

# New Testament Survey : 3

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# The Period of Consolidation – The reinforcement and strengthening of the Church

## The Pastoral Epistles – Paul's Legacy – 1 Timothy, Titus, 2 Timothy

# 1 Timothy, Titus, 1 and 2 Peter

## Lesson 1

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### 1 Timothy – Qualifications for Ministry – A personal letter to Timothy

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**AUTHOR** Paul

**DATE** 62 AD

**TIME** Paul was released from prison for a short while and travelled to Asia. He had sent Timothy to Philippi, and now waited for Timothy to join him in Ephesus.

Timothy then remained in Ephesus while Paul continued on to Macedonia, where he probably wrote this letter.

**WRITTEN TO** Timothy, Paul's "son" in Christ.

1. It was a personal letter to Timothy, not a general letter to be circulated to the church at Ephesus and other churches in the area.
2. Secondly, Timothy was overseeing the church at Ephesus – a matriarchal society (i.e. the mother was considered head of the home, not the father).

Here was the great temple of Artemis, a goddess they called "the bearer of God". This goddess was passionately worshipped by thousands both in the city and people who travelled long distances to get to her temple.

3. Heresy had invaded the church at Ephesus ... a heresy based on "secret knowledge"... some of which taught that Eve was the "illuminator" of mankind because they believed she was the first to receive secret knowledge from the serpent, who was called "the revealer of truth".

These people believed Adam was Eve's *son* rather than her husband, a belief that originated from pagan doctrine, which said that a female deity could bear god-like children.

**KEY VERSES** Read 1 Timothy 3:15-16 and 1 Timothy 6:11-12

**KEY CHAPTER** 1 Timothy 3 – the qualifications for leadership.

## PURPOSE

1. To encourage and challenge Timothy to fulfil the task before him. Timothy had the responsibility of leading the church at Ephesus, where some had fallen into wrong doctrine. Some of the church members, like Hymenaeus and Alexander, were under strict discipline.
2. To encourage Timothy to fight false teaching with sound doctrine; to develop quality leadership; to teach God's Word; and to encourage Christian conduct.

**MESSAGE** True leadership comes from *character qualities* – which result from our walk with God and not from achievements, academic certificates, technical or professional abilities.

## OUTLINE

### 1. Instruction concerning doctrine – Chapter 1.

**Read 1 Timothy 1:8-11 and verse 15**

### 2. Instruction concerning worship – Chapters 2 – 3.

#### a) The role of women.

**Read Acts 2:17-18**

Remember to keep the context of 1 Timothy in mind, (see "Written To" on the previous page), as we look at a passage that has caused much confusion.

#### i) **Read 1 Timothy 2:1-4.**

"Men" here means "mankind," and not "male", since Paul is not restricting prayers, petitions and thanksgiving only to males, nor does Jesus desire only for males to be saved.

#### ii) **Read 1 Timothy 2:8-10.**

This is not a total ban on the wearing of jewellery or having braided hair.

Remember, this is written to a young pastor in a city where women were the authorities at home and where many women were temple priestesses and prostitutes – whose dress was therefore *anything but* modest or reflecting godliness.

#### iii) **Read verses 11 and 12.**

Certainly this was not an absolute rule since Paul allowed Priscilla to teach.

If the instruction against women teaching was absolute, it would have been strengthened with other passages. Instead, we find many passages showing that women did indeed teach men and held significant places as leaders in the church. (Acts 18:26, 21:9; Romans 16:1, 2, 7; 2 John 10)

"Authority" here is the Greek word "authentain", meaning to domineer over, acting on one's own authority.

iv) **Read verses 13-15.**

*Only Jesus saves!* But a woman experienced the most significant birth of all – the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

b) **Elders and Deacons.**

i) **Elders – Greek, "presuteros".**

**Read 1 Timothy 3:1-7**

ii) **Deacons – Greek, "diakonos".**

**Read 1 Timothy 3:8-13**

The qualifications between elders and deacons only differ in that deacons were not required to be able to teach.

**Note:** Verse 11 indicates that women also qualified as deacons.  
Example: Romans 16:1 – "I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a "diakonos" of the church ..."

3. **Instruction concerning false teachers – Chapter 4.**

- a) Those who forbid marriage and eating certain foods.
- b) Whose who think depriving the body more important than spiritual discipline.

4. **Instruction concerning church discipline – Chapter 5.**

As a young man, Timothy is to treat other men as brothers, older men as fathers, older women as mothers, and young ladies as sisters.

**Read 1 Timothy 5:22**

Be sure of a person's character before making them a leader, which publicly shows your acceptance of their lifestyle and behaviour.

If someone you choose as a leader is living a life of sin, and you put them in leadership, everyone will believe you approve of their sin, and so you share in it.

5. **Instruction concerning pastoral motives – Chapter 6.**

**Read 1 Timothy 6:3-6**

People have different motives for wanting to minister – some do it because they want to be noticed, or to be a leader, or for money.

**Read verses 11-14 and then verses 20-21**

## **Titus – A Letter to a Young Pastor**

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**AUTHOR** Paul

**DATE** 62 AD

**TIME** **Titus had been left in Crete** to complete the establishment of the church there and to put right its errors – the lack of organization and un-Christian behaviour.

The men were irresponsible; older women were gossips and drank too much wine; young women were flirts (chatting-up the young men); and careless.

A group of Judaizers had sprung up who were dividing the church by teaching that it was all right for Christians to be immoral (corrupt).

**WRITTEN TO** Titus, a close associate of Paul's for 15 years.

He was a Greek from Antioch, obviously so radically saved that he, an uncircumcised Gentile believer, accompanied Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem for the Jerusalem Council in 50 AD and he ministered with Paul in Corinth and Macedonia.

