



DAILY ASSIGNMENTS:

- Day 1: Do section A. Read Romans 9-11
- Day 2: Do section B. Read Romans 12-16
- Day 3: Do Thought Question.

Lesson 1
Romans, Part II
Romans 9-16

A. God's Promises to the Jews. Read Romans 9-11

In the first three chapters, Paul told the Romans that they all needed the gospel (Romans 1:16) because they all had sinned (Romans 3:23). God supplied the remedy for sin - the perfect sacrifice of Christ. He taught the Jews that their only hope for salvation was to trust in Christ, not keep the law. Their faith would be like the faith of Abraham, who was saved by faith, not the works of the law. He was justified before his circumcision, not after it. However, trust in Christ did not mean a failure to obey God. Their obedience in baptism had resulted in their death to sin (Romans 6:1-6). Since they had died to sin, they could not return to a life of sin. They were to obey God from the heart. Even though there are difficulties in doing what God says, He has supplied benefits for those who serve Him so that nothing can separate them from His love (Romans 8).

Paul now turns his attention to his Jewish brethren. If God was saving both Jews and Gentiles through the gospel, it seemed to many Jews that His promises to them had not been kept. They had lost their special place in God's plan. The Jewish nation was no longer as important as it once had been. These are concerns Paul addresses in these verses.

1. The Jews thought God's promises had gone wanting ("has taken no effect," vs.6). He explains that they are not all Israel (the spiritual Israel God had in mind) who are of Israel (the physical descendants of Abraham). God had decided to choose Abraham, then Isaac, then the younger of two twins, Jacob, in fulfilling His promises. Did His choice depend on the merit of these individuals or on God's authority?
2. Paul states that God had a right to show Israel while using Pharaoh's stubbornness to magnify His power. Was God unrighteous for making such choices? Did He have the right to choose the nation of Israel as the nation through whom salvation would come?
3. The Jews were still frustrated because many Gentiles had found salvation while many Jews had rejected it (9:30-33). Christ was revealed as the end, or goal, of the law (10:4). He fulfilled all the promises it had made. Yet, what had Israel's reaction been to their Savior?
10:3,18
4. Since many Gentiles had believed and many Jews had not, does this mean God had cast away His people? 11:1 Israel had stumbled, but they still had an opportunity to individually obey the gospel and be saved. What figure does Paul use to show how both Jews and Gentiles are a part of God's plan for man? 11:17-20

B. Transformed by the Gospel. Read Romans 12-15

1. Paul has described the rich blessings of God in the first eleven chapters. What change should these things make in the lives of his hearers? 12:1-2
2. What are they to do? 12:21 What kind of actions will help them do this? 12:9-16
3. Did Christians need to obey the officials of government, even if they were evil? Why? 13:-17
4. In chapter 14, Paul describes how Christians were to deal with problems when they felt they had different responsibilities toward God. What are some principles he mentions?
 - vs.5b
 - vs.12
 - vs.19
 - vs.23
5. Where did Paul plan to go to preach the gospel? 15:24 What did he need to do first? 15:25-27
6. How does Paul end his epistle? What does this tell us about the friendships he had formed during his travels?



Thought Questions

The Jews became very confident over a period of time because they prided themselves on being God's people.

- What had they forgotten, both before and after the gospel came?
- Is it easy for us to be overconfident about our relationship with God?
- In what ways might we assume that God will bless us, regardless of our actions?
- What steps can we take to make sure we do not think this way?

DAILY ASSIGNMENTS:

- Day 1: Do Section A. Read Acts 20:3-16
- Day 2: Do Section B. Read Acts 20:17-38
- Day 3: Do Thought Questions.

