

REL A 212 Bible Dictionary Readings: Section 2, The Pauline Epistles

Paul

The life and work of the great Apostle Paul is recorded at considerable length in the Acts and the epistles. It is only possible to indicate here a few of the chief facts. He was known in early life as Saul; his Latin name Paul is first mentioned at the beginning of his gentile ministry (Acts 13:9). He belonged to Tarsus, in Cilicia (Acts 9:11); was a Pharisee and a pupil of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3); was active in the persecution of Christians (Acts 8:3; 26:10; Gal. 1:13; Philip. 3:6); and took part in the martyrdom of Stephen (Acts 7:58; 8:1). He started for Damascus for the purpose of further persecution (Acts 9:1) and on the road saw a vision of the Lord Jesus, which changed the whole current of his life (Acts 9:4–19; 22:7; 26:14; Gal. 1:15–16). After his baptism by Ananias (Acts 9:18), he retired into Arabia (Gal. 1:17) and then returned to Damascus, where he preached (Acts 9:19–25; 2 Cor. 11:32; Gal. 1:17–18). Being compelled to flee, about three years after his conversion he went to Jerusalem, where he stayed 15 days, Barnabas introducing him to Peter and James (Acts 9:26–30; Gal. 1:18–19). Being in danger, he retired to Tarsus (Acts 9:29–30) and there remained six or seven years, preaching in Syria and Cilicia (Gal. 1:21–24). He was then brought by Barnabas to Antioch (Acts 11:26) and after one year paid a visit to Jerusalem (Acts 11:29–30). After two more years' work in Antioch, he started with Barnabas and Mark on his first missionary journey (Acts 13:1–14:26). Then came another visit to Jerusalem with Barnabas to attend a conference with the other Apostles (Acts 15:1–33; Gal. 2:1–10), after which they returned to Antioch (Acts 15:35). He then started on his second missionary journey (Acts 15:36–18:22), which lasted about three years and ended with a visit to Jerusalem. After a short stay in Antioch, Paul began his third journey, which occupied about 3½ years (Acts 18:23–21:15). On his return to Jerusalem he was arrested and sent to Caesarea (Acts 21:17–23:35), where he remained a prisoner for two years (Acts 24:1–26:32), and was then sent for trial to Rome, suffering shipwreck on the way (Acts 27:1–28:10). He remained in Rome two years (Acts 28:30) and was then released. He then appears to have visited Asia, Macedonia, Crete, and perhaps Spain. At the end of about four years he was again taken a prisoner to Rome and suffered martyrdom, probably in the spring of A.D. 65. For an account of his teaching, see Pauline Epistles.

1 & 2 Thessalonians

Pauline Epistles—Epistles to the Thessalonians

Epistles to the Thessalonians

These epistles were written from Corinth during Paul's first visit to Europe. His work in Thessalonica is described in Acts 17. It was his wish to return, but he was unable to do so (1 Thes. 2:18); he therefore sent Timothy to cheer the converts and bring him word how they fared. The first epistle is the outcome of his thankfulness on Timothy's return.

Analysis of 1 Thessalonians

1. Personal: (a) Salutation and thanksgiving (1:1–10). (b) Reminder of his work among them, and fresh thanksgiving (2:1–16). (c) His anxiety on their behalf and his reason for sending Timothy (2:17–3:10). (d) A prayer for them (3:11–13).

2. Instruction: (a) Exhortation about spiritual growth, chastity, love, and diligence (4:1–12). (b) Doctrine of the second advent, for the consolation of the bereaved (4:13–18), and for the warning and edification of survivors (5:1–11). (c) Exhortations to laity, clergy, and the whole church (5:12–28).

In the short interval between the two epistles the Church suffered from persecution (2 Thes. 1:4); the prospect of an immediate return of the Lord fostered an unhealthy excitement (2:2) and seemed to countenance improvident idleness (3:6), while Paul's own teaching had been misunderstood (3:17).

Analysis of 2 Thessalonians

1. Salutation and thanksgiving (1:1–10).
2. A prayer (1:11–12).
3. Teaching about the second advent; the Lord not to come immediately (2:1–12).
4. Thanksgiving, an appeal to stand firm, and a prayer (2:13–17).
5. Prayer for himself and his converts (3:1–5).
6. Duty of subordination and of work (3:6–16).
7. Conclusion (3:17–18).

