

# Churches of the New Testament





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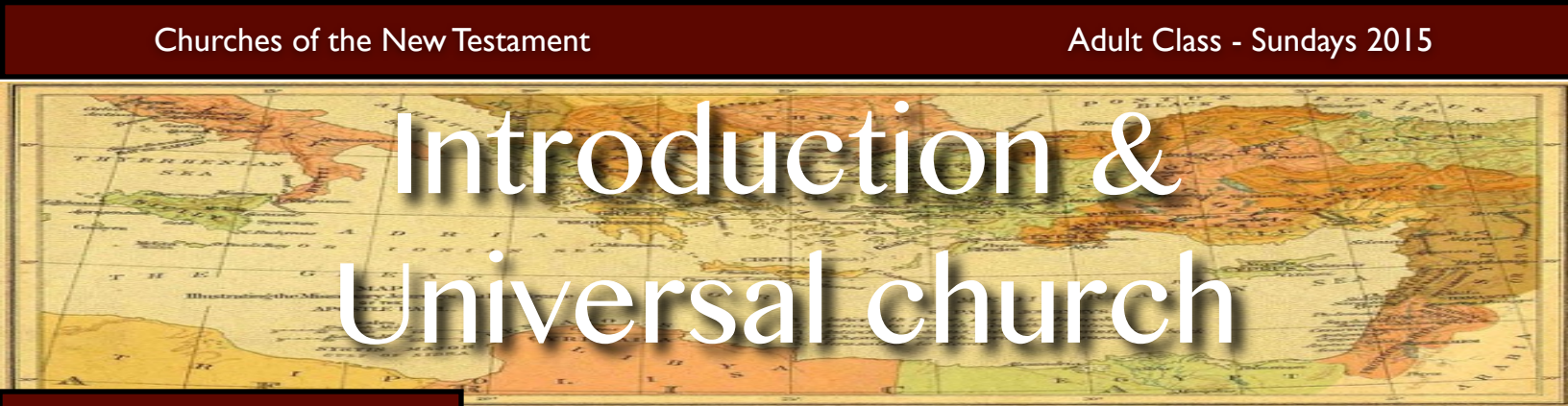
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# Introduction & Universal church

## IN PREPARATION

ISAIAH 2:1-3,

DANIEL 2:31-45

JOEL 2:28-32

MATTHEW 16:15-18

MARK 9:1

ACTS 1&2

## QUESTIONS

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE UNIVERSAL & LOCAL CHURCH? IS THERE A DIFFERENCE?

WHEN WAS THE CHURCH ESTABLISHED AND BY WHOM?

WHERE WAS THE CHURCH ESTABLISHED?

WAS THE CHURCH MADE BY ACCIDENT?

## Introduction

Jesus made a very simple yet powerful statement in Matthew 16:18 “I will build my church.” Jesus had a plan. He was going to make an organization of His people. It wasn’t going to be just another religious group. It was his own body, and it would fulfill his work. Paul says that this church reveals the “manifold wisdom of God” and that it is a glorious bride for Christ. There is no other organization like the church, and seeing as it is created by God, we need to know about it. Let’s begin our look at this wonderful organization simply called “the church”.

## The Universal church

### Why was it created?

It all began before the creation of the earth. God had set about a plan in the case of man’s disobedience. This system of redemption was focused around an institution that would be purchased by the most precious sacrifice the world would ever know.

Why did God plan man’s redemption before He made the earth?

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Did God know man would sin? Did he force man to sin?

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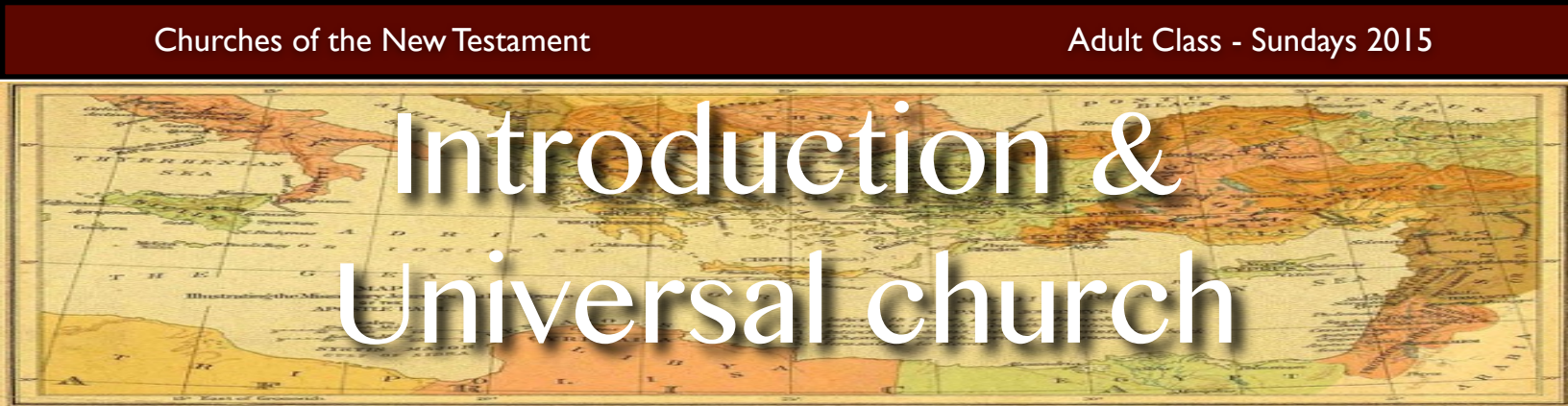
### How was it created?

