

# Course Study Guide

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**NT225**

***Romans-Ephesians:  
The Letter to the  
Roman Church  
& Letters from a  
Roman Prison***

By Dr. Craig Blomberg

Updated 2014

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**Our Daily Bread**  
Christian University

# Lesson 1 Study Guide

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**NT225**

***Romans-Ephesians:  
The Letter to the  
Roman Church  
& Letters from a  
Roman Prison***

Romans: Paul's Theological Magnum Opus

Updated 2014

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# Objectives

This lesson surveys Paul's most complete explanation of salvation. You will study the background of the church at Rome and gain insight into why they received such a thorough explanation of the Gospel. A survey of its content will address justification, sanctification, God's justice, and Christian living.

When you complete this lesson, "Romans: Paul's Theological Magnum Opus," you should be able to:

- Explain when and why Romans was written.
- Discuss the major themes of Christian doctrine as they are presented in Romans.
- Explain how God can justifiably require Jews, who had a God-given religion, to now accept Christ.
- Gain greater respect for and confidence in your salvation in Christ.

## Scripture Reading

Read Romans 1-16.

# Transcript

## Course Title: Romans—Ephesians: The Letter to the Roman Church & Letters From a Roman Prison

### Lesson One: Romans: Paul's Theological Magnum Opus

#### I. Introduction

In this lesson we turn to the epistle of Paul to the Romans, perhaps his most famous letter of all and certainly one of the most influential, if not the most influential New Testament document throughout church history—influential in the conversion of such leading lights as Augustine, Martin Luther, and, in more recent years, Karl Barth. There are probably more commentaries on the epistle to the Romans than on any letter or on any book of Scripture over the course of church history. Why was this letter so distinct in its influence?

#### A. Circumstances

Part of the answer to that comes because of the circumstances, which in turn led to the distinctive contents of this, the sixth of the epistles of Paul that we are now surveying in chronological sequence as best as we can reconstruct it. This is the first letter that Paul writes to a church which he has not personally founded. He has not yet even visited the city of Rome as he writes this letter, although he hopes to come soon.

Romans 15:23-33 yields most of the information that enables us to reconstruct the circumstances surrounding Paul's penning this epistle. He has completed his third missionary journey, he has taken up the collection successfully with which 1 and 2 Corinthians were recently concerned, and now he is on his way from Corinth by boat to Jerusalem to deliver that collection. After that, because he believes he has now evangelized at least representative sections of the eastern half of the empire, he hopes to turn his sights to the west, to Rome, the heart and the capital of the empire, and then beyond Rome further west to Spain, to the uttermost parts of the earth by first-century standards.

Because he has not personally visited or become acquainted with the majority of the Roman Christians, therefore he takes the opportunity to write what is the lengthiest and most systematic presentation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as he understands it. And this, in large measure, accounts for the importance and influence of this document throughout Christian history. He writes in approximately the year 57, but there are some specific circumstances in the years immediately leading up to this date which also account for the nature of the teaching we find in Romans.

#### B. Setting

In the year 49, the emperor Claudius issued an edict expelling all Jews from Rome because of

rioting, as one Roman historian later would describe it, at the instigation of somebody by the name of Chrestus. Chrestus is one letter different in Latin from the Latin word for Christ—Christus; and it looks suspiciously like a garbled attempt on the part of that later historian to describe some tension within the community of Jews and Christians. At any rate, Jewish Christians as well as non-Christian Jews were expelled as a result of this edict, though many then later returned after Claudius' death in the year 54. We must imagine, therefore, the Roman church in approximately 57, when Paul writes, as one that is not too far removed from having to come to grips with a sudden influx of Jewish believers to what, for a five-year period or so at least, was an exclusively Gentile Christian congregation. Instead of Jew and Gentile, replace with terms of contemporary warring ethnic groups, or competing races, and one understands the potentially volatile dynamic of the Roman church and the appeals to Jew and Gentile unity that punctuate Paul's letter to the Romans.

### C. Organization

Here is a letter which indeed is very systematically organized. It has been described as an ambassadorial letter, paving the way for Paul's meeting with the Christians there. Curiously, Romans 16 includes the longest list of greetings to any group of Christians in any of Paul's letters, and yet this comes in that letter, the first we have seen thus far, to a church that Paul did not found. Some scholars have been so struck by this apparent inconsistency that they have proposed theories that Romans 16 really belonged on the end of some other letter, such as Ephesians, initially. There is probably a much simpler and better explanation. There was an ancient proverb that all roads led to Rome, and this was not just a geographical hyperbole but also a reflection of the mass migration of many rural peoples to Rome in the first century. Rome was the center of trade and of travel, and it is not surprising that many Christians Paul would have met in other places in the empire, Aquila and Priscilla being one known example of such, might have eventually gravitated to or returned to Rome, so that Paul greets as many people as he has some contact with in order to smooth the way for his acceptance among the majority of Gentile Christians who he had not personally previously encountered.

The letter to the Romans falls very neatly into two sections, though of disproportionate weight. There is the typical theological exposition (Romans 1-11), following the introduction, the greetings, and thanksgiving; Romans 1:16-17 give a brief thesis statement; and then all the way through to the end of chapter 11 we have in neatly organized fashion the theology of the Gospel in clear, distinct stages. Chapters 12 through the middle of chapter 15, 15:13 to be specific, then turn to the ethics, or the exhortation of the Gospel, that flows from the theology Paul has enunciated in these first 11 chapters.

## II. Justification by Faith (1:1-5:21)

If we go back, then, to subdivide the first and larger theological section of Paul's writing, we notice how he begins in 1:16-17. He is not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of salvation unto both Jew and Greek. And it is a salvation which comes by faith from first to last. Just as in Galatians, Romans is concerned, at times in even more detail, to expound the theme of justification by faith alone, apart from the works of the law, as the central defining doctrine of the Christian message. But before Paul unpacks that theme of justification by faith, which, in fact, he

does unpack beginning in 3:21, he moves back, chronologically and theologically as it were, in 1:18-3:20, to establish the universal sinfulness of humanity.

### A. Universal Sinfulness

To put it very simply, before he can describe the Savior, he has to point out the need for salvation. Romans 1:18-3:20, therefore, fall into two subsections—the easier thesis to establish, at least by first-century Jewish standards (namely the universal sinfulness of the Gentile world), which occupies 1:18-32. But then, lest any Jews tempted to be smug in their agreement with Paul’s description of all of the proverbial Gentile sins and vices think that they themselves are somehow exempt from this indictment, 2:1-3:20 turns to show how Jews, too, stand guilty before God so that in 3:9-20 Paul can demonstrate the universality that no one is righteous, no, not one, and that no one can be saved by works of law.

In that first subsection (1:19-32), Paul refers not only to particular vices, but points out the theological heart of idolatry—namely, worshiping the creature rather than the Creator—and also the moral or ethical heart of idolatry—the heterosexual and homosexual sinfulness for which the Greco-Roman morals were legendary. In these verses also appear the seeds of what philosophers of the Christian faith would later develop and call the cosmological and the moral arguments for God’s existence. In 1:19-20 we read that all peoples of the world, whether or not they have the law, or God’s special revelation, should know from the creation that there is a Creator, and in 1:32 that there is a universal sense of morality—not that all cultures are equally agreed on everything that is right or wrong, but that all cultures have a standard of right or wrong.

As C. S. Lewis put it so colloquially and famously, humans are the only creatures to blush, or to have any need to. This shows that we are uniquely created in the image of one who has moral standards, something that cannot be said of the rest of the animal kingdom. Chapter 2:1 and following, as we have mentioned, then turns to point out that Jews who do have the law do not uniformly or consistently live up to the law, and therefore they, too, stand guilty before God. Having established this need for a Savior, Romans 3:21 then returns to Paul’s initial thesis, that salvation is through Christ by faith alone. And 3:21-31 may be seen as a thesis paragraph, unpacking that brief one-sentence statement of the heart of the Gospel.

### B. Two Metaphors

We have already seen in Paul’s previous correspondence how he uses the terms “justification” and “reconciliation” to summarize what was done, through well-known metaphors of the ancient world, in Christ’s atoning death. He repeats the theme of justification here again, and adds two new metaphors, also well-known from the ancient world—the metaphor of propitiation, a sacrifice of atonement, the metaphor that was taken from the temple cult referring to animal sacrifices that were offered to appease God’s wrath so that he might turn aside from human sin. In this context appears also the theological term “redemption,” which again originally was simply a very common, ordinary metaphor, this time taken from the world of the slave market. Redemption was the ransom price that was paid to buy back a slave’s freedom, to make him or her a free person.

## C. Faith Lived Out

Chapters 4 and 5 elaborate the theme of justification, chapter 4 doing so in more detail but in similar fashion to one of the ways we have seen Paul adopt in the letter to the Galatians—by going back to the example of Abraham as the first Israelite, who was reckoned righteous through his faith (Genesis 15). Chapter 5 proceeds to discuss the results of justification and falls into two sections: the first section dealing with the peace, the absence of objective enmity, between God and humankind, and the joy—joy that can remain even in the midst of suffering, that results from the knowledge that no matter what this life may throw at us we have an eternal life hidden in Christ with God that no one can damage or take from us.

The second half of Romans 5:12-21 is an extremely important passage in the history of Christian theology, as it enunciates further results of justification coming from the fact that Christ was our Second Adam, the new Adam, the new progenitor of the human race—who remained sinless, where the first Adam and his wife Eve, fell. Paul points out similarities between the old Adam and the new Adam, Jesus. Both were individual men; both acted in certain ways that affected the entire human race. And, in each case, one particular action—Adam’s original sin and Christ’s atoning death—was the key that influenced those who would follow them. But Paul also makes it clear that there are key dissimilarities between the old and new Adam, or between Adam and Christ. Adam’s action led to sin, whereas Christ’s leads to salvation. Adam’s action was one sin, but there were many sins that caused the need for Christ’s atonement. And while definitely all people who are heirs of Adam were condemned, not all of humanity will automatically be saved in Christ, but rather those who are in Christ because they have accepted his free gift of eternal life and therefore are rightly related to him.

