

NEW TESTAMENT OVERVIEW

- Dave Miller

**Course 1311
Brown Trail School of Preaching**

NEW TESTAMENT OVERVIEW

Course Textbook

Miller, Dave. *New Testament Overview*. Bedford, TX: Brown Trail School of Preaching, 1998.

Course Requirements

1. Take notes and concentrate carefully in class with a view toward grasping the central features of each New Testament book.
2. Written tests on each book will cover student comprehension of the **central theme** as well as the **general structure** of each N.T. book. The two-part final will measure student grasp of the key phrases and words listed on the final exam study guide.
3. Grading will consist of the following:

Central theme	=	1 pt.	=	27 points
Structure	=	1.7 pts.	=	46 points
Final (part 1)	=	.5 pts.	=	13.5 points
Final (part 2)	=	.5 pts.	=	<u>13.5</u> points
Total				100 points

Selected Bibliography

Brown, Colin, ed. *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. 3 Vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1975-1978.

Guthrie, Donald. *New Testament Introduction*. 3rd Ed. Rev. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1970.

H. I. Hester. *The Heart of the New Testament*. Liberty, MO: William Jewel Press, 1950.

Kittel, Gerhard, ed. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. 10 Vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1964-1976.

Tenney, Merrill C. *New Testament Survey*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1961.

New Testament Overview

Final Exam Study Guide

N.T. Book	Summary phrases:
Matthew	The Reigning King & His Kingdom
Mark	The Serving Servant
Luke	The Human Savior
John	The Divine Son of God
Acts	The Evangelistic Witnesses
Romans	The Powerful Gospel of Salvation
1 Corinthians	Division in the Church
2 Corinthians	Conciliation & Consolation
Galatians	Freedom from Reversion to Another Gospel
Ephesians	Spiritual Blessings in the Church of Christ
Philippians	Stand Fast in the Lord With Rejoicing
Colossians	The Supremacy of Christ
1 Thessalonians	Live Faithful Since Christ Will Return
2 Thessalonians	Don't Be Idle Since Christ's Return is Distant
1 Timothy	Conduct in the Church
2 Timothy	Christ's Soldier endures
Titus	Set Sound Doctrine in Order
Philemon	Receive Him Back
Hebrews	Christianity is Better
James	Do the Word
1 Peter	Stand in Grace in Suffering
2 Peter	Knowledge Makes Election Sure
1 John	We Can Know We Have Fellowship With Deity
2 John	Walking in Truth Means Abiding in Christ's Doctrine
3 John	Commendation of a Prosperous Soul
Jude	Contend for the Faith
Revelation	Overcome by Remaining Faithful Unto Death in the Kingdom

Keynotes of Scripture
Foy Wallace, Jr.

Matthew--**Kingdom**

Mark--**Servant**

Luke--**Humanity**

John--**Deity**

Acts--**Witness**

Romans--**Righteousness/Justification**

1/2 Corinthians--**Revelation/Wisdom**

Galatians--**Law & the Gospel**

Ephesians--**Oneness** in Christ

Philippians--**Gain** in Christ

Colossians--**Completeness** in Christ

1/2 Thessalonians--**Waiting** for Christ to come

1/2 Timothy & Titus--**Doctrine** (sound)

Philemon--**Human Relations**

Hebrews--**Better**

James--**Faith & Works**

1/2 Peter--**Precious Promises**

1/2/3 John--**Seed**

Jude--Stamp of **Authority**

Revelation--**Signify**

The One Book Analyzed & Outlined

Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

2. The New Testament.

To compare the prophecies of the Old Testament with the histories of the New Testament is enough to convince any candid mind that the Bible is the word of God, and Jesus the Son of God.

The Four Gospels.

A fourfold story of Christ's life - proven genuine by harmonious testimony and undesigned coincidences.

- 1) Matthew: (Kingdom) 27:37 - Mark (Service) - 10:45; Acts 10:38 - Works of Christ.
- 2) Mark: (Gospel) 1:1 - title, not chronology.
- 3) Luke: (Son of Man) 19:20 - Humanity.
Humanity from Adam.
- 4) John: (Deity) 20:31 - Son of God.
Supplements - Settles all heresies about Christ - Word - Logos.
- 5) Acts: (Witness) 1:8.
Only the apostles - Luke 24; Acts 1. We preach testimony of the witnesses - Paul, the last. I Cor. 15.
Links Old Testament prophecy with New Testament history.
- 6) Romans: (Justification, Righteousness) 1:17.
Righteousness of God - A judicially declared justification of sinner.
- 7) Corinthians I; (Revelation) 2:7-8.
Divine revelation vs. Human philosophy.
- 8) Corinthians II: (Inspiration) 7:6-7.
Humiliation and exaltation in defence of apostolic credentials.
- 9) Galatians: (The Faith) 3:2.
Law - grace - faith. Flesh and works - spirit and fruits.
- 10) Ephesians: (Oneness In Christ) 1:3; 4:4.
Epic of New Testament - Identification of Christ and Church.
- 11) Philippians: (Gain) 3:1-4; 4:4.
Balance-sheet. Loss and gain. Prize - etc.
- 12) Colossians: (Completeness In Christ) 2:10.
Saints in Christ - rights and riches. Dignity of Head - Identity of Body.
- 13) Thessalonians: (Waiting) I - 1:10; II - 3:5.
Antecedent and consequent events of the second coming of Lord.
- 14) Timothy: (Good Doctrine) I - 3:9; II - 1:13.
As gospel minister exhorted to sound doctrine.
- 15) Titus: (Sound Doctrine) 3:8-9.
An official rather than personal epistle. Comprehensive outlines on salvation by grace.
- 16) Philemon: (Human Relations) Verse 17.
A servant - slave - as a Christian - On Spiritual equality.
- 17) Hebrews: (Better) 11:40.
1. On danger of going back to Judaism - prevent such by showing superiority of New Covenant in every respect over Jewish.

2. Superiority of Christ to angels of Sinai.
3. Superiority of Christ to Moses. Greatest of all human legislators - Mediators inferior to Christ.

Hebrews 1:1.

Whole philosophy of divine revelation concentrated - Summary of God's special dealings. Embrace patriarchs - prophets and apostles - traces course of Revelation - culminated in His son.

a. Portions - Not all at once. Mohametanism in contrast - no precursor - no antecedent.

b. Manners - diversity of ways - but unity of plan.

5. Superiority of system of gospel in the word Better - 13 times. Permeates whole epistle.

5. Awful warnings vs apostasy - drawing back. Unbelief thread. Ch. 10-11. Faith.

- 18) James: (Works) 11:26.

Epistle of Holy living. Gospel of common sense, etc. Shams in religion. Faith and works.

- 19) Peter: (Precious Promises) I - 2:7-20.

Pilgrims of Dispersion - an apostle of hope - precious faith.

