unexpected deaths ([4:13](#)). **They may even have wondered whether the deaths were an expression of divine disapproval.**

Whatever the specifics, **clearly the Thessalonians needed reassurance about those who had died ([4:13-18](#)) and about their own destiny at the second coming ([5:1-11](#)).**

**The Thessalonians seem to have been vulnerable in other ways too. They had not expected the initial persecution to continue unabated for so long** ([3:3-4](#); cf. [2 Thess. 1:5-7](#)). Moreover, they missed Paul, apparently disappointed that he himself had not yet returned to see them ([1 Thess. 3:6-10](#)).

Yet **another problem in Thessalonica** demanded Paul's attention: **some Christians were bringing the church into disrepute by depending on wealthier Christians to provide for them rather than earning their own living** ([4:10b-12](#); [5:14](#); cf. [2 Thess. 3:6-15](#)). It is possible that this problem was a result of the Thessalonians' erroneous thinking about the future. However, it may simply be that **some church members were selfishly and lazily exploiting the charity of wealthier members to avoid having to work.**

When Paul heard Timothy's generally positive report, he was filled with joyful relief and was eager to encourage the embattled and discouraged Christians and to answer their questions. So he immediately began composing 1 Thessalonians ([1 Thess. 3:6-8](#)). **Paul's main purpose was to repair the hope of the Thessalonian Christians** in the wake of the unexpected deaths of people in their congregation and to reassure them that both the dead and the living were destined to be saved at the second coming ([4:13-5:11](#)). **Related to this was his desire to reassure the Thessalonians that they were among those elected by God for salvation** ([1:4](#); [5:24](#)).

**Paul also wished to underline the missionaries' authenticity as preachers of the gospel of God** ([1:5](#); [2:1-12](#); [2:17-3:10](#)) in the face of real or potential questions relating to his lengthy absence ([2:17-3:10](#)), the unrelenting persecution ([3:3-4](#)), and the unexpected deaths ([4:13](#)). **Paul also sought to encourage the Thessalonians by explaining that persecution is normal for the Christian** ([3:3-4](#)). In addition, **Paul is calling the recently converted, predominantly pagan community to sexual holiness** ([4:3-8](#)) **and the idle members of the community to gainful employment** ([4:9-12](#)).

**It also seems that Paul is seeking to undo their heavy dependence on him by urging the church to respect and defer to its own ministers** ([5:12-13](#)). This can be seen in his forbidding the despising of prophesying ([5:19-22](#)), his **emphasizing Timothy's credentials** ([3:2](#)), and his

**presenting the missionaries as a team** (hence the use of the first person plural through much of the letter).

### Key Themes

1. **The wrath of God comes on those who reject the gospel.** [2:16;](#)  
[5:3](#)
2. **Jesus' death and resurrection** are the basis [4:14;](#)  
for **the Christian's hope.** [5:10](#)
3. **Christians are destined not for wrath** but [1:10;](#)  
for salvation at Jesus' coming. [5:4, 9](#)
4. Christians who die will participate fully in [4:14-17;](#)  
the second coming. [5:10](#)
5. **Those who respond to the gospel have been elected by God** in prehistory and called [1:4;](#)  
by God, and they continue to be called by God [2:12;](#)  
throughout their earthly lives. [4:7; 5:9,](#)  
[24](#)
6. **Christians should live lives of comprehensive holiness.** [3:13;](#)  
[4:3-8;](#)  
[5:23](#)
7. **Christians must never shirk their responsibility to work.** [4:9-12;](#)  
[5:14](#)
8. **The authenticity of the gospel is confirmed by the integrity of its preachers.** [1:5; 2:1-](#)  
[12](#)
9. **Joy, especially in suffering, is a mark of the Christian.** [1:6;](#)  
[5:16](#)
10. Christians experience the realities of the [4:8-9](#)  
prophesied new covenant.

**11. Faith, hope, and love are essential and universal traits of the Christian.** [1:2-3;](#)  
[5:8](#)

## **The Setting of 1 Thessalonians**

*c. A.D. 49-51*

**Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians from Corinth near the end of his second missionary journey. Paul and his companions had established the church in Thessalonica but were forced to leave by opponents of the gospel. Later, Paul sent Timothy back to Thessalonica to check on the church there, and Timothy's report led Paul to write this letter.** Thessalonica enjoyed privileged status as the capital of Macedonia and was located on a natural harbor along the busy east-west Egnatian Way.

## **2 Thessalonians... Relationship to 1 Thessalonians**

Some have proposed that 2 Thessalonians preceded 1 Thessalonians, but [2 Thessalonians 2:15](#) rules this out. Others have postulated that Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians for a Jewish group within the church or even to the Philippians, but such hypotheses are in tension with [2 Thessalonians 1:1](#). Probably **Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians soon after dispatching 1 Thessalonians, because he had received a report (2 Thess. 3:11) that the situation at Thessalonica had taken a surprising turn.**



## Theme

**The theme of the second coming of Jesus dominates 2 Thessalonians just as it dominated 1 Thessalonians.** **Jesus' coming will be preceded by an "apostasy" (or rebellion) and by the revelation of the man of lawlessness, the Antichrist (2 Thess. 2:3). When Jesus comes, he will defeat this rebellious world ruler (2:8) and bring justice to oppressed Christians, and wrath to their persecutors and to unbelievers in general (1:5-10; 2:9-15).**

## Purpose, Occasion, and Background

**The Thessalonian church had accepted the strange claim that "the day of the Lord has come" (2:1-2).** How could they have thought this? Some think they spiritualized the concept of the day of the Lord, but Paul's argumentation seems inconsistent with this. Others postulate that they thought that tribulation was part of the day of the Lord and that it had begun, and consequently the second coming was imminent. However, Paul assumes that they knew the second coming occurred at the same time as the coming of the day of the Lord. As strange as it may seem, the Thessalonians may simply have fallen victim to the bizarre notion that the day of the Lord, understood in its normal sense, had come. As a result they were shaken and frightened (2:2). The Thessalonians were also undergoing persecution (1:4), which may have exacerbated their confusion about the end. Furthermore, the community had a problem with idlers refusing to work (3:6-15). They may have stopped working to await and preach the second

coming, but evidence for connecting the problems in this way is lacking. Lazy Christians may simply have been exploiting wealthier Christians' generosity in order to avoid work.

**Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians (1) to reassure those terrified by the thought that the day of the Lord had come (2:1-3:5), (2) to strengthen the Thessalonians in the face of unrelenting persecution (1:3-12), and (3) to deal with the problem of some of the church members refusing to earn their own living (3:6-15).**

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## **Vital Statistics**

### **Purpose:**

**To strengthen the Thessalonian Christians in their faith and give them the assurance of Christ's return**

**Author: Paul**

**Original Audience: The church at Thessalonica**

### **Date Written:**

Approximately A.D. 51 from Corinth; one of Paul's earliest letters

### **Setting:**

The church at Thessalonica was very young, having been established only two or three years before this letter was written. The Thessalonian Christians needed to mature in their faith. In addition, there was a misunderstanding concerning Christ's second coming—some thought Christ would return immediately; thus, they were confused when their loved ones died because they expected Christ to return beforehand. Also, believers were being persecuted.

**Key Verse:** *"For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died"* ([4:14](#)).

**Key People:** Paul, Timothy, Silas

**Key Place:** Thessalonica

**Special Features:**

Paul received from Timothy a favorable report about the Thessalonians. However, Paul wrote this letter to correct their misconceptions about the resurrection and the second coming of Christ.

## The Blueprint

3. Faithfulness to the Lord ([1:1-3:13](#))
4. Watchfulness for the Lord ([4:1-5:28](#))

Paul and his companions were faithful to bring the gospel to the Thessalonians in the midst of persecution. The Thessalonians had only recently become Christians, and yet they had remained faithful to the Lord, despite the fact that the apostles were not with them. Others have been faithful in bringing God's Word to us. **We must remain faithful and live in the expectation that Christ will return at any time.**

MEGATHEMES		
THEME	EXPLANATION	IMPORTANCE
<b>Persecution</b>	Paul and the new Christians at Thessalonica experienced persecution because of their faith in Christ. We can expect trials and troubles as well. We need to stand firm in our faith in the midst of trials, being strengthened by the Holy Spirit.	The Holy Spirit helps us to remain strong in faith, able to show genuine love to others and maintain our moral character even when we are being persecuted, slandered, or oppressed.

***Paul's  
Ministry***

Paul expressed his concern for this church even while he was being slandered. Paul's commitment to share the gospel in spite of difficult circumstances is a model we should follow.

Paul not only delivered his message, but gave of himself. In our ministries, we must become like Paul—faithful and bold, yet sensitive and self-sacrificing.

***Hope***

One day all believers, both those who are alive and those who have died, will be united with Christ. To those Christians who die before Christ's return, there is hope—the hope of the resurrection of the body.

If we believe in Christ, we will live with him forever.

All those who belong to Jesus Christ—from throughout history—will be present with him at his second coming. We can be confident that we will be with loved ones who have trusted in Christ.

***Being  
Prepared***

No one knows the time of Christ's

The gospel is not only what we

return. We are to live believe but also moral and holy lives, what we must live. ever watchful for his The Holy Spirit coming. Believers leads us in must not neglect faithfulness, so we daily responsibilities, can avoid lust and but always work and fraud. Live as live to please the though you expect Lord. Christ's return at any time. Don't be caught unprepared.

### *Location of Thessalonica*

**Paul visited Thessalonica on his second and third missionary journeys.** It was a seaport and trade center located on the Egnatian Way, a busy international highway. **Paul probably wrote his two letters to the Thessalonians from Corinth.**

## **2 Thessalonians: Vital Statistics**

**Purpose:**

**To clear up the confusion about the second coming of Christ**

**Author: Paul**

**Original Audience: The church at Thessalonica**

**Date Written:**

Approximately A.D. 51 or 52, a few months after 1 Thessalonians, from Corinth

**Setting:**

Many in the church were confused about the timing of Christ's return. Because of mounting persecution, they thought the day of the Lord must be imminent, and they interpreted Paul's first letter to say that the Second Coming would be at any moment. In light of this misunderstanding, many persisted in being idle and disorderly, with the excuse of waiting for Christ's return.

**Key Verse:** *"May the Lord lead your hearts into a full understanding and expression of the love of God and the patient endurance that comes from Christ" (3:5).*

**Key People:** Paul, Silas, Timothy

**Key Place:** Thessalonica

**Special Features:**

This is a follow-up letter to 1 Thessalonians. In this letter, Paul indicates various events that must precede the second coming of Christ.

## The Blueprint

3. The bright hope of Christ's return ([1:1-2:17](#))

4. Living in the light of Christ's return ([3:1-18](#))

**Paul wrote to encourage those who were facing persecution and to correct a misunderstanding about the timing of Christ's return. The teaching about the Lord's return promoted idleness in this young church. The imminent coming of Christ should never make us idle; we should be even more busy—living purely, using our time well, and working for his Kingdom.** We must work not only during easy times when it is convenient but also during difficult times. Christians must patiently watch for Christ's return and work for him while they wait.