Lesson 2
Paul Travels Toward Jerusalem
Address to Ephesian Elders
Acts 20:3-38

A. Paul Heads Toward Jerusalem. Read Acts 20:3-16

1. Paul stated in his letter to the Romans that he would first return to Jerusalem before traveling to Rome in order to preach the gospel (Rom. 15:25-27, 30-32). He first had to attend to the matter of taking the funds he and others had collected from the Gentile churches back to the needy saints in Jerusalem. He hoped that this gift would not only fill the needs of these Christians, but go a long way toward uniting Gentile and Jewish brethren in their new found faith. Paul wrote this epistle from Corinth, which is where the narrative in Acts begins as he journeys back toward Jerusalem.
2. What did the Jews in Greece try to do to Paul? What change of plans did he make?
3. Knowing that Paul was taking back funds to the brethren in Jerusalem, what role did the brethren traveling with him in 20:4 have?
4. What did Paul do with these brethren and those in Troas when he met them there? How did Paul's actions keep them from enduring sorrow?
5. Plot Paul's journey from Troas. Why might Paul have decided to sail past Ephesus? What was his hurry?

B. Paul Speaks to the Ephesian Elders. Read Acts 20:17-38

1. Who did Paul send for from Miletus? Why do you think he wanted to talk to these men even though he did not want to stop in Ephesus?
2. How did Paul describe his activity while at Ephesus?
3. What concern did he have about going to Jerusalem? Why?

4. Why did Paul not allow these threats to keep him from his work? What had God called him to do?

5. What particular responsibility did he place on these elders? vs.28 What made this warning particularly needful?

6. What did Paul mean by commending them to the word of God? vs.32

7. Why was Paul's example so important?

8. What teaching of Jesus is recorded here that is not recorded in the gospels?



Thought Questions

1. One of the responsibilities we have as Christians is to partake of the Lord's Supper. Acts 20:7 says they did this on the first day of the week. Does this example illustrate authority for us doing it on the same day? What if we could find other passages that tell us they did this on other days of the week? Can we? Did the early church do other things on the first day of the week? 1 Cor.16:1,2 What does this mean about the importance of this example?

2. In what other ways does Paul describe the Ephesian elders? Acts 20:17,28 Are these three different offices or positions? Are they titles? Why would these descriptions be used? Should we use the same ones today?

3. Is it really more blessed to give than to receive? How do you know? What proof can you give that this is so? What are some ways we can give instead of receiving?

DAILY ASSIGNMENTS:

- Day 1: Do Section A. Read Acts 21:1-14
- Day 2: Do Section B. Read Acts 21:15-40
- Day 3: Do Thought Question

Lesson 3
Paul in Jerusalem
Acts 21:1-40

A. Paul Travels to Jerusalem. Read Acts 21:1-14

Paul had been to Jerusalem many times before. This time was different. He had urged churches elsewhere, mainly those composed of Gentiles, to make a contribution toward the needy saints in Jerusalem. He and others were now traveling to Jerusalem to present their gifts to the brethren there. However, Paul was apparently being criticized because of his teaching and activity elsewhere among the Gentiles. As we shall see, some of his Jewish brethren thought that he had rejected the law of Moses altogether. As a result, many from the Jewish nation were intent on making sure Paul and his preaching activity ceased. It was a very tense situation as Paul neared Jerusalem.

1. Where did the ship carrying Paul dock once it reached Palestine?
2. What did the brethren at this place tell Paul about going to Jerusalem? How did they know?
3. Where did the ship stop next?
4. To whose house did they go after arriving in Caesarea? What was the last mention made of this man?
5. What did Agabus predict about Paul's visit to Jerusalem? What had Agabus previously predicted? (Acts 11:28) How did the brethren react to his prediction this time?
6. What was Paul's response to these concerns?

B. Paul in Jerusalem. Read Acts 21:15-40

1. What did Paul tell the brethren in Jerusalem when he met with them?
2. What concern did these Jewish brethren express to Paul about his activity?

3. What suggestion did James and the other elders make to Paul? Why do you think this was so important to them? Did they want Paul to change his activity among the Gentiles?
4. Where did Paul go in order to make an offering? Who saw him there?
5. How did the Jews from Asia stir up the rest of the people? Were their charges true? Why did they assume that Paul had defiled the temple?
6. How did the people react to this news?
7. How was Paul saved from being beaten? For whom had the commander mistaken Paul?
8. What request did Paul make?