Thessalonica

(Modern Saloniki.) Capital of Macedonia; Paul and Silas preached there (Acts 17:1); also the home of Aristarchus. The city was named in honor of Thessalonica, sister of Alexander the Great and wife of the Greek military leader Cassander.

1 & 2 Corinthians

Pauline Epistles—Epistles to the Corinthians

Epistles to the Corinthians

Corinth was the meeting point of many nationalities because the main current of the trade between Asia and western Europe passed through its harbors. Paul's first visit lasted nearly two years; his converts were mainly Greeks, gifted with a keen sense of the joys of physical existence, a passion for freedom, and a genius for rhetoric and logic, but reared in the midst of the grossest moral corruption, undisciplined and self-conceited. Some time before 1 Cor. was written he paid them a second visit (2 Cor. 12:14; 13:1) to check some rising disorder (2 Cor. 2:1; 13:2) and wrote them a letter, now lost (1 Cor. 5:9). They had also been visited by Apollos (Acts 18:27), perhaps by Peter (1 Cor. 1:12), and by some Jewish Christians who brought with them letters of commendation from Jerusalem (1 Cor. 1:12; 2 Cor. 3:1; 5:16; 11:23).

Analysis of 1 Corinthians

1. Salutation and thanksgiving (1:1–9).
2. Rebuke of the Corinthian church for lack of unity (1:10–6:20): (a) The spirit of partisanship and insubordination (1:10–4:21). (b) The case of impurity (5:1–13; 6:9–20). (c) The lawsuits (6:1–9).
3. Paul's reply to inquiries made by them as to: (a) Marriage (7:1–40). (b) Meat offered to idols (8:1–11:1). (c) The order of worship, with special reference to the Lord's Supper and the use of spiritual gifts (11:2–14:40). This section contains a magnificent description of love (12:31–13:13), the greatest in the trio of things that abide forever.
4. Doctrine of the Resurrection: (a) Of Christ (15:1–19). (b) Of the dead (15:20–34). (c) Degrees of glory (15:35–58).

5. Directions about a collection for the Christian poor at Jerusalem; information about Paul's, Timothy's, and Apollos's plans; final exhortations and salutation (16:1–24). Soon after writing the first epistle Paul was driven from Ephesus by a riot (Acts 19). In Macedonia he met Titus (2 Cor. 7:6), who brought him news from Corinth that his letter had been well received and had produced the desired effect; the Church had cleared itself of all complicity in a sexual offense and had excommunicated the offender (2:5–11). But Paul found that a personal coolness had sprung up between himself and his converts (7:2; 12:15), which unscrupulous opponents were turning to their own account.

Analysis of 2 Corinthians

1. Salutation and thanksgiving (1:1–11).
2. Personal, arising out of the report of Titus: (a) His own movements and feelings toward the Corinthian church (1:12–2:17). (b) The characteristics of the Christian ministry as exemplified by true Apostles (3:1–6:10). (c) An account of the impression produced on his own mind by the report of Titus (6:11–7:16).
3. Welfare collection for the churches of Judea (8:1–9:15).
4. Assertion of his own position as an Apostle (10:1–12:10).
5. Conclusion (12:11–13:14).

Corinth

Chief town of the Roman province of Achaia. It had a magnificent situation on the isthmus connecting the Peloponnesus with the mainland of Greece, possessing a harbor on both eastern and western sides. It was practically destroyed at the Roman conquest, 146 B.C., but was rebuilt by Julius Caesar a hundred years later. Paul lived here for a year and six months (Acts 18:1–18) in the course of his second missionary journey. Soon after his departure it was visited by Apollos. We learn from the two epistles to the Corinthians that the Church here was split up into parties and that the Judaizing element was very active. Near here were held the famous Isthmian games, from which Paul borrows the striking imagery of 1 Cor. 9:24–27.