## III. Sanctification (6:1-8:39)

Chapters 6-8 then move us to the next phase in Paul’s systematic, progressive enunciation of the Christian Gospel. From the theme of justification and all of its ramifications as one enters into the Christian life, Paul turns to the topic of sanctification—the Christian life as a process, as a process of growth in holiness and of being not only rightly related to God but transformed progressively by the spirit which he causes to dwell within us. One very attractive and simple outline of Romans 6, 7, and 8 is to see each of these successive chapters addressing the issues of freedom: freedom in chapter 6 from sin, freedom from law in chapter 7, and freedom from death in chapter 8. As we read the way Paul unpacks these three themes, it is clear that he is not saying Christians in this life are absolutely free from any one of these three elements. Christians clearly still sin, and the Christian life is not one of antinomianism, an anything goes anti-law mentality. There are clear ethical or moral, we might even say legal, standards. But they are not those unchanged of the Old Testament law in all of its details from the writings and books of Moses. Neither are Christians exempt from physical death, merely from the spiritual death that accompanies that physical death for all of those who are unregenerate. If we focus on just a few important exegetical highlights of these three chapters, Romans 6-8, we may, then, enunciate the following.

### A. Chapter 6

In Romans 6:1-4, the process begins with baptism. Some have read these verses as teaching

that Christians must be baptized to be saved, but 1 Corinthians 10:2 gives the lie to this interpretation, where Paul speaks of those who are metaphorically baptized under Moses in the wilderness, nevertheless in a majority of cases paying the physical and spiritual penalties for their sin and rebellion. Nevertheless, 6:1-4 reminds us, in the book of Romans, of a commonplace in early Christian belief and practice—namely, that baptism naturally and regularly followed closely on the heels of Christian profession of faith as a profound symbolism of our death and burial with Christ, and therefore should be considered the natural form of Christian practice in any time and place. The rest of Romans 6, however, makes it clear that Christians continue to have sin in their lives, although Christian commentators are divided on exactly how to explain Paul’s language of the old and new natures.

## B. Chapter 7

This tension that Christians continue to face, however, between the presence of sin and a renewed heart and spirit comes to a climax in Romans 7:14-25, where Paul detects a profound and poignant conflict that goes on within him and presumably all people, as he uses the first person singular to represent universal human experience. “I don’t do what I want to do; what I want to do I don’t do.” There is a profound tension within him that ultimately he can be victorious over only as Jesus Christ frees himself from it. The way this chapter ends, however, by announcing the victory in the first part of Romans 7:25 but then concluding that he still serves sin in his body, suggests that he is speaking as a Christian—although admittedly not all Christians have taken his language this way. It does seem, however, to be a profound spiritual truth that even as one grows in sanctification, in holiness, becomes more mature in the Christian life, one becomes more profoundly aware of the vast gulf which separates humanity from God.

God’s standards may not have changed (they have always been absolute and perfect), but our perception of them has changed and improved, and actually increases the gap between our perception of ourselves and our perception of the utterly perfect and holy standards before God. Christians who are wrestling with persistent sin, unable seemingly to conquer it, and yet profoundly upset about this experience, can take at least some consolation in the fact that the very wrestling that they are experiencing probably conclusively demonstrates that they are true Christians. Only in Christ, it may be argued, is such tension so extreme. Outside of Christ, they perhaps might not have been nearly as upset with such tension.

## C. Chapter 8

Chapter 8, nevertheless, proceeds to stress the victory that Christians can experience over sin, the happiness and joy that the fact eternally they stand completely free from condemnation (Romans 8:1), and the life through the Spirit that can begin successively to transform them. Romans 8 thus includes such famous passages as verse 28, that God works all things together for good; or another perhaps slightly better way to translate it is that God works in all things together for good, since not everything that happens to us is good but God can use all circumstances as part of His sovereign plan. Verses 29-30 introduce us to the vexed questions of predestination and election that culminate in the believer’s glorification. The chapter concludes with a ringing promise that nothing can ever separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.

#### IV. Problem of Israel's Unbelief (9:1-11:36)

We cannot hope to solve all of the theological problems surrounding predestination and election, although it is interesting, as chapter 9 unfolds, to notice that most of the examples Paul uses are more corporate in nature than individual—the different groups throughout the Old Testament that were or were not part of God's elect people, even though nothing is, at times, said about their spiritual salvation. At any rate, Romans 9-11 turn to the final topic in Paul's theological exposition, which at first glance seems unnecessary or out of place since chapter 8 has brought us to the resounding conclusion that one day we will be perfectly glorified. Nevertheless, first-century logic demands that Paul say something about what he does in Romans 9-11. He has been claiming that this Christian Gospel, in fact, is the fulfillment of the hopes of Israel, and yet he is writing to a church that is largely Gentile in its nature, and writing at a time when more Gentiles than Jews are responding positively to the Gospel. Does this not cancel out his claims? Romans 9, 10, and 11 can be seen, in turn, as giving three answers to this question.

First, Romans 9:1-29 points out that throughout even Old Testament history more often than not only a remnant of the Israelites were truly obedient—so that if a majority of them are rejecting the Christian Gospel, unfortunately, this can be said only to be in keeping with what often was the case in generations past. Secondly, from 9:30-10:21 Paul makes the point that what went wrong for the Jews, those who have not responded positively to the Gospel, as in generations past, were that they treated the law as if it was a means of works righteousness, rather than a way of relating through faith and obedience to the salvation that God had already wrought for them.

This chapter concludes the famous early Christian confession, the shortest known summary of what it meant to confess publicly that one was a believer or follower of Jesus, in 10:9-10, with the statement “Jesus is Lord”—rather than Caesar. And in this context, “Lord” must mean both “God” and “master.” Chapter 10:14-21 also contains that famous evangelistic call to preach the Gospel so that all might hear. Chapter 11 concludes the theological section of Paul's treatment with the third answer to the question of “What went wrong?” or “Why are so many Jews rejecting the Gospel?” with a reminder that this is only temporary, that it is meant to provoke the Jews into jealousy, so that they, too, just as the Gentiles are now responding, will respond with faith in Christ—Paul's famous olive tree metaphor.

#### V. Christian Life and Service (12:1-15:13)

Chapters 12 and following then turn to the ethics that flow from the Gospel, and may be outlined briefly in terms of a sequence of how Christians are to respond. Verses 1-2 enunciate the basic principle of transformation of both body and mind. Verses 3-8 then call on each believer to identify his or her spiritual gifts, and to exercise them faithfully. Romans 12:9-13:14 then give a miscellany of exhortations framed by the theme of love, which may well be seen to permeate this entire section. It's probably not coincidental that this sequence of gifts followed by exercising them in love is identical to what we saw in 1 Corinthians 12 and 13. An important part of what it means to love includes submission to the governing authorities (13:1 and following), although it is important to remember from the model of Peter himself and others throughout Scripture that obedience to human authorities never takes precedence over obedience to God; and if God's will contradicts those of human authorities, God must be obeyed rather than people. Romans

14:1-15:13 concludes the body of Paul's letter by returning to the identical theme we saw in 1 Corinthians 8-10, that of food sacrificed to idols, and makes many of the same points about the weaker and stronger brothers or sisters in the city of Rome.

## VI. Conclusion (15:14-16:27)

With 15:14-16:27, we then read of Paul's personal plans and the concluding greetings, both of which we have already discussed in our introduction to the letter. Romans, in sum, then, is the most complete and systematic exposition of Paul's, even though it does appeal to specific circumstances in which unity over nationalist, tribalist, or racist prejudices must triumph. It has been influential throughout the history of the church, and repays reading again and again in almost every contemporary Christian context, at whatever point in our journeys of faith we are along the road. It contains some of the most precious promises that God guarantees that He will bring us to the completion of that journey successfully.

# Discussion Questions

Based on your study of the book of Romans, how would you summarize the Gospel of Jesus Christ to someone who had never heard it before?

In his letter to the Romans, how does Paul justify that the Jewish people should accept Christ?

What similarities and differences does Paul point out between Adam and Jesus Christ? (Recall Romans 5:12-21.) What is the significance of these observations?

# Further Study

## Suggested reading for this lesson:

Stedman, Ray C. *Adventuring Through the Bible: A Comprehensive Guide to the Entire Bible*.

Discovery House Publishers: 1997.

Read Chapter 55: “The Master Key to Scripture” (Romans)

## Philip Yancey Devotional Spirit Life - Romans 8

There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. (Rom. 8:1–2)

The Holy Spirit is the theme of Romans 8, and in it Paul gives a panoramic survey of how the Spirit can make a difference in a person’s life.

First, Paul sets to rest the nagging problem of sin he has just raised so forcefully. “There is now no condemnation. . . .” he announces. Jesus Christ, through his life and death, took care of “the sin problem” for all time.

Elsewhere (Romans 4), Paul borrows a word from banking to explain the process. God “credits” Jesus’ own perfection to our accounts, so that we are judged not by our behavior, but by His. Similarly, God has transferred all the punishment we deserve onto Jesus, through His death on the cross. In this transaction, human beings come out the clear winners, set free at last from the curse of sin.