Thought Question

It is hard for us to imagine the tension that existed among the Jews and Gentiles. The Jews felt they were the select people of God. Those who obeyed the gospel had a hard time accepting the Gentiles as fellow brethren. Then they were taught that the Gentiles did not need to keep any of the law. Yet, the Jews in Palestine still lived under the Old Testament law. This is because it was not only a religious law, but a civil law. It governed their everyday life. To be a good citizen, they had to obey the commands in the old law.

Given this situation, would it be acceptable for a Jewish Christian in Palestine to keep parts of the old law? Would he still circumcise his children? Would he refrain from eating meats considered unclean? When Paul had a part in the temple ceremonies recorded in Acts 21, was he trying to mislead his Jewish brethren by making them think he kept the law when he really did not, or were there some areas in which he still kept the law?

DAILY ASSIGNMENTS:

- Day 1: Do Section A. Read Acts 22:1-29
- Day 2: Do Sections B, C. Read Acts 22:30-23:35
- Day 3: Do Thought Questions.

Lesson 4
Paul Sent to Felix
Acts 22:1-23:35

A. Paul Makes a Defense. Read Acts 22:1-29

Paul had been arrested by the Roman soldiers stationed in the fortress at the corner of the temple area. The commander was confused by the uproar Paul's presence had created. Perhaps this is why he granted Paul the opportunity to speak to his brethren on the steps of the fortress.

1. Why did the Jews suddenly grow quiet when Paul spoke to them?
2. What did Paul remind them about his previous activity before going to Damascus? What impression would this make on his hearers?
3. When Paul describes his being blinded and led to Damascus, what did he say Ananias did for him? (vs.13)
4. What did Paul say God had chosen him to do?
5. What did Ananias tell him not to delay doing?
6. At what point did the Jews listening to Paul fly into a rage? Why?
7. Why did the commander not beat (scourge) Paul as he intended to do?

B. Paul is Judged by the Sanhedrin. Read Acts 22:29-23:10

1. Why did the Roman commander bring Paul before the Sanhedrin the following day? (Note: The Sanhedrin was a ruling body of 70 Jews that governed Jewish affairs in Jerusalem)
2. With what statement did Paul begin? What did the high priest do? What was Paul's response?
3. What did Paul say in his defense that caused a division in the Sanhedrin? What difference was there among those in the Sanhedrin?

C. Paul is Taken to Caesarea. Read Acts 23:11-35

1. What did the Lord tell Paul on the following evening? How do you think Paul would have felt when he heard this?
2. What did some of the Jews decide to do? What does this tell us about the enmity many felt toward Paul and his actions?
3. How did Paul find out about this plot? What did he do when he found out?
4. How many men guarded Paul as he was taken to Caesarea? When did they depart? What does this tell you about the strength and determination of the Jews?
5. What did the commander confess about the charges made against Paul in the letter he sent to Felix?



Thought Questions

1. Paul made a complete change in his life. He had spent his early life trying to find and destroy those who were following Jesus. Suddenly, after being blinded on the road to Damascus, he made an abrupt change and began preaching the very same message which he had been persecuting others for teaching.
 - Why is Paul's sudden change a powerful testimony concerning the truth of the resurrection of Jesus?
 - Paul told the the Jewish council he had lived with a good conscience. How could he persecute Christians and have a good conscience? Is our conscience to guide us in our actions?
2. When Ananias went to Paul in Damascus, he restored his sight, then told him not to delay in being baptized. Why was there this urgency about baptism? Is there this same urgency today? Why or why not?

DAILY ASSIGNMENTS:

- Day 1: Do Section A. Read Acts 24:1-9
- Day 2: Do Section B. Read Acts 24:10-27
- Day 3: Do Thought Question.

Lesson 5
Paul's Defense before Felix
Acts 24:1-27

A. The Case is Made Against Paul. Read Acts 24:1-9

Paul was transported to Caesarea, the city where the Roman governors over Judea resided. Since the Roman commander in Jerusalem could not decide why the Jewish people were upset with Paul and had no charges to make against him, he hoped Felix would be able to judge the matter.