**KEY VERSES** **Read Titus 1:5 and Titus 3:8**

- PURPOSE**
1. To give instruction on the qualifications for eldership.
  2. To describe what it means to live a godly life.
  3. To exhort Titus to teach sound doctrine.

**MESSAGE** Sound doctrine leads to godly character and godly character produces a model lifestyle (good works).

**In order to continue in our chronological study of the New Testament, we interrupt the pastoral letters of Paul to insert the two letters from Peter, as Peter's letters were written before Paul wrote his second letter to Timothy.**

## **1 Peter – The Suffering Church**

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**AUTHOR** Peter

**DATE** 64 AD

**PLACE OF WRITING** Although Peter mentions "Babylon" in chapter 5:13, it is doubtful that he was in the city of Babylon in Mesopotamia. It is more likely that he was in Rome and using the name "Babylon" to describe Rome's wickedness.

**TIME** Christians were being increasingly opposed and abused as suspicions about them grew. For example, their talk about "another Kingdom" was considered dangerous to the present government.

**WRITTEN TO** **Read 1 Peter 1:1**

It would seem that this letter was written to Gentile Christians in Asia Minor, because it says they were called "out of darkness" (2:9); and "once were not a people, but now are the people of God" (2:10).

**KEY VERSES** **Read 1 Peter 1:10-12**

**Read 1 Peter 4:12-13**

- PURPOSE**
1. To encourage those who were suffering persecution at the present time.
  2. To prepare Christians for greater "fiery trials" in the days ahead.
  3. To show them the glory that is ahead.

**MESSAGE** How to live in a hostile world.

**OUTLINE**

1. **A Christian's Salvation** – Chapters 1 – 2:12.

**Read 1 Peter 1:1-2**

- a) **Our inheritance gives us hope in all our trials.**

**Read 1 Peter 1:3-9**

- b) **Our privilege.**

**Read 1 Peter 1:10-12**

- c) **Our response.**

**Read 1 Peter 1:13 and verses 22-23**

**Read 1 Peter 2:1-5 and verses 9-12**

2. **A Christian's Submission** – Chapters 2:13 – 3:12.

Christians are to make an impression on those who are not saved by what the unsaved would see as *most unusual behaviour*.

This involves being good citizens, obedient slaves, loving husbands, submissive wives, great friends – everyone living in harmony, sympathetic to each other, kind-hearted, humble and loving.

3. **A Christians' Response to Suffering** – Chapters 3:13 – 5:14.

a) **Suffering should not be as a result of sinful behaviour.**

**Read 1 Peter 2:20**

**Read 1 Peter 3:17**

**Now read 4:15-17**

b) **The devil and all the demons know about Jesus' resurrection.**

i) **Jesus' visit to hell – Read 1 Peter 3:18-20.**

"Preaching", means to proclaim truth.

**Read Colossians 2:15**

During the time between Jesus' death and His resurrection, He visited hell *to proclaim triumphantly that He is the Messiah and that through Him there is redemption for the whole human race.*

**Please note:** This passage does not offer salvation to fallen angels or to any person in hell.

ii) **Baptism – Read 1 Peter 3:21-22.**

In comparing baptism to the flood, Peter carefully indicates that the contact with water does not remove sin ("not the removal of dirt from the flesh"), but rather it is the inward attitude of repentance and faith, which "appeals to God for a good conscience", that leads to cleansing from sin.

c) **What it means to stop sinning.**

**Read 1 Peter 4:1-6**

"The dead", does not refer to "the spirits in prison" (verse 18), but to those Christians who have already been killed for their faith, now enjoying life in heaven.

d) **The correct response to suffering.**

**Read 1 Peter 4:12-19**

**Read 1 Peter 5:7**

**Now read 1 Peter 5:11-12**

## **EVENTS IN ROME**

Peter's letter is made all the more amazing since **in 64 AD, Rome was devastated by fire and Christians wrongly blamed for it.**

Many believed the fire was actually started by the Emperor Nero in order to claim additional land so that he could build a huge palace for himself, and in fact he did actually build a palace where the fire had destroyed the city.

In order to shift suspicion from himself, Nero blamed the Christians, who conveniently taught that the world would some day be destroyed by fire.

Christians were arrested in great numbers and met terrible deaths in the Roman stadium – some wrapped in animal skins and torn to pieces by dogs, or fastened to crosses and set on fire to light Nero's garden at night.

This time of persecution did not last long, but it was very fierce.

## **2 Peter – What true knowledge is**

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**AUTHOR** Peter

**DATE** Between 64 and 66 AD

**TIME** First Peter was written to encourage believers who were facing problems from the world.

However, Peter's second letter was written to warn believers of false teachers *in the church*. The danger to the church was now more from *inside* than from outside.

This was because many leaders twisted the doctrine of justification and were living rebellious and immoral lifestyles and encouraging others to do the same.

**WRITTEN TO** The churches in Asia Minor.

**KEY VERSES** **Read 2 Peter 1:20-21**

**Read 2 Peter 3:9-11 and then verses 17-18**

**PURPOSE** 1. To answer false knowledge with the truth.

2. To encourage them to live carefully because Jesus is coming back.

**MESSAGE** The Christian lifestyle demands moral excellence, self-control, godliness, brotherly kindness and unselfish love.

These false leaders, however, were sensual, arrogant and greedy. They laughed at the judgment to come and lived only for today.

Peter reminds believers that although God is long-suffering and patient, judgment will come. In view of this, believers should live godly lives.

