



Intro to the New Testament:

Major Letters of Paul

Session Three



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1 Corinthians

1 Corinthians

- *Salutation:* Paul's opening follows the conventions with the exception of the expanded senders (we don't know who Sosthenes is, but it is clear Paul is the writer) and the expanded recipients (together with all those calling on the name of Lord Jesus Christ in everyplace)
- *Opening Thanksgiving:* Despite the Corinthians problems, Paul expresses gratitude to God for the sufficiency of their spiritual gifts which is a concrete expression of God's grace to them. For Paul this is an assurance that God has called them and will therefore will sustain them faithfully until judgment day

1 Corinthians 1:10 - 6:20

- In this first section Paul responds to reports he has received from Chloe's people and other oral reports, as well he tries to clear up misunderstandings of his earlier correspondence
 - Paul deals with the causes and gives solutions over the rivalry that has developed between some of the Corinthians who have declared loyalty to various Christian leaders
 - Paul understands the root of the problem is the Corinthians addition to power, prestige, and pride
 - Paul combats the wisdom of the word by calling attention to the contrary wisdom and power of God manifested in the cross of Christ, in the calling of the
- 03 Corinthians, and in the nature of Paul's own ministry and apostolic way of life

1 Corinthians 7:1 - 16:12

- Paul then turns to the questions raised by the Corinthian church
- He discusses marriage and celibacy recognizing the physical and emotional needs of living in the age between the first and second coming of Christ
- Paul draws out a threefold significance of Jesus's resurrection
 - No one can conclude that there is no resurrection from the dead
 - What happened to Christ as first fruits will happen to all in Christ at his second coming when all powers are destroyed or subjugated to the reign of God
 - The Corinthians now live between Christ's resurrection and their own in an age which is evil but can be overcome in confidence that Christ's experience of overcoming death will be shared by them because they are in him



Intro to the New Testament:

Early Letters of Paul

2 Corinthians

2 Corinthians

- *Salutation:* Once again while Paul greets on behalf of himself and his coworkers the letter itself is clear that Paul is addressing the house churches in Corinth
- *Opening Thanksgiving:* The situation has changed in Corinth and Paul's apostleship is now questioned by a significant group who claim that Paul's suffering demonstrates that he is not actually called by God to be an apostle

2 Corinthians: Outline

- (1:12-2:13) When charged with trying to defraud the Corinthians by changing his plans, Paul explains that in fact he was acting in a Christlike way by coming with mercy before judgment
- (2:14-7:16) Paul now portrays his suffering as an apostle as a Roman slave in a triumphal procession—he is being led by Christ as a slave going to death
- (8:1-9:15) Paul points to the self-giving of Jesus's sacrifice as the grounds for the collection for the needs of Jerusalem
- (10:1-13:10) Paul's tone turns again to an aggressive apologetic and counterattack of his opponents with a hope that his coming visit will be a constructive time of healing rather than of judgment for the church



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Major Letters of Paul

Romans

Romans: Author, Date, Origin, Recipients

- *Author:* Paul's self designation in the letter also gives us insight into Paul: he had a deep sense of commissioning as an apostle
- *Date:* Paul wrote Romans at a time when he thought he had completed a significant phase of his work. This would put this letter to the mid 50s
- *Origin:* Correlating Romans 15:25 with Acts 20:3 suggests that Paul wrote Romans from Corinth which fits with the evidence of Romans 16:1–2: Phoebe came from a Corinthian port
- *Recipients:* While we don't know how Christianity began in Rome, we do know that there was a large Jewish population in Rome (40–50k), and that there was an active mission to the circumcised. The letter itself tells us that Gentiles were also drawn into the church

Romans: Social Context

- *Social Context:*
 - a. Within the church: when Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome the church which would have been founded by Jewish leaders lost its Jewish leadership. Naturally Gentile leadership would have developed. Therefore, Paul in part writes to ease tensions between party's now that the Jews have come home.
 - b. Outside the church: The Jewish people were influential but despised in Rome which is why Paul also addresses how the church is to relate to their community.

Romans: Purposes

- *Missionary*: Paul desires to go to Spain and to make the churches in Rome his base much like Antioch for his mission in Asia Minor. So Romans is a clear theological treatise to garner support
- *Apologetic*: Paul gives a robust introduction to himself due to the fact that he did not found these congregations. Not only does he want their support, but he is clarifying in case there has been questions about who he is and what he believes.
- *Pastoral*: Paul is also aware of some potential conflict within the ranks that he wants to settle—particularly Gentile boasting.

Romans: Chapter 1-4

- The reason the gospel is the power of God for salvation for all who believe, Jew and Gentile, is because the wrath of God is against all unrighteousness both Jew and Gentile
- Further, those who possess the Law do not possess an advantage when it comes to God's judgment, in fact those who have the Law but do not do what it says stand condemned before God by the Law
- Those who have faith that God raised Jesus from the dead are displaying the same faith uncircumcised Abraham displayed when he believed God's promise and he was made a part of God's family. This means those who have faith in the faithfulness of Jesus are children of Abraham apart from the flesh

Romans: Chapter 5-8

- Paul goes on to relocate those who are in Christ; they now stand in grace and they are marked out by a new Christlike character which is faithful love in the midst of tribulations
- Therefore we maintain hope knowing that while we were enemies God saved us, so if we are now reconciled we will be fully saved by Jesus
- Our sonship is not just a personal faith, but fulfills the creation mandate as well so that the creation itself longs for the revelation of the sons of God because it too will experience salvation
- We too await our full redemption with perseverance knowing that God is working all things together for good with an assurance that nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord

Romans: Chapter 9-11

- Paul pictures himself as Moses/Christ willing to be cursed so that they would be saved
- The Gentile Christians need to know that God has not simply rejected Israel: Paul reflects God's own love for his people who are properly sons, the glory of God, they have the covenants and were given the Law and temple service and promises; the fathers belong to them and even the Messiah comes from them and he is God over all blessed forever Amen!
- No, Israel is not cut off only temporarily stumbled over that stone and even that stumbling is a part of God's plan: by their unbelief space has opened for the Gentiles to come in, so they cannot boast as this too is based on grace and faith rather than ethnicity

Romans: Chapter 12-16

- In light of God's unlooked for plan all Christians are now called to live according to the new pattern and character of Christ with humility and love; blessing enemies and trusting to the justice of God
- God has given government as a part of maintaining order so we are to be subject to them (life was good under Nero in the beginning)
- Christians should not cause a disturbance that could lead to the hindrance of the gospel (like Chrestus)
- Most of all there is to be a bearing with each other that leads to accepting one another