- 20) John I: (Seed) 3:9 - his seed - Abrahamic seed - remains - compare Gal. 3:26-29 - Baptized - Seed - 1 John 3:9 - Born - same thing.

Words Light - love light - basic of fellowship. Truth - commands to all alike - Jew - Gentile - Seed of Abraham. They did not sin against Abraham nor forfeit "his" seed as the Judaizers charged - for in being born - baptized into the new covenant the Abrahamic seed was obtained - "remaineth in him" who obeyed gospel - Gal. 3 - compared with 1 John 3:9. Gal. 3 and 1 John 3 are Paul's answer and John's answer to the Judaizers.

- 21) John II: (Truth) Verse 6.

Time and love of first epistle. Dignity of woman - as representative of Church.

- 22) John III: (Fellowship) Verse 8.

Convert of John's exhorted - forbidden to lend aid - help to propagators of error.

- 23) Jude: (Authority) Verses 21-24.

Last of epistles - seal of authority - warning against apostasy. The faith makes faithful saints.

- 24) Revelation: (Signified) 1:1).

Apocalypse - Opposite mystery - linked with Old Testament - apocalypses - siege - destruction of Jerusalem - demolition of temple - downfall of Judaism - end of Jewish state - victory - triumph of church over Jewish-Roman persecutors - reign (or triumph) of martyred souls - in victory - the resurrection of Cause - description of New Jerusalem - the church - judgement on the persecutors. Closing with forecast of the expansion of the church by renewed great commission and great invitation. Chapter 22:17.

A Summary of the Book of Matthew

The Bible speaks of only one gospel, but Matthew, Mark, Luke and John present four separate accounts of the arrival of the “good news.” Matthew, whose name means “gift of the Lord,” was a Jewish tax collector--a vocation generally detested by the Jews, especially when the collected taxes were for their Roman conquerors (9:9). Matthew’s surname was “Levi” (Mark 2:14). He authored this book prior to the destruction of Jerusalem (24:2). Five great discourses of Christ are presented to the reader: (1) the sermon on the mount with its beatitudes and model prayer (chs. 5-7); (2) instructions given on the occasion of the sending out of the Twelve (ch. 10); (3) the kingdom parables (ch. 13); (4) dealing with feelings of pride and superiority in the kingdom; (5) predictions about the fall of Jerusalem (ch. 24) and the second coming of Christ (24:36-25:46). Each discourse ends with the same refrain--“When Jesus had finished these sayings...”

Outline

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| chs. 1-4:11 | The King’s earthly credentials
His Jewish genealogy/conception (1); birth (2); baptism (3); temptation (4:1-11) |
| chs. 4:12-14:12 | The King’s Galilean ministry
His ministry launched (4:12-25); His preaching on the mountainside (5-7); His total power and preeminence--over disease, distance, demons, death, sin, culture, nature, etc. (8-9); His ambassadors instructed (10-11:19); His opponents (11:20-12:50); His parables (13); the loss of His forerunner (14:1-12) |
| chs. 14:13-17:21 | The King’s trans-Galilean ministry
His compassion/concern for people in the face of religious opposition (14:13-16:12); His identity confirmed & His church anticipated (16:13-20); His death predicted (16:21-28); His glory manifested (17:1-13); His insistence upon apostolic faith (17:14-21) |
| chs. 17:22-18:35 | The King’s return to Galilee
His betrayal foretold (17:22-23); His obedience to law (17:24-27); His insistence upon humility shown through childlike faith, concern for the lost, interpersonal sin, and willingness to forgive (18) |

chs. 19-20	<p>The King's Judean/Perean ministry</p> <p>His will regarding: divorce (19:1-12); a childlike attitude (19:13-15); the danger of coveting--wealth (19:16-26), reward (19:27-30), recognition (20:1-16), and rank (20:17-28); His authentication as "Son of David" (20:29-34)</p>
chs. 21-27	<p>The King's final week on earth/His death (Jerusalem & vicinity)</p> <p>His triumphal entry (21:1-11); His condemnation of the Jewish leadership by means of: temple cleansing (21:12-17), the fig tree (21:18-22), the authority of John (21:23-27), the two sons (21:28-32), the vinedressers (21:33-46), the wedding (22:1-14), taxes (22:15-22), the resurrection (22:23-33), the greatest command (22:34-40), the Son of David (22:41-46), denunciation of Pharisees (23:1-36), desolation of Jerusalem/Temple (23:37-24:35), preparation for Christ's second coming (24:36-25:46); His preparation for death (26:1-30); His betrayal (26:31-56); His trials (26:57-27:26); His crucifixion (27:27-56); His burial (27:57-66)</p>
ch. 28	The King's conquest over death: the resurrection

Central Theme: Addressing himself to Jews, Matthew affirms that Jesus of Nazareth was, in fact, the King/Messiah ("anointed one") foretold by the O.T. prophets. He was the long-awaited "Son of David" (1:1; 9:27; 12:23; cf., 2 Sam. 7:12; Is. 11:1; Jer. 23:5) and Son of Abraham (1:1) through whom all families would be blessed (Gen. 12:3). Since Jesus is King, all Jews (and nonJews--28:19) must render submission, bow before Him, and accept His kingdom ("kingdom of heaven" is used 33 times; "kingdom of God" is used 5 times; other variations of "kingdom" occurs 18 more times). Chapter 5:17-20 summarizes the basic message of the book by announcing the fulfillment and completion of Mosaic religion in the work of Christ (i.e., His teaching and atonement) and the advent of His kingdom. The Old Testament is alluded to some 65 times.

A Summary of the Book of Mark

John Mark, the writer of this gospel account, was the cousin of Barnabas (Col. 4:10) and the son of Mary (Acts 12:12). He participated in Paul's first missionary tour but deserted and earned Paul's disfavor. Consequently, on the next trip, he accompanied Barnabas in his evangelistic endeavors while Paul took Silas (Acts 15:36-40). However, Mark later regained Paul's favor (Col. 4:10; Philemon 24).

Outline

- chs. 1-10 The daily service of the Servant
- chs. 11-16 The ultimate sacrifice of the Servant

Central Theme: Addressing himself to Romans (notice how he offers careful explanations regarding Jewish customs), Mark presents Jesus as the **servant** who **acts** for the good of others. Emphasis is placed upon Jesus' servanthood by verifying His deity (backed by miracles), stressing more what Jesus **did** than what He **said** ("straightway" occurs more than 40 times), and by centering on His ultimate sacrifice in behalf of others (one-third of the book is spent on Christ's last week on earth leading up to His death/resurrection). The pivotal verse that divides the book into two parts and serves as the theme of the book is 10:45--"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

A Summary of the Book of Luke

Neither an apostle nor a Jew, Luke was a medical doctor (Col. 4:14) who gave himself to advancing the kingdom of Christ through evangelistic travels, especially with Paul. He was inspired by God to write both Luke and Acts as a two-part treatise addressed to Theophilus (and all Gentiles) to verify the historicity of Christianity. His medical background is frequently reflected in his familiarity with the language of the Greek medical schools (4:38; 7:15; 8:55; 14:2; 22:44,50-51).