#### *The Plan*

The process of redemption started before the foundation of the earth, but the creation of the church was not done over night. It began with a plan, and the bible story is all about this process of redemption!

Why is the bible story mostly about one group of people? What did God do with that group? \_\_\_\_\_

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# Introduction & Universal church

## *The Prophecies*

There are three vital passages that give us the who, what, where, and when for the beginning of the church. In Isaiah 2 the Lord gives the where and who for our questions. In Daniel 2 we learn the when for the church's establishment. Finally we learn from Joel 2 what sign to look for when the kingdom would be established.

Where does Isaiah say the kingdom would be established and who would enter it?

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When does Daniel say the kingdom would be established? How do we know?

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What would be poured out when the kingdom would be established?

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## *The Purchase*

While the Lord was telling his prophets pieces of what would happen in his kingdom, there was also much said about the coming Messiah. This Messiah or Deliverer is the one the Jews were longing for because of his connection to the kingdom.

Where would the Jews learn about the Messiah? What were they expecting? Did he deliver?

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What would the Messiah come to do? What had the Jews done to reconcile their two very distinct ideas? \_\_\_\_\_

What did Jesus do for His church? Why couldn't something else be done?

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## **When was it created?**

The three passages of the old testament identified a specific event in the future, but the establishment of the kingdom confused even the disciples! They had heard the prophecies, but now things were about to all come together.

What final two was the fulfillment of those other three twos in the old testament? Who was there? What was done? Where was it? When was it? \_\_\_\_\_

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# Jerusalem

## IN PREPARATION

ACTS 2:40-47, 4:4,  
32-5:16

5:41-6:7, 8:1-4, 14-17

9:26-31, 11:1-4

## QUESTIONS

IS JERUSALEM THE  
MODEL FOR LOCAL  
CHURCHES?

WHO WERE SOME  
KEY MEMBERS FOR  
THIS CHURCH?

WHEN WAS IT  
ESTABLISHED? BY  
WHOM?

WHAT KIND OF  
PROBLEMS DID THEY  
HAVE?

WHAT WAS THEIR  
REPUTATION?

## Introduction

At the beginning there was only one local church. All the other local churches started from the church in Jerusalem. They were strong, they were what all the other churches wanted to imitate. Today, we want to imitate this wonderful church.

## History of the church

This church had a very special beginning as we saw in Acts chapters 1 & 2. The church had begun under the leadership of the apostles, and it already had at least 3,000 people for the time being. Even though they were so large, they had the leadership to handle such a large group, and they were still on fire to reach the lost all around them. Peter, John, and all the apostles called this church their home in the beginning.

What did the church devote themselves to after their initial obedience? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the relationship between the members? What did they do together? \_\_\_\_\_

What were the christians involved in up to chapter 6? How large had they grown? Why were they growing? \_\_\_\_\_

What were their daily activities in these first 5 chapters? \_\_\_\_\_

## Issues & Struggles

It has been accurately said that the church is full of people, people have problems, and churches will have problems. The church at Jerusalem had problems even though they were a model church. Now every church will have problems at times, but we want to learn from the church at Jerusalem what they did when they had them.

What happened to their key members and leaders in Acts 3-5?



# Jerusalem

What seems to be the financial status of many of their members? Is this a problem, what did they do? \_\_\_\_\_

What happened when the church had people who were wanting to appear righteous and lied to God? How did the church handle it? What can we learn? \_\_\_\_\_

What brethren were being overlooked? Why might that have happened? What did they do? \_\_\_\_\_

How was the local church in Jerusalem organized? What did they do when their leaders were being distracted with physical things? \_\_\_\_\_

What can we learn about the relationship of the brethren and their problem solving? \_\_\_\_\_

## External Problems for Jerusalem

While the church in Jerusalem loved each other and found solutions for their internal problems, the church had more problems to be concerned about from the outside. Saul, a zealous Pharisee, had committed himself to stamping out the cause of Christ, and he was on the war path. Additionally, the church in Jerusalem is presented with a problem outside of their local group whenever Peter converts a Gentile to Christ!

What was the beginning of the persecution against the church at Jerusalem? What did the brethren do? \_\_\_\_\_

This scattering actually worked out to the benefit of Jerusalem in some ways. What were the Apostles needing to do for Samaria? \_\_\_\_\_

What changed in order to help the brethren? What problem was presented to them because of it in chapter 9? \_\_\_\_\_

How did local fellowship in the church at Jerusalem work (Acts 5:13, 9:26,28)? What can we learn for us? \_\_\_\_\_

What happened in chapter 10 that led to an issue coming up in chapter 11? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the big deal with a Gentile obeying the gospel? \_\_\_\_\_



# Jerusalem & Antioch

## IN PREPARATION

ACTS 11:17-30,

12:23-13:1,

14:24-15:34

18:22-23,

ROMANS 15:25-27

I CORINTHIANS

16:1-4, 2ND

CORINTHIANS 8-9

ACTS 21:17-26

## QUESTIONS

WHO WERE SOME  
KEY MEMBERS FOR  
THIS CHURCH?

WHEN WAS IT  
ESTABLISHED? BY  
WHOM?

WHAT KIND OF  
PROBLEMS DID THEY  
HAVE?

WHAT WAS THEIR  
REPUTATION?

## Establishment of Antioch

At this point in the book of Acts we are told that the word spread to Judea and Samaria, but another church emerges in importance in chapter 11 - Antioch. As the gospel had continued to spread, a church was established here. This place becomes an important launching place for Paul's journeys in the future.