And, as always with Paul, the best news of all is that Jesus Christ did not stay dead. Paul marvels that the very same power that raised Christ from the dead can also “enliven” us. The Spirit is a life-giver who alone can break the gloomy, deathlike pattern described in Romans 7.

To be sure, the Spirit does not remove all problems. His very titles—Intercessor, Helper, Counselor, Comforter—assume there will be problems. But the God within is able to do for us what we could never do for ourselves. The Spirit works alongside us as we relate to God, helping us in our weakness, even praying for us when we don’t know what to ask.

The way Paul tells it, what happens inside individual believers is the central drama of history: “All of creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.” Somehow, spiritual victories within us will help bring about the liberation and healing of a “groaning” creation. The apostle can hardly contain himself as he contemplates these matters. Romans 8 ends with a ringing declaration that nothing—absolutely, positively nothing—can ever separate us from God’s love. For Paul, that was a fact worth shouting about.

Life Question: According to this chapter, how can the Holy Spirit make a difference in your daily life?

# Glossary

**Holiness** — In the highest sense, holiness belongs to God (Isa 6:3) and to Christians as consecrated to God’s service, insofar as they are conformed in all things to the will of God (Rom 6:19). Personal holiness is a work of gradual development.

**Propitiation** — (Greek *hilasterion*, “to bring together,” “to make favorable,” or “to win reconciliation”) - Propitiation properly signifies the turning away of wrath by an offering. A sacrifice of propitiation brings human beings near to God. It reconciles them to God by atoning for their transgressions (1Jn 2:2; 4:10).

**Redemption** — The purchase back of something that had been lost, by the payment of a ransom.

**Sanctification** — The process of growing in conformity to God’s moral standards.

**Sin** — That which separates one from God; acts of disobedience to God’s commandments; the resulting human nature that is alienated from God.

# Quiz

1. According to the book of Romans, the central defining doctrine of the Christian message is:
  - A. Justification by faith alone
  - B. Justification by works alone
  - C. Justification by an equal combination of faith and works
  - D. Justification primarily by faith, but with some works for good measure
  
2. Propitiation means to:
  - A. Bring together
  - B. Make favorable
  - C. Win reconciliation
  - D. All of the above
  
3. Romans 5:12-21 elaborates on the theme of justification by speaking of Christ as:
  - A. The Great High Priest
  - B. The Passover Lamb
  - C. The Second Adam
  - D. The Son of God
  
4. Romans 9-11 deals with:
  - A. The process of sanctification
  - B. The ethics that flow from the Gospel
  - C. Christ's substitutionary atonement
  - D. The problem of Israel's unbelief
  
5. Sin:
  - A. Cannot separate a person from God
  - B. Is a departure from the true destiny and nature God originally intended for humans
  - C. Does not entail a distancing of oneself from God's moral likeness
  - D. Does not include a removing of oneself from God
  
6. Which chapter of Romans includes the longest list of greetings to any group of Christians in any of Paul's letters and has been the source of much debate among scholars?
  - A. 1
  - B. 8
  - C. 15
  - D. 16
  
7. What does Paul say to the Christian who is struggling with sin?
  - A. Take heart-if you were not a true Christian, you probably would not be so upset!
  - B. Take heart-God does not want you to worry about your sin anymore!
  - C. You can do it-when you're mature enough, you will be relieved of your struggle!
  - D. Get your life right before you come into the presence of God!

8. What dynamic had apparently happened within the church at Rome not long before Paul wrote his letter to the Romans?
  - A. An influx of poor Christians into what had been a wealthy congregation
  - B. An influx of wealthy Christians into what had been a poor congregation
  - C. An influx of Jewish Christians into what had been a Gentile congregation
  - D. An influx of Gentile Christians into what had been a Jewish congregation
  
9. What is significant about Paul's letter to the Romans?
  - A. It is the first church to which Paul wrote while staying in the city.
  - B. It is the first church to which Paul wrote that he had already visited three times.
  - C. It is the first church to which Paul wrote that he did not establish.
  - D. It is the first church to which Paul wrote that was undergoing persecution.
  
10. Which of the following is not a major theme of Romans?
  - A. Sanctification
  - B. Prognostication
  - C. Justification
  - D. Universal sinfulness

Answers: 1. A 2. D 3. C 4. D 5. B 6. D 7. A 8. C 9. C 10. B

# Lesson 2 Study Guide

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## NT225

# *Romans-Ephesians: The Letter to the Roman Church & Letters from a Roman Prison*

Philemon-Ephesians: Four Letters  
of Joy From an Imprisoned Apostle

Updated 2014

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# Objectives

This lesson takes us to the four prison epistles: Philemon, Colossians, Philippians, and Ephesians. These books are filled with doctrine, historical data, and principles for effective Christian living.

When you complete this lesson, “Philemon–Ephesians: Four Letters of Joy From an Imprisoned Apostle,” you should be able to:

- Explain why these books are grouped together and called the “prison epistles.”
- Discuss the reason each book was written.
- Discuss the cultural and spiritual condition of the books’ recipients and explain how it is reflected in each book’s content.
- Describe how each book’s content is arranged to accomplish Paul’s purpose for writing it.
- Generate spiritual guidelines for Christian living from each book.

## Scripture Reading

Read Colossians 1-4 and Philemon 1.

# Transcript

## **Course Title: Romans—Ephesians: The Letter to the Roman Church & Letters From a Roman Prison**

### **Lesson Two: Philemon—Ephesians: Four Letters of Joy From an Imprisoned Apostle**

#### I. Introduction

As we proceed chronologically in our survey of Paul's epistles, we come to a collection of four letters that have historically been known as the Prison Epistles, because each contains reference to Paul writing them from prison. We are not told specifically which prison, but early in church history it was assumed that these reflect Paul's period of house arrest in Rome in the early 60s of the first century. The four letters that we are speaking of include Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philippians. Scholars have also usually separated off Philippians from the other three, and assumed that it came from a slightly later period of this imprisonment because of its more somber references to the very real possibility that Paul countenanced of having to face death as a possible outcome of his hearing before Caesar.

Reasons for including Philemon, Colossians, and Ephesians in all roughly the same period of time, perhaps slightly earlier in Paul's two-year imprisonment in the beginning of the 60s, come from the same names that appear in the various greetings scattered throughout these letters. Philemon is apparently a Christian of the church at Colosse, and both Colossians and Ephesians are being delivered by means of the same mailman, or courier, a man by the name of Tychicus. Other names that appear in common throughout these writings include Epaphras, the pastor of the Colossian church, Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke. We probably cannot be any more precise in the circumstances or in determining the sequence of Philemon, Colossians, and Ephesians, if indeed they were all written and sent out roughly at the same time, but we will proceed to treat them in that particular order.

#### II. Book of Philemon

The letter to Philemon is by far the shortest of the letters Paul penned, and at first glance seems to be a very private letter.

##### A. Setting

Philemon, a Christian in or around Colosse, lost one of his slaves, Onesimus, who had run away. Onesimus met up with Paul, presumably while he was in Rome under house arrest but still able to receive visitors, and in the process became a Christian. Paul is now sending Onesimus back to Philemon, but requesting that Philemon receive him in the new spirit of Christian brotherly relationships that this former master and slave now shared.

Paul does not specifically ask that Philemon grant Onesimus his freedom, but he does allude to the fact that he who once seemed useless now has become useful, a play on

the meaning of the name Onesimus, or “useful,” and that Paul would have liked to have kept Philemon for his own service—perhaps a hint that he is hoping that Philemon will grant Onesimus his freedom. This short letter is also a model of apostolic tact, as Paul on several occasions makes comments to the effect that he does not want to coerce Philemon, but have him respond voluntarily, and yet appeals to his own authority, not so much as an apostle, but as an old man—but one to whom Philemon owes his very soul, his very life. Perhaps he was a convert indirectly through Epaphras’ ministry at Colosse while Paul was evangelizing the nearby community of Ephesus.

## B. Issue of Slavery

The big question for modern people reading Philemon is: Why does not Paul confront the issue of slavery more directly? We may give at least five brief replies to this question. First of all, we must remember that in the ancient world slavery was not as unrelentingly evil or malignant as we think of in many modern contexts, not least that of the nineteenth century American South. There certainly were slaves who lived in barbaric conditions, but others were more like servants or butlers in the households of noble people. Secondly, slavery was not primarily an issue of racism in the ancient Roman Empire, as it often has been in other places, but rather that of the subjugation of conquered territories. Thirdly, in a culture that had never known Christianity as a force with any kind of a power base, it is very unlikely that more widespread emancipation attempts could have flourished at all; in fact, it might have proved counterproductive for this fledgling institution. Fourthly, Paul’s main concern throughout his writings is for the more inward and spiritual liberation that the Gospel brings. But, fifthly and finally, Paul does teach in 1 Corinthians 7:17-24 that if a slave has the chance to acquire his or her freedom they should exercise that option.

As one commentator puts it, even though Paul does not directly confront the institution of slavery head-on, what this letter does is to bring us into an atmosphere in which the institution could only wilt and die. Undoubtedly for this very reason it was preserved. Tradition says that Onesimus became bishop of Ephesus at the end of the first century. If that tradition is right, then here was one influential Christian leader who recognized that his own personal emancipation proclamation, as it were, could be widely useful and influential in the church of Jesus Christ more generally.

## III. Book of Colossians

The second of the Prison Epistles that we wish to survey is the epistle to the Colossians. This brief letter is the second that Paul has written to an entire Christian congregation that he did not personally found. But as we mentioned above, it may well be the spin-off of his ministry in nearby Ephesus.