### MEGATHEMES

THEME	EXPLANATION	IMPORTANCE
<b><i>Persecution</i></b>	Paul encouraged the church to persevere in spite of troubles and trials. God will bring victory to his faithful followers and judge those who persecute them.	God promises to reward our faith by giving us his power and helping us bear persecution. Suffering for our faith will strengthen us to serve Christ. We must be faithful to him.



### ***Christ's Return***

Since Paul had said that the Lord could come at any moment, some of the Thessalonian believers had stopped working in order to wait for Christ.

Christ will return and bring total victory to all who trust in him. If we are ready, we need not be concerned about *when* he will return. We should stand firm, keep working, and wait for Christ.

### ***Great Rebellion***

Before Christ's return, there will be a great rebellion against God led by the man of lawlessness (the Antichrist). God will remove all the restraints on evil before he brings judgment on the rebels. The Antichrist will attempt to deceive many.

We should not be afraid when we see evil increase. God is in control, no matter how evil the world becomes. God guards us during Satan's attacks. We can have victory over evil by remaining faithful to God.

### ***Persistence***

Because church

We must never get

members had quit working and become disorderly and disobedient, Paul chastised them for their idleness. He called on them to show courage and true Christian conduct.	so tired of doing right that we quit. We can be persistent by making the most of our time and talents. Our endurance will be rewarded.
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- Life Application Study Bible.

## Survey of 1 & 2 Corinthians:

### Theme

**First Corinthians covers a number of topics** (see “Key Themes”). One theme emerges from these discussions, however, as **Paul’s dominant concern. Paul wants this church, divided because of the arrogance of its more powerful members, to work together for the advancement of the gospel.**

**He wants them to drop their divisive one-upmanship, build up the faith of those who are weak, and witness effectively to unbelievers.**

## Purpose, Occasion, and Background

**Corinth sat on the isthmus connecting the Greek mainland with the Peloponnesian peninsula.** This location made it a flourishing crossroads for sea traffic between the Aegean region and the western Mediterranean. It was **a place where many cultures and religions mingled.** Since **it was a Roman colony,** Roman law and customs were important, particularly among the upper classes, but **“many ‘gods’ and many ‘lords’” found a home in Corinth (8:5).** **The worship of these gods was fully integrated into governmental affairs, civic festivals, trade guilds, and social clubs, and everyday life in general.** Corinth was also a destination for traveling professional orators who charged a fee for attendance at their entertaining rhetorical displays and advised people on how to advance socially.

**Into this milieu Paul brought the gospel of Jesus Christ, and soon a church was established.** **He was aided** in his work by two new-found friends from Rome, **Priscilla and Aquila, who, like Paul, were displaced Jews and tentmakers by trade** ([Acts 18:1-4](#), [18-19](#), [24-28](#); [Rom. 16:3](#); [2 Tim. 4:19](#)). **Paul, Priscilla, and Aquila spent 18 months in Corinth in the early 50s** and then, after a brief trip to Judea and Syria, Paul traveled to Ephesus. Priscilla and Aquila were already there ([Acts 18:19](#); [1 Cor. 16:19](#)) and, by the time Paul arrived, they had already met the skillful Christian apologist Apollos, who had also been in Corinth ([Acts 18:24-19:1](#); [1 Cor. 1:12](#); [3:4-6](#), [22](#); [4:6](#); [16:12](#)).

**Paul settled in Ephesus for three years ([Acts 20:31](#)) and at some point wrote to the Corinthians the otherwise unknown letter that he mentions in [1 Corinthians 5:9](#). It is not known what prompted the letter but it dealt with sexual immorality, a persistent problem for the Corinthian church ([5:1-13](#); [6:12-20](#)). Sometime later, Paul received an oral report indicating that **the Corinthians had not only misunderstood his first letter (5:10) but were plagued with serious problems of division, sexual immorality, and social snobbery (1:10; 5:1; 11:18)**. Around the same time, a letter arrived from the Corinthians that displayed considerable theological confusion about marriage, divorce, participation in pagan religions, order within corporate worship, and the bodily resurrection of Christians ([7:1](#); [8:1](#); [12:1](#); [15:12](#), [35](#)).**

In response to these troubling developments, **Paul felt compelled to write a substantial letter to Corinth, making the case that much of their conduct was out of step with the gospel. At the root of their disunity lay an arrogance ([3:21](#); [4:6](#), [8](#), [18-19](#); [5:2](#), [6](#)) that was incompatible with God's free gifts to them in Christ: wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption ([1:30](#); [4:7](#)). In addition, a self-centered insistence on their own rights ([6:12](#); [8:9](#); [9:12](#); [10:23](#)) at the expense of the weak ([8:10](#); [11:22](#)) and marginalized ([14:16](#), [23](#)) revealed that their own social advancement rather than the gospel's advancement was their top priority.**

**At the root of much of the immorality and idolatry in Corinth, moreover, lay a lack of appreciation for the**

**holiness that God requires of his people**. Though the particulars of the Mosaic law were no longer to define the boundaries for God's people ([7:19](#)), **the law's underlying theme that God's people were to be "set apart"—a people marked off from their culture—remained in place** ([5:1-2](#), [13](#); [7:19](#); [10:1-5](#)). In addition, **the dwelling of God's Spirit within each believer** ([6:19](#)) **and the new unity that believers have with the resurrected, living Christ** ([6:14-17](#); [15:30-34](#)) **implied that the Corinthians needed to make a clean break from the moral impurity of their culture.**

Despite the often **stern tone** of the letter ([4:18-21](#); [5:2](#); [11:17](#), [22](#); [15:36](#)), Paul was thankful to God for the Corinthians ([1:8](#)) **and** felt a **deep personal affection** for them ([16:24](#)). Because of this love, and for the purpose of God's glory ([10:31](#)), **Paul wanted the Corinthians to become a well-constructed dwelling place for God's Spirit** ([3:12](#), [16](#)) and to be "guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" ([1:8](#)).