**OUTLINE** 1. **Christian Character – Chapter 1.**

The answer to false knowledge is true knowledge.

**Read 2 Peter 1:2-10 and then verses 20-21**

2. **False Teachers – Chapter 2.**

**Read 2 Peter 2:12-15**

**3. Christ's Return – Chapter 3.**

**Read 2 Peter 3:3-4**

**Now read 2 Peter 3:8-14 and verses 17-18**

**Peter was killed in Rome, sometime between 64 and 66 AD, during Nero's reign. Tradition has it that he was crucified, but as a result of his request that he not die in the same manner that his Lord Jesus had died, his executioners crucified him upside down.**

### **Memory Verse**

2 Timothy 1:7, *"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and a sound mind"*.

### **Teacher's Notes**

1. Read 1 Timothy 2:1 – written when those in leadership were being killed. The context is that although it meant hardship and even death, it was good to want to be a leader.
2. Paul's instruction regarding qualifications for eldership/leadership deal specifically with the situation of polygamy (a man who has more than one wife – 2 Timothy 3:2). It seems clear this excludes such a man from leadership, although he is certainly not excluded from being part of the church. Polygamy, although tolerated by God in Old Testament times, was never God's plan. See Matthew 19:4-6, *"for this reason a man will ... be united to his wife (singular) and the two (not 3 or 4) will become one"*.
3. Remember, leadership is not lordship and submission is not slavery. A man has to manage his household and the church, not as an owner, but as a shepherd.
4. There is much evidence of women holding positions of leadership in the church. For example, Romans 16, calls Phoebe a "diakonos" i.e. deacon (verse 1), also in verse 3 Paul greets, "Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus". Notice the order – the woman's name first. This same order appears in Acts 18:26 – according to original manuscripts, although in the old King James Bible, the order was reversed. Today Bible authorities agree the original manuscript is "Priscilla and Aquila".

In 1 Timothy 3:11, ("likewise *their* women") the word "*their*" does not appear in the original letter, but is "likewise women are to be worthy of respect ... etc." clearly indicating women in leadership. Of course it is argued that leaders are to be "husbands of one wife", the point being that polygamy is not acceptable. But since women are not known to have taken more than one husband, it would make it unnecessary to mention them in this regard.

# 2 Timothy, Hebrews and Jude

## Lesson 2

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### 2 Timothy – Paul's last letter – A letter of vision and of exhortation to sound doctrine to a new generation of leaders

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**AUTHOR** Paul

**DATE** 67 AD

**TIME** Written during a time of great persecution.

In general, the Pastoral Epistles reveal a church that was fighting for its life against the spiteful, hateful jealousy of the Jews and lack of interest from a corrupt, ungodly society.

On Paul's return after visiting Ephesus, his opponents were able to use Rome's official position against Christianity to their advantage. Fearing for their own lives, Paul's supporters deserted him.

Unlike his first imprisonment, Paul was not in a comfortable house. This time he was in a cold cell, treated as a criminal, and cut off from friends.

He now delegates his responsibilities and vision to a younger generation of leaders. 2 Timothy is his last letter, written from prison in Rome in 67 AD.

**WRITTEN TO** Timothy – a personal letter.

**KEY VERSE** **Read 2 Timothy 2:3-4**

**Read 2 Timothy 3:14-17**

**PURPOSE** Paul had three main reasons for writing to Timothy.

1. He was lonely. Everyone except Luke had either deserted him or betrayed him.
2. Paul and Timothy had a special relationship – Paul called him his "son" and said "I have no one else like him" in Philippians 2:20.
3. He was concerned about the churches.

#### MESSAGE

Chapter 2 says it all: God's minister is to be faithful, able to reproduce ministry in others, sound in doctrine and the Word of God, able to persevere or endure, and not be ashamed even in hardships.

1. **Persevere in Present Testing** – Chapters 1 – 2.

**Read 2 Timothy 1:7-12**

**Then read 2:8-10**

Paul is in prison ... "but the Word of God is not imprisoned!"

**Read 2 Timothy 2:15**

**And verses 24-26**

2. **Endure Future Testing** – Chapters 3 – 4.

Paul anticipated a time of growing apostasy (backsliding; turning away) in the church, when people will be deceived by empty rituals and dead religion rather than a *relationship* with God through Jesus.

**Read 2 Timothy 2:10-17**

**And 2 Timothy 4:5**

**Paul's final words:**

**Read 2 Timothy 4:7-8 and then verses 16-18**

**PAUL'S MINISTRY**

1. Won freedom for the Gentiles from a yoke of legalism.
2. Established a strong chain of churches in strategic areas.
3. Trained strong leaders.
4. Wrote much of the New Testament we have today.
5. Laid out the groundwork of theology for the church.
6. Established the pattern for evangelism – New Testament churches in every area.

**If we read 2 Timothy 4:6-8, we see that Paul knew his work was done and his life was at an end. There are no details of his final trial; we only know that it ended in his death, about 67 AD.**

**EVENTS IN ROME**

Because of his extravagance and life of luxury, Nero spent all of Rome's resources. He then turned on the wealthy classes, confiscating properties and raising taxes. The result was that the country rebelled against him.

Nero killed himself in 68 AD.

He was succeeded by **Galba**, one of Nero's military generals, who made many enemies because of his cruelty. Galba was assassinated by **Otho**, who later committed suicide and another military man, **Vespasian, was made Emperor in 68 AD.**

## Hebrews – The Superiority of Christ

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**AUTHOR**      **Unknown.** (Maybe Clement of Rome, Silvanus, Barnabas, Luke, Apollos or Priscilla.)