### A. Setting

Here Paul seems to have to address a particularly unique version of false teaching, that for want of a specific title it has often simply been called the Colossian heresy. It has elements of

the Judaizing controversies that we have seen in previous letters, but it also seems to contain elements of more Gnostic, or Gnosticizing, tendencies. Chapter 2, for example, refers to debates over various ritual laws including the ceremonial laws of clean and unclean food, and the various weekly, seasonal, or annual festivals. Clearly here those who are requiring such rituals are inviting a Judaistic philosophy. But this same context in just two verses, 2:18, refers to angel worship, something no orthodox Jew would ever do but was well known in various forms of Greek religion. It also describes a false humility that comes from a prideful reliance on asceticism or on spiritual visions—again, things much more akin to what we know of from other Greek forms of thought than anything Jewish.

The spin-off of this false teaching affected three particular Christian doctrines that Paul has to deal with in this letter: Christology, one's understanding of the person of Christ, of Jesus; soteriology, the doctrine of salvation; and anthropology, the doctrine of humanity, or of human nature. For the more Judaizing tendencies of this heresy, it was difficult for these would-be Christians to believe that Jesus was fully God, seemingly compromising Jewish monotheism. And therefore Colossians contains some of the strongest statements of Christ's deity found anywhere in Scripture. The implications for soteriology—for the doctrine of salvation—for the Judaizers, as we have seen earlier, are that various works or Jewish rituals must therefore complete Christ's atonement, thus leading to an inadequate understanding of the human response to what God has done in Christ. For the more Gnosticizing tendencies of this particular Colossian heresy, the difficulty was exactly the opposite—believing in Christ's full humanity; and, therefore, Christians are not fully saved because the spiritual realm and the material realm, the spirit and the body, are improperly divorced. And, therefore, Colossians also contains strong statements about the very practical moral or ethical outworkings of the Gospel that must flow from a claim to be a believer in Christ.

## B. Outline

We may see these specific concerns unpacked sequentially as we briefly survey the structure of the letter. Once again, much like the book of Romans, there is a theological half—the bulk of the first two chapters, and an ethical half—the bulk of the second two chapters.

## C. Theological Exposition (Colossians 1:15-2:23)

Following an introduction, the theological exposition proceeds formally in 1:15-2:23. The most striking and famous portion of this segment of Colossians is the first, in which a famous hymn or poem of doctrine, a tightly packed creed or confession of who Christ is, appears in 1:15 and following. In these verses, combined with the later reference in 2:9, as we mentioned a minute ago we have some of the strongest statements of Christ's deity, of his lordship, not only over individual Christians but over all of the cosmos. The implications of this, therefore, as this section unfolds, is that Christ, who has provided the complete atonement, makes reconciliation with God guaranteed, contingent on the Colossians' perseverance (1:21-23)—reconciliation that is demonstrated at the human level, particularly between Jews and Gentiles, that most warring of factions in the first century (1:24-2:7).

Third, and addressing the Colossian heresy here most directly, reconciliation with any other philosophy or religion is excluded (2:8-23). And in this section we find the specific

references mentioned above to the Judaizing and the Gnosticizing elements—elements that continue to have parallels throughout the history of Christianity, as, for example, in those who legalistically mandate the Sabbath as a particular day of rest with a long list of what can or cannot be done on that day. Chapter 2:16-17 is one of the clearest statements in the New Testament against all forms of Sabbatarianism, making it clear that the Sabbath laws of Judaism were only a part of the shadow, the substance of which was Christ—that they are fulfilled in Christ and therefore need not be literally obeyed in the fashion that Jews of old did.

#### D. Ethical Outworking (Colossians 3:1-4:18)

Chapters 3 and 4 then turn to the ethical outworkings of the Gospel, and particularly the anthropological implications. Namely, how are humans to understand their nature and their response to the complete deity and complete atonement that Christ has provided? There is a striking juxtaposition in the opening paragraphs of Colossians 3, between, on the one hand, calling Colossian Christians to focus on God, to focus on the heavenly realms, to concentrate on heavenly things—language which at first glance would suggest some form of mysticism, or contemplative meditation. But after those opening four verses, 3:5 and following immediately explain how this focus on heavenly things is done. It is done by the ordinary actions of decent Christian moral living. Unlike the Gnosticizing tendencies of the Colossian heresy, the body and spirit cannot be separated. One cannot claim to have some kind of spiritual union with Christ or God, or spiritual maturity, if there is not moral living that flows as the natural ethical outgrowth of this alleged relationship. The latter part of chapter 4, then, provides the conventional closing greetings that we have become accustomed to seeing in Paul's letters.

There is one other structural item of interest in this last half of Colossians, in which Paul discusses the relationship between slaves and masters, between wives and husbands, between children and parents. This section, 3:18-4:1, tucked into the ethical exhortations of the epistles, follows a form, or literary genre, that was well known from the ancient world, and has been called by scholars a household code, or a domestic code, of ethics. Both ancient Jews and Greeks and Romans alike, often in their ethical exhortations included instructions for how people living in relationships of authority and subordination were to conduct themselves.

The three categories that Paul enunciates here are not new, but what is radical is his reciprocal focus of the responsibilities of those people in the authoritative positions in the particular relationships. Paul will unpack these themes even more as we proceed to the letter to the Ephesians. But as we sum up the distinctive contribution of the Colossian letter, and the response Paul gives to the Colossian heresy, we may wish to think through what ways our particular cultures have, even in professing Christianity, inadequate Christology. Do we really believe in Christ as the complete expression of God's fullness—His deity and His complete humanity? Do we recognize a complete atonement for which no human works can in any way supplement or complete? And do we recognize the impossibility of divorcing professed belief in union with Christ from ordinary moral behavior and living? When phrased this way, there are many frightening parallels to the Colossian heresy in contemporary Christianity to which this letter speaks volumes.

## IV. Book of Ephesians

The third Prison Epistle, then, is the letter to the Ephesians. There are a number of interesting features about the letter to the Ephesians that have led many scholars, sometimes along with Colossians as well, to doubt whether or not Paul wrote this letter.

### A. Setting and Author

On the one hand, it seems to be a very general and systematic letter, much like Romans, with next to no personal greetings and few signs that Paul has any firsthand knowledge of its recipients. And yet Ephesus was the community in which Paul spent the longest time of any of his stops on his missionary travels. Ephesians and Colossians are also more similar to each other than any other two letters anywhere in the apostolic collection, leading some to wonder if some later anonymous Christian had copied from the more authentic predecessor, the Colossian epistle. Thirdly, the three earliest and most reliable manuscripts that we have of the letter to the Ephesians lack the words “in Ephesus” in the first verse. In other words, they do not claim to be addressed to any one particular Christian congregation.

As a result, many scholars believe that Ephesians was not penned by Paul. More conservative scholars suggest that perhaps he gave greater freedom to a different amanuensis or scribe to write up the details of his letter, perhaps along the analogy of his epistle to the Colossians and that we should imagine Ephesians not being written just to the church of Ephesus but as a circular letter, or an encyclical, perhaps for many of the churches in the area around Ephesus, much like the book of Revelation would later explicitly be said to have been written to the seven churches of Asia, including, interestingly, Ephesus. This might also account for the reference at the end of the letter to the Colossians to an apparently otherwise unknown letter to the Laodiceans that they are to get a hold of and read. If Ephesians was, in fact, addressed to several churches in and around Ephesus, of which Laodicea was one of them—again, interestingly, one of the same churches that the book of Revelation was written to—this could account for this otherwise cryptic reference.

Nevertheless, there are numerous references to heavenly places, to Satan as the prince and power of this air, to the battle that Christians face, and, most notably in the closing chapter in Ephesians 6:10 and following, to the whole issue of spiritual warfare, all of which fit very appropriately what we have read in Acts 19 about Paul’s time in Ephesus and the magic or occult that he had to combat there. We believe, therefore, that some combination of these explanations may allow us to continue to affirm that Paul was the primary author responsible for this epistle. As we have mentioned, its outline very closely follows that of Colossians, as well as some of the specific contents, so we may comment relatively briefly on its contents here. The first three chapters are largely theological; the last three chapters are largely ethical.

## B. Outline

Tucked into the thanksgiving section of the opening verses of chapter 1 is a long sentence that unpacks the trinitarian nature of Christian faith, praising God for what He has done, following each of the roles of the three persons of the Trinity. Chapter 2 includes those famous verses, 6 and 8-9, that stress that salvation is entirely by grace through faith—although verse 10 is appropriately kept in this same context, which reminds us that we who are saved by grace through faith are also created in Christ Jesus for good works. Good works naturally flow from our saving faith. Chapter 3 introduces us to a key Pauline theme: namely, the mystery of the Christian revelation, the mystery which in verse 6 is specifically defined as the unity in the church between Jew and Gentile—a unity which in verses 9-10 is meant to have an evangelistic function to all of the hostile forces in this world, perhaps impressing even the diabolical forces that lie behind non-Christian earthly authorities.

Chapters 4-6, then, unpack the ethical implications of this Gospel. Much as in Romans and 1 Corinthians, we have a section on using spiritual gifts, particularly to promote the unity of the church. In chapter 5, beginning with verse 18 and following, we have commands to be filled with the Spirit, which among other things is unpacked by means of the proper role relationships of the same three groups that we saw addressed in Colossians. Here, however, Paul expands on his instructions, particularly in his commands to husbands and wives. Wives are indeed called to submit to their husbands, suggesting an enduring relationship of authority and submission. But, however malignant or unfortunate this relationship is often corrupted among fallen humanity, Paul makes it clear that he has a 180 degree opposite view of what Christian authority should look like. His command to the husbands is to love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for them. If there is an authority in any particular role relationships in Christian living, it is always an authority of sacrifice, an authority of responsibility, an authority of servant leadership—not of wielding power in any heavy-handed or authoritarian way. Chapter 6, as we mentioned, includes the famous passage in verses 10-20 on the whole theme of spiritual warfare in unseen places.