Who were the disciples teaching? Who were they not teaching based on 11:19? \_\_\_\_\_

Who was sent to Antioch shortly after its establishment? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

What were they first called in Antioch? What did it mean? \_\_\_\_\_

What was prophesied by Agabus, and what did the brethren do? \_\_\_\_\_

## Antioch's Work in Paul's Journeys

As the church in Antioch continued to grow, the brethren played a larger part in the worldwide work of the gospel. Since Paul was hunted down by the brethren in Jerusalem, it seems Antioch was his home congregation and launching point.

Where did the first journey begin? What did Antioch do with it? \_\_\_\_\_

Who was going on the first journey? \_\_\_\_\_

Where did the first journey end? What did Paul and Barnabas share with them? How long did Paul stay? \_\_\_\_\_

In the second journey (Acts 16-18), where does Paul begin and end his journey? \_\_\_\_\_



# Jerusalem & Antioch

## The Jerusalem Council

The story in Acts shifts back to Jerusalem again because of a growing conflict among the brethren. This controversy stemmed from some brethren going beyond the word of the Apostles (15:24) and requiring circumcision and keeping the old law (15:5). This is not a discussion of changing doctrine or of a new doctrine, it was a council to find out what was specifically commanded by the Apostles & God.

How is this dissension described? Who originated this discussion? What party were they of?

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Who spoke in the meeting? What did they say about the specific question?

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What methods did they use in order to establish authority? \_\_\_\_\_

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## The Collection for the Needy at Jerusalem

One of the other big threads that flows through the new testament concerning Jerusalem is a special collection for the needy. Paul had been told to remember the poor in Jerusalem earlier (Galatians 2:9-10), and he was preparing for their needs now.

In Romans 15:25-27, what was Paul preparing and for what reason? What would it do for the brethren's relationship? \_\_\_\_\_

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In 1 Corinthians 16:1-4, what had Paul commanded the brethren in Achaia to do? Where was he taking it? How was the process to be organized? \_\_\_\_\_

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In 2 Corinthians 8-9, why is Paul writing to them? What were they needing to prepare? Where was Paul taking it? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

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In Acts 20 Paul is accompanied by brethren heading to Jerusalem and is warned against going. In Acts 21:17ff the brethren gladly received him. Why was Paul so adamant to go to Jerusalem? What happened to him there? \_\_\_\_\_

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# Galatia

## IN PREPARATION

ACTS 14:1-23 &  
GALATIANS

## QUESTIONS

WHO WERE SOME  
KEY MEMBERS FOR  
THESE CHURCHES?

WHEN WAS IT  
ESTABLISHED? BY  
WHOM?

WHAT KIND OF  
PROBLEMS DID THEY  
HAVE?

WHAT WAS THEIR  
REPUTATION?

## Establishment of the churches

This particular book does have some discussion on what region is actually “Galatia.” For our study we are going to assume that this is the Roman province Galatia, and that would include Lystra, Derbe, and Iconium. These churches were established on Paul’s first journey, and he revisited them on the second journey (Acts 15:36). This area is the home of Timothy who joined Paul on the second journey and is very well known in the new testament books. This book itself could be the earliest of all the books of the new testament, and it had a very definite theme.

Where is the region of Galatia? \_\_\_\_\_

How was the word received in the city of Iconium? Who opposed them? \_\_\_\_\_

In Lystra what amazing miracle was done? How did the people of the city respond? \_\_\_\_\_

After having such an enthusiastic response, how did Paul and Barnabas respond? What did the Jews do after that? \_\_\_\_\_

After being terribly treated and left for dead, the brethren left and returned back to and went to the congregations they established in order to do what? What did they tell them? What did they put in place? \_\_\_\_\_

## The Letter to the churches of Galatia

Considering that this is possibly the earliest new testament book written (causing it to be placed in the 50’s A.D.), that would explain why Paul writes so quickly and is surprised that these brethren had turned away so quickly to a different gospel. It seems clear that not long after Paul had been there Jewish teachers came in so that they could spy out their liberty in Christ and bring them back into submission to the old law. Page 9



# Galatia

What had happened while Paul was gone? What had the brethren been led away by? \_\_\_\_\_

What does Paul tell them to stay in, even if an angel came and told them different? \_\_\_\_\_

Where had Paul received his ministry? Where did he go after obeying the gospel? \_\_\_\_\_

Upon returning to Jerusalem, how did the brethren receive him? Did they add anything to him? What did this mean for Paul's ministry? \_\_\_\_\_

When Paul opposed Peter to his face, where did that place Paul? \_\_\_\_\_

## **Justification by Faith, not the works of the old law (Galatians 2-6)**

Paul was successful under the old law, but he had received something infinitely greater in his obedience to Christ. In obeying Christ he was no longer connected to the meritorious works of the old law but faithful obedience to Christ's gospel. This is what Paul wants for the Galatian brethren as well.

How would Paul nullify the grace of God? \_\_\_\_\_

How had the Galatians been bewitched? \_\_\_\_\_

What connection do the law & the promise have? How were they justified in Galatia? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the purpose of the old law? \_\_\_\_\_

What were the brethren being enslaved to? How were they enslaved? \_\_\_\_\_

What do the relationship between Hagar & Ishmael have to with Sarah & Isaac? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the big problem in Galatia? What were these teachers trying to do to the brethren? \_\_\_\_\_

Now that the Galatians were free from the law, how were they to walk? What were they doing to one another, and how were they to change their lives? \_\_\_\_\_

What final messages does Paul have for this church? \_\_\_\_\_



# Philippi

## IN PREPARATION

ACTS 16

PHILIPPIANS

## QUESTIONS

WHO WERE SOME  
KEY MEMBERS FOR  
THIS CHURCH?

WHEN WAS IT  
ESTABLISHED? BY  
WHOM?