1. Who came to Caesarea from Jerusalem?
2. How did Tertullus begin his introduction to Felix? What motive would he have in doing this?
3. What specific charges did Tertullus make concerning Paul? What would be the basis for each of these charges?
4. How did he misrepresent the actions of Lysias?

B. Paul Is Granted a Hearing. Read Acts 24:10-27

1. What denials does Paul issue? Was he accurate?
2. What confession did he make?

3. Why did the things written in the Law and the Prophets have to do with Paul's defense?
4. What did Paul hope to have?
5. What did Paul strive to do?
6. What explanation did Paul give concerning the events that had caused so much excitement in Jerusalem about him?
7. How did Paul dismiss the charges made against him?
8. How did Felix respond?
9. What kind of imprisonment was Paul given?
10. What opportunity was Paul later given to speak? With what topics did he concern himself?
11. What was the reaction of Felix? What was he hoping Paul would do? What happened to him?



Thought Question

After Felix listened to Paul, he held him to go away and he would call for him when it was convenient.

- What are some reasons people give for delaying a response to the gospel?
- Are these good reasons or bad?
- Is there a solution for each one? If so, what?

DAILY ASSIGNMENTS:

- Day 1: Do Section A. Read Acts 25:1-12
- Day 2: Do Section B. Read Acts 13-27.
- Day 3: Do Thought Question.

Lesson 6
Appeal to Caesar
Acts 25:1-27

A. Paul Before Festus. Read Acts 25:1-12

Imagine being arrested and put in custody but not having any charges brought against you. You are granted an initial hearing, which is inconclusive, but then you sit in prison for two years with no hope of further action. This was Paul's situation. He was left in prison by Felix for two years. When Felix was replaced, he left Paul in prison in order to make himself popular with the Jews. Paul could easily have begun to despair, wondering when, or even if, he was ever going to be granted a hearing. It would be very easy to grow discouraged in such circumstances. Study and see how Paul reacted.

1. Where did Festus go upon taking charge?
2. What did the Jewish rulers request? Why? What did Festus answer?
3. What did the Jews say when they came to Caesarea? What was their problem?
4. What did Festus also desire to do after Paul had spoken? Why would he want to do this?
5. What appeal did Paul make? What did this mean? Why did he have this right?
6. How did Festus respond?

B. Herod Hears Paul. Read Acts 25:13-27

1. Why did Festus seek help from Herod?
2. How did he explain the case to Herod?
3. Who was this Agrippa? How was he related to the Herod that reigned when Jesus was born?
4. How did Herod and Agrippa enter the following day? Who else was there? How might this have affected Paul?
5. What did Festus hope to have as a result of this hearing?



Thought Question

Do you think it was wise for Paul to appeal to Caesar? Give reasons for your answer. Did Paul use the privileges of his citizenship? Are there advantages we have as a citizen of this country? Name some. Can any of these be used in service to God?

DAILY ASSIGNMENTS:

- Day 1: Do Section A. Read Acts 26:1-11.
- Day 2: Do Sections B,C. Read Acts 26:12-32.
- Day 3: Do Thought Question.

Lesson 7
Paul and Agrippa
Acts 26:1-32

A. Paul Speaks Before Agrippa, Acts 26:1-11

In this lesson, Paul yet again explains his behavior to a governing official. Having spoken to his own brethren in the temple courtyard (Acts 22), he then addressed the Sanhedrin (Acts 23). Once he was escorted to Caesarea, he spoke to Felix, then Festus and now to Agrippa. His explanation always follows the same pattern. He describes why he changed from persecuting Christians to preaching the gospel they had obeyed.

1. Why did Paul say he felt especially grateful for an opportunity to speak to Agrippa? Do you think he was correct?
2. Although Paul was from Tarsus, where did he say he was raised? Were others aware of this?
3. Of what Jewish sect had Paul been a part? How did he describe it?
4. What question did Paul ask Agrippa? What did he mean by this?
5. Why did Paul feel he must do things contrary to Jesus of Nazareth? What things did he do?