Galatians

Pauline Epistles—Epistle to the Galatians

There is some uncertainty as to what churches were addressed in this epistle. They were either in northern Galatia, the district of which Ancyra was capital, or in the district on the borders of Phrygia and Galatia that was visited by Paul on his first missionary journey. In either case the Galatian churches were certainly visited by Paul on his second (Acts 16:6) and third (Acts 18:23) journeys. (See *Galatia*.) The epistle was written by him (probably while traveling through Macedonia) at the news of a wholesale defection from the truth of the gospel in favor of a return to the bondage of the Jewish law. In the epistle he vindicates his own position as an Apostle, enunciates the doctrine of righteousness by faith, and affirms the value of spiritual religion as opposed to a religion of externals.

Analysis of Galatians

1. Salutation and expression of regret at the news he had received (1:1–10).
2. Personal: a vindication of his own position as an Apostle; his relationship with other Apostles (1:11–2:21).
3. Theological, showing the superiority of the doctrine of faith to the doctrine of merit by works (3:1–4:31): (a) Appeal to their own experience of the Christian life (3:1–

- 6). (b) The faith of Abraham; faith in Jesus Christ enables believers to become Abraham's seed (3:1–29). (c) The purpose of the law and its preparatory function (4:1–11). (d) A personal appeal (4:12–20). (e) Allegory of Isaac and Ishmael (4:21–31).
4. Practical results of the doctrine of faith (5:1–6:10): (a) A return of Judaism a denial of Christian liberty (5:1–12). (b) Liberty did not mean freedom from moral restraint (5:13–26). (c) Duty of sympathy and liberality (6:1–10).
5. Autograph postscript (6:11–18).

Galatia

A district in the center of Asia Minor, inhabited by tribes from Gaul who settled there in the 3rd century B.C. (Galatia was also the Greek name for Gallia, or Gaul.) It was visited by Paul on his second and third journeys (Acts 16:6; 18:23). Some scholars think that Paul and Luke regarded the cities of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, visited by Paul on his first journey, as part of Galatia, and that it was to these towns that the epistle to the Galatians was addressed. They formed (with the exception of Iconium) part of the Roman province of Galatia but in popular speech were generally regarded as belonging to Pisidia or Lycaonia.

Romans

Pauline Epistles—Epistle to the Romans

Epistle to the Romans

This epistle was written from Corinth toward the end of the stay recorded in Acts 20:3. Paul was then contemplating a visit to Jerusalem, which was certain to be dangerous (Rom. 15:31). If he escaped with his life he hoped afterwards to visit Rome. The letter was meant in part to prepare the Church there to receive him when he came. It may also be regarded as containing a statement of doctrines that had been in dispute with the Judaizing Christians and that Paul now regarded as finally established.

Analysis of Romans

1. Salutation and thanksgiving (1:1–15).
2. Doctrinal (1:16–11:36): (a) His main thesis, the doctrine of righteousness by faith (1:16–17). (b) Such a doctrine met a crying need of the whole world, for God's wrath against sin was only too evident, and this included both Jew and Gentile (1:18–2:29). (c) The Jew's position of privilege (3:1–8; see also Rom. 9). (d) Jew and Gentile shown from scripture to be alike under sin (3:9–20). (e) Righteousness by faith now made possible and all boasting excluded (3:21–31). (f) Illustration of the doctrine from the case of Abraham (4:1–25). (g) Joy through the Lord Jesus (5:1–11). (h) The first and the second Adam (5:12–19). (i) The moral consequences of our deliverance, namely, union with Christ, release from sin, and life in the Spirit (5:20–8:39). (j) Israel's rejection, the reason for it (9:1–10:21), yet not final (11:1–36).
3. Practical exhortations: (a) The duty of holiness of life and the law of love (12:1–13:14). (b) The treatment of weaker brethren (14:1–15:13).
4. Personal: (a) His reasons for writing (15:14–33). (b) Greetings (16:1–23). (c) Benediction and praise to the Lord (16:24–27).

Election

A theological term primarily denoting God's choice of the house of Israel to be the covenant people with privileges and responsibilities, that they might become a means of blessing to the whole world (Rom. 9:11; 11:5, 7, 28). Election is an opportunity for service and is both on a national and an individual basis. On a national basis the seed of Abraham carry the gospel to the world. But it is by individual faithfulness that it is done.

