



## Introduction to the Letters of the Apostle Paul

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable... even the Old Testament, but if there are specific Scriptures that are applicable to all Christians living in the age of Grace, they would be the Epistles of the Apostle Paul.

The Epistles of Paul have a very distinctive character. All Scripture, up to the Gospel accounts of the crucifixion, looks forward to the cross, and has primarily in view Israel, and the blessing of the earth through the Messianic kingdom.<sup>1</sup> The majority of the Bible is a Jewish book. All of it is written "for" us, but not all of it is written "to us."

Yet, the Epistles of Paul are written "to us." Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles. Before the apostle Paul, the Church was a mystery. The idea that not only Jews could be saved, but now Gentiles was something hidden from view in the Old Testament.

This is what Paul's letters are about. They develop the doctrine of the church. What we believe about how to live the Christian life can be found in no other books since, for the most part, they are written "to" the Jews. Seven of Paul's letters were written to seven Gentile<sup>2</sup> churches (Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Colosse, and Thessalonica). The mystery of the church was from the "beginning of the world, hid in God." (Ephesians 3:1-12).

What we learn through Paul is the church is not an organization, but an organism, the body of Christ. The body of Christ is filled with His (Jesus) life, and heavenly calling, promise, and destiny. Through Paul alone we know the nature, purpose, and form of organization of local churches, and the right conduct at such gatherings.

Through the apostle Paul, and only the apostle Paul, we know that "we shall not all sleep," the "the dead in Christ shall rise first," and that living Christians shall be "changed" and caught up to meet the Lord in the air at the Rapture of the church.

---

<sup>1</sup> C.I. Scofield, The Epistles of Paul. The Scofield Reference Bible.

<sup>2</sup> Although Jews and Gentiles both were in these churches.

## Thirteen Letters | Session 1 | Introduction

Paul unfolds doctrines of grace that were unseen in the teachings of Jesus Christ. Paul originates nothing, but unfolds everything, concerning nature and purpose of the law; the ground and means of the believer's justification, sanctification, and glory; the meanings of the death of Christ, and the position, walk, expectation, and service of the Christian.

Our Bible study will move through all of Paul's letters in chronological order. It is impossible to find an exact chronology of his letters. We will use the chronology of Bishop James Ussher who lived from 1581-1656. He was the archbishop of the church of Ireland and an incredible scholar.

The Epistles of Paul | Date of Writing\*

Letter	Date of Writing	Place of Writing
1st Thessalonians	54 A.D.	Corinth
2nd Thessalonians	54 A.D.	Corinth?
1st Corinthians	59 A.D.	Ephesus
2nd Corinthians	60 A.D.	Philippi
Galatians	58 A.D.	Corinth
Romans	60 A.D.	Corinth
Philemon	64 A.D.	Rome - In prison
Colossians	64 A.D.	Rome - In prison
Ephesians	64 A.D.	Rome - In prison
Philippians	64 A.D.	Rome - In prison
1st Timothy	65 A.D.	?
Titus	65 A.D.	?
2nd Timothy	66 A.D.	Rome - In prison (2x)?

\*Adapted from Dr. C.I. Scofield, The Old Scofield Reference System, The Scofield Study Bible, 1917

[This chronology is subject to minor changes over the course of our study]

Here are some facts regarding the apostle Paul:

## The Life and Ministry of the Apostle Paul

Born A.D. 10. Birth Name was Saul.	As Jesus was working as a carpenter, Paul was attending School.	Born in Tarsus. A Jew in Family of Pharisees (Acts 21:39; 23:6)	Of the Tribe of Benjamin (perhaps named after King Saul, a Benjaminite)
Paul inherited Roman Citizenship from His Father	He Studied in Jerusalem under Gamaliel in the School of Hillel (Acts 22:3).	Wrote 13 (maybe 14) of our New Testament Books	Tentmaker by Trade (Acts 18:3)
Was a great persecutor of the New Christians (Acts 9:1)	Saw Jesus on the Road to Damascus and Believed (Acts 9:1-19)	Boldly Preached in the Name of the Lord (Acts 9:27)	His formal ministry began in the Church in Antioch
Three Missionary Journeys (maybe 4). Went to Corinth on 2nd Journey.	Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 22:21; Romans 11:13)	Wrote his final letter of 2nd Timothy, A.D. 66	Was Beheaded in Rome (circa A.D. 67)

Pastor Roger Feenstra, 2019