## C. Spiritual Application

If we think about applying the letter to the Ephesians today, we must think about ways in which Jew and Gentile need to be united—races that are at war with one another, tribalism that continues to remain rampant in our modern world. We need to recognize again, as in John 17, Jesus' high priestly prayer, the enormous evangelistic implications of the unity of the church. Why is it, at least in most parts of the western world, that at 11 o'clock on Sunday morning remains the most segregated hour? Christians should rather be demonstrating to a fallen world the most integrated of all human communities.

## V. Book of Philippians

Finally, we come to the short letter of Philippians, the fourth and final of Paul's so-called Prison Epistles—with a more somber tone, particularly in 1:21-25 and 2:17—where Paul makes it clear

that he has wrestled with the possibility that he might actually be on the verge of death, although God has consoled him with the conviction that for the benefit of his congregations, the Philippians included, he will live just a little bit longer. Philippians is what in the ancient Greek world was called a “family letter.”

### A. Outline

It does not fall into the twofold division of theology and ethics that we have seen is so common elsewhere; but after the introductory greetings and prayer for the recipients, its body begins in 1:12-26 by giving reassurance about Paul’s well-being despite his imprisonment. Then, in 1:27-2:18, he requests reassurance about his congregation. He wants to be comforted hearing how well the Philippians are doing. In this context appears the most famous passage of Philippians, 2:6 and following—the famous Philippian hymn that describes the great humiliation and condescension that Jesus experienced in the incarnation, divesting Himself from full independent exercise of his divine prerogatives and humbling Himself and becoming obedient even unto death, death on a cross. Only then was He glorified and exalted back to His original state at the right hand of the Father, at which point one day all peoples on earth, in heaven, and under the earth will be forced, whether they have done so voluntarily or not thus far, to acknowledge Christ’s lordship.

Chapter 2:19-30, following the outline of a family letter, then provides information about the movement of the intermediaries back and forth between Paul and the Philippian church—this context, particularly Timothy and Epaphroditus. The one place where Paul deviates from the standard family letter of relatively informal personal information is in 3:1-4:1, in which he introduces specific warnings, once again against Judaizers, false teachers at Philippi. Here appear, as in Galatians 1, some of the strongest language warning against those who would glory in the flesh. And the fact that this section intrudes in the otherwise natural outline of the letter gives it prominence as well.

Chapter 4:2-20, then, include final thank-yous and various special instructions which center around the most immediate occasion for the delivery of this letter—namely, a thank you note for money received. The Philippian congregation has apparently been the most active throughout Paul’s career in supporting Paul so that he did not always have to work for a living. Although on a number of occasions, as 1 Corinthians 9 reminds us, he voluntarily relinquished those rights to accept money for ministry, so as not to offend people; and we have no evidence that he ever accepted money for ministry among the people he was immediately ministering to. Chapter 4:21-22 conclude with an exchange of greetings with third parties, and 4:23 has a closing wish for health.

### B. Spiritual Application

If we seek to apply the letter to the Philippians, we may derive virtually one application from each of the main sections of the body of the letter. We, too, must encourage others about our well-being in ministry, even under adverse situations. We must challenge others to the unity that comes from treating others as more important than ourselves. We must commend faithful believers publicly, warn against heresy forthrightly—at least when someone’s salvation is

actually at stake. Finally, we must thank people for their support; and, as Paul puts it in 4:10 and following, he has learned how to be content in all circumstances, to be content however little or great that support is.

# Discussion Questions

As you review your study of Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philippians, in what ways do you see Paul's teaching to be countercultural? Choose one of those countercultural teachings and apply it to a situation in the society in which you live today.

Describe, in your own words, the Colossian heresy that Paul addresses in his letter to the Colossians. What parallels to this heresy do you see in Christianity today? How might we work to solve this?

One of your friends insists that the Bible promotes the institution of slavery. Using the books of Philemon, Colossians, and Ephesians, how would you refute this?

# Further Study

## Suggested reading for this lesson:

Stedman, Ray C. *Adventuring Through the Bible: A Comprehensive Guide to the Entire Bible*.

Discovery House Publishers: 1997.

Read Chapter 67: “A Brother Restored” (Philemon)

## Philip Yancey Devotional Downward Mobility - Philippians 2

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. (Phil. 2:3)

Fully a decade after founding the church, Paul wrote his Philippian friends a personal letter. He had suffered much in the intervening years: beatings, imprisonment, shipwreck, hostility from jealous competitors. Surely he must have sometimes wondered, “Is it worth all this pain?” Even as he wrote this letter, he was under arrest, “in chains for Christ” (1:13). But whenever Paul’s thoughts turned to Philippi, the apostle’s spirits lifted.

Paul declined gifts from most churches, out of fear that his enemies might twist the facts and accuse him of being a crook. But he trusted the Philippians. At least four separate times they sacrificed to meet his needs. Just recently, they had sent Epaphroditus on an arduous journey to care for Paul in prison. Paul wrote the book of Philippians, in fact, mainly as a thank-you for all that his friends had done.

If someone had bluntly asked the apostle, “Paul, tell me, what keeps you going through hard times?” he likely would have answered with words straight out of this chapter, for here Paul reveals the source of his irrepressible drive. First, Paul gives the example of Jesus. In a stately, hymn-like paragraph, he marvels that Jesus gave up all the glory of heaven to take on the form of a man—and not just a man, but a servant, one who poured out his life for others. Paul took on that pattern for himself.

Then, in a seeming paradox, Paul describes a kind of “teamwork” with God: While God is working within, we must “work out” salvation with fear and trembling. A later spiritual giant, Saint Teresa of Avila, expressed the paradox this way: “I pray as if all depends on God; I work as if all depends on me.” Her formula aptly summarizes Paul’s spiritual style.

Philippians gives an occasional glimpse of the apostle Paul’s fatigue. But it also shows flashes of what kept him from “burnout.” To him, the converts in Philippi shone “like stars in the universe.” That kind of reward, and joy in their progress, kept Paul going.

Life Question: How can you “consider others better than yourself” without developing a bad self-image?

# Glossary

**Asceticism** — (Greek *askesis*, exercise or training) - The term, which was already used by the Stoics and Cynics, denoting practices designed to combat vice and develop virtues. It normally takes the form of renunciation (e.g., fasting, celibacy), but has sometimes been given a more active form in such excesses as self-flagellation.

**Christology** — The study of the person of Christ, and in particular, of the union in Him of the divine and human natures.

**Hedonism** — The doctrine or way of life that adheres to pleasure as being the sole good in life.

**Soteriology** — (Greek *soteria*, salvation) - The section of Christian theology that treats the saving work of Christ for the world.

# Quiz

- Paul probably did not confront the issue of slavery head-on because:
  - There were so few slaves in the Roman Empire that it was basically a non-issue.
  - Paul's main concern was for the more inward and spiritual liberation that the Gospel brings.
  - Paul believed those who were slaves should in no case desire their freedom.
  - It would have hurt the Roman economy.
- The book of Colossians contains some of the strongest statements of this subject in all of Scripture:
  - The deity of Christ
  - The servanthood of Christ
  - The priesthood of Christ
  - The temptations of Christ
- These two epistles are more similar to each other than any other two letters in the New Testament:
  - Colossians and Philippians
  - Colossians and Ephesians
  - Ephesians and Philippians
  - Philippians and Philemon
- This is a system of practices designed to combat vice and develop virtues:
  - Hedonism
  - Existentialism
  - Anthropomorphism
  - Asceticism
- What did Paul experience in Ephesus that may have caused him to write about spiritual warfare in Ephesians?
  - Occult practices
  - Demonic possession of Christians
  - Angel worship
  - Legalism
- What teaching can we **not** find in the book of Philippians?
  - We must encourage others about our well-being in ministry, despite our challenges.
  - We must commend faithful believers publicly.
  - We must warn against heresy forthrightly when someone's salvation is at stake.
  - We must stand up for our rights when we are persecuted.

7. What was the name of the slave about whom Paul wrote in his letter to Philemon?
  - A. Crispus
  - B. Titus
  - C. Epaphroditus
  - D. Onesimus
  
8. Which letter has the most information addressed to the relationship between husbands and wives?
  - A. Philemon
  - B. Colossians
  - C. Ephesians
  - D. Philippians
  
9. Which of the following was **not** part of the “Colossian heresy”?
  - A. Dual worship of God and Diana
  - B. Judaizing and Gnosticizing
  - C. Adherence to clean and unclean food laws and Jewish religious festivals
  - D. Angel worship
  
10. Which Prison Epistle contains the hymn about Christ’s humiliation?
  - A. Philemon
  - B. Colossians
  - C. Ephesians
  - D. Philippians

Answers: 1. B 2. A 3. B 4. D 5. A 6. D 7. D 8. C 9. A 10. D

# Lesson 3 Study Guide

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**NT225**

***Romans-Ephesians:  
The Letter to the  
Roman Church  
& Letters from a  
Roman Prison***

Archaeology & the New Testament

Updated 2014

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**Our Daily Bread  
Christian University**

# Objectives

This lesson continues the study of New Testament archaeology introduced in Lesson Three (Judaism: The Religion Jesus Was Born Into) of the Galatians–1 Corinthians course. Specifically, you will see how archaeological discoveries of ancient texts and artworks contribute to our understanding of Jesus' life and ministry.

When you complete this lesson, "Archaeology & the New Testament," you should be able to:

- Name, describe, and explain the significance of four archaeological literary works.
- Name, describe, and explain the significance of important archaeological artworks.
- Discover how these archaeological findings relate, specifically, to the life and crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

## Scripture Reading

Read Ephesians 1-6 and Philippians 1-4.