The elect are chosen even "before the foundation of the world," yet no one is unconditionally elected to eternal life. Each must, for himself, hearken to the gospel and receive its ordinances and covenants from the hands of the servants of the Lord in order to obtain salvation. If one is elected but does not serve, his election could be said to have been in vain, as Paul expressed in 2 Cor. 6:1.

We see that elections are not all of the same kind. Since election has to do with God's choice of persons or groups to accomplish His purposes, some may be elected by Him to one thing and some to another. Although the Lord uses certain individuals to accomplish His purposes, it does not necessarily follow that these persons will automatically receive a fulness of salvation thereby. For instance, Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus fulfilled certain purposes in the economy of God, but they apparently did it for their own reasons and not as conscious acts of faith and righteousness. On the other hand, salvation of one's soul comes only by personal integrity and willing obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Thus there are some elections to be desired over others. An "election of grace" spoken of in D&C 84:98–102 and Rom. 11:1–5 has reference to one's situation in mortality; that is, being born at a time, at a place, and in circumstances where one will come in favorable contact with the gospel. This election took place in the premortal existence. Those who are faithful and diligent in the gospel in mortality receive an even more desirable election in this life and become the elect of God. These receive the promise of a fulness of God's glory in eternity (D&C 84:33–41).

The concept held by many that God unconditionally elected some to be saved and some to be damned without any effort, action, or choice on their part is not correct, for the scriptures teach that it is only by faith and obedience that one's calling and election is made sure (2 Pet. 1; D&C 131:5). See also Abraham, covenant of.

Ephesians

Pauline Epistles— Ephesians

Epistle to the Ephesians

This epistle was carried by the same messenger who bore the Colossians' letter. The epistle is of great importance, for it contains Paul's teaching regarding the Church of Christ.

Analysis of Ephesians

1. Salutation (1:1–2).
2. Doctrinal, the Church of Christ: (a) Thanksgiving for blessings bestowed in Christ (1:3–14), and prayer for the further enlightenment of his converts (1:15–2:10). (b) The change in their state: once aliens, now fellow-citizens of the saints, Gentile and Jew henceforth united in one Church (2:11–22), a mystery now revealed (3:1–12). (c) Prayer and thanksgiving (3:13–21).

3. Practical exhortation: (a) Necessity of unity (4:1–6), each developing his own gift for the good of the whole; role of apostles and prophets in the Church (4:7–16). (b) The new man (4:17–5:21). (c) Teaching about marriage, children, and servants (5:22–6:9). (d) The Christian armor (6:10–20).
4. Reference to Tychicus (6:21–22); blessing (6:23–24).

Grace

A word that occurs frequently in the New Testament, especially in the writings of Paul. The main idea of the word is divine means of help or strength, given through the bounteous mercy and love of Jesus Christ.

It is through the grace of the Lord Jesus, made possible by His atoning sacrifice, that mankind will be raised in immortality, every person receiving his body from the grave in a condition of everlasting life. It is likewise through the grace of the Lord that individuals, through faith in the Atonement of Jesus Christ and repentance of their sins, receive strength and assistance to do good works that they otherwise would not be able to maintain if left to their own means. This grace is an enabling power that allows men and women to lay hold on eternal life and exaltation after they have expended their own best efforts.

Divine grace is needed by every soul in consequence of the Fall of Adam and also because of man's weaknesses and shortcomings. However, grace cannot suffice without total effort on the part of the recipient. Hence the explanation, "It is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do" (2 Ne. 25:23). It is truly the grace of Jesus Christ that makes salvation possible. This principle is expressed in Jesus' parable of the vine and the branches (John 15:1–11). See also John 1:12–17; Eph. 2:8–9; Philip. 4:13; D&C 93:11–14.

Ephesus

Capital of the Roman province of Asia and a great commercial center. Ephesus was three miles from the sea, on the banks of the navigable river Cayster. It was an important business center, much of the commerce between east and west passing along the great highway that connected Ephesus with the Euphrates. It thus became a natural center for the Christian Church in Asia Minor. The city was celebrated as the guardian of the image of Artemis or Diana (Acts 19:35), and there was a large manufacture of silver shrines of the goddess. The magnificence of her temple was proverbial. Ephesus was visited by Paul at the close of his second missionary journey (Acts 18:19); he stayed there for two years on his third journey (Acts 19) and left in consequence of a disturbance caused by silversmiths whose trade in shrines of the goddess had suffered in consequence of the growth of the Christian faith. See also Acts 20:17; 1 Cor. 15:32; 16:8; 1 Tim. 1:3; 2 Tim. 1:18; 4:12. The city was also closely connected with the life of John. See also John.