**But not Timothy**      **Read Hebrews 13:23**

**and not Paul**      **Read Romans 1:1; 1 Corinthians 1:1;**

**Read 2 Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:1; Ephesians 1:1 ...** and you could continue through all the books Paul wrote.

**Now Read Hebrews 1:1 ...**

The lack of his customary greetings and the exclusive use of the Greek Septuagint instead of any Hebrew Scripture, as well as the elegant Greek used, make it doubtful that Paul wrote this book.

**DATE**      About 68 AD

**TIME**      Jews in Palestine had suffered because of the corruption and extravagance of their Roman governors, and in 66 AD they rebelled.

Although not everyone joined in the fight, by the middle of the year, Jewish rebels had taken over the whole of Jerusalem.

**Vespasian**, one of Rome's outstanding military commanders and known as a man who would not tolerate rebellion of any kind, was sent to Palestine to put an end to the uprising.

By 68 AD, Jews throughout the country were near defeat and the city of Jerusalem close to being overpowered, when **Vespasian was made Emperor of the Roman Empire** and commissioned his son, **Titus**, to complete the task of defeating Jerusalem.

The Romans did not yet officially ban Christianity, but the attitude was hostile. Terrible persecution and death were now only a few years away.

**WRITTEN TO**      These people probably lived in Rome. They were not new Christians and had endured hardships, but were now in *danger of going back to Judaism because of increased persecution.*

**KEY VERSES**      **Read Hebrews 4:14-16**

**Read Hebrews 12:1-2**

**KEY CHAPTER**      **Hebrews 11** – The "Hall of Fame" of Scripture – those who took God at His word when there was nothing to rely on except His promises.

**PURPOSE**      1.    To show the superiority of Christ and Christianity over Judaism.  
                         2.    To show that the priesthood, sacrifices, etc., were but shadows of the New Covenant – the reality is not the Old, but the New.

**MESSAGE**      **The New Covenant, priesthood and promises are "better".**

**1.    Jesus Christ, as a Person, is "Better" – Chapters 1 – 4:13.**

a)    **Better than the Prophets – Read Hebrews 1:1-3.**

In the Old Testament God spoke through prophets, now He speaks through His Son.

b)    **Better than the Angels** (verses 4-13).

c)    **Better than Moses – Read Hebrews 3:1-6.**

Moses was a servant *in* the house of God, but Jesus is a Son *over* God's house .... whose house we are!

d)    **Therefore we must pay close attention to what we have heard.**

**Read Hebrews 2:1-4**

We must pay attention to what we have heard because, if under the Old Covenant there were penalties for disobedience, how shall we escape if we neglect Christ's salvation, which has been confirmed by signs and wonders and by gifts of the Holy Spirit.

**2.    Christ's Work is "Better" – Chapters 4:14 – 10:18.**

a)    **He is a Better High Priest than Aaron – Read Hebrews 4:14-15.**

Because He was tempted *in all things* just (exactly) as we are, *yet without sin*. (Aaron was tempted, but sinned. Jesus was tempted, but did not sin.)

i)    **His Priesthood is of the Order of Melchizedek.**

The superiority of Melchizedek to Levi is seen in the fact that Levi paid tithes through Abraham to Melchizedek.

Abraham blessed Melchizedek – and the lesser is blessed by the greater. (Hebrews 7:7)

ii)    **A description of Melchizedek – King and a Priest.**

**Read Hebrews 7:1-10**

In the Old Testament kings came from the tribe of *Judah*, priests came from the tribe of *Levi*.

But Melchizedek's kingship and priesthood did not rely on his genealogy – that is, it did *not* depend on *who his mother or father was*. Therefore it did not depend on what tribe he was from. The text does not say he did not *have* parents, but that his priesthood was not dependant on who they were. He is a priest even *without* genealogy.

He was "...*made* like the Son of God" (verse 3); was a *man* (verse 4); received tithes without being a Levite (verse 5); without being dependant on his ancestry (genealogy) (verse 6); was greater than Abraham and Levi (verse 7).

*Melchizedek's priesthood is prophetic of Christ's because Jesus, both King and our great High Priest, was from Judah, not Levi, yet he lives a Priest forever. Jesus' priesthood does not depend on His genealogy.*

Now read Hebrews 7:14-16

b) **The New Covenant makes the Old one obsolete** (out of date).

i) **From law to something better.**



**Read Hebrews 7:11-12 and then verses 18-19**

"For the Law made *nothing* perfect". (verse 19)

ii) **A better high priest.**

**Read Hebrews 7:28 – 8:1**

**And Hebrews 8:4-5**

iii) **Better promises – Read Hebrews 8:6-13.**

iv) **A better sanctuary – Read Hebrews 9:8-12.**

v) **A better sacrifice – Read Hebrews 9:13-14.**

vi) **A better mediator – Read Hebrews 9:15.**

c) **From Shadow to Reality.**

**Read Hebrews 10:1**



**"The Law is.. a shadow ..and can never make perfect..."**

**Read Hebrews 10:16-18**

3. **The Christian Walk of Faith is "Better"** – Chapters 10:19 – 13:25.

a) **Therefore since we have a great priest.**

Let us draw near (verse 22); Let us hold fast (verse 23); Let us consider (verse 24).

b) **Definition of faith.**

**Read Hebrews 6:1-3**

**Faith is the "substance of things hoped for..."**

Sub – means "under"  
stance – means "to stand" } Therefore faith is what stands under our relationship with God.

**The conviction of things *not seen*.**

If we put that all together, we find that what "stands under" and is "not seen" is usually a *foundation* ...

