

Galatians

Paul's letter to the Galatians was addressed to a group of churches in Galatia, a region of present-day Turkey. Paul had preached the gospel in these churches. He wrote to counter those who taught that Christians must be circumcised in order to be accepted by God. Paul began with a defense of his apostolic authority (chs. 1–2), then made it clear that all believers, Jew and Gentile alike, enjoy complete salvation in Christ (chs. 3–4). In chapters 5–6 Paul showed how the gospel of grace leads to true freedom and godly living. Perhaps the central message of Galatians is “a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ” (2:16). Paul wrote this letter sometime between a.d. 48 and 55.¹

Author : Paul

Time of Writing : 48 - 55 A.D.

Key Scriptures² : Galatians 1:6-8

Structure of the Book³ :

- Paul's defense of his apostleship (1:1–2:21)
- Paul's defense of his gospel (3:1–5:12)
- Application of his viewpoint (5:13–6:18)

Purpose/Message of the Book⁴:

- To prove the authenticity of the gospel according to Paul
- To refute the legalism of the Judaizers under the Old Covenant
- To establish the doctrine of Christian liberty under the New Covenant
- To show the superiority of the Abrahamic and New Covenants over the Mosaic Covenant
- True liberty in Christ in neither the legalism of the Old Law nor the license of the Old Flesh
- Life and righteousness come only by grace through faith
- Having received the Spirit we must also walk in the Spirit

¹ The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016). (Ga). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

² <https://www.theosu.ca/programs/episode-43-galatiansmp4-0663dc>

³ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). Faithlife Study Bible. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

⁴ <https://www.theosu.ca/programs/episode-43-galatiansmp4-0663dc>

Ephesians

The apostle Paul wrote Ephesians to the churches around Ephesus (Acts 19) to display the scope of God's eternal plan for all humanity—for Jews and Gentiles alike. This is the mystery of God, hidden for ages but now made known in Jesus Christ. The first three chapters focus on what Christians should believe, unfolding the glorious riches of God's grace in Christ. Dead sinners are made alive and gain eternal salvation "by grace ... through faith" (2:8). The last three chapters explain the implications of God's grace for the church, for individuals, and for families. This second section comes to a climax with a command to stand with the armor of God against the devil. Paul wrote this letter while in prison, probably in Rome about a.d. 60.⁵

Author : Paul

Time of Writing : 60 A.D.

Key Scriptures ⁶: Ephesians 4:15

Structure of the Book ⁷:

- Salutation (1:1–2)
- God's work of reconciliation in Christ (1:3–3:21)
- Living in response to God's work in Christ (4:1–6:20)
- Conclusion and benediction (6:21–24)

Purpose/Message of the Book⁸:

- To strengthen the believers in their love and faith in Christ
- To encourage believers to put off the old man and put on the new man
- To show the unity of both Jew and Gentile in the one body of Christ
- To believer is seated in heavenly places in Christ but yet is to walk in practical love on earth
- The Church is a time manifestation of God's eternal purposes through Christ

⁵ The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016). (Eph). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁶ <https://www.theosu.ca/programs/episode-44-ephesiansmp4-e8629f?autoplay=true>

⁷ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). Faithlife Study Bible. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

⁸ <https://www.theosu.ca/programs/episode-44-ephesiansmp4-e8629f?autoplay=true>

Philippians

Philippians overflows with joy and thanksgiving. Paul wrote to the church in Philippi to thank them for a gift. He reported the joyful news that Epaphroditus, who had brought their gift to Paul, had recovered from his illness and was returning to Philippi. Paul said that he had learned the secret of being content in any situation, and he told them about his situation in prison. He expressed joy that more people were hearing about Christ even if some were proclaiming the gospel with bad motives. Wanting the Christians in Philippi to be unified, he challenged them to be servants just as Jesus was when he “emptied himself” and became a man rather than clinging to the rights of his divine nature (2:1–11). Paul wrote this letter while in prison, probably in Rome about a.d. 60.⁹

Author : Paul

Time of Writing : 60 A.D.

