

Session 7: Missions Era & Epistles (Chapter 18 and 19)

Today's session focuses on the **Missions Era** and **the Epistles**.

Missions Era

Central Figure

Paul

Location

Roman Empire

Storyline Summary

Paul *expands* the church into the *Roman* Empire during the next two *decades*.

REVIEW FROM LAST WEEK:

- Saul is traveling to Damascus to find and persecute Christians, when Jesus appears to him from heaven and Saul is converted to Christianity.
- Jesus changes his name to Paul.
- Jesus expressly tells Paul to become a missionary to the Gentiles.
- This marks a transition in the nature of the church, because up to this time, the message has been given exclusively to Jews.

Interesting Fact:

- All of Paul's missionary journey's started in Antioch.

4 Major Subjects in the Missions Era:

1. **First Missionary Journey: Galatia for two years**
2. **Second Missionary Journey: Greece for three years**
3. **Third Missionary Journey: Asia for four years**
 - Even though Paul is warned that he will be imprisoned upon his return to Jerusalem, he returns anyway and is immediately arrested.
4. **Trials and Imprisonment: Roman prison for two years**
 - After being in a Roman prison for two years, it is said Paul was beheaded.

The Epistles

IMPORTANT FACTS:

- **Epistles** = letters written to churches and individuals to encourage them and instruct them
- 13 written by Paul and 9 by different authors

Pauline Epistles

(letters written by Paul)

To Churches:

Romans

1 Corinthians

2 Corinthians

Galatians

Ephesians

Philippians

Colossians

1 Thessalonians

2 Thessalonians

General Epistles

(letters written by different people)

Hebrews

James

1 Peter

2 Peter

1 John

2 John

3 John

Jude

Revelation

To Individuals:

1 Timothy

2 Timothy

Titus

Philemon

4 Main Study Topics for the Epistles:

1. The Nature of the Epistles: Doctrine, then duty

- The typical pattern of the Epistles is to write a section of doctrinal truth and follow up with the practical implications of that truth. (Doctrine, then duty. Principle, then practice.)

2. Pauline Epistles to Churches: Letters to local churches

To Churches

- **Romans:** doctrinal, with the most complete doctrine of *salvation* by grace through faith in all of the Bible
- **1 & 2 Corinthians:** practical, deals with specific problems in the Corinthian church
- **Galatians:** written to some of Paul's first converts, refuting *legalism*

- **Ephesians:** deals with believer's *position* in Christ and its practical implications
- **Philippians:** a warm letter of *joy* to despite trials
- **Colossians:** the *preeminence* of Christ is its major theme
- **1 & 2 Thessalonians:** very personal letters dealing with specific issues in the Thessalonian church, including *prophecy* and *practical living*

3. Pauline Epistles to Individuals: Letters to individuals and pastors

To Individuals

- **1 & 2 Timothy:** two letters to a young pastor in Ephesus. The first *counsels* him on local church issues and the second *encourages* him to remain strong in the faith in the midst of trials.
- **Titus:** written to a pastor of the church on the island of Crete, it deals with local church issues, including *qualifications* of church leaders
- **Philemon:** written to a slave owner urging lenient treatment of a runaway *slave* who has become a Christian and is returning to his Christian master

4. General Epistles: Letters to the Christian Public

Written by various authors, they are letters to the Christian public at large with the exception of 2 John and 3 John.

- **Hebrews:** doctrinal, draws on Old Testament truth to teach New Testament truth to a Jewish audience
- **James:** deals with the proper way Christian faith should be carried out in everyday life
- **1 & 2 Peter:** written to believers scattered throughout Asia and Galatia, deals with the proper response to *suffering* and opposition
- **1, 2, 3 John:** letters from the apostle John dealing with the *love* of God and how it is carried out in the lives of Christians
- **Jude:** a brief book warning against ungodly living
- **Revelation:** prophetic, deals with the nature and chronology of the *end times*.