Outline

- 1:1-4 Purpose for writing
- 1:5-4:13 Jesus' forerunner, birth, baptism, genealogy, temptation
- 4:14-9:50 Public ministry
- 9:51-19:27 Preparations for rejection & death as He
heads toward Jerusalem (9:51; 13:22; 17:11; 18:31; 19:11,28)
- 19:28-24:53 Death & rejection during His final days in Jerusalem

Central Theme: Luke's stated purpose in writing is to provide an accurate and orderly record of those things believed/fulfilled about Jesus (1:1-4). His gospel record is directed especially to the nonJews--those who did not possess the special insights and perspective afforded the Jews. Luke especially emphasizes the humanity of Jesus--Jesus as a man, a human being--one who can relate to the teeming masses of hurting humanity. Several features of the book capture this human dimension: (1) the lineage of Jesus is traced all the way back to Adam; (2) stress is placed upon the birth of Christ, i.e., His becoming human; (3) emphasis is given to His one on one concern for individuals (e.g., Zacchaeus, the thief, the prodigal son, the publican, the good Samaritan, the thankful leper); (4) special attention is given to women (Elizabeth, Mary, Anna, the widow of Nain, the sinful woman, Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, Martha and Mary, the poor widow, the daughters of Jerusalem, the Galilean woman); (5) emphasis is placed upon the plight of the poor and oppressed, especially in parables; (6) the frequency with which Jesus resorted to prayer is noted (3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18,28-29; 10:21; 11:1; 22:39-46; 23:34,46); (7) human preoccupation with material wealth is given repeated attention; (8) Jesus' frequent use of "Son of Man" to refer to Himself (24 times). Luke's emphasis upon the humanity of Jesus provides assurance to Gentiles that He compassionately offers salvation to them as well as the Jews. The book also projects a sense of the joy and hope that is available through Jesus.

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A Summary of the Book of John

Written by “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (21:20,24), the apostle John is believed to be the author. The son of Zebedee, he and his younger brother James were known as “sons of thunder” (Mk. 3:17). His later life’s work was done in Ephesus before he was banished to the island of Patmos (Rev. 1:9). Five New Testament books are attributed to him: the gospel account, 1, 2, and 3 John and Revelation. His gospel record differs from Matthew, Mark and Luke which are labeled “synoptics” because they parallel one another. John contains no parables. It apparently refutes gnosticism’s denial of the physical and human nature of Christ by accentuating physical aspects of Christ’s person (e.g., His pain and death, His hunger and thirst, His becoming tired). It also presents numerous personal interviews.

Outline

- 1:1-18 The deity of Christ seen in His pre-existence & incarnation
- 1:19-51 The deity of Christ seen in John’s testimony
- 2:1-11 **SIGN #1**--Christ’s deity **proven** by His ability to turn water into fresh juice
- 2:12-25 The deity of Christ seen in His authority over the Temple & its correlation to His own body
- 3:1-36 The deity of Christ seen in His announcement of the new birth and John’s reaffirmation of His deity
- 4:1-42 The deity of Christ declared to the Samaritans
- 4:43-54 **SIGN #2**--Christ’s deity **proven** by healing the nobleman’s son
- 5:1-9 **SIGN #3**--Christ’s deity **proven** by healing the paralytic
- 5:10-47 His deity discussed in light of the sign
- 6:1-21 **SIGNS #4 & 5**--Christ’s deity **proven** by feeding the 5000 and walking on water
- 6:22-71 His deity discussed in light of the signs
- 7-8 His deity declared to the Jews in Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles
- 9:1-7 **SIGN #6**--Christ’s deity **proven** by healing the blind man
- 9:8-10:21 His deity discussed in light of the sign
- 10:22-42 His deity questioned at the Feast of Dedication
- 11:1-44 **SIGN #7**--Christ’s deity **proven** by raising Lazarus from the dead
- 11:45-57 His deity discussed in light of the sign
- 12:1-50 His deity illustrated by His anointing, triumphal entry & further teaching punctuated by scattered rejection of His signs (vs. 9,18,37)
- 13-17 His deity accentuated in His effort to prepare the apostles for His death and their future roles
- 18-20 His deity demonstrated in the culmination of His earthly activities: arrest, trials, crucifixion/death, burial, resurrection, post-resurrection appearances climaxing in Thomas’ confession of His deity
- 21 His deity confirmed to 7 disciples

Central Theme: The theme is stated in 20:30-31--“And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” Thus the book is designed to verify and authenticate the deity of Christ on the basis of “signs,” seven of which are spotlighted in the book (see outline above). These signs are pinpointed to prove the claim of Jesus to be divine was true. He is referred to as “the Word” (1:1); “God” (1:1); “the Lamb of God” (1:29); “the Messiah” (1:41); “the Son of God” (1:49); “the King of Israel” (1:49); “Son of Man” (1:51); “the Savior of the world” (4:42); and “my Lord and my God” (20:28). His deity is identified in the “I am” statements (4:26; 8:24,28,58; 13:19)--unmistakeable allusions to the God of the Old Testament (Ex. 3:14). His deity is also echoed in other “I am” expressions (6:35; 8:12; 10:9,11,14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1,5). Key words which supplement and undergird this central emphasis upon Jesus’ identity (in addition to “sign” which is used 17 times) include: “work/works” (a parallel term to “sign” and used 25 times); “believe” (53 times); “true/truth” (used 40 times); “know/knows” (used 87 times). Though John reflects his thoroughly Jewish background in his allusions to Jewish life and customs, his audience is all people--Jew and Gentile--and their need to acknowledge Jesus.

A Summary of the Book of Acts

Addressed to the same initial audience as the book of Luke (i.e., Theophilus), Acts was written by Luke, the only nonJewish New Testament writer. Being a physician, the medical terminology associated with his profession and seen in Luke continues in Acts (1:3; 3:7,11; 9:18,33; 13:11; 28:6,8-9). He was a frequent companion with Paul in evangelistic travels, indicated by “we” and “us” sections (16:10-17; 20:5-21:18; 27:1-28:16). Peter, Stephen, Phillip, Barnabas and James are the major characters of the first twelve chapters. Paul dominates the rest of the book.