**Faith in Jesus Christ** is the *foundation* of our relationship with God. (Ephesians 2:20; 1 Corinthians 3:11)

One cannot see faith. But we *can* see what a person builds on their foundation of faith. How?

By looking at how a person lives in their normal, daily life.

c) **Examples of people who lived lives of faith.**

**Read Hebrews 11:6**

**Examples** – Abel, Enoch, Noah

**Abraham** – Read Hebrews 11:8, and verse 11

**Now read verses 13-16 and 17-19** – Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, etc.

**Now read verses 39-40**

d) **How we should live.**

**Read Hebrews 12:1-3 and 7-11**

**Then read verses 25-29**

e) **Benediction** – Read Hebrews 13:20-21

This is one of the finest benedictions (blessings) in Scripture.

# **Jude – Fight! Contend! Do Battle!**

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- AUTHOR** Jude. He was a half-brother of our Lord Jesus (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3).
- DATE** Because Jude quotes 2 Peter 3:3, this letter must have been written after Peter's second letter, therefore between 66 and 80 AD.
- TIME** False teachers had crept into the church and turned God's grace into freedom to do whatever they pleased.
- With error and wickedness around, there is a great challenge to live godly lives, but God was (and is) able to keep them (and us) from stumbling.
- WRITTEN TO** There is not enough information in this short letter to determine who Jude was writing to.
- KEY VERSE** **Read verse 3**
- PURPOSE** To combat false teaching by "earnestly contending for the faith".
- MESSAGE**
1. **Jude's Purpose in Writing – verses 1-4.**  
**Read verses 1-4** "...certain persons have crept in unnoticed...".
  2. **Description of False Teachers – verses 5-16.**
  3. **Defense against False Teachers – verses 17-23.**  
**Read verses 17-23**
  4. **Closing – Read verses 24-25.**  
  
This is one of the greatest blessings in the Bible. For all of us who have trusted in Jesus Christ, it emphasizes His power to keep us from falling into error.

## **EVENTS IN ROME**

Do you remember what we studied last Lesson? We learned that ...

**The Jews in Palestine had rebelled against Roman rule**, but by 68 AD, they were near defeat and the city of Jerusalem close to being overpowered.

**Vespasian was made Emperor of the Roman Empire in 69 AD**, and commissioned his son, **Titus, to complete the task of defeating Jerusalem.**

Titus sealed off the city, which soon experienced starvation and disease. Hundreds of thousands died – there were even cases where parents killed and ate their own children!

The entire city was defeated in 70 AD, the temple burned, and all the furniture taken to Rome. (Read Matthew 24:15-22)

### **Read Luke 19:41-44**

Judaism was never the same after this – nearly all the Sanhedrin were killed as well as most of the priesthood.

Most of Jerusalem was destroyed and there was now no temple, thus Jewish worship stopped, and by 73 AD all traces of a self-ruling Jewish nation was gone.

Vespasian died in 79 AD and his son, **Titus, became Emperor.**

### **The reign of Titus was successful, but short. (79 – 91AD)**

He was greatly loved by his people and generous to a fault. He spent so much on public buildings, welfare funds, and games in the arena that he used up all the finances Rome had!

His short reign was overshadowed by two major disasters – the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius (a volcano) in 79 AD and the second fire of Rome in 80 AD.

When Titus died, his brother, **Domitian**, succeeded him.

Domitian was cruel and vicious, beginning a reign of terror throughout Rome.

He was the first Emperor to demand worship as "Dominus et Deus" – Lord and god. Others had been worshipped as gods, but never while they were alive.

### **Memory Verse**

Hebrews 10:17-18, *“And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more. Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin”.*

## Teacher's Notes

1. Hebrews 4:14-15 says that Jesus was tempted in all things just as we are. Think about that for a moment.

It means that because He was fully human, Jesus was tempted to steal ... to lie ... even to commit sexual sin. ***But He resisted every temptation and did not sin!***

He is "able to sympathize with our weaknesses" *because* He was "tempted in all things as we are".

That is why we can "draw near with confidence to the throne of grace". Notice also that we do not receive judgement when we come to God, but we find "mercy and grace to help in our time of need".

2. Hebrews 7:19, "For the Law made *nothing* perfect". Remember, the purpose of the Law was not to make righteous, because "no flesh will be justified in His sight... for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin". (Romans 3:20, 7:7)

Once we know of our sin and understand we have no way to get rid of our sin, the Law becomes a "schoolmaster", to lead us to Christ (Galatians 3:24), so that Jesus becomes our righteousness (Romans 10:4), and we become sons of God (Romans 8:14).

Remember, it is not those who follow the Law who are sons of God, but those who are "being led by the Spirit". (Romans 8:14)

Listen to what Romans 8:1-4 says in view of everything that Paul said in chapters 1 to 7, and that is that although we have all failed to meet God's requirement of holiness and therefore stand guilty before Him, we have a legal standing of righteousness, being free from our sin and its penalty because God is the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. (Romans 3:26)

"Therefore (that is why) there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you (and me – Praise God!) free from the law of sin and of death. For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit".

# 1 John, 2 John and 3 John

## Lesson 3

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### 1 John - The Book of What We Have and What We Know

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- AUTHOR** John, author of the Gospel of John, 3 letters and Revelation.
- DATE** Between 85 and 90 AD
- TIME** Now an old man, John lovingly writes to his "children" whose faith in Jesus was being threatened by false teachers, Eastern religion and the attractiveness of worldly pleasures.
- WRITTEN TO** It is likely that this letter was written to the churches in Asia Minor that John ministered to.

He addressed them again in the book of Revelation.