Colossians & Philemon

Pauline Epistles—Epistles to the Colossians

Epistle to the Colossians

This epistle was the result of a visit from Epaphras, the evangelist of the Church in Colosse (1:7–8), who reported that the Colossians were falling into serious error, the result of a deep consciousness of sin leading to a desire to attain moral perfection by mechanical means, the careful observance of external ordinances (2:16) and ascetic restrictions (2:20), coupled with

special devotion to a host of angelic mediators. The attractiveness of such teaching was due not only to the satisfaction it offered to the craving after sanctification, but also to the show it made of superior wisdom and greater insight into the mysteries of the universe. Paul shows that Christ, in His own person, is the one principle of the unity of the universe, and that sanctification is to be found only through union with Him.

Analysis of Colossians

1. Salutation, thanksgiving, and prayer (1:1–13).
2. Doctrinal: (a) Christ, our Redeemer, the author and goal of all creation, the Lord of all divine perfection, in whom is the reconciliation of the universe (1:14–2:5). (b) Hence the importance of union with Him (2:6–12). (c) Danger of ceremonialism and of angel worship (2:13–19). (d) Importance of dying and rising again with Christ (2:20–3:4).
3. Exhortation: (a) Every evil inclination to be subdued (3:5–11). (b) We must clothe ourselves in all graces of the Spirit (3:12–17). (c) Social duties to be observed (3:18–4:6).
4. Personal: commendations and greetings (4:7–18).

Colosse

A town of Phrygia, in the valley of the Lycus, near Laodicea and Hierapolis, and close to the great road that led from Ephesus to the Euphrates. When Paul wrote his epistle to the Colossians he had probably not yet visited the place. Epaphras and perhaps Timothy were its first Christian teachers (Col. 1:1, 7; 4:12–13).

Philemon

Of Colosse (Col. 4:9; Philem. 1:10), converted by Paul (Philem. 1:1). He was the owner of the slave Onesimus, who ran away and joined Paul and was sent back by him with a letter to his master. See Pauline Epistles.

Philippians

Pauline Epistles—Epistles to the Philippians

Epistle to the Philippians

The church at Philippi was the earliest founded by Paul in Europe (Acts 16:11–40). His first visit ended abruptly, but he was not forgotten, and his converts sent him supplies not only while he remained in the neighborhood, but also after he had moved on to Corinth (Philip. 4:15–16). He passed through Philippi six years later (Acts 20:2) on his way from Ephesus to Corinth, and again on his return (Acts 20:6) from Corinth to Jerusalem. When the news of his removal to Rome reached the Philippians, they sent one of their number, Epaphroditus (Philip. 2:25), to minister to him in their name. The strain of work in the capital proved too severe, and Epaphroditus had to be sent home (2:26–30), taking with him the epistle to the Philippians. Its main purpose is to express Paul's gratitude and affection, and to cheer them under the disappointment of his protracted imprisonment.

Analysis of Philippians

1. Salutation, thanksgiving, and prayer on their behalf (1:1–11).
2. Personal: dealing with the progress of the missionary work (1:12–26).
3. Exhortation to unity, humility, and perseverance (2:1–18).
4. Paul's own plans, and those of Timothy and Epaphroditus (2:19–30).

5. Warning against false teachers (3:1–4:9).
6. Thanks for their assistance, and conclusion (4:10–23).

Philemon

Of Colosse (Col. 4:9; Philem. 1:10), converted by Paul (Philem. 1:1). He was the owner of the slave Onesimus, who ran away and joined Paul and was sent back by him with a letter to his master. See Pauline Epistles.

Philippi

A city of Macedonia, founded by Philip, father of Alexander the Great; visited by Paul (Acts 16:12–40; 20:6; see also Philip. 1:1; 1 Thes. 2:2). It is described as a Roman “colony”; it contained a body of Roman citizens, placed there for military purposes, governed directly from Rome and independent of provincial governors and local magistrates. The church there was mainly gentile, there being no Jewish synagogue. Paul’s visit was memorable for his assertion of his rights as a Roman citizen (Acts 16:37). The converts were afterwards generous in their contributions toward his support (Philip. 4:15).