WHAT KIND OF  
PROBLEMS DID THEY  
HAVE?

WHAT WAS THEIR  
REPUTATION

## Establishment of the church

This church is one of the most beloved of all the churches with which Paul interacted. At the beginning of his second journey, Paul has a vision of a man asking for him to come over and help them. Taking this vision to heart, he decides that God wants him to go and work there.

We are introduced to the first known convert at the work in Philippi - Lydia. Since there was no synagogue, the custom was to meet by the water. It turns out to be beneficial for the church when Lydia and her household obey the gospel and the work is started in Philippi.

Why did they go to the riverside instead of the synagogue?

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How did the Lord open Lydia's heart? \_\_\_\_\_

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## Growth of the church

The church in Philippi has a very small beginning. There were probably just a handful of people when Paul initially converted the household of Lydia; nevertheless, Paul continued to teach the gospel. In his teaching of the gospel there was a young demon-possessed girl that burdened Paul by identifying them as servants of the Most High God. After many days Paul cast the demon out, but that highly upset her owners because they were going to lose a lot of money. Paul ends up going to jail, and the work is temporarily hindered.

What was wrong with the slave girl saying they were servants of God? \_\_\_\_\_

What happened to Paul and Silas? \_\_\_\_\_



# Philippi

## The Philippian Jailer

After ending up in jail because of the slave girl, Paul and Silas were singing and praying and having a good influence on all the people in the jail. While they were there an earthquake happened, and the jail doors opened. The jailer woke to find the doors open and was about to kill himself before they intervened. Perhaps by seeing their good example the man was convicted and wanted to be saved.

What might have led the jailer to ask Paul & Silas what it took to be saved? \_\_\_\_\_

What saved the Philippian Jailer? \_\_\_\_\_

## A Letter to Philippi

Paul ended up eventually leaving and going on to Achaia after Philippi, but the brethren were always close to Paul. In Paul's letter to the Philippians, he identifies his love and thanks them for their financial support while he was working in Achaia. This letter is mostly positive, but there were some problems with Jewish teachers and division among the brethren.

What was Paul thankful to the brethren for? \_\_\_\_\_

What was Paul having a difficult choice over? \_\_\_\_\_

Since the brethren were having problems with pride and division, to whom does Paul appeal? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the doctrine and character of the false teachers in Philippi? \_\_\_\_\_

Who were the people the division was centered around? What was the problem? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the solution to the problems in Philippi? \_\_\_\_\_

# Thessalonica

## IN PREPARATION

ACTS 17:1-11

1 & 2 THESSALONIANS

## QUESTIONS

WHO WERE SOME KEY MEMBERS FOR THIS CHURCH?

WHEN WAS IT ESTABLISHED? BY WHOM?

WHAT KIND OF PROBLEMS DID THEY HAVE?

WHAT WAS THEIR REPUTATION?

### Establishment of the church (Acts 17:1-11)

The church in Thessalonica started under fire. Paul did as was his normal custom, and he started with the Jews. Some of the Jews were persuaded, but it was the Greeks that responded so strongly in the beginning. The idol worshippers were the core of the church that Paul would later address in his letters to Thessalonica.

What was the message Paul was proving to his audience? What was he using? \_\_\_\_\_

How did the Jews respond? What were their accusations? \_\_\_\_\_

What church was more eager for the scriptures than they were initially? \_\_\_\_\_

### Growth of the church (1 Thessalonians 1-3)

When Paul writes to these brethren in 1 Thessalonians we are delighted at the report he gives of this church. They had seen the power of the message, been convicted, and were examples for all the churches in their area. Under the work of Timothy these brethren were heading in the right direction.

What had these people turned from when they came to God? \_\_\_\_\_

What were they examples in? How so? \_\_\_\_\_

How had Paul taught and worked among them? What two relationships does he use to describe himself? \_\_\_\_\_

What was Paul's primary goal in teaching these brethren? How did they receive that message? \_\_\_\_\_

Who was sent to work with the Thessalonians? \_\_\_\_\_

How did that work go? \_\_\_\_\_



# Thessalonica

What had Timothy accomplished in this time with the brethren? \_\_\_\_\_

Why was Paul unable to come back to them? \_\_\_\_\_

## Problems in Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 4-5, 2 Thessalonians)

Just as we acknowledged with Jerusalem, churches aren't perfect, but they have to correct their issues in order to be sound. That's how it was for this church in Thessalonica, too. The brethren were doing well, but they needed to be reminded of some things.

How had they been walking? What did Paul want them to do? \_\_\_\_\_

What were the areas that they had to address in 1 Thessalonians? \_\_\_\_\_

What had they been very good at? \_\_\_\_\_

What were the misunderstandings and how was it affecting their work habits?

(1 Thessalonians 4 & 2 Thessalonians 3) \_\_\_\_\_

What did the brethren need to learn about the coming of the Lord? \_\_\_\_\_

Why did Paul give this list of admonitions at the end of 1 Thessalonians? What's included?

## A Second Reminder for Thessalonica (2 Thessalonians)

The brethren in Thessalonica were strong, but they still didn't seem to be able to wrap their heads around the coming of Christ and the gathering to Him. Paul sends a second letter to help them fully grasp what was going to happen and how they should act because of it.

What does he admonish the brethren of in chapter one? What is the punishment for rejecting the gospel? \_\_\_\_\_

What is under discussion in chapter two? Who is being discussed? \_\_\_\_\_

What was their responsibility while all this judgement was happening? \_\_\_\_\_

What were they instructed to do toward any brother who walked disorderly?