**KEY VERSES** **Read 1 John 4:16**

**Read 1 John 5:11-13**

**KEY CHAPTER** **1 John 1** – If a Christian does not continue in his relationship with God, he will need to ask God for forgiveness before fellowship is restored.

#### PURPOSE

A "second generation" of Christians had arisen by the time John wrote this letter – that is, the children born to early Christians were now adults.

Church doctrine was being challenged by many false teachings. In particular, Eastern religions were influencing the church.

1. **It was written to combat "Gnosticism"** – a belief that Jesus Christ was a vague spirit or an idea, rather than a living person who had been born a baby in Bethlehem, died, and rose again bodily.

These false teachers taught that while a person's spirit was good, the physical world (everything that can be felt, or touched or seen) was evil and that the spiritual and the physical could not relate to each other.

To them, salvation meant an escape from the realm of the physical into the realm of the spirit using secret **knowledge**, which could only be obtained by those who were initiated into the inner secrets of the group.

These "gnostics" also believed that their hidden knowledge gave them a special position above everyone else, outside the limits of right and wrong. This led them to live very immoral, sinful lives.

2. **It was also written to encourage believers in their relationship with a God of great love.**

- MESSAGE
1. When we truly walk with God, we will not love worldly sin.
  2. If we abide (live, dwell) in Him, we will not sin.

OUTLINE

1. **The basis of our relationship with God** – Chapters 1 – 2.

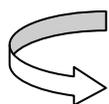
- a) **If Jesus is our Saviour, then our sins are forgiven.**

Read 1 John 1:9 – 2:2

- b) **If Jesus is our Saviour, then we live the way He did.**

Read 1 John 2:3-6

Read verse 3 again...



Do you remember what Jesus' commandments are?

Read Matthew 22:36-40 and 1 John 3:23

- c) **If Jesus is our Saviour, then we love one another.**

Read 1 John 2:7-11

- d) **If Jesus is our Saviour, then we do not love the world.**

Read 1 John 2:15-17

- e) **If Jesus is our Saviour, then we know the truth.**

Read 1 John 2:20-22

And verses 28-29

2. **The result of our relationship with God** – Chapters 3 – 5.

- a) **We are His children!**

Read 1 John 2:1

- b) **We can live a life free of sin.**

Read 1 John 3:6-8

Why did Jesus come? To "destroy the works of the devil" (verse 8).

The devil brought sin to mankind – separating man from God; putting blame and hatred between a man and his wife and between brothers; to bring sickness and disease, etc.

c) **We know the Spirit of God.**

**Read 1 John 4:2-3**

d) **We can overcome the devil.**

**Read 1 John 4:4 and 5:4**

e) **We can love each other.**

**Read 1 John 4:7-11**

f) **We have no fear – even of death.**

**Read 1 John 4:17-19**

g) **We have eternal life.**

**Read 1 John 5:11-13**

h) **We have our prayers heard and answered.**

**Read 1 John 5:14-15**

**CONCLUSION**      **Read 1 John 5:18-21**

## **2 John – The Book of Truth**

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**AUTHOR**      John

**DATE**      Between 85 and 90 AD

**TIME**      In First John, John wrote that some false teachers had left the church and were now travelling in the area, visiting churches and teaching error.

Do you remember what was wrong with their teaching? Yes, they taught first of all that Jesus had not come in the flesh, but was just a spirit who only *seemed* to die on the cross.

They also taught that everything physical was evil but the spirit realm was good and that the physical and spiritual were totally separate ... therefore, it did not matter how a person lived.

For example, they could cheat, steal, commit adultery, etc., and they claimed it would have no effect on their spiritual condition, or their eternal destiny.

**WRITTEN TO** A lady and her children. Or, it could be a lady who led a church, a group of people who were not following the error of the false teachers, but were "walking in the truth" (2 John 4).

**KEY VERSES** Read verses 9-10

**PURPOSE** An encouragement to love God and one another, but not to associate with false teachers who do not acknowledge the truth about Jesus.

**OUTLINE** 1. **Keep to the truth and walk in love** – verses 1-6.

Read verses 1-6

2. **Beware of false teachers and do not associate with them** – verses 7-13.

Read verses 7-11

### **3 John – The Book of Christian Fellowship**

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**AUTHOR** John

**DATE** Between 85 and 90 AD

**TIME** As with 1 and 2 John, this letter was probably written from Ephesus.

John had sent a number of teachers out to spread the gospel and to visit the churches in the area.

**WRITTEN TO** John wrote this letter to Gaius, to thank him for his hospitality as he had offered his home to "the brethren", that is, the men John had sent out.

But there were also false teachers travelling around. A man named Diotrephes was one.

Diotrephes had grabbed the leadership of one of the Asian churches and placed himself as the head authority, rejecting John's authority and the teachers he had sent, and throwing out of the church anyone who wanted to receive John's teachers.

**KEY VERSE** Read verse 11

**PURPOSE** 1. To commend Gaius for his hospitality and for walking in the truth, and to encourage him to continue.

It is evident that John cared very much about this man for he calls him "beloved". (John may have led him to Christ – see verse 4.)

2. To rebuke Diotrephes and to provide a recommendation for one of John's teachers, Demetrius.

**MESSAGE** 3 John is the shortest book in the Bible. It has a very personal and clear message – John commends Gaius for walking in the truth (verses 1-8) and condemns Diotrephes for walking in error (verses 9-14).

- OUTLINE**
1. **Living like a servant of God** – verses 1-8.
  2. **Living like a selfish man** – verses 9-14.