B. Paul Recounts His Conversion. Read Acts 26:12-23

1. What did Jesus mean when He told Paul it was hard for Paul to kick against the goads? What are goads? What purpose do they serve?
2. To whom did God desire to send Paul?
3. What would Paul accomplish by preaching the gospel to the Gentiles?

4. Did Paul obey God's vision? Where did he go to preach?
5. Why did Paul say the Jews had seized him in the temple area and tried to kill him?
6. What was the message Paul was witnessing to others?

C. Agrippa's Response. Read Acts 26:24-32

1. How did Festus respond to Paul's comments? Did Paul agree with him?
2. Where did Paul say the things he spoke of had taken place? What did he mean?
3. What did Agrippa say when Paul asked him about his belief in the prophets? What do you think he meant by it?
4. What was Agrippa's verdict?



Thought Question

In 26:8, Paul asked Agrippa why it be thought incredible if God raised the dead. Raising someone from the dead is an incredible event. Was Paul denying that it was incredible? At what point was he driving? What are some of the works God has performed in the Old Testament that could be deemed incredible? Should it be difficult for an unbeliever to believe in the resurrection of Christ? Why or why not? Why do more people not believe in it? Does the fact that it happened over 2,000 years ago make it more difficult to believe today? Does the fact that no one can do such a sign today make it difficult to believe?

DAILY ASSIGNMENTS:

- Day 1: Do Sections A,B. Read Acts 27:1-38
- Day 2: Do Section C. Read Acts 27:39-44
- Day 3: Do Thought Question.

Lesson 8
Journey to Rome
Acts 27:1-44

Since Paul had appealed to Caesar and no Roman official could find any charge to bring against him, Paul would be sent to Rome where he would receive a hearing from Caesar. However, the voyage itself was no easy matter. Sailing on the open sea during the first century was an imprecise art. There were no advance weather forecasts to warn sailors of approaching storms. Instead, they had to brave the elements and use their own learned wisdom to determine when it was safe to sail. Although Paul ultimately arrives in Rome, the voyage is not without its hardships and uncertainties.

A. Paul Sets Sail for Rome. Read Acts 27:1-8

1. Who accompanies Paul on this journey (based on the "we" in vs.1)? What other friend of Paul went with them?
2. What Roman officer was given charge of the voyage? What was his position?
3. How did Julius demonstrate kindness to Paul at Sidon?
4. Which way did they go around Cyprus (look at a map to trace this journey)?
5. What change was made at Myra? What island did they sail to?

B. Storm on the Open Sea. Read Acts 27:9-38

1. What did Paul advise while they were sheltered in Fair Havens? What decision was made? Why?
2. Why were they not able to winter in the harbor at Phoenix?
3. Describe how the voyage deteriorated at this point. How did Paul assure them right in the middle of the storm? What did this have to do with Paul's situation?

4. What happened on the fourteenth night?
5. Why did Paul urge the men not to try and escape from the ship? What was done with the skiff?
6. What counsel did Paul give about eating? Why?

C. Shipwrecked. Read Acts 27:39-44

1. What did they decide to do when daylight arrived?
2. What happened to the ship?
3. What did the soldiers decide to do? Why?
4. Why were the prisoners spared?



Thought Questions

Did God protect Paul on this journey? Did he act in a miraculous way on Paul's behalf?

- What would you call this kind of protection?
- Does God protect us in the same way today? How do you know?
- Does He indicate His protection to us by means of visions? Why or why not?

DAILY ASSIGNMENTS:

- Day 1: Do Section A,B. Read Acts 28:1-17.
- Day 2: Do Section C. Read Acts 28:18-31.
- Day 3: Do Thought Questions.

Lesson 9
Imprisoned in Rome
Acts 28:1-31

Paul and the companions with him finally reached land, but in an unexpected fashion. Their ship was destroyed, but all those aboard were able to either swim ashore or cling to a piece of wreckage and drift ashore. Paul and the rest of his company eventually make it to Rome where Paul awaits his trial and continues his teaching.

A. On Malta. Read Acts 28:1-10

1. On what island did Paul and his companions shipwreck? Locate it on a map.
2. How did the natives treat them?
3. What was their first reaction to Paul? Why? How did their attitude change toward him?
4. Who was Publius? What did Paul do for him?
5. On what terms did Paul leave those on Malta?