### Key Themes

1. Since the church is the dwelling place of God's Spirit, **the people who make up the church should work for unity** by building each other up. [1:10-4:21](#) (esp. [3:10-16](#); [14:12](#))

2. **Christians should build up the church** in four practical ways:

a. they should <b><u>be sensitive to those of fragile faith.</u></b>	<a href="#">8:1-9:18</a> ; <a href="#">10:28</a> , <a href="#">33</a>
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b. they should <b>win unbelievers through culturally sensitive evangelism.</b>	<a href="#">9:19-23</a> ; <a href="#">10:27</a> , <a href="#">32-33</a>
c. they should <b>conduct worship services in such a way that unbelievers present might come to faith.</b>	<a href="#">14:16</a> , <a href="#">23-25</a>
d. their <b>corporate worship should use spiritual gifts not for personal display, or evaluating who has a better gift, but to build up the church.</b>	<a href="#">11:2-16</a> ; <a href="#">12:12-30</a> ; <a href="#">14:1-35</a>
3. Sexual relations form a union between man and woman as profound as the union of the believer with Christ, and so <b>sexual activity should be confined to marriage.</b>	<a href="#">5:1-13</a> ; <a href="#">6:12-20</a> ; <a href="#">7:5</a> , <a href="#">9</a> , <a href="#">36</a>
4. <b>Baptism and the Lord's Supper are important, but both are subordinate to personal trust in the gospel and to living in the way that God commands.</b>	<a href="#">1:14-17</a> ; <a href="#">10:1-5</a> ; <a href="#">11:17-34</a> ; <a href="#">15:29-34</a>
5. The bodily <b>resurrection</b> of Jesus (and of his followers) from the dead <b>is a critical component of Christian faith &amp; practice.</b>	<a href="#">6:14</a> ; <a href="#">15:1-58</a>

## The Setting of 1 Corinthians

*c. A.D. 53-55*

**Paul wrote 1 Corinthians during his third missionary journey, near the end of his three-year ministry in Ephesus ([Acts 19:21-22](#)).**

Both Corinth and Ephesus were wealthy port cities steeped in pagan idolatry and philosophy. Corinth benefited both militarily and economically from its strategic location at one end of the isthmus that connected the southern Greek peninsula to the mainland.

## 2 Corinthians: Theme

**The central theme of 2 Corinthians is *the relationship between suffering and the power of the Spirit in Paul's apostolic life, ministry, and message.***

**In addition to calling into question Paul's motives in organizing a collection for believers in Judea (8:20-21; cf. 2:17; 12:14-18) and questioning his personal courage (10:10-11; 11:21), Paul's opponents had argued that Paul suffered too much to be a Spirit-filled apostle of the risen Christ.**

**Paul argues that his weakness as an apostle is the very means by which believers are comforted (1:3-11) and God in Christ is made known in the world (2:14-17; 4:7-12; 6:3-10; 11:23b-33). Paul's sufferings embody the cross of Christ, while his endurance amid adversity, with thanksgiving and contentment, manifests the resurrection power of the Spirit (12:7-10).**

**Paul's suffering as an apostle is thus the very means God uses to reveal his glory (1:3-4, 11, 20; 4:15; 9:11-15; 10:17-18).**

**Paul therefore sees a close tie between the Corinthians' acceptance of his apostleship and the genuineness of their faith.**

**To reject Paul and his proclamation is to reject Christ himself, since Paul's message, ministry, and manner of life are one.**

**This explains why 2 Corinthians is the most personal of all of Paul's letters, filled with deep emotion.**

### **Purpose, Occasion, and Background**

**Second Corinthians is a response to a complicated history between Paul and the Corinthian church**, which must be reconstructed from the evidence available today (see note on [Acts 20:1](#)). Originally, Paul had planned to travel from Ephesus through Macedonia to Corinth (see [map](#)) on his way back to Jerusalem to deliver the money he had collected for the believers in Judea ([1 Cor. 16:5-9](#)). In the meantime, he sent Timothy to visit the Corinthians on his behalf ([Acts 19:22](#); [1 Cor. 16:10-11](#)). When Timothy arrived in Corinth, he found that the church was in turmoil, most likely in response to the arrival of Paul's opponents from the east. When Paul learned of this he decided to proceed immediately to Corinth to resolve the issues first, then travel on to Macedonia before returning to Corinth for a second visit on his way to Jerusalem (the proposed "second experience of grace" of [2 Cor. 1:15](#)).



**Paul's visit, however, turned out to be very "painful" as a result of the church's open rebellion against him (2:1, 5-8; 7:8-13; 11:4).** At that time, **Paul decided it was best to suffer humiliation and leave, without retaliating, in order to extend mercy to the Corinthians (1:23-24).** Once back in Ephesus, **Paul sent Titus back to Corinth with a tearful and severe letter (now lost), warning the church of God's judgment if they did not repent (2:3-4; 7:8-16).**

**To Paul's great joy, the majority of the Corinthians did repent, which Paul discovered when he met Titus in Macedonia (7:5-16).** But there was still a rebellious minority who, under the influence of Paul's opponents (11:12-21), **continued to reject Paul and his gospel. In response, and as yet another act of mercy, Paul wrote 2 Corinthians from Macedonia in anticipation of his third, impending visit to Corinth** before going on to Jerusalem (12:14; 13:1).

**The mixed nature of the church in Corinth, not to mention the opponents whom Paul addresses indirectly throughout the letter, explains the complex nature of 2 Corinthians and its sometimes sudden shifts in focus and tone.** This has led some scholars to suggest that it is a compilation of as many as six fragments. There is no evidence, however, that 2 Corinthians ever contained less than or more than its present content, or that it was arranged in a different order.