Outline

- 1:1-7 Introductory remarks: transition from Christ’s earthly life to His successors
- 1:8 Theme: The gospel is to be preached throughout the world in geographical sequence--Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the world
- 1:9-26 Preparations for the launching of Christianity
- 2:1-8:3 Christianity presented to Jerusalem
 the gospel preached & the church established (2); the healing of a lame man confirms the message (3); the miracle and message evoke persecution (4:1-31); numerical growth creates difficulties (4:32-5:11); the miracles & message evoke more persecution (5:12-42); numerical growth creates more difficulties (6:1-7); the miracles & message of Stephen evoke more persecution (6:8-8:3)
- 8:4-40 Christianity/the gospel presented to the Samaritans, Galileans, proselytes
- 9:1-28:31 Christianity/the gospel presented to the world/Gentiles
 conversion of the apostle to the Gentiles (9:1-31); conversion of first Gentiles & establishment of first Gentile church (9:32-11:30); Jewish persecution of the church (12); first missionary tour (13-14); Jerusalem meeting on the Jew/Gentile question (15:1-35); second missionary tour (15:36-18:22); third missionary tour (18:23-21:15); Paul’s arrest, defenses & journey to Rome (21:16-28:31)

Central Theme: With the atonement an accomplished reality, Acts is designed to report the presentation of the gospel and the Christian religion to the Roman world. Acts reports the fulfillment of the great commission stated by Jesus (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-48). It documents the first converts to Christianity and the establishment of the church of Christ. The first thirty years of Christianity is covered with special attention given to the following critical events: the incorporation of both Jew and Gentile into the kingdom of Christ and thus the transition from Judaism to Christianity as the only true religion (4:12); the central importance of evangelism in the Christian religion; church life and the problems that arise in daily Christian living; the role of the Holy Spirit in the inauguration of Christianity; facing persecution from both religious and secular authorities.

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A Summary of the Book of Romans

The church of Christ in Rome was composed largely of Gentiles (1:13; 11:13; 15:15-16). Paul had long wanted to pay a personal visit to the church in Rome (1:11). But circumstances had prevented him from doing so (1:13; 15:22). The letter to the Romans served as a strong doctrinal discourse to a Gentile church from the apostle to the Gentiles. It is the New Testament's premier, systematic and comprehensive articulation of the Christian faith.

Outline

- 1:1-15 Greeting and personal remarks
- 1:16-17 Thematic statement
- 1:18-3:20 The critical *need* for the gospel/salvation/righteousness
 - The Gentiles are lost without the gospel (1:18-32); the Jews are lost without the gospel (2:1-3:8); the whole world is lost (3:9-20)
- 3:21-5:21 The *need* is met (and Judaism surpassed) through the gospel
- 6:1-8:39 How the gospel correlates with law
- 9:1-11:36 How the gospel correlates with the history of Judaism
- 12:1-15:13 How the gospel *applies* to daily Christian living
- 15:14-16:27 Closing remarks, greetings and admonitions

Central Theme: Paul articulates the central thesis of the book in 1:16-17: the gospel is God's appointed tool to save human beings from sin. This salvation is achieved--not by Judaism and the law of Moses or by meritorious human effort--but by an obedient faith. The faith enjoined upon people in the book of Romans is a trust that obeys (1:5; 16:26) by complying with the conditions of salvation made available through Christ. The specific purpose of the gospel is to cause human beings to become Christians and live the Christian life. Romans specifically shows that the incredible wisdom of God orchestrated the gospel plan of salvation (11:33-36). In view of this great reality and as a direct consequence, we are urged to conduct ourselves accordingly by living the Christian life (12:1ff). The gospel is completely sufficient to deal with sin, but, having been forgiven, we must live faithfully.

A Summary of the Book of 1 Corinthians

What a city! Corinth was the Hollywood and Las Vegas and New York City of the ancient world. Its population was ethnically diverse, consisting of Romans, Greeks, and Orientals. Located on the coast, it was a prosperous city of commerce. The great temple of Aphrodite was located there--with its 1,000 temple prostitutes. Its outdoor amphitheatre could seat 20,000 spectators. Athletic games were hosted that were surpassed only by the Olympics. It contained bars and nightclubs. It was so known for loose living and sexual immorality that the term *korinthiazomai* ("to act the Corinthian") became a euphemism for sex. The city first heard the gospel of Christ when Paul visited on his second evangelistic tour in 50 A.D. He stayed a year and a half, living and working with Aquila and Priscilla who shared the same secular occupation. Paul wrote a previous letter to the Corinthians prior to 1 Corinthians (5:9).

Outline

- 1:1-9 Introductory remarks
- 1:10-4:21 Unnecessary, unscriptural division in the church discussed
- 5:1-7:40 Division pertaining to human sexuality
- 8:1-11:2 Division pertaining to food and idolatry
- 11:3-14:40 Division pertaining to the worship assembly
 female leadership (11:3-16); Lord's Supper (11:17-34); spiritual
 gifts (12:1-14:40)
- 15:1-58 Division pertaining to the resurrection
- 16:1-4 Division pertaining to the collection
- 16:5-24 Closing admonitions, remarks, greetings

Central Theme: The central purpose of this letter is stated in 1:10--"Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." The Corinthian church was racked by division, disagreement, and confusion. This diversity manifested itself in terms of doctrinal errors, immorality, and disorder in the worship assembly. After identifying the primary problem and admonishing the brethren to understand the threat to Christ's cause posed by internal division (chs. 1-4), Paul proceeds to treat specific causes of division (chs. 5-16). He introduces these causes by calling their attention to previous correspondence he had received pinpointing each item he addresses (5:1--"It is actually reported..."; 7:1--"Now concerning the things of which you wrote..."; cf., 1:11; 8:1; 11:18,34; 12:1; 15:12; 16:1). The antidote to division is to be totally devoted to Christ alone and His preached message (1:13ff). Devotion to Christ means conforming one's life and doctrinal beliefs to Christ's views. To do so, one will need to "be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong. Do everything in love" (16:13).

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A Summary of the Book of 2 Corinthians

Paul had addressed himself in 1 Corinthians to several problems existing in the church of Christ at Corinth. Repentance was eventually forthcoming, enabling Paul to write this letter on a more positive note within a few months after 1 Corinthians.

Outline

- 1:1-11 Greeting, Introduction, Thanksgiving
- 1:12-7:16 Expressions of consolation and conciliation in view of Paul's joy over Corinthian repentance; assertions of his apostolic ministry in their behalf
- 8:1-9:15 Admonition to contribute to the financial plight of Judean Christians
- 10:1-13:10 Paul's defense of his apostolic authority and conduct
- 13:11-14 Conclusion and farewell

Central Theme: 1 Corinthians was written to urge cessation of division within the church. On the other hand, 2 Corinthians was written to offer consolation and reaffirm Paul's love for and approval of the Corinthians in view of the positive response demonstrated by the majority. However, an element remained that continued to agitate against Paul's apostolic authority. The letter was also designed to press further Paul's right to offer divinely authoritative instruction and correction to the church (notice Paul's standard discourse marker at the commencement of his defense in 10:1--*parakalo* = "I beg/plead").