B. On to Rome. Read Acts 28:11-17

1. How long was it before Paul and his Roman guard left Malta? On what ship did they sail? (Note: Egypt supplied a great deal of grain to Rome at this time. Ships leaving Alexandria would often cross the Mediterranean on this supply route.)
2. Look on a map and trace Paul's journey to Rome.
3. What liberty was Paul permitted when they reached Rome?

C. Paul Awaits His Hearing. Read Acts 28:17-31

1. How did Paul explain his presence in Rome to his Jewish brethren?
2. What phrase did he use to describe why he was chained? What did he mean by this?
3. What did the Jews know about him? What kind of hearing did they give him?
4. What evidence did Paul use in speaking to them? Why?
5. What resulted? What passage did Paul quote to describe them? Where else and by whom was this quotation used?
6. To whom did Paul decide he would speak?
7. How long did Paul wait to have a hearing before Caesar? What did he do during this time?



Thought Questions

1. What had Paul stated as his desire when he wrote to the Romans? Cp. Rom.1:13-15 Had he accomplished his desire? Was it just as he had expected? What should this help us to realize about our plans and goals? Do we always accomplish just what we expect? Does that mean we have failed? Why or why not?
2. The book of Acts ends abruptly, suddenly, with little or no explanation. Why do you think it ends this way? Do you think Luke knew what happened to Paul? Some suggest that the book was written as a defense to a Roman official hearing the case concerning Paul's activity. What do you think?

DAILY ASSIGNMENTS:

- Day 1: Do Section A,B. Read Ephesians 1-3
- Day 2: Do Section C. Read Ephesians 4-6
- Day 3: Do Thought Question.

Lesson 10
Ephesians
Ephesians 1:1-6:24

A. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians.

Paul continued to preach the gospel to Jews and Greeks while imprisoned at Rome. Although a prisoner, he was under house arrest (Acts 28:30). This meant that although a Roman guard was nearby or possibly even chained to him, he was allowed to entertain guests. During this time, it is also clear from his other writings that he continued to correspond with brethren he had become acquainted with in other places.

Among Paul's letters, or epistles, are four which are known as the prison epistles. This is because he wrote this while in prison in Rome. Three are to churches - Ephesians, Colossians and Philippians. One is to the individual Philemon concerning his runaway slave Onesimus. Each of these epistles has important teaching from which we are able to learn a great deal today.

At the start of his third preaching journey, Paul spent over two years at Ephesus. From Ephesus the gospel had been spread to those who lived throughout Asia. In his epistle to the Ephesians, Paul stresses the importance of the church. In the first three chapters, he describes what it means to be in the relationship known as the church. He describes this relationship in several different ways. In the last three chapters, he makes application of the truth concerning the church. Since Christ has purchased the church with His blood, those who have been saved are responsible to live in a way that brings glory to Him.

B. The Church and Its Relationship to Christ. Read Ephesians 1-3

The first three chapters are divided up into their various paragraphs. Try to get the main idea of how Paul is describing the church in each section.

1. 1:3-14: Paul emphasizes in this section that every spiritual blessing is in Christ (1:3). This means that all the blessings God has for us can only be realized by being in a relationship with Christ. Look at these verses and name at least three blessings we receive in Christ. What does each one mean?
2. 1:15-23: Paul says that he wants his readers to know the power God has shown toward us in Christ (1:19). What happened after Jesus was raised from the dead? What is He in reference to His body? What is the body?
3. 2:1-10: What past, present and future state does Paul describe in these verses? Which one are you in?

4. 2:11-22: What was true of the Gentiles before Jesus? How did this change? (vs.19) How did Jesus bring together Jew and Gentile?

5. 3:1-13: Paul was made an apostle in order to reveal the mystery. A mystery is something that could not be made known unless God revealed it. What does he say the mystery is? (vs.10) What does this mean?

6. 3:14-21: What strength does Paul ask for in his prayer on behalf of the Ephesians?