**Memory Verse**

1 John 4:19, "*We love, because He first loved us*".

# Revelation

## Lesson 4

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### The Expectant Church

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**AUTHOR** John

**DATE** 95 or 96 AD

**EVENTS IN ROME** **The Roman Emperor Domitian**, was cruel and vain. He placed statues of himself everywhere and anyone who refused to make sacrifices to them was charged with treason.

It was a dangerous time for Christians. They had no protection under Roman law and were hated by the Jews.

The word "Christian" became a name of contempt (disrespect, shame).

Peter, Paul and John urged Christians to live lawful, godly lives so that no one could accuse them of lawlessness.

**TIME** By the time John wrote Revelation, the church had been in existence for about 60 years (i.e. from Acts 2 until the time he wrote Revelation).

Most scholars agree that John was in his late teens when Jesus called him as a disciple – probably about 19. So he would have been about 92 when he died. (That would make him about 22 when Jesus died and the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost.)

John's preaching and teaching about Jesus had a great effect on people and had brought great change to their lives. But, there was also considerable opposition to the message of the Gospel. This led the Roman authorities to exile John to a small, lonely island called Patmos in the Aegean Sea.

By the time he wrote Revelation John was the only one of the twelve original disciples still alive.

**KEY VERSE** **Read Revelation 1:19**

This verse gives a chronological division of the book of Revelation into three periods, "*What you have seen*" – the wonderful revelation of the glorified Christ in chapter 1 .... "*What is now*" – the seven churches in chapters 2 and 3 which is also believed to give a picture of the church period right up to the rapture of the church ... "*What will take place later*" – from chapters 4 to 22 it deals with the period from the rapture to the new heaven and earth, into eternity.

**PURPOSE** 1. To encourage, rebuke and to instruct the seven churches in Asia.

2. To give prophetic vision to the church concerning the second coming of Christ and the events that will take place before this wonderful event.
3. To help the church understand God's wonderful plan of salvation – what was begun in Genesis now concludes gloriously in Revelation.

- MESSAGE**
1. **The Kingdom of God will triumph over the kingdom of darkness!**
  2. **Christians who overcome will receive eternal rewards.**

## OUTLINE

### 1. The things which you have seen – Chapter 1.

#### Read Revelation 1:4-8

Remember, John was writing to Christians who were refusing orders to worship the Roman Emperor.

### 2. The things which are – Chapters 2 – 3.

The messages to the seven churches.

#### a) The church at Ephesus – 2:1-7.

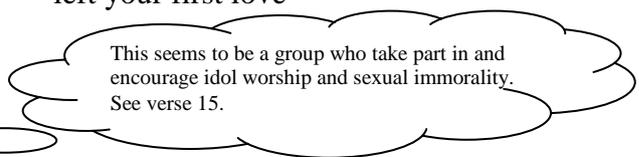
Remember, this is the same church Paul wrote to in the book of Ephesians, telling them of their wonderful riches in Christ and encouraging them to "walk in a manner worthy of their calling".

#### What is Right

working hard  
standing against evil  
rejecting false teachers in  
endured  
not grown tired  
hate the "Nicolaitans"

#### What is Wrong

left your first love



This seems to be a group who take part in and encourage idol worship and sexual immorality. See verse 15.

**Promise:** Those who overcome will eat of the tree of life.

#### b) The Church at Smyrna – 2:8-11.

#### What is Right

Faithful in tribulation and hardship  
Faithful even in persecution

#### What is Wrong

Nothing!

**Promise:** The crown of life for remaining faithful, and the promise that death will not affect anyone who overcomes.

c) **The Church at Pergamum – 2:12-17.**

**What is Right**

Faithful even although there is great wickedness all around them

**Promise:** Overcomers will eat some of the "hidden manna", and will be called by a new name.

**What is Wrong**

Some accept and follow the teachings of the Nicolaitans

d) **The Church at Thyatira – 2:18-29.**

**What is Right**

Increasing in love and faith and service; perseverance.

**Promise:**  
Overcomers will be given authority over the nations and be given the morning star.

**What is Wrong**

They follow the teaching of a false prophetess, Jezebel, who taught sexual prophetess, immorality and idolatry. (Like the Nicolaitans.)

Sickness and tribulation and the destruction of all her "children", that is, her followers.

e) **The Church at Sardis – Revelation 3:1-6.**

**What is Right**

Started out well, "alive"

**Promise:** Overcomers will be clothed in white, their name kept in the Lamb's Book of Life, and their name spoken to the Father and all the angels.

**What is Wrong**

But now have stopped, "dead"

f) **The Church at Philadelphia – 3:7-13.**

**What is Right**

Remained faithful against strong opposition.  
Persevered and kept God's Word.

**Promise:** They have an "open door" to God, and He will defeat their opponents (who seem to have been Judaizers) and reveal how much God loves the people of this church; they will be kept from testing.

Overcomers will be given a position of strong support in God's heavenly temple, and will wear God's name and the name of the New Jerusalem as well as Jesus' name.

g) **The Church at Laodicea – 3:14-22.**

**What is Right**

Only that in His grace,  
God loves them

**What is Wrong**

They are passive, and lukewarm.  
They think they are doing well and  
do not really need God, but they  
are poor, blind and naked.

**Promise:** Those who repent will enjoy renewed fellowship with God.  
Overcomers will sit with Him on His throne.

3. **Things which shall take place – Chapters 4 – 22.**

a) **A vision of heaven.**

**Read Revelation 4:1-2**

John is given a vision of heaven where he sees the Father (One sitting on the throne), and the Son (the Lion/Lamb), worshipped by all of heaven.

**Read Revelation 4:11**

**And then read Revelation 5:9-14**

b) **Three groups of Seven Judgments.**

John uses complicated symbols and images mostly from Old Testament prophecy.