Key Scriptures¹⁰ : Philippians 3:8

Structure of the Book¹¹:

- Introduction and Paul’s report (1:1–26)
- Call to unity (1:27–2:30)
- Warnings against false teachers (3:1–21)
- Further instructions and thanksgiving (4:1–23)

Purpose/Message of the Book¹²:

- To thank the church for their gift and to inform them of Paul’s intended visit
- To warn them against false teachers
- To exhort them to be like-minded by having the mind of Christ
- To encourage them to rejoice in all circumstances
- The Christian life is one of joy which is independent of all circumstances and suffering
- The key to unity is having the mind of Christ

⁹ The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016). (Php). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

¹⁰ <https://www.theosu.ca/programs/episode-45-philippiansmp4-8ec1c0?autoplay=true>

¹¹ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). Faithlife Study Bible. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

¹² <https://www.theosu.ca/programs/episode-45-philippiansmp4-8ec1c0?autoplay=true>

Colossians

Paul wrote to the church in Colossae to fortify it against false teachers who might try to impose strict rules about eating and drinking and religious festivals. Paul shows the superiority of Christ over all human philosophies and traditions. He writes of Christ's deity ("He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation" [1:15]) and of the reconciliation he accomplished with his blood. He explains that the right way of living in this world is to focus on heavenly rather than earthly things. God's chosen people must leave their sinful lives behind and live in a godly way, looking to Christ as the head of the church (1:18). Paul wrote while in prison, probably about the same time as he wrote to the Ephesians.¹³

Author : Paul

Time of Writing : 50's A.D.

Key Scriptures¹⁴ : Colossians 2:6-7

Structure of the Book¹⁵:

- Salutation and prayer (1:1–14)
- The Christ hymn and reconciliation (1:15–23)
- Paul, the Colossians, and empty philosophy (1:24–2:23)
- Living according to the cross (3:1–4:6)
- Final exhortations and greetings (4:7–18)

Purpose/Message of the Book¹⁶:

- To warn them against the heresies concerning the person and nature of Jesus
- To warn them their severe discipline and ritualism
- To present Jesus as the Head of the Church in His Deity and Humanity
- To exhort them to put off the old man and to put on the new man
- Christ is in all, through all, and above all
- He (Jesus) is the fullness of the Godhead
- We are to set our affections on things above and not on things on the earth

¹³ The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016). (Col). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

¹⁴ <https://www.theosu.ca/programs/episode-46-colossiansmp4-a32003?autoplay=true>

¹⁵ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). Faithlife Study Bible. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

¹⁶ <https://www.theosu.ca/programs/episode-46-colossiansmp4-a32003?autoplay=true>

1 Thessalonians

Paul wrote this letter to encourage new believers in their faith, to exhort them to godly living, to give them assurance about the eternal state of believers who had died, and to defend the integrity of his ministry as an apostle. Thessalonica (present-day Thessaloniki, Greece) was the capital of Roman Macedonia. It was on important trade routes. Paul, twice identified as the author (1:1; 2:18), visited Thessalonica on his second missionary journey but was forced to flee because of Jewish opposition. He sent Timothy to work with the largely Gentile church there, and Timothy brought him good news of their faith (3:6). This is one of Paul's first letters, probably written about a.d. 50–51.¹⁷

Author : Paul

Time of Writing : 50 - 51 A.D.

Key Scriptures ¹⁸: 1 Thessalonians 4:3

Structure of the Book¹⁹ :

- Paul and the Thessalonian church (1:1–3:13)
- Practical instructions and Christ's return (4:1–5:22)
- Prayer and conclusion (5:23–28)

Purpose/Message of the Book²⁰:

- To correct mistaken views and to establish the doctrine of the second coming of Christ
- To exhort the believers to display the three chief Godly virtues : faith, hope, and love
- The coming of Christ for his people is a comfort to those who look and patiently wait for him
- The doctrine of the second coming is a great incentive for holiness

¹⁷ The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016). (1 Th). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

¹⁸ <https://www.theosu.ca/programs/episode-47-1-thessaloniansmp4-1d1850>

¹⁹ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). Faithlife Study Bible. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

²⁰ <https://www.theosu.ca/programs/episode-47-1-thessaloniansmp4-1d1850>

2 Thessalonians

This letter from the apostle Paul was probably written shortly after his first letter to the church in Thessalonica. He had been boasting of them to other churches, telling of their faith and their love for each other in the face of persecution. Paul reminded them that God will repay their persecutors. He also addressed two recurring problems in this church. First, they were concerned that the Lord had already returned. Paul urged them not to become “shaken in mind or alarmed,” fearing that “the day of the Lord” (2:2) had already come. Second, he admonished them not to be idle, commanding them that, “If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat” (3:10).²¹

Author : Paul

Time of Writing : 50’s A.D.