C. Walking Worthy of the Lord. Read Ephesians 4-6

Paul now turns his attention to how a Christian should live. Since God has granted Christians such wonderful spiritual blessings in Christ, they should reflect that in their life.

1. How should those in the body treat each other? 4:2,3 How can they be united? 4:4-6

2. How does Paul describe the change that takes place in a Christian? 4:22-24 Name at least two ways this change is evidenced in the way a Christian lives? 4:25-5:7

3. Name three attitudes a Christian should have. 5:15-21

4. What relationships are affected by being a Christian? 5:22-6:9



Thought Question

Why is it important that when we become a Christian our life changes? What difference does it really make?

DAILY ASSIGNMENTS:

- Day 1: Do Section A,B. Read Colossians 1,2.
- Day 2: Do Section C. Read Colossians 3,4.
- Day 3: Do Thought Questions.

Lesson 11
Colossians
Colossians 1:1-4:18

A. The Book of Colossians.

This book is another one of the prison epistles. Paul wrote to the church of Colossae during his period of Roman imprisonment. Locate it on a Bible map. It is located in Phrygia, about 100 miles east of Ephesus. This church may have resulted from the efforts of Paul while he was in Ephesus. During that time, the word was spread abroad through all of Asia.

Paul wrote this letter to the Colossian brethren because they were being led astray by teaching that prided itself on human wisdom. False teachers had influenced these brethren with a combination of Jewish, Greek and Oriental thinking. Paul was guided by the Holy Spirit to write this epistle and counter this false thinking. He does so by emphasizing the importance of Jesus Christ. Jesus was not some lesser spirit being, but one who is divine, one of the persons of the Godhead. Jesus was sufficient to supply all needs. Notice how this is stressed throughout the book.

Colossians is structured very much like Ephesians. The first two chapters are doctrinal, the second two chapters are very practical. In fact, some of the teaching in the last two chapters is almost identical to Paul's teaching in Ephesians. The theme is different. Whereas Ephesians emphasizes the church as having received the fullness of Christ, Colossians focuses on Christ as having the fullness of the Godhead.

B. Christ is Preeminent. Read Colossians 1-2.

1. Describe the steps involved in spiritual maturity. 1:9-11

2. List some ways in which Christ is shown to be preeminent (above every other being). 1:13-18

3. What did Jesus make through the blood of the cross? 1:19-23 With whom?

4. What might some try to do through human wisdom and philosophy? 2:1-10 How is Christ the answer to this?

5. How does Jesus make us alive from the dead? 2:11-14 What victory did He win?

C. Seek the Things Above. Read Colossians 3,4.

1. We are urged to seek the things above. Where does this take place according to 3:2? Why do you think this is so?
2. To seek the things above, what must we put to death? 3:5-9 Why is this necessary? Does it happen all at once?
3. With what must we replace these things? 3:12-17
4. Which relationships are controlled by Christ? 3:18-4:1 How do each of these show we are seeking the things above?



Thought Questions

1. Paul felt that some of the Colossian Christians were in danger of being deceived by the persuasive words and arguments of men's philosophy and wisdom. As a result, they were being led away from Christ. Can we be led astray by such things today? Give two examples. How does our faith in Christ and knowledge about Him help us not to be deceived?
2. When should we start seeking the things above? Is it better to wait until we are old and mature? Is there any point in doing this while we are young? Why or why not?

DAILY ASSIGNMENTS:

- Day 1: Do Section A,B. Read Philemon.
- Day 2: Do Thought Questions.

Lesson 12
Philemon
Philemon 1-25

A. The Epistle to Philemon

Philemon is closely connected with the book of Colossians. The evidence from the two books suggests that Philemon was one of the members of the Colossian church. Indeed, they probably met in his home. As Paul sent the Colossian letter to this church, he seems to have also dispatched a personal letter to Philemon concerning his runaway slave, Onesimus. It seems Onesimus had suddenly left Philemon, possibly having stolen some of his wealth. He ended up in Rome and somehow had met up with Paul. As a result, Onesimus had obeyed the gospel and become useful to Paul. But Paul felt compelled to return this man to his master. The letter he writes explains his actions.