# Corinth Part One

## IN PREPARATION

ACTS 18:1-18A

I CORINTHIANS 1-5

## QUESTIONS

WHO WERE SOME KEY MEMBERS FOR THIS CHURCH?

WHEN WAS IT ESTABLISHED? BY WHOM?

WHAT KIND OF PROBLEMS DID THEY HAVE?

WHAT WAS THEIR REPUTATION

WHAT TYPE OF QUESTIONS DID THEY ASK PAUL ABOUT IN THE LETTER?

## Establishment of the church

Beginning in Acts 18 is when this church had its origin and development. Paul meets with a good couple named Aquila and Priscilla, and they work there in the city of Corinth. Paul did his usual custom and started in the synagogue. This initial work did not go very well with the Jews, and he begins working with the Gentiles. It was the purpose of the Lord for Paul to stay and work there because many were ready for the word.

How was Paul innocent of the Jews' blood? \_\_\_\_\_

Who was Crispus? What position did he have? What about Sosthenes? \_\_\_\_\_

How well were the people responding? What did they do? \_\_\_\_\_

How did the Jews oppose Paul? How did the rulers react? \_\_\_\_\_

How long did Paul stay in Corinth? \_\_\_\_\_

## Growth of the church (I Corinthians 1:4-9)

After many people had been coming to the Lord as a result of Paul's work, Paul had to leave and return to Antioch. In the time that he was gone, the church continued to grow, and even Apollos had a role in their growth (Acts 19:1). Even in the letters to Corinth it is clear that Paul had seen their growth and wanted them to continue to maturity.

In what ways had the church at Corinth grown since Paul initially established the church? \_\_\_\_\_

In what way were the spiritual gifts being a hindrance for the church, even though they were not lacking any gift (I Cor 1:7)? \_\_\_\_\_



# Corinth Part One

## Problems in Corinth

If there is one thing that Corinth is known for it has to be problems. Out of all the churches in the New Testament no other church had as many problems as Corinth. Meanwhile, Paul still addressed them as saints and a church of God (1 Corinthians 1:2). The brethren were largely immature and ignorant of the things that they needed. The church was very young spiritually speaking, and Paul is writing this letter in order to help them. Now in the letter itself there are two sections of problems: there was a set of questions the brethren asked that he specifically answered, and there was a set of issues that Corinth had not asked about which Paul educates them on.

What is the first thing Paul addresses? Where had he heard it from? How were the lines being drawn? \_\_\_\_\_

Why does Paul spend so much time talking about the gospel, how people respond to it, what's included in it, and what kind of man it takes to receive him? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the difference between the natural man & spiritual man? Why could Paul not address them as spiritual people? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the manifestation of their spiritual immaturity? \_\_\_\_\_

How does the Lord's gospel system work (3:4-23)? Who did the Corinthians belong to? \_\_\_\_\_

After clarifying the understanding of the brethren on how they should view Paul or Apollos, what was the problem with Corinth's attitude? (Chapter 4:3-21) \_\_\_\_\_

### *The man with his father's wife*

After spending the first few chapters laying down the foundational errors in Corinth's thinking and in their lives, Paul now has them in a place where the brethren will listen to him. With that in mind he goes into the most difficult of the situations found in Corinth and gives them insight into what type of action is necessary for this man.

What did Paul mean when he said in 4:21 "shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?" \_\_\_\_\_

What was tolerated there that would not be tolerated even among the pagans? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the responsibility of the brethren to their brother? \_\_\_\_\_



# Corinth Part Two

## IN PREPARATION

1 CORINTHIANS 6-16

2 CORINTHIANS

## QUESTIONS

WHAT WERE SOME OF THE PROBLEMS IN CORINTH?

WHAT DID THEY SPECIFICALLY ASK PAUL ABOUT?

WHAT WAS THE ROOT CAUSE OF THEIR PROBLEMS?

HOW HAD THE CHURCH BEEN ESTABLISHED & HOW LONG DID PAUL STAY THERE?

WHAT WAS BEING TAUGHT AMONG THE BRETHREN?

## Problems in Corinth (Continued)

After dealing with the most embarrassing sins in Corinth, Paul then turns it right back to the divisions that existed among the brethren in chapter 6. Not only were they divided, they were suing each other in court! Paul stops this nonsense. The next problem they had that was not asked about was the sexual immorality in them. The world was going to be evil, but they themselves were to not be. When they did these type actions, they were leaving the Lord and sinning against their own bodies.

Does this passage teach that is a sin to take one of our brethren to court? What is Paul's logic in the matter? \_\_\_\_\_

What were they seemingly being deceived into thinking (6:9)? \_\_\_\_\_

How were they defiling their bodies? Why shouldn't they do that? \_\_\_\_\_

## Questions from Corinth

The rest of the book primarily deals with questions that the brethren had that were seemingly problems. In many of the rest of the chapters there is a specific phrase "now concerning" which designates the particular topic under discussion and answers to their questions.

What was the question they had asked about first? Does Paul mean that they shouldn't get married? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

What specific groups does Paul address in I Corinthians 7? \_\_\_\_\_

In chapters 8-10 what is the question? What were they having issues regarding? \_\_\_\_\_

What is an idol? \_\_\_\_\_



# Corinth Part Two

Chapters 8-10 are primarily discussing issues regarding what two things? \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter 11 discusses two main problems. What were they? What were they doing? \_\_\_\_\_

Chapters 12-14 are concerning what one particular topic? \_\_\_\_\_

Why does Paul spend all of chapter 15 discussing the resurrection? \_\_\_\_\_

What are the final questions Corinth had in 16? \_\_\_\_\_

## A Follow-up Letter to Corinth

In the second letter there seem to be three primary purposes of the book: to tell them of their gladness of their repentance, to instruct them away from the false teachers that were plaguing them, and to set in order the coming collection for Jerusalem.