Key Scriptures²² : 2 Thessalonians 3:16

Structure of the Book²³ :

- Thanksgiving and prayer (1:1–12)
- Misunderstanding regarding the Day of the Lord (2:1–17)
- Exhortations to avoid idleness, benediction, and closing (3:1–18)

Purpose/Message of the Book²⁴:

- To give further details concerning the events surrounding the coming of the Lord
- To encourage the believers during a time of persecution
- The coming of Jesus is a judgement upon those who do not know Him
- The spirit of the anti-Christ is already at work within the world
- In light of the comings of both Christ and the anti-Christ, the believer should walk orderly

²¹ The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016). (2 Th). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

²² <https://www.theosu.ca/programs/episode-48-2-thessaloniansmp4-8b1a7b?autoplay=true>

²³ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). Faithlife Study Bible. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

²⁴ <https://www.theosu.ca/programs/episode-48-2-thessaloniansmp4-8b1a7b?autoplay=true>

1 Timothy

First Timothy is one of three pastoral letters (including 2 Timothy and Titus) that the aging apostle Paul sent to those who would continue his work. Timothy was, in every way, Paul's spiritual son. Young but gifted, Timothy had been assigned to lead the church at Ephesus—a church needing order in worship as well as doctrinal correction, plagued as it was by false teachers. Paul's letter, likely written about a.d. 62–66, counseled the young man on matters of church leadership—from proper worship, to qualifications for overseers (elders) and deacons, to advice on confronting false teaching and how to treat various individuals within a congregation. Paul charged Timothy to live a life beyond reproach, giving believers a standard to emulate.²⁵

Author : Paul

Time of Writing : 62 - 66 A.D.

Key Scriptures²⁶ : 1 Timothy 4:16

Structure of the Book²⁷ :

- Greeting and instructions on dealing with false teaching (1:1–20)
- Instructions on conduct (2:1–3:13)
- Contrasting sound teaching with false teaching (3:14–4:16)
- Instructions about particular groups and closing exhortation to Timothy (5:1–6:21)

Purpose/Message of the Book²⁸:

- To warn against false teachers
- To give instruction concerning sound doctrine
- To encourage Timothy concerning his ministry
- The minister that is given to godliness will be good and faithful
- The true minister will teach sound doctrine
- The relationship between older and younger ministries is to be a “father - son relationship “

²⁵ The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016). (1 Ti). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

²⁶ <https://www.theosu.ca/programs/episode-49-1-timothyp4-d087a7>

²⁷ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). Faithlife Study Bible. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

²⁸ <https://www.theosu.ca/programs/episode-49-1-timothyp4-d087a7>

2 Timothy

Paul wrote this letter as he awaited execution. Despite all that Paul was facing—death, the end of his ministry, abandonment by most of his friends for fear of persecution—he faithfully directed his spiritual son Timothy to the hope that is in Christ. As he exhorted Timothy to boldness, endurance, and faithfulness in the face of false teaching, Paul showed his customary concern for sound doctrine. Scripture, said Paul, is “breathed out by God” and is sufficient in all things pertaining to the faith and practice of Christians (3:16–17). Older believers, therefore, should be eager to pass on their knowledge of Scripture to those who are younger in the faith (2:2). Paul probably wrote from Rome, a.d. 67 or 68.²⁹

Author : Paul

Time of Writing : 67-68 A.D.

Key Scriptures³⁰ : 2 Timothy 4:3-4

Structure of the Book³¹ :

- Greeting, thanksgiving, and encouragement (1:1–18)
- Aspects of effective ministry (2:1–13)
- Opposing false teaching (2:14–3:9)
- Paul’s charge to Timothy and closing remarks (3:10–4:22)

Purpose/Message of the Book³²:

- To get Timothy to visit him in Rome
- To give Timothy some direction in the time of apostasy
- The true minister of Christ will be faithful in times of apostasy
- The true minister will be sound in doctrine, teaching, and preaching the Word of Truth

²⁹ The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016). (2 Ti). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

³⁰ <https://www.theosu.ca/programs/episode-50-2-timothyp4-33eab4>

³¹ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). Faithlife Study Bible. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

³² <https://www.theosu.ca/programs/episode-50-2-timothyp4-33eab4>