**Note:** At present, exactly who the "beast rising out of the sea with ten horns and seven heads" might be, or the other beast "causing those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain", no one knows for sure.

However, regardless of who they might be, one thing is certain:

*John's message is clear – Christ will return and reign in a new world, therefore we need to keep our conduct free from sin and we need to remain people of faith.*

**Read a few selected passages and be encouraged!**

**Read Revelation 7:3 and then verses 9-17**

**Read Revelation 11:15-19**

**And now read chapter 12:10-12**

**Then chapter 19:1-7**

**And 21:3-5 and then verses 12-17**

**Finally, read verses 20-21**

**CHRIST IS SEEN AS** The Head of the Church, the Lamb, the Lion of Judah, the Bridegroom, King of Kings, Lord of Lords

### **WHAT HAPPENED TO THESE SEVEN CHURCHES**

Of the seven churches John wrote to in the Book of Revelation, four lie in ruin. All four cities – Ephesus, Pergamum, Sardis and Laodicea do not exist today.

Obviously they did not pay attention to John's warnings.

### **FINAL EVENTS IN ROME**

**Domitian died and Nerva took his place as Emperor.**

Nerva only ruled for 2 years, (96 – 98 AD), but during that time he released all those who had been arrested on suspicion of treason and restored property that had been confiscated (taken away).

**Trajan ruled from 98 – 117 AD.** He was a military man and under him the Roman Empire reached the height of its power.

**Hadrian, Trajan's cousin, ruled next.** He was also a military man. He allowed any religion to have freedom as long as they also worshipped the Roman state... but both Jews and Christians refused to do this.

Hadrian visited the place where the temple had been in Jerusalem, (remember, it was totally destroyed in 70 AD), and built another temple to Jupiter on the same spot. He forbade circumcision – and any Jew found guilty was put to death.

But circumcision was the sign of covenant to the Jews and so they rebelled. Hadrian immediately put down the rebellion, threw the Jews out of Jerusalem, and rebuilt the city.

In 132 AD, a man named **Simon Bar Kochba** pronounced himself the Messiah, and declared the independence of Judea from Rome.

He was totally defeated, Judea was devastated, leading rabbis were executed, Jews were sold into slavery, and the temple site ploughed and sowed in salt.

Only the massive retaining wall of the temple, which had been built by Herod, now remained. This is known today as the "**Wailing Wall**" – so called because it is where Jews go to mourn the fall of their nation.

Under Hadrian's rule there was no general persecution of Christians, although a few were put to death. Nevertheless, the conflict between false religion and true faith in God, immorality and a pure lifestyle, worship of the emperor and the Lordship of Jesus Christ, continued.

Christianity was considered to be in opposition to the state and Christians were thought disrespectful to the Roman gods. Famines, plagues, etc., were blamed on angry gods that Christians had offended.

To be a Christian was to live in uncertainty and danger.

**A FINAL AND MOST HORRIBLE PERSECUTION** began during the reign of **Diocletian in 300 AD.**

Every person in the Empire had to prove their loyalty to the state by taking part in pagan sacrifices.

Those who refused were put to death. Neighbours informed on neighbours, many fled, many were tortured and many died.

All Christian leaders were thrown into prison.

Every copy of the Scriptures was to be burned.

All who would not renounce Christianity lost their citizenship and were outside the protection of the law.

**After Diocletian, Emperor Constantine began his rule in 310 AD.** He believed the Christian God had given him a sign that he would win an important battle.

Well, he did win the battle and, as a result, issued an "**Edict of Toleration**", a command of acceptance and freedom to worship. Christianity was made lawful and all persecution stopped.

But Constantine did not at first become a Christian himself and gave credit for his victory to the Roman sun god.

Later Constantine combined pictures of this sun god with Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness... adding a halo around images of Jesus, and combining the sun god's image and his birthday, December 25<sup>th</sup> with Jesus.

He also retained the title and right as supreme head of the state ... and now added head of the church also. He called himself "pontifex maximus" or chief priest of the state religion. (The Roman Catholic Popes later took the same title.)

**NOTE:** While Constantine made it acceptable to be a Christian, his successor, **Theodosius, made it compulsory**, and Christianity became the state religion of the Roman Empire.

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Everyone who wanted to keep his or her citizenship, or to hold public office, or carry on a business, *had* to become Christian.

**This ended the message of repentance, faith towards God through Jesus Christ, rebirth and the need for a transformed life.**

Everyone *had* to become a Christian in order to live their daily lives, so everyone *verbally* accepted Him as Saviour... but in their *hearts* many still held onto their old beliefs.

The *real, spiritual church faded* and the "**structural church**" began – that is, a church with an emphasis on man-made policies and traditions, church buildings, programmes, and “church politics”, rather than on the solid foundation of Jesus

Christ as Saviour and Lord. Leadership became “positions,” and sought after for reasons of selfish ambition, rather than from a call of servanthood.

This structural church pattern continued and grew until the beginning of the Reformation over 1,200 years later.

### **Memory Verse**

Revelation 12:11, *"They overcame him [the devil], by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; and they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death".*

### **Teacher's Notes**

1. 1 John 2:18-22. Verse 18 refers to "many antichrists". Verse 22 explains verse 18 by saying "the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ – this is the antichrist ..." and that even now there are many who deny Jesus.
2. 1 John – is the book of what "we know".

The word "know" is used over 40 times in 1 John. When you have an opportunity take time to go through 1 John and mark every "know" and then see what it is you "know". You will be blessed that you took the time!

## ***AND HE SHALL REIGN FOREVER AND EVER AMEN***

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