A Summary of the Book of Galatians

This letter was addressed to a cluster of churches situated in the Galatian region of Asia (cf., Acts 16:6; 18:23). Whereas the letter to the Romans seemed to anticipate the potential arrival of Judaizers, Galatians clearly reflects their presence among the Galatian Christians. They constituted a serious threat to the Galatians' grasp and application of the pure gospel to their lives. Their objective was to bind upon the church of Christ Old Testament rites and ceremonial practices--especially circumcision. They found it necessary to discredit Paul's apostolic authority in order to advance their cause.

Outline

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 1:1-5 | Greeting and introduction |
| 1:6-7 | Thematic statement |
| 1:8-2:21 | Paul's apostolic authority reaffirmed and defended |
| 3:1-4:31 | The gospel reaffirmed & the Christian faith defended as surpassing Judaism |
| 5:1-6:10 | The practical application of the gospel to daily living |
| 6:11-18 | Summary and conclusion |

Central Theme: The central concept of Galatians is partially stated in 1:6-7 & articulated clearly in 5:1. An accurate conception of the gospel was being corrupted through reversion to Judaism and the law of Moses. Galatians was written to challenge Christians to refrain from resorting to the obsolete (Heb. 8:13) religious system of Judaism. Instead, they should remain firmly committed to Christ and Christianity and live life accordingly by developing the spiritual qualities that are a part of the gospel and the liberty it brings.

A Summary of the Book of Ephesians

The gospel of Christ was likely introduced into the city of Ephesus by Paul, Priscilla, and Aquila in Acts 18:19 on Paul's second missionary tour. For sure, the church was established no later than Paul's third missionary tour (Acts 19). Ephesians is one of four letters written by Paul while imprisoned in Rome (Eph. 3:1), along with Philippians (Phil. 1:7), Colossians (Col. 4:10), and Philemon (Phile. 9). While awaiting trial, he was detained under house arrest for two years "in his own rented house" (Acts 28:30). Ephesus was a prominent city of Asia Minor--commercially, politically, religiously. The great pagan temple dedicated to the Roman goddess Diana (Artemis in Greek) was located there and its business dealings caused it to rank with Alexandria as a significant trade center.

Outline

- 1:1-2 Greeting
- 1:3 Thematic statement
- 1:4-3:21 Blessing bestowed in the context of Christ and the church
- 4:1-6:20 The practical response to spiritual blessings realized
 in faithful Christian living
- 6:21-24 Concluding comments

Central Theme: In God's great scheme of redemption, He decided to bestow His many spiritual blessings solely upon the church of Christ (Christ's body of saved people). As a consequence, Christians are called to fulfill the eternal purpose of the church in their individual lives by living the Christian life faithfully *as the bride of Christ*. In view of what God has done through Christ for the church (chs. 1-3), the church (i.e., Christians) are urged to live lives worthy of their calling (chs. 4-6). Notice Paul's standard discourse marker in 4:1 (*parakalo*--"I beseech you") which divides the letter into two parts, the first abstract and didactic, the second practical and hortatory. God has high goals for the church predetermined in eternity and Christians are charged with fulfilling these goals.

A Summary of the Book of Philippians

Another of Paul's prison letters, Philippians was written to a church established by Paul on his second missionary tour (Acts 16). Established and named by Alexander the Great's father, the city of Philippi enjoyed the special privileges afforded a Roman colony. The church had provided Paul with financial support on two previous occasions (4:16). They sent Epaphroditus with a third gift to aid Paul during his imprisonment. Recovering from a near fatal illness (2:27), Epaphroditus was then sent by Paul with the Philippian letter back to the brethren to allay their fears and thank them for their continued assistance.

Outline

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 1:1-11 | Greeting and gratitude |
| 1:12-26 | Personal preaching challenges faced by Paul |
| 1:27-28 | Thematic statement |
| 1:29-30 | Endure suffering |
| 2:1-30 | Epitomize humility |
| 3:1-21 | Beware of enemies |
| 4:1 | Thematic Restatement |
| 4:2-23 | Final remarks: exhortations, expressions of gratitude and joy |

Central Theme: The central concept of the book is stated in 1:27 and restated in 4:1-- Conduct yourselves in a manner that is worthy of the gospel by standing firm for the gospel. They must stand firm amid suffering. They must stand firm by emulating the humility of Christ. They must stand firm by dealing with the enemies of the cross. In short, they must stand firm in the Lord (4:1). This theme is echoed in parallel expressions: "work out your own salvation" (2:12); "let us walk by the same rule" (3:16); "the things which you learned...these do" (4:9). A key word of the letter is "joy" and its forms, occurring 16 times. The living of the Christian life by standing firm must be punctuated & permeated by rejoicing in all circumstances of life.

A Summary of the Book of Colossians

One of Paul's four "prison epistles," this letter was written to a church likely established by Paul's influence through one of his Ephesian converts, Epaphras (1:8). Paul had not been in contact with Colossian Christians in person (2:1). He apparently sent this letter to them by the hand of Tychicus (4:7) just as he had sent the Ephesian letter (Eph. 6:21). The church in Colossae was facing heretical teaching that constituted a serious threat to their faith. The heresy struck at the very heart of Christianity--the person of Christ.

Outline

1:1-14	Greeting, gratitude and introductory remarks
1:15-23	Christ's supreme place in the scheme of things
1:24-2:3	Christ's supreme place in the presentation of the gospel
2:4-10	Christ's supreme place challenged by philosophy
2:11-17	Christ's supreme place challenged by Judaism
2:18-23	Christ's supreme place challenged by gnostic mysticism & asceticism
3:1-4:6	Christ's supreme place applied to Christian living
4:7-18	Closing greetings

Central Theme: Whereas Ephesians focuses upon *the church of the Christ*, Colossians centers on *the Christ of the church*. The all-sufficiency and supremacy of Christ are pinpointed in contrast to false philosophies and thought systems that undermine Christ's supreme place in the divine scheme of things. Paul goes out of his way to stress the divinity of Christ: Christ is Creator (1:15-16); He is eternal (1:17); He is head of the church (1:18); He possesses the fullness of divinity (1:19; 2:9). Since Christ is supreme and completely adequate, we have no need of mere human philosophy and tradition. Since Christ is supreme (ch. 1) and since Christ frees us from human regulations and ideologies (ch. 2), we ought to center our lives on Christ by living the Christian life (chs. 3-4).

A Summary of the Book of 1 Thessalonians

On his second evangelistic tour, Paul, accompanied by Timothy and Silas, visited the seaport city of Thessalonica (Acts 17). Their gospel message was well received by some Jews and a great many Greeks. However, nonreceptive Jews stirred up a mob of malcontents who evoked action from the city rulers against Paul's host. Paul was forced to leave the city by night--but the church had been established! When Paul arrived in Athens, he sent Timothy back to Thessalonica to urge the brethren to bear up under their afflictions (1 Thess. 3:1-5). Timothy rejoined Paul in Corinth and provided reassurance regarding the condition of the Thessalonian church (1 Thess. 3:6). Paul then wrote two letters to them.