# Transcript

## Course Title: Romans—Ephesians: The Letter to the Roman Church & Letters From a Roman Prison

### Lesson Three: Archaeology & the New Testament

#### I. Introduction to Archaeological Evidence (Part 2)

Archaeological evidence has added a great deal to New Testament biblical studies, especially over the last fifty years. In this unit, we will look at significant literary finds, imperial artwork, religious art, and archaeology's impact on our knowledge of the life, death, and burial of Jesus Christ.

#### II. Major Literary Finds

Although most archaeological evidence may be of interest to some Bible readers, literary finds can be especially significant to the field of Biblical Studies. The major literary finds associated with New Testament and early Church History Studies include the Dead Sea Scrolls, Codex Sinaiticus, Nag Hammadi Codices, and the Bar Cochba Letters.

##### A. Dead Sea Scrolls

The happenstance discovery, in the spring of 1946, of seven ancient scrolls in a cave in the Desert of Judah was followed by similar finds in another ten caves situated near a site known by the modern Arabic name Qumran. Qumran is located some ten miles south of Jericho and just over a mile west of the Dead Sea. After a decade of no new discoveries, Yigael Yadin retrieved from the cellars of an antique dealer in Bethlehem the Temple Scroll, the largest scroll of all. The manuscripts appear to represent about 800 separate documents, some 240 of which are copies of books of the Hebrew Bible. About ten of the scrolls are largely complete, but most consist of innumerable fragments. These discoveries have shed additional light on the setting of the New Testament—its people, their beliefs, and reactions to political and religious situations. By content and literary genre, the scrolls fall into four major divisions. These are as follows:

1. **Hebrew Bible.** Copies of books of the Hebrew Bible make up about thirty percent of the find. With the exception of the book of Esther, all books contained in the Hebrew Scriptures are represented at Qumran.
2. **Apocryphal Books.** Hebrew and Aramaic manuscripts of apocryphal books, such as the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, Tobit, Jubilees, and 1 Enoch as well as hitherto unknown compositions of a similar character, such as the Genesis Apocryphon, the Psalms of Joshua, and others, amount to about twenty-five percent of the find.
3. **Previously Unknown Compositions.** Another twenty-five percent of the find are copies

of previously unknown compositions: wisdom writings, prayers and prayer compilations, etc. They presumably derive from what may be considered the common literary position of Judaism in the late Second Temple Period.

**4. Literature of the Community of the Renewed Covenant.** Approximately one-fifth of the manuscript assemblage consists of Hebrew compositions of various literary genres that evidently constituted the particular literature of the “community of the renewed covenant.” These works are of special interest because they enlighten us as to the Covenanters’ conceptual universe and the socio-religious structure of their community.

## B. Codex Sinaiticus

In 1844, Constantine Tischendorf embarked on a search for biblical manuscripts, which took him to the Orthodox monastery of St. Catherine at the foot of Mt. Sinai. During his stay, he noticed a stack of parchment that was to be used for kindling in the monastery’s oven. After leafing through the leaves of parchment, he realized the monks were about to burn a rare Greek edition of the Hebrew Bible. Although he could not convince them to give him the manuscript, he was able to keep them from using the parchment for kindling.

Tischendorf returned to the monastery twice more before the monks allowed him to examine a large manuscript they kept in a closet. To Tischendorf’s amazement and delight, this early fourth-century manuscript, which was in excellent condition, contained not only most of the Old Testament but also all of the New Testament, plus two additional early Christian writings: the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas. The monks would only allow him to make a handwritten copy of the manuscript. It was not until the early decades of the twentieth century that a photographic facsimile of the entire Codex Sinaiticus manuscript was finally published.

## C. Nag Hammadi Codices

As with the Dead Sea Scrolls, the discovery of the literary treasures of Nag Hammadi was largely accidental. Several hundred miles south of Cairo, beyond the ancient monastery of Pachomius at Chenoboskion, a group of local farmers were digging up the rich soil surrounding the Nile River bed to use as fertilizer. One of the farmers, Mohammed Ali, happened upon a large storage jar. Hoping it might contain gold or perhaps a coin hoard, he broke open the jar. Out tumbled twelve large, leather-bound codices. The year was 1945.

Mohammed gave one of the books to his brother-in-law, who eventually sold it to a Cairo museum. Of the remaining eleven books, one was partially burned by Mohammed’s wife, and the rest fell into the hands of local merchants. It took over thirty years for the Nag Hammadi codices to be recovered, collected, and edited for the publication.

Unfortunately, nothing is known of the history of the group who gathered together this collection. They are Coptic copies of writings, which were originally composed in Greek. The writings cover a wide variety of subjects, and they seem to have been composed originally by a number of different authors, at different times, and in a variety of locations. The common

thread that unites the dissimilar writings of the Nag Hammadi collection is an emphasis on secret, saving knowledge (gnosis), as well as an other worldly estrangement from society in general and a desire to withdraw from the corruption of the material world.

#### D. Bar Cochba Discoveries

The Jewish revolt against Rome from A.D. 132-135 was not recorded in detail by any extant second-century historian, yet it was an extremely significant event in Jewish history. It was the last fight for Jewish independence that took place in Palestine until Israel's War of Independence in 1947-48. Until recently, the only information known about the revolt and its leader Simon Bar Cochba (Kochba) was found in the Talmud and in brief references in other works.

In 1951 and 1952, as a result of archaeological excavations, the first physical evidence of the revolt was found—several bundles of papyrus and leather that contained contracts and documents dating from about A.D. 132. Especially interesting was the discovery of two letters sent by Simon Bar Cochba, one of which was probably written or dictated by him, and contains his signature. All these discoveries were made in the Wadi Murabbaat caves in Jordan, about eleven miles south of Qumran. A 1960 expedition yielded an additional fifteen letters written to or by Bar Cochba as well as two parchment fragments of Exodus that were inserted in phylacteries and date from the first century. The expedition in 1961 yielded a great deal of material. Nearly fifty papyri and a number of tools, baskets, textiles, and so forth were found. All the documents were from the time of the second revolt or prior to it.

### III. Imperial Artwork

One important example of Roman imperial art specifically created for conveying political messages to the citizens of Rome and the inhabitants of the empire was the erection and decoration of massive triumphal arches. These arches were erected at government expense at various locations throughout the empire, but especially in Rome itself.

#### A. Titus's Arch

On the tenth of the month of Ab, late August of A.D. 70, the Jerusalem temple was destroyed. Upon his return to Rome in 71, Titus celebrated a joint triumph with his father, the Emperor Vespasian. In the procession were the enemy leaders, Simon Bar Giora and John of Gischala, and various objects were taken from the temple (notably the menorah, table, and trumpets). Simon was beheaded, John was probably enslaved, and the sacred objects were deposited in the Temple of Peace in Rome. Two triumphal arches were erected in the following years to celebrate the victory. One was destroyed in the fourteenth or fifteenth century, but the other is still standing in Rome, the arch of Titus.

In Book Seven of the Jewish War, the Jewish historian Josephus describes in great detail the enormous victory parade held in Rome immediately after the war. A close comparison of the scenes carved on the arch and Josephus's literary description reveals that a significant portion of the relief decoration carved on the arch of Titus is a visual narration of that victory parade.

For example, one panel features part of a procession in which spoils from the Jerusalem temple are conveyed on a float. The objects displayed are cult objects, such as the table of the “presence.” Also carved in intricate detail is a magnificent reproduction of a seven-armed candelabra or menorah.

Other panels focus on Titus himself. One scene depicts his role in the triumphal procession. He is pictured in a magnificently decorated chariot, drawn by four horses. Above his head the goddess Victoria, herself, holds a golden crown. But the scene that is accorded the greatest prominence records an event that took place eleven years later. The dead emperor is portrayed as being carried off to heaven on the wings of an eagle. Viewed as a unified visual message, the arch celebrates Titus as the hero of the Jewish war, who eventually became a god himself because of his extraordinary service in maintaining the peace of the empire. The fortunate survival of the arch of Titus adds an important dimension to our understanding of the outcome of the Jewish war and what it meant to the various participants.

## B. Imperial Coinage

Roman coinage had developed gradually from the fourth century B.C. Roman emperors made extensive use of monumental art to promote their political and religious messages, but they also had the rather simple but extremely effective medium of imperial coinage. Two of the most common messages that Roman coins emphasized regarding emperors were their accomplishments in battle that maintained the peace of the empire and their generous benefactions that enhanced the material well-being of its subjects.

“Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s,” says Jesus as reported in the Gospels (Mk 12:17; Mt 22:21; Lk 20:25). These words were prompted when a Pharisee produced a coin with a depiction of the emperor’s head on one side. The point of Jesus’ remark is that no matter how powerful the emperor may appear to be in this world, his influence does not extend to the spiritual realm.

## IV. Religious Artwork

Another way in which material remains can increase our understanding of the world in which the early Christian message was spread is by giving voice to other messages of hope and salvation that seem to have held appeal to the ordinary inhabitants of the Greco-Roman world. The situation in the provincial city of Philippi is a case in point.

### A. Ancient Graffiti at Philippi

Located in northeastern Greece, Philippi was a Roman colony situated near the eastern end of the Egnatian Road (Via Egnatia), the major overland route leading from Rome to the Aegean coast. Even today, visitors can see the remains of its forum, with its once-splendid fountains, its well-appointed library and civic offices, and its monumental temples honoring the patron goddess of the city and the imperial family. To the north are the foothills of the Balkan Highlands, to the east rises Mt. Orbelos, and to the west Mt. Pangaeum (Pangaion).