Paul's letter is an extended defense of the legitimacy of his apostolic ministry and its implications.

**It is intended to accomplish three overlapping purposes: (1) to strengthen the faithful majority and the purity of the church (primarily chs. 1-7); (2) to complete the collection as the expression of their repentance (primarily chs. 8-9); and (3) to offer the rebellious minority one more chance to repent before Paul returns to judge those still rejecting him and his message (primarily [chs. 10-13](#)).**

Thus, [chapters 1-7](#) focus primarily on the past track record of Paul's ministry, [chapters 8-9](#) on the present responsibility of the repentant, and [chapters 10-13](#) on the future judgment of those still in rebellion against the gospel.

### Key Themes

1. **The cross of Christ, embodied in the suffering of his apostle, unmasks the erroneous teaching of "false apostles" and "servants of Satan."** [11:13-15](#)
2. In fulfillment of [Jer. 31:31-34](#) and [Ezek. 36:26-27](#), Paul is a servant of **the new covenant** ([2 Cor. 3:6](#)), whose ministry and message of the cross mediates the Spirit of [3:3](#), [6-9](#); [5:14-15](#), [21](#) the living God and God's righteousness to believers.
3. **Endurance amid adversity and Christlike behavior**, both made possible by the grace of God and modeled by Paul [1:12-14](#); [6:1](#), [14-7:1](#); [9:13-15](#);

himself, are the greatest display of God's presence, power, and glory in this fallen world. [12:7-10](#); [13:4](#)

**4. The presence and power of the Spirit transforms believers into the image of God seen in Christ, which is the dawning of the new creation characterized by the righteousness of God. Believers therefore embody the new creation of the new covenant by living for the sake of others.** This is made possible by the reconciliation with God brought about by the cross. [3:18](#); [4:4](#), [6](#); [5:15](#), [17-21](#)

**5. Repentance expresses itself in holiness, which is defined as a purity-producing love for God and his church and a unity-creating love for one's neighbor.** [6:14-7:1](#); [chs. 8-9](#)

**6. Christ, as Savior, is also the universal Judge, who will one day pass judgment on all people according to their deeds.** In [1:14](#), [22](#); anticipation of this day, **the Spirit transforms those in whom he dwells** as a [3:6](#), [8-9](#), [18](#); [5:5](#), [9-11](#) guarantee of the "eternal weight of glory" to come for believers at the resurrection.

## **The Setting of 2 Corinthians**

*c. A.D. 55-56*

Paul wrote 2 Corinthians from Macedonia a year or so after writing 1 Corinthians, during his third missionary journey. He had just finished his three-year ministry in Ephesus and was visiting the churches in Macedonia as he made his way to Corinth. In Macedonia he met Titus, who had returned from Corinth with news about the church there.

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## 1 Corinthians: Vital Statistics

### **Purpose:**

To identify problems in the Corinthian church, to offer solutions, and to teach the believers how to live for Christ in a corrupt society

**Author: Paul**

**Original Audience: The church in Corinth**

### **Date Written:**

Approximately A.D. 55, near the end of Paul's three-year ministry in Ephesus, during his third missionary journey

**Setting:** The church was largely made up of Gentiles. Paul had established this church on his second missionary journey.

**Key Verse:** *"I appeal to you, dear brothers and sisters, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, to live in harmony with each other. Let there be no divisions in the church. Rather, be of one mind, united in thought and purpose" (1:10).*

**Key People:** Paul, Timothy, Chloe's household

**Key Places:** Worship meetings in Corinth

**Special Features:** This is a strong, straightforward letter.

## The Blueprint

### 3. **PAUL ADDRESSES CHURCH PROBLEMS** (1:1-6:20)

**1. Divisions in the church**

**2. Disorder in the church**

Without Paul's presence, the Corinthian church had fallen into divisiveness and disorder. This resulted in many problems, which Paul addressed squarely.

**We must be concerned for unity and order in our local churches, but we should not mistake inactivity for order and cordiality for unity. We, too, must squarely address problems in our churches.**

4. **PAUL ANSWERS CHURCH QUESTIONS** ([7:1-16:24](#))

1. Instruction on **Christian marriage**
2. Instruction on **Christian freedom**
3. Instruction on **public worship**
4. Instruction on **resurrection**

The Corinthians had sent Paul a list of questions, and he answered them in a way meant to correct abuses in the church and to show how important it is that they live what they believe.

Paul gives us a Christian approach to problem solving. He analyzed the problem thoroughly to uncover the underlying issue and then highlighted the biblical values that should guide our actions.

MEGATHEMES		
THEME	EXPLANATION	IMPORTANCE
<b><i>Loyalties</i></b>	The Corinthians were rallying around various church leaders and teachers—Peter, Paul, and Apollos. These loyalties led	Our loyalty to human leaders or human wisdom must never divide Christians into camps. We must care for our fellow

to intellectual pride and created a spirit of division in the church.

believers, not fight with them. Your allegiance must be to Christ. Let him lead you.

### *Immorality*

Paul received a report of uncorrected sexual sin in the church at Corinth. **The people had grown indifferent to immorality.** Others had misconceptions about marriage. We are to live morally, keeping our bodies for God's service at all times.

**Christians must never compromise** with sinful ideas and practices. **We should not blend in with people around us. You must live up to God's standard** of morality and not condone immoral behavior, even if society accepts it.