Outline

1:1	Greeting
1:2-10	Paul's commendation of the church
2:1-12	Paul's conduct defended
2:13-3:13	Paul's concern for the church
4:1-12	Paul's caution to live the Christian life
4:13-5:11	Paul's clarification regarding afterlife
5:12-22	Miscellaneous instructions
5:23-28	Closing exhortation

Central Theme: In light of Paul's untimely departure from Thessalonica (Acts 17:10), the first Thessalonian letter has essentially two purposes. First, Paul was anxious to provide reassurance that all was well despite the tumultuous, whirlwind circumstances that surrounded the birth of the Thessalonian church of Christ (chs. 1-3). Second, he wanted to urge them (notice the usual discourse flag word from **para-kaleo** in 4:1 and 5:14) to live the Christian life faithfully, allowing no unsettling circumstances to derail them (chs. 4-5). These unsettling matters included the status of deceased Christians and the return of Christ, respect for elders, and the use of miraculous gifts. Perhaps the most unsettling matter was the question of Christ's return, which is discussed not only in the section 4:13-5:11, but is further alluded to in 1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 5:23.

A Summary of the Book of 2 Thessalonians

Paul likely sent this letter to the church of Christ at Thessalonica shortly after he sent them the first letter. The first letter had apparently elicited questions about the second coming of Christ. Though he had discussed the matter in a lengthy section of the first letter (4:13-5:11), some were confused, having drawn false conclusions, and were conducting themselves inappropriately as a result. A second letter was needed to straighten out the misunderstanding and correct the misconduct of those who were confused.

Outline

1:1-2	Greeting
1:3-12	Expression of thanks and reassurance in the face of persecution
2:1-2	Central thesis
2:3-17	Confusion over the second coming corrected
3:1-15	Practical admonitions to live the Christian life faithfully
3:16-18	Closing remarks

Central Theme: Paul's central point is stated in 2:1-2 and entails Paul's concern that the Thessalonian brethren not be confused about the second coming. The clarification which follows consists of Paul's assurance that the second coming was sufficiently distant that they need not spend time fretting over it. Instead, they should focus on and devote themselves to the day-to-day details of living the Christian life (2:15). Paul was certain that the end of the world was sometime away since he had been informed, by inspiration, that a significant apostasy was yet to occur in history (2:3-12). Rather than assuming a near return and adjusting their lifestyle to idle waiting (3:6-15), they needed to just live life everyday by involving themselves in the usual good works of a Christian (2:15-3:5).

A Summary of the Book of 1 Timothy

Paul and Timothy had been traveling companions on Paul's second evangelistic tour (Acts 16:1-2). Timothy's mother was Jewish but his father was Greek. Paul treated Timothy like a spiritual son (1:18). He had left Timothy in Ephesus to function as a local preacher (1:3). Though Paul planned on visiting in the near future (3:14; 4:13), he wrote this letter to aid Timothy in his ministerial and evangelistic responsibilities (2 Tim. 4:5).

Outline

1:1-2	Greeting
1:3-11	Caution concerning false teachers and doctrinal error
1:12-17	Paul's reception of forgiveness
1:18-20	Paul's charge to Timothy
2:1-15	Instructions on leading in worship
3:1-13	Instructions on church leadership qualifications
3:14-16	Thematic statement
4:1-16	Further caution concerning error/heresy and how to combat it
5:1-6:19	Instructions on Christian conduct and interpersonal/church relationships Older men and women (5:1-2); widows (5:3-16); elders (5:17-21); Timothy (5:22-25); masters/slaves (6:1-2); the rebellious (6:3-5); pursuit of wealth (6:6-19)
6:20-21	Closing admonition

Central Theme: The purpose of the letter is stated in 3:15--"I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church." 1 Timothy is a church manual for proper protocol in matters related to church activity--appropriate behavior among Christians. Timothy is specifically charged with waging a good warfare and fighting the good fight of faith (1:18; 6:12). The central way in which he was to accomplish this charge was through his teaching and preaching (1:3; 4:6,11,13,16; 6:2b). His teaching and preaching were addressed to the church and calculated to inform church members how to conduct themselves as the church.

A Summary of the Book of 2 Timothy

Having written a previous letter to the young evangelist Timothy, Paul now apparently found himself imprisoned under Neronian persecution and facing the end of his life on earth (cf., 1:8,16; 4:6-8). Yet his pressing concern to the end is for Timothy, the church, and the cause of Christ. 2 Timothy is believed to be the last inspired letter Paul penned before he departed this life.

Outline

- 1:1-2 Greeting
- 1:3-7 Paul's personal gratitude for Timothy
- 1:8-12 The good soldier must not be ashamed of the gospel
- 1:13-18 The good soldier must hold fast to the gospel
- 2:1-2 The good soldier must be strong in the gospel and pass it on
- 2:3 Thematic statement: Be a good soldier of Jesus Christ
- 2:4-13 The good soldier must stay focused on the gospel and be faithful in its promotion
- 2:14-26 The good soldier must deal with others responsibly
- 3:1-13 The good soldier must endure apostasy and persecution
- 3:14-4:5 The good soldier must know and preach the gospel
- 4:6-8 The good soldier (like Paul) must endure to the end of life
- 4:9-22 Paul's final admonitions and farewell

Central Theme: The primary message of the book is summarized in 2:3--we must endure hardship if we are to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Enduring hardship means fulfilling the obligations and responsibilities of the Christian life even in the face of opposition. A good soldier is one who is not ashamed of the gospel, who holds fast to the gospel, who is strong in the gospel and who promotes the gospel. He stays focused on the gospel in his dealings with others and when he encounters apostasy and persecution. He knows the gospel and preaches the gospel, enduring to the very end.

A Summary of the Book of Titus

This letter was probably written in between the writing of 1 and 2 Timothy. A convert of Paul, Titus was a fullblooded Gentile (Gal. 2:3) who likely had a role to play in settling the Jew-Gentile question at Jerusalem (Acts 15:2; Gal. 2:1-3). He was active in assisting Paul during the third evangelistic tour both in Corinth (2 Cor. 7:6-7; 8:6,16) and on the island of Crete (Tit. 3:12). As Paul's life was nearing its end, he sent Titus to Dalmatia--modern day Yugoslavia (2 Tim. 4:10).

Outline

- 1:1-4 Greeting
- 1:5 Purpose for writing
- 1:6-16 Qualifications of elders and their duty to protect the church
- 2:1-10 Doctrinal admonitions for young/old, servants/masters to
 live the Christian life
- 2:11-15 Motivation for Christian living
- 3:1-11 Further doctrinal admonitions
- 3:12-15 Closing personal remarks

Central Theme: Paul explicitly identifies his purpose for writing Titus in 1:5--"that you should set in order the things that are lacking." This purpose was to be achieved by speaking, exhorting, rebuking, reminding and affirming with sound doctrine (2:1,15; 3:1,8,14). The citizens of Crete had a reputation for being especially wicked (cf., 1:12). Christians needed encouragement to distance themselves from their former lifestyle and to refrain from being influenced by the world (cf., 2:12). This epistle would enable the congregations on the island to insulate themselves from worldly living by (1) securing shepherds who would help to protect the flock and (2) by offering specific teaching on Christian living in a variety of social roles.