On the northern side of the Egnatian Road lies a steep outcropping of rocks, which leads to the higher elevations of Mt. Pangaeum. Scattered over this lonely stretch of rock is an incredibly rich profusion of rather crudely carved religious representations, a graphic and poignant witness to the simple piety of ordinary people. The majority of them seem to have been commissioned as an act of piety and gratitude for some gift of protection, healing, or rescue that the god or goddess is credited with having performed on the suppliant's behalf.

To date, 187 reliefs have been identified, forming a kind of extended open-air sanctuary. The goddess Diana (the Roman counterpart to the Greek goddess Artemis), in her role as huntress is featured most prominently. In fact, there are over ninety separate representations of her in various hunting poses. This evidence of popular concern for the risks and rewards of the hunter is further emphasized by the presence among these same rocks of a roughly carved sanctuary to Sylvanus, a Roman god of the woodlands.

A variety of other deities are also represented, including the Phrygian mother goddess Cybele. Higher up the mountain, Isis had her own temple and small sanctuary complex, but she was also honored among the rock carvings. Although Egyptian in origin, Isis became extremely popular in the Roman Empire as a compassionate goddess who could heal, protect, and possibly grant her worshipers a better life in the next world. In one of the few inscriptions accompanying a relief, Isis is honored as the Queen of Heaven, a frequently repeated title for this goddess.

What all of the deities who are honored in this desolate rocky outcropping have in common is that they extended concern and protection to ordinary people and to the occupations and preoccupations of their everyday lives. Paul appears to have understood this need, as he encouraged the Philippians by saying, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving present your requests to God" (Php 4:6).

## B. Tombs and Ossuaries

Under Greco-Roman influence, tombs in Palestine took on the exterior forms and ornamentation of classic architecture. The elaborate facades and monuments, cut from the living rock along the side of the Kidron Valley, give some idea of what the necropolis must have looked like when literally hundreds of such tombs were visible around the edges of the city on the slopes of Mount Scopus, the Mount of Olives, and other rock faces in the area.

The monuments only draw attention to the tombs, which were cut into the rock and located outside the city wall. To enter, one had to stoop to get in to the small passageway, stepping down into a large room with a stone bench around the sides. After death, the body was placed on one of the stone benches. The tomb was then sealed by rolling a circular stone over the small entranceway. This was the first burial.

After a period of about a year, the family returned to the tomb and gathered the bones of the deceased into an ossuary, following a carefully-prescribed ritual. The use of bone chests or ossuaries was a new innovation from the third century B.C. onward. They were patterned after Roman cremation chests and consisted of stone boxes, about three feet long, with covers. The

box was then placed in one of the smaller niches, which had been cut into the sides of the main room of the tomb. Ossuaries were frequently marked with elaborate geometrical designs and with Aramaic name inscriptions. Hundreds of ossuaries have been recovered and are of interest to biblical scholars as are the Christian catacombs found in Rome.

### C. Catacombs

Of all the roads that led to Rome, the Appia Antica—built in 312 B.C.—was the reigning leader. Along the Appian Way, patrician Romans built great monuments above ground, while Christians met in the catacombs beneath it. The remains of both can be visited today. In some of the dank, dark grottoes, you can still see the remains of early Christian art. The extensive and almost continuous exploration of early Christian catacombs has revealed a rich, albeit, largely hidden world of early Christian art and imagery. Although for some Christians, they have been the object of religious pilgrimage since their very creation, it was not until the fifteenth century that scholars began visiting the Roman catacombs for the purpose of historical investigation. In the late sixteenth century, excavation of an area on the northern outskirts of the city led to another major underground gravesite. The discovery of more catacombs has continued almost to the present time.

How did the popular piety of the Christians of the third and fourth centuries express itself in the wall paintings surrounding these Christian graves? (1) First, human figures, generally representations of the deceased, are depicted standing with arms and large eyes raised upward in an attitude of early Christian prayer. (2) Early Christian tombs were also frequently decorated with religious symbols such as crosses and fish. (3) A third subject typically portrayed was a rich variety of scenes from biblical stories. By far the most commonly portrayed subject was Christ Himself in the role of the Good Shepherd.

## V. Life of Christ

There are many other archaeological sites and finds pertinent to the life, death, and burial of the man Christ Jesus.

### A. Bethlehem

Matthew 2:1 and Luke 2:4-7 state that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, which is situated on a ridge about 2,500 feet above sea level some six miles southwest of Jerusalem. Very old traditions place the birth of Jesus in a cave in Bethlehem. Justin Martyr, who wrote *Dialogue with the Jew Trypho* shortly after the middle of the second century, says: “But when the Child was born in Bethlehem, since Joseph could not find a lodging in that village, he took up his quarters in a certain cave near the village.” Origen, who was in Palestine frequently from 215 onward and wrote *Against Celsus* about 248, reports what is evidently the same tradition and speaks as if he himself were one of those to whom the cave had been shown. It was possibly over this cave that a church was built by the emperor Constantine and dedicated by his mother, Helena, who visited Bethlehem in c. 327. You can still visit the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem today.

## B. Sepphoris

Traditionally, Jesus is often pictured as a rural carpenter with limited urban exposure, but excavations at Sepphoris have begun to challenge that concept. The ruins of the palace, colonnades, forum, theater, and villas at Sepphoris show that the Galilean culture affecting Jesus was far more sophisticated and urban than was previously thought possible. This strategic city, the capital of Galilee in Jesus' youth, lay only four miles north of Nazareth. Sepphoris was "the ornament of all Galilee," according to Josephus, and the busy, bustling capital of Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great.

The seat of government, Sepphoris boasted about Antipas' opulent royal residence, administrative offices, the royal bank, and archives. Within the city's strongly fortified walls stood the great fortress, headquarters for Antipas' secret police and the military personnel charged with keeping the peace and protecting the borders. Archaeologists have uncovered hundreds of thousands of datable pottery—a dozen colors of imported marble, fragments of bright frescos, artistically molded plaster, smooth, round, limestone columns, ornately cut capitals, hundreds of coins, scores of whole ceramic vessels, beautiful mosaics, bronze figures, gold chain, carved ivory, and other artifacts, which all demonstrate that Sepphoris in the early and middle Roman periods, was indeed a thriving metropolis. As Richard A. Batey, an archaeologist who has dug at Sepphoris for years states in his book, *Jesus and the Forgotten City*, "Continuing archaeological excavations are yielding evidence of a sophisticated urban culture that places Jesus in a radically different environment that challenges traditional assumptions about His life and ministry" (p. 14).

## C. Gerasa (Jerash)

Another urban area Jesus may have visited was Gerasa, one of the significant cities of the Decapolis. The Gerasenes were the inhabitants of the city and its surroundings. The ancient city has been identified with modern Jerash, about twenty-two miles north of Amman (capital of modern Jordan), nineteen miles east of the Jordan River, and thirty-seven miles southeast of the Sea of Galilee. The identification is based on the similarity between the ancient and modern names and on inscriptions that describe the ancient residents as "the first Gerasenes." The Bible does not refer to the city per se but to "the region of the Gerasenes" (Mk 5:1).

The Jordanian Department of Antiquities has been excavating the site since 1953. An excellent example of city planning, Gerasa was laid with a single main street intersected at right angles by two cross streets. The main street was just over a half mile in length and was flanked by 260 Ionic and Corinthian columns on either side. The side streets likewise were colonnaded, and a drainage system ran under the middle of the streets. To the west of the main street on the highest point in town rose the second-century temple of Artemis, east of the street stood two bath complexes, and in the north part of town was a theater. At the south end of the street stood a first-century circular forum, unique in the Greco-Roman world. From the forum a great flight of steps led up to the temple of Zeus, which began in A.D. 22. Next to it stood the south theater (first century) capable of accommodating about 5,000 people. At the south entrance of the city was a great triumphal arch, commemorating Hadrian's visit to the city in A.D. 129, and next to that sprawled the hippodrome. Ruins of thirteen churches appeared in the excavations.

## VI. Death of Christ

Although we have no direct evidence of Christ's death and burial, there are archaeological finds which can shed light on that period of His earthly existence.

### A. Pilate: Inscription and Coinage

Born in Seville, Spain, Pontius Pilate lived in Caesarea where he was appointed procurator of Judea (A.D. 26-36). During excavations in the Roman theater in Caesarea 1961, an extraordinary find was made, a stone with an inscription. The stone had been used to form a landing for a flight of steps at one of the entrances to the seats of the theater and was badly chipped away, probably at that time, on the left side. Originally the stone must have been embedded in the wall of the building for which it provided the dedicatory inscription. Four lines remain legible, at least in part. With restoration and translation they are as follows: To the people of Caesarea/Tiberieum/Pontius Pilate/Prefect of Judea. This was the first epigraphical evidence concerning Pontius Pilate, under whom Jesus was crucified.

In addition, during the governorship of Pontius Pilate for the first time a pagan symbol was used on a Judean lepton (a small coin), the "lituus" or wand of the augur, with the legend Tiberius Caesar. The reverse of this coin gives the year as 17, which would come out to A.D. 30, the probable year of Christ's crucifixion. Another coin, shows a second type issued by Pilate, three wheat ears bound in a cluster. Its reverse has a simpulum or ladle used in pouring liquids on a burning sacrifice—another Roman symbol. These coins illustrate Pilate's lack of concern for his Jewish subjects' feelings.