What comfort did the brethren receive from Titus (Chapters 1,2, & 7)? \_\_\_\_\_

How did the man respond to the rebuke & withdrawal of the congregation? \_\_\_\_\_

What was passing away and what was going to continue on (Chapters 3-5)? \_\_\_\_\_

What was under assault concerning Paul's ministry in Corinth (Chapters 6, 10-12)? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the doctrine of these false teachers? What were they trying to undo in Paul's work there? \_\_\_\_\_

What did Paul want them to have ready when he came the second time (Chapters 8-9)? \_\_\_\_\_

How did Paul feel about this church (Chapter 12:11ff)? \_\_\_\_\_

What was Paul concerned about, and what was he going to do the second time he came? \_\_\_\_\_

How did Paul feel about this church despite its problems? \_\_\_\_\_



# Rome

## IN PREPARATION

ROMANS 1-16

## QUESTIONS

WHO WERE SOME  
KEY MEMBERS FOR  
THIS CHURCH?

WHEN WAS IT  
ESTABLISHED? BY  
WHOM?

WHAT KIND OF  
PROBLEMS DID THEY  
HAVE?

WHAT WAS THEIR  
REPUTATION?

## Establishment of the church

Unlike some of the other churches we have studied, who established the church in Rome is a mystery. There is no specific indication of someone like Paul going to Rome to establish this church so we are left to discuss some possibilities.

The first possibility is that it was the visitors from Rome in Acts 2 that established at least the basics. Now, that's not the only alternative. Acts 17:6 showed that the word had been turning the world upside down, so it would make sense that the influence had reached Rome. Especially considering there were Christians (at least Priscilla and Aquila) by the time of Acts 18 when Claudius removed the Jews from Rome.

Finally, the book of Acts ends with Paul in prison at Rome waiting to defend himself before Caesar. Now, while he was there waiting Jews were coming and asking him questions and some of them were persuaded. So this could be part of the roots as well. Truthfully, it was probably a combination of all these elements that led to the church being in Rome.

What was Paul able to do in Rome while he was in Prison? \_\_\_\_\_

How do we know there were brethren in Rome? \_\_\_\_\_

## Growth of the church

Much like the establishment of the church there is not much said about its growth. But one interesting fact is seen at the end of the letter to the Romans. It seems that there might have been multiple churches in the city of Rome. There is one specifically identified as meeting in Aquila and Priscilla's home v 5. But there is also two groups identified in v 14-15 that list brethren specifically, then mention "the brethren with them." It has been suggested that there might have been two additional house churches in the city of Rome as well. This makes sense considering the vast size of the city.



# Rome

## Paul's Letter to Rome

Obviously the most famous piece of information we have about the church at Rome is the letter Paul wrote to them. The letter itself drives at some very important themes and it is the greatest single discussion about salvation in the New Testament. When thinking about the church at Rome it helps for us to remember that the church there was filled with both Jews and Gentiles, but it most likely included more Gentiles than Jews. When Paul then goes through and writes about the all inclusive nature of the gospel, how all men have been guilty before God, that it is a system based off of faith and not works of the law, these concepts are driving back to the same concept that the gospel is for every person, but especially the Gentiles.

There are two other prominent examples that show that this letter was hard a large connection to the Gentiles. In the first chapter he talks about "the obedience of the faith among all the Gentiles for His names sake." But Paul later goes on in verses 13-14 to identify that he wanted to bear fruit among them like he had among the other Gentiles, and that he was under obligation to Greeks and other groups. This seems to be a large part of the church. The second example is in chapter 15. This is where Paul is encouraging the brethren to send aid to the church in Jerusalem and he mentions specifically that the Gentiles shared in their spiritual things (15:27) and that they were indebted to help in the physical things. All of this goes to give us information about the church, and then as we study the letter we are introduced to the powerful system that God setup in the gospel, and the practical applications that need to be in our life as a result of it.

What are some major themes in the Roman letter? \_\_\_\_\_

What type of demographic would the church in Rome be made of most likely? \_\_\_\_\_

Were there any shepherds in Rome? \_\_\_\_\_

## The Falling away and Rome's part

We would be remiss to neglect to mention Rome's part in the overall apostasy. Eventually both Paul and Peter were killed in Rome according to tradition and after their deaths error eventually crept in like Paul said (Acts 20). Rome was one of the 5 groups that had chief elders and through process of time Rome eventually became the place where the Pope was put in to be head over the entire church.



# Ephesus

## IN PREPARATION

ACTS 18:24-19:41,  
20:17-38

EPHESIANS 1-6

1 TIMOTHY 1-6

REVELATION 2:1-7

## QUESTIONS

WHO WERE SOME  
KEY MEMBERS FOR  
THIS CHURCH?

WHEN WAS IT  
ESTABLISHED? BY  
WHOM?

WHAT KIND OF  
PROBLEMS DID THEY  
HAVE?

WHAT WAS THEIR  
REPUTATION?

## Establishment of the church

The beginning of this church is different than the other churches in Acts. The region of Ephesus is first introduced when a man named Apollos comes preaching the baptism of John. Seeing his zeal, knowledge, and eloquence, Priscilla and Aquilla set the man straight, and then he went over to Corinth. Around this time Paul comes to Ephesus and works. Paul meets some people who needed to be baptized with the baptism of Christ, and the work continues for two years.

In these two years Paul did many amazing miracles and the town was changing over to Christ. But this change led eventually to a riot when Demetrius turns the town against Paul because he taught against the goddess Diana. This riot soon led to Paul's departure.