A Summary of the Book of Philemon

This little letter is one of four letters written by Paul during his first imprisonment in Rome. It addresses a very prominent issue within the Roman Empire--the matter of slavery. Historians estimate that the empire contained 60 million slaves, a circumstance that was bound to impact the church of Christ (cf., Eph. 6:5-9; Col. 3:22-4:1). Philemon was a member of the Colossian church (cf., Col. 4:9). His slave, Onesimus, had fled to Rome where he encountered and was converted by Paul who convinced him to return to Philemon.

Outline

vs. 1-3	Greeting
vs. 4-7	Commendation and compliments
vs. 8-17	Request to receive Onesimus back
vs. 18-21	Promise of repayment
vs. 22-25	Closing remarks

Central Theme: The central purpose for writing this letter was to implore Philemon to accept his runaway slave (Onesimus) back, without retaliation, and to treat him as a Christian brother (vs. 12,15-17--notice the triple use of "receive"). While a Christian slave would live up to his legal and monetary obligations (1 Cor. 7:20-24), a Christian slave owner would treat his slave the way he, himself, would want to be treated (Matt. 7:12)--i.e., "no longer as a slave" (Phile. 16). By implication, the influence of Christianity effectively dissolves the institution of slavery.

A Summary of the Book of Hebrews

The authorship of this book remains a disputed matter. The recipients of the book were unquestionably Jewish Christians who were facing persecution and the accompanying temptation to abandon Christianity and revert to Judaism. The author saturates his writing with the Old Testament, quoting directly from the Septuagint 29 times and indirectly 53 additional times.

Outline

- 1:1--2:18 Christ is superior to angels
- 3:1-4:13 Christ is superior to Moses (& Joshua)
- 4:14-10:18 Christ is superior to the Mosaic priesthood
- 10:19-11:40 Exhortation to faith
- 12:1-13:19 Exhortation to faithful Christian living amid hostility
- 13:20-25 Closing remarks

Central Theme: Since Christians of Hebrew descent were being intimidated and tempted to lapse back into Judaism, Hebrews constitutes a strong defense of the superiority and supremacy of Christ and Christianity. Judaism was temporary and a shadow. Christianity is permanent and the substance. Christ and Christianity are “better” (12 times), “heavenly” (6 times), and “perfect/perfection” (11 times). Judaism has faded away and is obsolete (8:13). The incomparable Christ remains. He is completely competent, capable and qualified to supply all our needs.

Whereas Colossians demonstrates Christ’s supremacy over pagan philosophy, Hebrews shows Christ’s supremacy over Judaism.

A Summary of the Book of James

Classified as one of the “general epistles” (i.e., addressed to Christians in general), this book is believed to have been penned by the half-brother of Jesus who became a believer after the Resurrection (Matt. 13:55; John 7:5; Acts 1:14; 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; Gal. 1:19; 2:9). Probably written early in the history of Christianity, it addresses Hebrew Christians (1:1) and has been described as the Proverbs of the New Testament because of its listing of practical moral precepts.

Outline

- 1:1 Greeting
- 1:2-16 Facing tests, trials, temptations
- 1:17-27 The saving word must be *enacted* as daily religion
- 2:1-13 Exhibit impartial love for everyone
- 2:14-26 Faith must act
- 3:1-12 Control the tongue
- 3:13-18 Wisdom is indispensable to Christian conduct
- 4:1-5:6 Worldliness is antagonistic to Christian wisdom
 - lust for worldly pleasure (4:1-5); the need for humility (4:6-10);
 - refrain from being judgmental (4:11-12); remember God in one's
 - business plans (4:13-17); do not misuse wealth (5:1-6)
- 5:7-12 Exercise patience
- 5:13-18 Pray
- 5:19-20 Encourage others to remain faithful

Central Theme: While James is loosely organized into a series of disconnected ethical pronouncements and lacks the prior theological foundation discussion so common to Paul's letters, the book nevertheless may be seen as an exhortation to concrete Christian living. The practicality of Christian living and the need to be faithful in one's Christian conduct is discussed in light of the central admonition: “be doers of the word and not hearers only” (1:22). This organizing principle is explained and demonstrated in the need to (1) endure trials (1:2-16); (2) aid the needy (1:27); (3) be impartial (2:1-13); (4) activate one's faith (2:14-26); (5) control the tongue (3:1-12); (6) display wise, peaceful, humble conduct toward others (3:13-4:12); (7) make plans with God's will in mind (4:13-17); (8) avoid unjust use of riches (5:1-6); (9) be patient (5:7-12); (10) be prayerful (5:13-18); and (11) be concerned for wayward brethren (5:19-20).

A Summary of the Book of 1 Peter

In his first of two letters, Peter addressed himself to Christians scattered throughout the Roman Empire. He identifies them as “sojourners” or “pilgrims” dispersed among the Roman provinces (1:1). These mostly Gentile Christians were enduring the suffering and testing that inevitably comes from living life within a worldly, pagan society. Christians are truly strangers, aliens, foreigners who are temporary residents awaiting their ultimate home in Heaven.

Outline

1:1-2	Greeting
1:3-12	Praise to God and Christ for the gospel and salvation
1:13-5:11	What it means to stand in God’s grace, i.e., to live holy lives
5:12	Thematic statement
5:13-14	Closing greetings

Central Theme: The central thought that gives the letter cohesion is 5:12--“I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand.” The grace of God is the Christian religion and the life it requires (cf., 1:10). Christians were facing fiery trials (4:12) and suffering (used 16 times). This reproach must be met with joyful, hopeful, courageous, faithful Christian living. The love which God has shown to us through Christ is sufficient motivation (1:3ff).

A Summary of the Book of 2 Peter

Peter wrote this letter (like 1 Peter) to a generic audience--Christians scattered throughout the world. He was likely nearing the end of his life on earth. He was very concerned that the Christians to whom he wrote continue their development and spiritual growth. They must avoid being adversely influenced by those who would draw them away from the knowledge of God and Christ. Peter wrote to *remind* (1:12; 3:1).

Outline

1:1-2	Greeting
1:3-11	Thematic elaboration
1:12-21	Reminders regarding the certainty of divine knowledge/Scripture
2:1-22	Warnings against false teachers
3:1-13	Clarification regarding the end of time
3:14-18	Closing admonitions

Central Theme: Peter declares the central intent of his letter in 1:8,10. In view of the “knowledge” (1:3) through which God has imparted His will to make sinners into Christians and to mature Christians, we must avoid being barren/unfruitful in that knowledge (1:8) by making our calling and election sure (1:10). A key word is “knowledge” (16 times). The only way to achieve ultimate acceptance with God is to know His will and then to live it (“add to your faith”--1:5; “do these things”--1:10). One must be “diligent” in this endeavor (1:5,10; 3:14). Growth is thus enjoined as indispensable (3:18).