### B. Evidence of a Roman Crucifixion

At the beginning of the summer of 1968 a team of archaeologists discovered four cave-tombs at Giv'at ha-Mivtar (Ras el-Masaref), which is just north of Jerusalem. The date of the tombs, revealed by the pottery in situ, ranged from the late second century B.C. to A.D. 70. One of the tombs contained a man between twenty-four and twenty-eight years of age, who had been crucified. The name of the man was incised on his ossuary in letters two-thirds of an inch high: Jehohanan. He was probably crucified between A.D. 6, the time of the census revolt, and 66, the beginning of the war against Rome. All the marks of violence on the skeleton resulted directly or indirectly from the crucifixion experience.

The lower third of his right radial bone showed a groove, which was probably the result of friction between a nail and the bone. It seems his arms were nailed to the patibulum through the forearms and not through the wrists, the bones of which were found undamaged. It might be more accurate to translate the only two references in the Gospels that mention of the "hands" of the crucified Jesus (Lk 24, Jn 20) with "arms." Hence, according to John 20:27, Jesus said to Thomas, "Place your finger here, and observe my arms. . . ."

The legs had been pressed together, bent, and twisted so that the calves were parallel to the patibulum. The feet were secured to the cross by one iron nail driven through both heels (tuber calcanei). The iron nail harbored below the rounded head the following: sediment, fragments

of wood (Pistacia or Acacia), a limy crust, a portion of the right heel bone, a smaller piece of the left heel bone, and a fragment of olive wood. It is apparent that Jehohanan had been nailed to an olive wood cross with the right foot above the left. While Jehohanan was on the cross, presumably after an interval of some time, his legs were fractured. One forcible blow from a massive weapon shattered the right shins into slivers, and fractured the left ones, contiguous with the cross (simplex), in a simple, oblique line. We now have empirical proof that nails were used on the cross, the part of the Crucifixion that had been doubted.

## VII. Christ's Burial

Jesus died on a hill outside the wall of Jerusalem. Quarrying had given the site the outline of a skull (Golgotha). The body of Jesus was taken from the cross and buried in a nearby cave. In c. 40-44, Herod Agrippa increased the size of Jerusalem by erecting a "third wall." Thus enclosing the area of Calvary and the tomb inside the city. To further complicate the history of the site, in A.D. 70 Jerusalem was leveled by Titus.

### A. Church of the Holy Sepulcher

The remembrance of the place of Golgotha and of the tomb of Jesus on the part of the early Christians in Jerusalem is highly probable. Eusebius says Emperor Hadrian (117-138) covered the holy sepulcher with earth, paved the whole area, and built a shrine of Venus there. Much later, Constantine ordered the Venus shrine to be cleared away and, while this was being done, contrary to all expectation, a tomb came to light. This was evidently the only tomb on the immediate site, so it was understood to be the sepulchre of Christ. Thereupon Constantine instructed Bishop Macarius to build a church ("basilica") upon the site. The basilica included Calvary and a rotunda over the sepulchre. In order to do this, the sides of Calvary were leveled off so that it became like a balcony. Also, he cleared the hill away from around the cave of the tomb. The dedication of the church was in 335. The basilica, as it now stands, was completed by crusaders in 1099, incorporating elements of the previous edifices. A modern restoration of the basilica began in 1959.

### B. Gordon's Calvary and the Garden Tomb

In 1842, Otto Thenius suggested that a rocky hill east of the Damascus Gate on the Nablus Road was the real hill of Golgotha. In 1867, a rock-hewn tomb was found in the northwestern slope of this hill. In 1883-84, Charles G. Gordon visited Jerusalem and accepted the view originally proposed by Thenius. After that, the hill became known as "Gordon's Calvary" and the tomb as "Gordon's Tomb" or, more recently, the "Garden Tomb." On top of the hill is a Muslim cemetery.

Having visited the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, with its dark maze of chapels, its ornate altars, its smell of incense and sound of strange chants in a babel of languages, many visitors have become convinced such a place could not possibly be the location of Golgotha and the tomb. Unfortunately, the claim that Gordon's Calvary is the site of the real Calvary is based more on wishful thinking than history, archaeology, or tradition. Nevertheless, it can give an idea of what the tomb of Jesus was like better than the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and it is a beautiful spot for quiet prayer and meditation.

# Discussion Questions

Explain ways in which archaeological discoveries have influenced your understanding of the biblical text and/or the life of Jesus.

Which of the archaeological discoveries discussed in this lesson interests you most? Explain.

What do we learn about the importance of religion in ancient people's lives from the discussion of religious artwork in this lesson (i.e. graffiti at Philippi, tombs and ossuaries, and catacombs)?

# Further Study

## Suggested reading for this lesson:

Stedman, Ray C. *Adventuring Through the Bible: A Comprehensive Guide to the Entire Bible*.

Discovery House Publishers: 1997.

Read Chapter 61: “Power and Joy!” (Colossians)

## Philip Yancey Devotional

### Looking Up - Ephesians 1:15–2:13

I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. (Eph. 1:18–19)

Ironically, some of the brightest, most hopeful books of the Bible—the letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Ephesians—came out of Paul’s term of house arrest in Rome. There’s a good reason: Prison offered him the precious commodity of time. Paul was no longer journeying from town to town, stamping out fires set by his enemies. Settled into passably comfortable surroundings, he could devote attention to lofty thoughts about the meaning of life.

A prisoner who survived fourteen years in a Cuban jail told how he kept his spirits up: “The worst part was the monotony. I had no window in my cell, and so I mentally constructed one on the door. I ‘saw’ in my mind a beautiful scene from the mountains, with water tumbling down a ravine over rocks. It became so real to me that I would visualize it without effort every time I looked at the cell door.”

The letter to the Ephesians gives a hint as to what the apostle Paul “saw” when he let his mind wander beyond the monotony of his place of confinement. First, he visualized the spiritual growth in the churches he had left behind. This passage opens with a burst of thanksgiving for the vitality of the Ephesian church. Then, he sought to open “the eyes of their hearts” to even more exalted sights: the “incomparable riches” of God’s grace.

Ephesians is full of staggering good news. In it, Paul asks the grandest question of all: “What is God’s overall purpose for this world?” He raises the sights far above his own circumstances to bigger issues, cosmic issues. And when he cranks up the volume to express God’s plan of love, not one low, mournful note sneaks in.

If you feel discouraged, or wonder if God really cares, or question whether the Christian life is worth the effort, Ephesians provides a great tonic. It prescribes the “riches in Christ” available to all.

Life Question: What do you find most encouraging about Paul’s good-news message?

# Glossary

**Qumran** — The site of some ruins of an Essene monastic community at the northwestern end of the Dead Sea, about eight miles south of Jericho. It was near here that the first of the so-called Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in 1947, to be followed by further finds in later years.

**Hebrew Language** — The language in which the Old Testament was written except for 268 verses in Aramaic (Da 2:4-7:28; Ezr 4:8-6:18; 7:12-26; Jer 10:11). Both Hebrew and Aramaic belong to the Semitic family of languages. The Hebrew language, like Phoenician, Aramaic, and Arabic, is written from right to left. Unlike English, which includes vowels in its twenty-six letter alphabet, the Hebrew alphabet consists of twenty-two consonantal sounds or phones. A system of vowels was added in medieval times.

**Apocrypha** — (Greek “hidden things”) - The books and portions of books present in the Septuagint and Vulgate but not included in the Jewish and Protestant canon.

**Papyrus** — Papyrus is a writing material made out of the fibers of the stem of a water plant which formerly grew plentifully in the Nile. It was used in ancient Egypt and became the chief writing material in the Greco-Roman world from the fifth century B.C. (and probably earlier) to the fourth century A.D., when it gradually gave way to vellum.

# Quiz

1. Over 180 reliefs have been found at this ancient site forming a kind of open-air sanctuary:
  - A. Ephesus
  - B. Philadelphia
  - C. Philippi
  - D. Thessalonica
  
2. Popular piety of the third and fourth century Roman Christians did **not** express itself:
  - A. Alongside the Appian Way
  - B. As catacomb art
  - C. In dark grottoes beneath the Appian Way
  - D. With art associated with Jesus, the Good Shepherd
  
3. Qumran is located some ten miles:
  - A. South of the Dead Sea
  - B. South of Jericho
  - C. North of the Dead Sea
  - D. North of Jericho
  
4. The Dead Sea Scrolls do not include:
  - A. Books of the Hebrew Bible
  - B. Apocryphal books
  - C. The Bar Cochba letters
  - D. Literature of the community of the renewed covenant
  
5. The famous Pilate inscription, attesting to the historicity of Pontius Pilate, was found at this site.
  - A. Capernaum
  - B. Jerusalem
  - C. Masada
  - D. Caesarea
  
6. The last fight for Jewish independence that took place in Palestine until Israel's War of Independence in 1947-48 was:
  - A. The revolt led by the Maccabees
  - B. The Bar Cochba Revolt
  - C. The Jewish revolt against Rome in 68-70
  - D. The Jewish revolt against the Babylonians
  
7. The traditional site of Christ's burial is:
  - A. Gordon's Tomb
  - B. The Church of the Holy Sepulcher
  - C. The Church of All Nations
  - D. The Garden Tomb

8. The works of this Jewish historian are still considered a valuable resource for first century study:
- A. Philo Judaeus
  - B. Herodotus
  - C. Josephus
  - D. Claudius
9. This capital city of Herod Antipas was close to Jesus' hometown:
- A. Megiddo
  - B. Chorazim
  - C. Tiberias
  - D. Sepphoris
10. Which of the following is **not** true in regard to the Codex Sinaiticus?
- A. It was kept in a monastery closet.
  - B. It includes a Greek edition of the Hebrew Bible.
  - C. It includes all of the New Testament.
  - D. It was found at Nag Hammadi.

Answers: 1. C 2. A 3. B 4. C 5. D 6. B 7. B 8. C 9. D 10. D