



Introducing the New Testament

Week 3

1



Overview of this week

- ❖ The book of Acts
 - Jesus' ascension (ch. 1)
 - Mission in Jerusalem (ch. 2-7)
 - Missions in Samaria and Judea
 - Paul's first missionary journey (13:4 – 14:28)
 - Council in Jerusalem
 - Paul's second missionary journey (15:32 – 18:32)
- ❖ Galatians
- ❖ 1 & 2 Thessalonians
- ❖ Phillipians

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Jesus' Ascension

- ❖ Luke's introduction
- ❖ The mandate to witness & the promise of the Holy Spirit
- ❖ The ascension & the promise of Jesus' return
- ❖ Matthias is chosen to replace Judas Iscariot
 - 120 or so believers with Peter and the disciples
 - How did they choose?
 - Two candidates: Barsabbas & Matthias
 - They cast lots! Why? Should we always do as the Apostles did?

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The Mission in Jerusalem

- ❖ Pentecost (chapter 2)
 - An outpouring of God's spirit – read Peter's sermon!
- ❖ Life in the early days of the church (2:42-47)
- ❖ Peter's healing of a crippled beggar
 - Peter preaches again – proclamation & repentance
- ❖ Peter & John are arrested -- They are warned & released
- ❖ More about life in the community (beg. 4:32)
- ❖ The apostles are arrested/escape/recaptured
 - A leading Pharisee persuades the council to release them
- ❖ Apostles enlist others to help in the community (6:1-6)
- ❖ The martyring of Stephen

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The Mission to Judea and Samaria

- ❖ Persecution expands; Peter & Phillip head to Samaria
- ❖ Phillip and the Ethiopian eunuch on the road to Gaza
 - See Isaiah 56 (3-8) – being God's people is not a matter of DNA
- ❖ Saul's conversion (Chapter 9)
 - Probably 3 years after Jesus' resurrection (33AD or so)
- ❖ Peace returns to the church
- ❖ Peter's miracles
- ❖ Peter & Cornelius: the beginning of the Gentile mission
 - 66 verses devoted to this story of the gospel
 - Peter must defend himself in Jerusalem
- ❖ Antioch (in Syria) develops into a second dynamic center of Christianity
- ❖ Peter is imprisoned by Herod Agrippa, then miraculously delivered – Herod is struck dead! (44AD)

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Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey (49–52AD)

- ❖ The letter from Jerusalem is well-received in Antioch (Syrian)
- ❖ Barnabas & Mark head for Cyprus
- ❖ Paul & Silas, later adding Timothy, head north but turn west toward Macedonia & Greece (see 16:7-9)
- ❖ They pick up Luke in Philippi – note how it is now “we” (16:11)
 - Miracles in Philippi
 - Paul & Silas are thrown into prison
 - Earthquake/saving of the jailer/Paul & Silas are taken into the jailer's home
- ❖ Thessalonica, then Berea, then Athens, then Corinth
 - Paul spent 18 months or so in Corinth

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The Eastern Mediterranean in Paul's Day





Galatians – A Life and Death Struggle!

- ❖ Perhaps the earliest of Paul's letters and his harshest
 - 49 or 50AD
 - Written to the churches in Galatia, an area in Asia Minor
 - When you read this letter, hear Paul's anger!
- ❖ The immediate question
 - Who can eat with whom? See 2:11-14
 - Must Paul's ex-pagan/gentile converts be circumcised and keep Torah?
- ❖ The bigger question
 - Who are the people of God, enjoying a right relationship with God?
- ❖ Good works v. the "works of the law"

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1 Thessalonians

- ❖ Also an early letter by Paul (though could be later)
- ❖ A friendly, encouraging letter written to Christians in Thessalonica
 - Much thanksgiving for these Christians
 - A reminder of their call to be holy
- ❖ 4:13-18
 - We aren't sure exactly what problem or belief Paul is responding to – but it is an "eschatological" problem – dealing with last things.
 - *parousia* in Greek– the "coming" of the Lord
 - V. 2:19, 3:13, 4:15, 5:23
 - In secular Greek, *parousia* was used to denote the solemn arrival of a king or emperor at a place
 - Arriving kings were met outside the city gates and escorted into the city; e.g. Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem

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2 Thessalonians

- ❖ Probably a later letter to Thessalonica
- ❖ An encouraging letter to the faithful
 - 1:3-10: a prayer of thanksgiving with apocalyptic expectations of judgment on those who “don’t know God” and those “who do not obey the gospel of Jesus Christ.”
 - 2:1-12: the parousia – Jesus’ coming, preceded by “rebellion” & “the lawless one”
- ❖ 2:13-16
- ❖ 3:6-15 -- a strong caution against idleness!

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The Eastern Mediterranean in Paul’s Day





Philippians – A friendly note of thanks

- ❖ Paul had founded the church in Philippi on his first missionary journey, about 50AD. Like Thessalonica, Philippi was a large commercial center on the highway from Asia Minor to Macedonia.
- ❖ The Philippians were very supportive of Paul's efforts, including sending money. This letter is one of unreserved thanks.
- ❖ Paul is writing from prison. This is probably a temporary imprisonment in Ephesus. The letter was probably written about 56AD.
- ❖ This is the most personal of Paul's letters and we get the fullest portrait of the man.

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Philippians

- ❖ The Christ hymn (2:5-11)
 - Probably a hymn or confession from the early church that Paul adapted for his use here.
 - Paul is urging unity and harmony in the community -- the Christians must, following Christ's example, defer to each other.
- ❖ Paul's example -- Placing our faith in Christ; sharing in Jesus' suffering and resurrection; running the race & living as citizens of heaven (3:2-4:1)
- ❖ The joy, the peace, and the good (4:4-9)

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