Why were these disciples baptized? \_\_\_\_\_

Where did Paul reason for two years? \_\_\_\_\_

How successful was the work going in Ephesus? \_\_\_\_\_

## Growth of the church

The church had grown while under the instruction of Paul, and he loved the brethren there. Later Paul was heading to Jerusalem and was unable to go to Ephesus. Even though he couldn't go to Ephesus, he decided to meet with the shepherds at Miletus in order to give them instruction on their work.

What does the fact that the church has pastors say for their growth? \_\_\_\_\_

Were these men equipped to do their work as pastors?  
\_\_\_\_\_

What was the work Paul gave them? \_\_\_\_\_

What church was their responsibility? Where would apostasy come from? \_\_\_\_\_



# Ephesus

## Timothy in Ephesus

One important part of the growth that took place in Ephesus was Timothy. He had done good work in Thessalonica, and Paul had put him to work in Ephesus. As Paul writes his letter to him we see instruction about some of the problems Timothy dealt with while he was there.

What was Timothy supposed to appoint while he was there? \_\_\_\_\_

What were some issues Timothy dealt with in Ephesus? \_\_\_\_\_

## A Letter of Instruction and Encouragement (Ephesians 1-6)

The next interaction we have with the church at Ephesus is the letter Paul sent them from prison. There were a couple of main things that he wanted to stress to the brethren in His letter. First, that the church is God's glorious institution wherein both Jew and Gentile are saved. Second, that the new life they had come to was the only life for them. With this in mind, he instructs them to put off the old and put on the new in every part of their life!

What was the mystery God had in store for mankind? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the work of the leadership in Ephesians 4:11-16? Why is this role so vital? \_\_\_\_\_

What relationships did their change in life affect? \_\_\_\_\_

## A Letter of Rebuke (Revelation 2:1-7)

As we begin introducing the seven churches of Asia, we are given a sad note about this good work: they were doing all the right things but the fire had gone out - they had lost their first love. The church was working, they were unable to put up with false teachers, they had not grown weary in the work, but their heart wasn't in it anymore. Jesus tells them to fix it! The church must not only be doing the right things, they must have their heart right!

What were the positive things they were doing? Did they seem alive and active? \_\_\_\_\_

What had happened since Paul left? \_\_\_\_\_

How could they repent from abandoning the love they had at first? \_\_\_\_\_

How had this happened to such a wonderful church? \_\_\_\_\_

What would they receive for their repentance and continuing in the faith? \_\_\_\_\_



# 7 Churches of Asia

## IN PREPARATION

REVELATION 2:8-29

2ND PETER 2:15-16,

NUMBERS 22-25

I KINGS 16:31

## QUESTIONS

WHAT THINGS  
POSITIVELY OR  
NEGATIVELY ARE SAID  
ABOUT THESE  
CHURCHES?

HOW IS JESUS  
DESCRIBED AS HE  
SPEAKS TO THEM?

WHAT KIND OF  
PROBLEMS DID THEY  
HAVE?

WHAT WAS THEIR  
REPUTATION?

## Introduction

In the letters to the seven churches of Asia there are all kinds of issues addressed among the churches. These churches comprise almost all the different issues that plague churches for all mankind. With that in mind, we want to understand the issues they dealt with and learn from their mistakes as well as their good examples.

## Smyrna

Smyrna was just north of Ephesus about 35 miles and was known for its magnificent harbor. It was the town competing with Ephesus for the chiefest among the cities of Asia. The region was especially know for its emperor worship, but despite this, the church had done very well. In fact, Smyrna and Philadelphia are the only two that didn't have anything negative said about them. Because of their continued faithfulness they had a glorious reward promised to them by Christ.

What did Jesus say "I know" about? \_\_\_\_\_

How are the Jews pictured in this discussion? \_\_\_\_\_

What was coming soon for this church? \_\_\_\_\_

What would they receive for their faithfulness? \_\_\_\_\_

## Pergamum

This city was the capital of the region of Asia, and it was the northernmost of all the cities addressed. This church dwelt in a terrible place - where Satan's throne was. Despite this they were doing okay, but they had to change...



# 7 Churches of Asia

...a few things in order to be acceptable to the Lord. It seems that the evil around them had crept into the church. The brethren were being plagued by the idols around them, and they needed to repent quickly before Jesus would come and war against them with his two-edged sword.

What did it mean that they dwell where Satan's throne is? \_\_\_\_\_

Who had they held fast to? Who was killed among them? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the teaching of Balaam, and who was Balak? (2 Peter 2:15-16, Numbers 22-25)

What was the result of this teaching? What did it do to the Jews of the old testament?

What was the desired response, and what would they receive for it? \_\_\_\_\_

## Thyatira

Thyatira was the least known and least important of all these cities according to research, but it has the most said about it. This church seemed be divided according to to their interaction with Jezebel. This Jezebel was a monster of a woman in the old testament. She was constantly against Elijah and wanted him killed. Jezebel also led Ahab much further into wickedness that it seems he would have gone on his own. She was a wicked woman, and her lifestyle is pictured here destroying this church.

Idolatry was a continued problem for the christians because of their culture. What was Jezebel leading this church into? \_\_\_\_\_

How is Jezebel pictured? What is she known for? \_\_\_\_\_

What did all the churches know? \_\_\_\_\_

Was the whole church being led away? \_\_\_\_\_

How did people describe this terrible doctrine? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the reward for remaining faithful? \_\_\_\_\_

As we are surveying these churches, what have we learned? \_\_\_\_\_



# 7 Churches of Asia Part 2

## IN PREPARATION

REVELATION 3:1-22

## QUESTIONS

WHAT THINGS POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY ARE SAID ABOUT THESE CHURCHES?