Even though this is a personal letter, it demonstrates how the Holy Spirit could communicate teaching from God that is useful for us even today. Read and study the letter and you will grow in appreciation for what God has done for us.

B. The Letter to Philemon. Read Philemon.

1. As what does Paul describe himself? vs.1 How was this true?

2. Who was in the house of Philemon?

3. What good things did Paul have to say about Philemon? vv.4-7 What kind of man do you think he was?

4. Paul had a right to command certain things of Philemon. Instead, what motivation does he use? Why do you think he did this?

5. What had Onesimus once been to Philemon? What was he now? Had he helped Paul? What things do you think he might have done? Why do you think Philemon had made this change?

6. Paul wants Philemon to act voluntarily, not out of compulsion. What does this mean? Why is it so important?

7. Paul said he wanted Philemon to receive Onesimus as something more than a slave. What did he have in mind? What would this mean?

8. What was Paul willing to repay?

9. What confidence did Paul have in Philemon? What do you think Philemon did?



Thought Questions

1. When your parents ask you to do something, does it matter whether you respond? Does it matter how you do what they ask you to? Why or why not? What difference will this attitude make in other things we do?

2. Philemon could have legally demanded that Onesimus return as his slave and be punished, but Paul wanted him to forgive him, possibly even free him. Are there things we have a right to do but might not do because we want to live at peace with others? If so, name one. Why is this attitude important?

Lesson 13
Philippians
Philippians 1:1-4:23

DAILY ASSIGNMENTS:

- Day 1: Do Section A,B. Read Philippians 1-2.
- Day 2: Do Section C. Read Philippians 3-4.
- Day 3: Do Thought Question.

A. Paul Writes to the Philippians.

The last of the four prison epistles written during Paul's initial imprisonment in Rome is his letter to the Philippians. Paul had visited Philippi during his second preaching journey. There he converted Lydia and her household, then was thrown in prison. This led to the conversion of the Philippian jailer and his household. This church continued to play a role in Paul's work after he left Philippi. They are the only church that continued to send to his needs when he left Philippi. We do not know how much contact he had with them before his imprisonment, but once he came to Rome, they sent Epaphroditus as their messenger to deliver their gifts to him and to check on his welfare. Paul had a fond heart for them and he had a special place in their heart.

As much as any New Testament book, this one demonstrates how we can be joyful despite the difficulties we face in life. Paul would have had every reason to be discouraged and disheartened by his imprisonment. He had expected to come to Rome a free man and preach, but instead he was in chains. However, he was able to rejoice despite his hardships. This book reveals why.

B. Having the Right Focus. Read Philippians 1-2

1. Had Paul continued to think about the Philippians? 1:3-11 Why or why not?
2. What were some of Paul's brethren doing to make things harder for him? 1:12-18 Was he upset about it?
3. What was Paul's attitude toward death? 1:19-26 Why could he feel this way?
4. What kind of attitude did Paul want the Philippians to have toward each other? 2:1-4 Who else had this attitude? 2:5-11
5. Who else had this attitude? 2:19-24 Who else had this attitude? 2:25-30

C. I Can Do All Things. Read Philippians 3-4

1. There were those among the Philippians who were boasting because of their credentials as a Jew. Were Paul's credentials just as impressive? 3:1-11 How did Paul feel about these? What was more important to him?
2. Did Paul think of himself as being perfect? 3:12-16 What was his attitude about the past? What was his attitude about the future?
3. Where did Paul say our real citizenship is? 3:17-21 What do you think he meant by this?
4. What kind of attitude did Paul tell the Philippians to have all the time? 4:1-7 What activity would allow them to do this?
5. On what things were they to meditate? Why?
6. What help did the Philippians give to Paul? 4:10-20 Was he in need? What had he learned? On whom was he able to depend?



Thought Questions

Paul emphasizes the idea of joy and rejoicing throughout this book. He tells us that we can continue to rejoice in any circumstance. Is this really possible? How do we know? Think of two difficult circumstances that might affect you. How could you still rejoice using the teaching Paul has given us?