### *Freedom*

Paul taught freedom of choice **on practices not expressly forbidden in Scripture.** Some believers felt certain actions—like eating the meat of animals

**We are free in Christ, yet we must not abuse our Christian freedom** by being inconsiderate and insensitive to others. We must never encourage

used in pagan rituals—were corrupt by association. Others felt free to participate in such actions without feeling that they had sinned.

others to do something they feel is wrong just because we have done it. **Let love guide your behavior.**

### **Worship**

Paul addressed disorder in worship.  
People were taking the Lord's Supper without first confessing sin.  
There was misuse of spiritual gifts and confusion over women's roles in the church.

Worship must be carried out properly and in an orderly manner. Everything we do to worship God should be done in a manner worthy of his high honor. Make sure that worship is harmonious, useful, and edifying to all believers.

### **Resurrection**

Some people denied that Christ rose from the dead. Others felt that people would not physically be

Since we will be raised again to life after we die, our life is not in vain. We must stay



resurrected. **Christ's** faithful to God in  
**resurrection** our morality and  
**assures us that we** our service. **We are**  
**will have new,** **to live today**  
**living bodies after** **knowing we will**  
**we die. The hope of spend eternity**  
**the Resurrection with Christ.**  
**forms the secret of**  
**Christian**  
**confidence.**

## 2 Corinthians: Vital Statistics

**Purpose:** To affirm Paul's ministry, defend his authority as an apostle, and refute the false teachers in Corinth

**Author:** Paul

**Original Audience:** The church in Corinth

**Date Written:** Approx. A.D. 55-57, from Macedonia

**Setting:**

Paul had already written three letters to the Corinthians (two are now lost). In 1 Corinthians (the second of these letters), he used strong words to correct and teach. Most of the church had responded in the right spirit; **there were, however, those who were denying Paul's authority and questioning his motives.**

**Key Verse:** *"So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead 'Come back to God!'" (5:20)*

**Key People:** Paul, Timothy, Titus, false teachers

**Key Places:** Corinth, Jerusalem

**Special Features:** This is an intensely personal and autobiographical letter.

## The Blueprint

5. **Paul explains his actions** ([1:1-2:11](#))
6. **Paul defends his ministry** ([2:12-7:16](#))
7. **Paul defends the collection** ([8:1-9:15](#))
8. **Paul defends his authority** ([10:1-13:14](#))

In responding to the attacks on his character and authority, Paul explains the nature of Christian ministry and, as an example, openly shares about his ministry.

This is an important letter for all who wish to be involved in any kind of Christian ministry, because it has much to teach us about how we should handle our ministries today.

Like Paul, those involved in ministry should be blameless, sincere, confident, caring, open, and willing to suffer for the sake of Christ.

## MEGATHEMES

THEME	EXPLANATION	IMPORTANCE
<b><i>Trials</i></b>	Paul experienced great suffering, persecution, and opposition in his ministry. He even struggled with a personal weakness—a "thorn" in the flesh. Through it all, Paul affirmed God's faithfulness.	God is faithful. His strength is sufficient for any trial. <b>When trials come, they keep us from pride and teach us dependence on God. He comforts us so we can comfort others.</b>
<b><i>Church Discipline</i></b>	Paul defends his role in church discipline. Neither immorality nor false teaching could be ignored. <b>The church was to be neither too lax nor too severe in administering discipline.</b> The church was to restore the corrected person when they repented.	The goal of all discipline in the church should be correction, not vengeance. <b>For churches to be effective, they must confront and solve problems, not ignore them. In everything, we must act in love.</b>

## *Hope*

To encourage the Corinthians as they faced trials, Paul reminded them that they would receive new bodies in heaven. This would be a great **future victory in contrast to their present suffering.**

To know we will receive new bodies offers us hope. No matter what adversity we face, we can keep going. **Our faithful service will result in triumph.**

## *Giving*

**Paul organized a collection of funds for the poor in the Jerusalem church.** Many of the Asian churches gave money. Paul explains and defends his beliefs about giving, and he urges the Corinthians to follow through on their previous commitment.

Like the Corinthians, we should follow through on our financial commitments. Our giving must be generous, sacrificial, well planned, and based on need. Our generosity not only helps those in need but enables them to thank God.

## *Sound Doctrine*

**False teachers were challenging Paul's ministry and authority as an**

apostle. Paul asserts his authority in order to preserve correct Christian doctrine. His sincerity, his love for Christ, and his concern for the people were his defense.

- Life Application Study Bible.

## Survey of Romans:

### Theme

The theme of Romans is the revelation of God's judging and saving righteousness in the gospel of Jesus Christ. In the cross of Christ, God judges sin and yet at the same time manifests his saving mercy.

### Purpose, Occasion, and Background

Romans provides the fullest expression of Paul's theology, though it is doubtful that he intended it to be a complete summary statement.

*(For example, Romans lacks any detailed treatments of Paul's doctrine of Christ (see [Phil. 2:6-11](#); [Col. 1:15-20](#)), of the church (see Ephesians), or of last things (see [1 Thess. 4:13-5:11](#); [2 Thess. 2:1-12](#))).*

It is more **likely that Paul wrote the letter to address particular issues of concern to the Roman church.** Specifically, he addressed matters of interest for a church that included both Jewish and Gentile Christians: **(1) Can one be right with God through obeying the law ([Rom. 1:1-3:20](#))? (2) What can be learned from Abraham, and is he the father of both Jewish and Gentile Christians ([4:1-25](#))? (3) What role does the law play with reference to sin ([5:20](#); [7:1-25](#))? (4) What does the salvation of Gentiles indicate about the future of Israel as God's people ([9:1-11:36](#))? (5) Should Christians observe OT food laws, and how should they relate to fellow believers on such matters ([14:1-15:13](#))?**

**The focus on Jew-Gentile issues suggests that tensions existed between Jews and Gentiles in the church in Rome.** The Roman church probably began as a Jewish church, though it is not known exactly when it was established. Perhaps Jews from Rome returned from Jerusalem after Pentecost ([Acts 2:10](#)) and founded the church, or perhaps the church was established later. Some have suggested that Peter founded the church in Rome, but no significant evidence supports this premise.