HOW IS JESUS DESCRIBED AS HE SPEAKS TO THEM?

WHAT KIND OF PROBLEMS DID THEY HAVE?

WHAT WAS THEIR REPUTATION?

## Introduction

As we continue our study of these seven churches, we are beginning to see that they were not so different than we are today. They wanted to do what was right, but they had their struggles. In fact, they struggled with the same exact things that we struggle with - apathy, worldliness, false teaching. This list could go on and on, but the response required from all these churches is the same one the Lord requires from us. The encouraging and sobering thing throughout all these is two simple words "I know." The Lord knows about us here, He knew about them in their churches, and He wants all of us to be concerned about His will first!

## Sardis

As we open up our study again we are struck with a very scary condition for this church - they had a reputation for being alive, but they were dead. This simple statement drives home the point that the Lord is very aware of the circumstances of each local congregation. This congregation was on its last leg, and they needed to sober up quickly or it was all going to be over for them.

What was the reputation for the church? What was the reality?

What did it mean that they were dead? \_\_\_\_\_

How does this happen to a church? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the instruction Christ gave? \_\_\_\_\_

What did this mean? How were they to accomplish it? \_\_\_\_\_

Was all the news bad for Sardis? \_\_\_\_\_

What would be the reward for those who repented? \_\_\_\_\_

# 7 Churches of Asia

## Part 2

### Philadelphia

After receiving some terrible news about the church in Sardis, we turn to Philadelphia for a very encouraging letter. The Lord knew about the good things going on in this church, and He encourages them to press on despite their little power. The Lord would open the way, He would take care of their oppressors, but they had to remain where they were and press on! What did it mean that Christ had set before them an open door? \_\_\_\_\_

What could it mean for the church to have a little power? \_\_\_\_\_

How did Christ feel about this church? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the hour of trial that was coming? \_\_\_\_\_

What was their reward if they held on? \_\_\_\_\_

### Laodecia (Colossae)

The church here in Laodecia is not mentioned for the first time in the book of Revelation like many of the others. Laodecia was supposed to have the letter to the Colossians read to them as well. This bit of history helps us get an idea of what was going on in the area. The brethren in Colossae had been under assault by false teachers, and Paul wrote to them in order to keep them in the faith. By the time John writes his letter to Laodecia the church seems to have worn down and become complacent. This had to change if they wanted to remain faithful. The city of Laodecia was an extremely lucrative city at this time. Their three main products were gold because of the banking system, clothing because of the black woolled sheep the city was known for, and the specific medicine they had that was a remedy for weak and ailing eyes. Despite this prosperity they had a problem with their water supply. Colossae had good cold springs, and Heirapolis (another nearby city) was prized for its hot springs, but the water seems to have been lukewarm in Laodecia. All their wealth could not provide the good water they wanted.

What good is said about this church? \_\_\_\_\_

What did it mean that they were lukewarm? At what temperatures is water the most useful? \_\_\_\_\_

Are those comfortable? \_\_\_\_\_

Instead of being rich, how was this church's condition? What was the remedy? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the solution for Laodecia? \_\_\_\_\_



# Honorable Mentions

**IN PREPARATION**

ACTS 16

TITUS

ACTS 17:10-34

**QUESTIONS**

WHO WERE SOME  
KEY MEMBERS FOR  
THIS CHURCH?

WHEN WAS IT  
ESTABLISHED? BY  
WHOM?

WHAT KIND OF  
PROBLEMS DID THEY  
HAVE?

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REPUTATION?

**Crete**

This congregation has very little known about it. The information we do have is largely in Paul's letter to Titus. Titus is here at this church in order to establish them and put in leadership. The letter is full of addresses for every aspect of that congregation's life.

This island in the Mediterranean had a well known reputation for the type of people there. Paul specifically identifies one of their prophets and confirms his testimony that "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." What a reputation!

What type of men needed to be put in as shepherds? \_\_\_\_\_

How was Titus supposed to work with each member? \_\_\_\_\_

How would working in this place be difficult for Titus? \_\_\_\_\_

**Berea & Athens**

These are two churches that were established right around the same time. After Paul had been in Thessalonica, he was pleased with the great response of the brethren in Berea. While not much is mentioned, what is mentioned is very commendable! Athens, on the other hand, seemed to be very difficult. It was full of idolatry and philosophy, despite this there was success in Athens. But there is not really anything else recorded about this church in our new testaments.

What is Berea commended for? \_\_\_\_\_

What is Athens well known for? \_\_\_\_\_

# Reflection

**As we come to the end of this quarter, we would be remiss to not consider the things we have learned and the pattern we see in these churches. These questions help drive us back to what God wants us to see in all these churches of the New Testament.**

How were these churches organized collectively? Were they all connected? \_\_\_\_\_

How were these churches organized locally? \_\_\_\_\_

What did each role do for these congregations? What were their functions?

Shepherds \_\_\_\_\_

Evangelists \_\_\_\_\_

Teachers \_\_\_\_\_

Deacons \_\_\_\_\_

Members \_\_\_\_\_

What common threads do we see in a positive way for these churches? \_\_\_\_\_

What common threads do we see in a negative way for these churches? \_\_\_\_\_

What wisdom of God do we see in His divine plans for the church universally and locally? \_\_\_\_\_

What have you learned this quarter regarding these local churches? How can it help you? \_\_\_\_\_

Since these churches are our models today, how can we apply these principles to our local congregation here? \_\_\_\_\_

Despite the common theme of problems, there is always a common theme of solutions. What does this say for the future of our church? \_\_\_\_\_