A Summary of the Book of 1 John

In addition to the gospel account and the Revelation, the apostle John is credited with authoring three New Testament epistles. First John appears to have been written to address gnostic tendencies that were beginning to impact the church adversely. These gnostic tendencies included the belief that matter was inherently evil, that one must come to possess a superior mystical knowledge, and that Jesus would not have come in the flesh.

Outline

1:1-4	Purpose for writing
1:5-2:29	God is <i>light</i>
3:1-5:12	God is <i>love</i>
5:13-21	Conclusion

Central Theme: John's twofold objective is to refute erroneous doctrinal teaching (and the relaxed ethical standards that teaching evokes) while reassuring the faithful of their salvation. Several times John uses the expression, "I write to you," to flag his literary intentions (1:4; 2:1,8,12-14,21,26; 5:13). On the one hand, he continually attacks those views that challenge Christ's incarnation--a golden thread that runs through the book. On the other hand, he stresses the resulting relationship/fellowship that one can have with deity if one will live a moral, faithful Christian life.

Tampering with the truth that Jesus came in human flesh obscures a number of key Christian concepts. These include the doctrine of sin (cf., condemnation, darkness, forgiveness of sin); the doctrine of righteousness (God's as well as ours--cf., truth, commandments, Christ's blood and propitiation); the doctrine of love (God's as well as ours). These doctrines are critical, core Christian *truths* ("true," "truly," "truth" used 16 times) that Christians must *know* ("knew," "know," "knoweth," "known" used 39 times). Without them one's belief in Jesus as the Son of God is called into question (e.g., 3:21; 4:15; 5:1,5,10,13).

A Summary of the Book of 2 John

Whether this letter was addressed to a specific Christian woman and her family or to a local congregation and its members need not be settled (vs. 1,13). The author was the apostle John who likely wrote from Ephesus.

Outline

vs. 1-3	Greeting
vs. 4	Theme
vs. 5-11	Exhortation and caution
vs. 12-13	Closing remarks

Central Theme: The central purpose of 2 John is to admonish Christians to stay true to the commands of God. John uses several parallel expressions to emphasize this central concern: “walking in love,” “love one another,” “walk according to His commandments,” “abide in the doctrine of Christ,” and “bring this doctrine.” The book urges Christians to remain true to God’s words in their treatment of each other and to refrain from being led astray by those who do not remain true to those words. Special warning is given for Christians to beware of those who deny Christ’s enfleshment.

A Summary of the Book of 3 John

This extremely brief personal letter was offered as a temporary substitute for an impending visit from the apostle John. The recipient was Gaius, a faithful Christian brother. John has many matters to discuss with him and hoped to do so face to face in the near future. In the meantime, this short bit of inspired communication would have to do.

Outline

- | | |
|-----------|-----------------------------|
| vs. 1 | Greeting |
| vs. 2-8 | Commendation of Gaius |
| vs. 9-11 | Condemnation of Diotrephes |
| vs. 12 | Recommendation of Demetrius |
| vs. 13-14 | Closing remarks |

Central Theme: This epistle serves primarily as a word of encouragement to a great Christian man whose spiritual life prospered. Even in the midst of senseless and selfish ambition exhibited by Diotrephes, Gaius was flourishing in his exhibition of Christian living and love for the church.

A Summary of the Book of Jude

The writer of this letter was the brother of the James who held a prominent role in the church at Jerusalem (Acts 15). He was also the half-brother of Jesus (Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3). He wrote to a generic audience of Christians who were facing the influence of evil men who were subverting the faith. Jude shows great concern that his recipients be warned and stirred up to withstand evil influences.

Outline

vs. 1-2	Greeting
vs. 3-4	Theme
vs. 5-16	Description of the false teachers
vs. 17-23	Admonitions to the faithful
vs. 24-25	Closing benediction

Central Theme: The purpose in writing is stated in vs. 3-4. Jude urged his readers to stand up and defend the faith against those who sought to alter it. The subversion appears to have pertained to using grace as a cover to relax Christian moral standards as well as gnostic tendency to compromise the person of Christ.

A Summary of the Book of Revelation

Unlike the other New Testament books, Revelation is an “apocalypse”--a book written in apocalyptic language. By nature, it communicates its message via symbols, imagery and signs (cf., “signified”--1:1). Numbers, objects, places, animals, etc. are utilized in a cryptic, nonliteral, figurative fashion. This dramatic imagery is largely intended to be visualized (1:3,12,17,19; 4:1; 5:1,2,6,11; 6:1; et al.). Like other New Testament books, the Revelation was addressed to a specific audience in the first century (i.e., the churches of Christ in Asia Minor--1:4,11) who were undergoing terrible persecution inflicted by the Roman government. The bulk of its contents, therefore, were fulfilled in close proximity to the time in which it was written (“shortly come to pass”--1:1; 22:6; “the time is at hand”--1:3; 22:10).

Outline

- 1:1-11:14 The glorified Christ provides solace for the faithful
 Prologue and salutation (1:1-8); initial vision (1:9-20); admonition to the churches to be faithful (2-3); God & Christ control the universe (4-5); six seals warn of judgment (6); the redeemed are protected (7); six trumpets warn of judgment (8-9); the scroll & two witnesses (10:1-11:14)
- 11:15-19 Thematic statement and reaction
- 12:1-22:21 The struggling church endures the persecution of this life
 Satan is enemy #1 (12); Satan has allies (13); God has His allies (14); the faithful will survive (15); the judgments are forthcoming (16-20); the church in its ultimate eternal state (21:1-22:5); epilogue and closing remarks (22:6-21)

Central Theme: The historical background of Revelation consists of Roman persecution against Christians for their refusal to participate in Caesar worship. The purpose of the Revelation is to encourage Christians to resist the government’s call for worship of the emperor. Christ--not Caesar--is Lord. Christians must remain loyal to Christ even if it means their death (2:10). In so doing, they can “overcome” (used 14 times). The book is evenly divided into two parts. The first eleven chapters present the central figure of time and eternity--the resurrected, victorious, powerful, worthy, glorified Christ. The final eleven chapters depict the suffering of the church as she endures oppression and persecution--though judgment and punishment will be forthcoming upon the oppressors of the church. The thematic statement splits the book into the two equal parts: “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever” (11:15). In other words, the human kingdoms of world history

cannot overthrow the one true kingdom--the church. In fact, the church is made up of citizens taken out of all these other kingdoms (Dan. 7:14). Human kingdoms come and go, eventually crumbling into the dust of antiquity. But the kingdom of Christ will never be destroyed (Dan. 2:44). She will surpass and transcend all others. "Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:28-29).