As time passed, of course, Gentiles in Rome also became Christians. The Roman historian Suetonius records that the Roman emperor Claudius (reigned A.D. 41-54) expelled

Jews from Rome in A.D. 49 because of strife over “Chrestos.” Suetonius likely misunderstood the name, so that the dispute probably was about “Christos” (Latin for Christ). The expulsion of Jews from Rome is confirmed by [Acts 18:2](#). **Because of the expulsion, the Gentile churches would have developed for a number of years apart from the Jews. Over the years the Jewish Christians slowly filtered back into Roman churches. It is not difficult to imagine that tensions would develop between law-observing Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians who lived free of the restrictions in the Mosaic law.** It seems, however, that the church was made up mainly of Gentile Christians (see [Rom. 1:5-6](#), [13](#); [11:13](#); [15:15-16](#)).

**Paul’s selection of themes (gospel and law; the significance of Abraham; the future of Israel) suggests significant tensions between the Jews and Gentiles in Rome. Paul wrote Romans so that they would be united in the gospel he preached, and so that they would comprehend how the gospel spoke to the issues that divided them.**

A closer look at Romans reveals another purpose as well. Paul wanted the Christians in Rome to rally around his gospel so that Rome would become the base of operations by which he could proclaim the gospel in Spain ([15:22-24](#)). **If Roman Christians did not agree with Paul’s gospel message, especially on the issues being debated among Jews and Gentiles, then they would not support his proposed mission to Spain.**

**Paul needed to explain the gospel in some detail so that the Christians in Rome would become the base from which he could proclaim the gospel in new regions.**

Of course, **the ultimate aim and purpose for the preaching of the gospel is the glory of God.**

**Paul longs for the Gentiles to come to the obedience of faith for the sake of Christ's name (1:5). God has planned all of salvation history to bring glory and praise to his name (11:33-36).**

### **Key Themes**

1. **All people are sinners**, therefore all, without exception, **need to be saved** from their sin. [1:18-3:20](#); [5:12-19](#)
2. **The Mosaic law**, though good and holy, **cannot counteract the power of sin.** [2:12-29](#); [3:9-20](#); [5:20](#); [7:1-25](#); [9:30-10:8](#)
3. **Through the righteousness of God, sin is judged and salvation is provided.** [3:21-26](#); [5:12-19](#); [6:1-10](#); [7:1-6](#); [8:1-4](#)
4. **With the coming of Jesus Christ**, the former age of redemptive history has passed away and **the new age of redemptive history has begun.** [1:1-7](#); [3:21-26](#); [5:1-8:39](#)
5. **The atoning death of Jesus Christ is central to God's plan of salvation.** [3:21-26](#); [4:23-25](#); [5:6-11](#), [15-19](#); [6:1-10](#);



- 6. Justification is by faith alone.** [7:4-6](#); [8:1-4](#)  
[1:16-4:25](#);  
[9:30-10:21](#)
- 7. There is a certain hope of future glory for those who are in Christ Jesus.** [5:1-8:39](#)
- 8. Those who have died with Christ and who enjoy the work of the Holy Spirit are enabled to live a new life.** [2:25-29](#); [6:1-7:6](#); [8:1-39](#)
- 9. God is sovereign in salvation**; he works all things according to his plan. [9:1-11:36](#)
- 10. God fulfills his saving promises** to both Jews and Gentiles. [1:18-4:25](#); [9:1-11:36](#); [15:8-13](#)
- 11. The grace of the gospel calls Christians to personal holiness, mutual service, good citizenship, and wholehearted neighbor-love in Christ.** [12:1-13](#)

### **The Setting of Romans (c. A.D. 57)**

Paul probably wrote Romans from Corinth during his third missionary journey ([Acts 20:2-3](#)). Rome was the epicenter of the powerful Roman Empire, ruling over many of the great ancient centers of Western civilization. Paul had established the church at Corinth during his second missionary journey ([Acts 18:1-11](#)).

## - ESV Study Bible

### Vital Statistics

**Purpose:** To introduce Paul to the Romans and to give a sample of his message before he arrives in Rome

**Author:** Paul

**Original Audience:** The Christians in Rome

**Date Written:**

About A.D. 57, from Corinth, as Paul was preparing for his visit to Jerusalem.

**Setting:**

Apparently Paul had finished his work in the east, and he planned to visit Rome on his way to Spain after first bringing a collection to Jerusalem for the poor Christians there ([15:23-28](#)). The Roman church was mostly Jewish but also contained a great number of Gentiles.

**Key Verse:** *"Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us" ([5:1](#)).*

**Key People:** Paul, Phoebe

**Key Place: Rome**

**Special Features:**

Paul wrote Romans as an organized and carefully presented statement of his faith—it does not have the form of a typical letter. He does, however, spend considerable time greeting people in Rome at the end of the letter.

### **The Blueprint**

C. **WHAT TO BELIEVE** ([1:1-11:36](#))

- 1. Sinfulness of humanity**
- 2. Forgiveness of sin through Christ**
- 3. Freedom from sin's grasp**
- 4. Israel's past, present, and future**

**Paul clearly sets forth the foundations of the Christian faith. All people are sinful; Christ died to forgive sin; we are made right with God through faith; this begins a new life with a new relationship with God.** Like a sports team that constantly reviews the basics, we will be greatly helped in our faith by keeping close to these foundations. **If we study Romans carefully, we will never be at a loss to know what to believe.**

D. **HOW TO BEHAVE** ([12:1-16:27](#))

- 1. Personal responsibility**
- 2. Personal notes**

**Paul gives clear, practical guidelines for the believers in Rome.**

**The Christian life is not abstract theology**

unconnected with life, but it has practical implications that will affect how we choose to behave each day.