1 & Timothy, Titus

Pauline Epistles—Epistles to Titus

Epistle to Titus

See also *Titus*.

Analysis of Titus

1. Salutation (1:1–4).
2. Qualifications of an elder (1:5–9).
3. Discipline in the Cretan church (1:10–16).
4. Proper treatment of various classes of Christians (2:1–15).
5. General exhortation (3:1–11).
6. Personal messages (3:12–15).

Pauline Epistles—Epistles to Timothy

1 Timothy

In the course of his travels after his first imprisonment Paul came to Ephesus, where he left Timothy to check the growth of certain unprofitable forms of speculation, intending (3:14) afterwards to return. As a delay might occur, he writes to him, perhaps from Macedonia (1:3), to give him counsel and encouragement in the fulfillment of his duty. See also *Timothy*.

Analysis of 1 Timothy

1. Salutation (1:1–2).
2. Foolish speculations and legalism to be kept in check as dangerous to the simplicity of the gospel (1:3–20).
3. Directions about public worship, and about the character and conduct of ministers (2:1–3:13).
4. Summary of the true believer’s creed (3:14–16).
5. Warning against foolish asceticism (4:1–16).
6. Hints to Timothy about the treatment of his flock (5:1–6:2).
7. Warnings against various dangers (6:3–19).
8. Conclusion (6:20–21).

2 Timothy

This epistle was written during Paul's second imprisonment, shortly before his martyrdom. It contains the Apostle's last words and shows the wonderful courage and trust with which he faced death.

Analysis of 2 Timothy

1. Salutation (1:1–2).
2. Charge to Timothy (1:3–14).
3. The desertion by old friends, and the faithfulness of others (1:15–18).
4. Various warnings and directions (2:1–26).
5. Dangers ahead and how to meet them (3:1–4:5).
6. Paul's confidence in the face of death (4:6–8).
7. A message to friends (4:9–21).

Pastoral Epistles

The name given to the epistles to Timothy and Titus, because they deal with the pastoral office and the duties of the shepherds or ministers of the Church.

Titus

Apparently converted by Paul, perhaps at Antioch (Titus 1:4). Attended the conference at Jerusalem about circumcision (Gal. 2:1); probably with Paul on his third missionary journey; sent by him to Corinth as the bearer of 1 Cor. (2 Cor. 7:6–7, 13, 15). He then returned to Paul in Macedonia and was again sent to Corinth with 2 Cor. and with instructions about a collection for the poor of Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8:4–7). After this we have no mention of him for eight years. At the conclusion of Paul's first imprisonment at Rome, Titus joined him at Ephesus, and they went together to Crete, where Titus remained and where he received a letter from Paul with instructions about his work and asking him to come to Nicopolis (Titus 1:5; 3:12). Later on he was sent on a mission to Dalmatia (2 Tim. 4:10).

Timothy

Honored of God. The son of a Greek father and Jewish mother (Eunice) living at Lystra (Acts 16:1–3; 2 Tim. 1:5); circumcised by Paul in order that he might be of greater use for evangelistic work among Jews (Acts 16:3); spoken of by Paul as his own "son in the faith" (1 Tim. 1:2, 18; 2 Tim. 1:2); at Philippi (Philip. 2:22); at Beroea (Acts 17:14); sent to Thessalonica (1 Thes. 3:2); with Paul at Corinth (1 Thes. 1:1; 2 Thes. 1:1); sent to Macedonia (Acts 19:22); to Corinth (1 Cor. 16:10); with Paul in Macedonia when he wrote 2 Cor. 1:1, 19; and at Corinth (Rom. 16:21); followed him to Troas (Acts 20:4–5); at Rome (Philip. 1:1; 2:19; Col. 1:1; Philem. 1:1); at Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3); Paul wished him to come to Rome (2 Tim. 4:9, 21); set at liberty (the details of the imprisonment are unknown) (Heb. 13:23). Timothy was perhaps Paul's most trusted and capable assistant, as in Philip. 2:19–23.