**It is not enough merely to know the gospel; we must let it transform our life and let God impact every aspect of our lives.**

### MEGATHEMES

THEME	EXPLANATION	IMPORTANCE
<b>Sin</b>	Sin means refusing to do God's will and failing to do all that God wants. Since Adam's rebellion against God, our nature is to disobey him. Our sin cuts us off from God. Sin causes us to want to live our own way rather than God's way. Because God is morally perfect, just,	Each person has sinned, either by rebelling against God or by ignoring his will. No matter what our background or how hard we try to live good and moral lives, we cannot earn salvation or remove our sin. <b><u>Only Christ can save us.</u></b>

and fair, he is right to condemn sin.

### *Salvation*

Our sin points out our need to be forgiven and cleansed. Although we don't deserve it, God, in his kindness, reached out to love and forgive us. He provides the way for us to be saved. **His death paid the penalty for our sin.**

It is good news that God saves us from our sin. But **in order to enter into a wonderful new relationship with God, we must believe that Jesus died for us and that he forgives all our sin.**

### *Growth*

By God's power, believers are sanctified—made holy. This means **we are set apart from sin, enabled to obey and to become more like Christ.**

When we are growing in our relationship with Christ, the Holy Spirit frees us from the demands of the law

Because we are free from sin's control, the law's demands, and fear of God's punishment, **we can grow in our relationship with Christ. By trusting in the Holy Spirit and allowing him to help us, we can overcome sin and temptation.**

and from fear of judgment.

**Sovereignty** God oversees and cares about his people—past, present, and future. God's ways of dealing with people are always fair. Because God is in charge of all creation, he can save whomever he wills.

Because of God's mercy, both Jews and Gentiles can be saved. We all must respond to his mercy and accept his gracious offer of forgiveness. Because he is sovereign, let him reign in your heart.

**Service** When our purpose is to give credit to God for his love, power, and perfection in all we do, we can serve him properly. Serving him unifies all believers and enables them to show love and sensitivity to others.

None of us can be fully Christ-like by ourselves—it takes the entire body of Christ to fully express Christ. By actively and vigorously building up other believers, Christians can be a symphony of service to God.

## - Life Application Study Bible.

### **Bible Timeline**

30 AD	The Ascension
30 AD	Matthias Chosen by Lot
30 AD	The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost
30 AD	Peter Heals and Preaches
30 AD	Peter and John Arrested and Released;
30 AD	Believers Share All
30 AD	Deaths of Ananias and Sapphira
30 AD	Apostles Preach and Heal
31 AD	Stephen's Speech, Stoning and Death
31 AD	Saul Persecutes the Church
31 AD	Philip in Samaria
31 AD	Simon the Sorcerer
31 AD	Philip and the Ethiopian
34 AD	Saul's Conversion
37 AD	Peter Preaches to the Gentiles
42 AD	Barnabas Sent to Antioch
42 AD	Peter Led from Prison by the Angel
44 AD	Herod Agrippa Dies
48 AD	Paul's First Missionary Journey
48 AD	Paul preaches in Pisidian Antioch
48 AD	Paul and Barnabas in Iconium
48 AD	Paul and Barnabas in Lystra and Derbe
48 AD	Paul and Barnabas Return to Syrian Antioch
48 AD	Return to Syrian Antioch
48 AD	The Council at Jerusalem
49 AD	Paul's Second Missionary Journey
49 AD	Paul in Philippi
49 AD	Paul in Thessalonica, Berea, Athens
51 AD	Paul in Corinth

54 AD	Paul in Ephesus
57 AD	Paul in Macedonia and Greece
59 AD	Paul Returns to Jerusalem
60 AD	Paul imprisoned in Caesarea
62 AD	Paul Before Festus
62 AD	Paul Before Agrippa
62 AD	Paul Sails for Rome
62 AD	The Shipwreck
62 AD	Paul Ashore at Malta
62 AD	Paul Preaches at Rome

### "Paul's Pattern"

- Acts 8
- Acts 9
- Pre-Antioch (see 2 Cor. 11)
- Barnabas
- 3 Missions
  - A. Galatians - summarize
  - B. 1&2 Corinthians - summarize
  - C. 1&2 Thessalonians - summarize
  - D. Romans - summarize
- In Jerusalem, then Cesarea
  - A. Jews fulfill Spirit's promise of bondage
  - B. Paul's 5-point sermon to Felix & wife
- Cesarea to Rome
  - A. Send-off
  - B. Ship-out
  - C. Storm-tossed
  - D. Ship-wrecked



- E. See Rome
- Paul in Rome...
  - A. Ignite, Invite, Invest
  - B. How to invest: R. O. I.
    - \* Inform
    - \* Inspect
    - \* Inspire
  - C. Understanding Eternal Investing
    - \* Institutions of...
    - \* Instructions for...
    - \* Implications from...
  - D. Beautifully Unattractive:
    - \* That's the last straw...
    - \* Truly Christ-like (Jesus quoted Isaiah)
    - \* The Gentiles will listen

Fulfilling his calling

Looking for faithful listening!

No watering rocks/fertilizing weeds

\*\*\* "The mission is bigger than  
either the missionaries or the  
mission field." - JDP \*\*\*

- Next week... we'll pick up right HERE & walk with Paul through his "2 years in Rome," during which time he:

- A. Welcomed/discipled "all who came..."
- B. Wrote 4 N.T. books/letters
  - \* Philippians \* Ephesians \* Colossians \* Philemon