

# The Mission Era I: Paul's Letters

## WEEK FOURTEEN

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GALATIANS  
1 CORINTHIANS  
PHILEMON  
1 TIMOTHY

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# Mission Era I: Paul's Early Christian Communities

## PAUL'S LIFE & WORLD

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# A Pauline Chronology

## Paul's Life

- 32 Conversion
- 35 First Jerusalem Visit
- 35-43 Silent Years
- 43-44 Antioch Ministry
- 45-47 1<sup>st</sup> Miss. Journey
- 48 Jerusalem Conference
- 48-52 2<sup>nd</sup> Miss. Journey
- 52-57 3<sup>rd</sup> Miss. Journey
- 57 Arrest in Jerusalem
- 60-62 House Arrest in Rome

## Paul's Letters

- 50 1 Thessalonians
- 51 2 Thessalonians
- 53 1 Corinthians
- 54 2 Corinthians
- 55 Galatians
- 57 Romans
- 60 Philemon & Colossians
- 61 Ephesians
- 62 Philippians
- 63 Titus & 1 Timothy
- 64 2 Timothy

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## The World of Paul

- Social Standing & Classes
  - Citizenship
  - Classes
    - ✦ Senatorial: wealthy, prominent leadership, powerful
    - ✦ Equestrian: "middle-class," some were leaders
    - ✦ Plebians: poor, little influence, large numerically
    - ✦ Freedmen: former slaves, varied levels of standing
    - ✦ Slaves: Skilled, slavery voluntary or involuntary
    - ✦ Free peasants: unskilled labor, struggle to survive
  - Position of Women

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## The World of Paul

- Social Standing & Custom
  - Honor & Shame
  - Patronage & Reciprocity
  - Kinship & Identity
- Language
- Entertainment

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## The World of Paul

- Graeco-Roman Religion
  - Pervasive in all areas of life
  - Highly visible
  - Diverse—polytheistic
  - Sacred sites and temples
  - Iconographic—focus on images
  - Ritualistic and sacrificial oriented
  - Partaking in sacred meals

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Mission Era I: Paul's  
Early Christian Communities

**PAUL THE LETTER  
WRITER**

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**Paul the Letter Writer**

- Basic Structure of Paul's Letters
  - Salutation
  - Thanksgiving
  - Body
  - Exhortation
  - Closing

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**Paul the Letter Writer**

- Canonical Organization of Paul's Letters
  - Recipients
    - ✦ Letters to Churches
    - ✦ Letters to Individuals
  - Multiple letters to one recipient
  - Length (longest to shortest)

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## Paul the Letter Writer

- Goal/Purpose of Writing a Letter
  - Substitute for personal presence
  - Situation-oriented (occasional letters)
    - ✦ False-teachers
    - ✦ “Improper behavior”
    - ✦ General teaching or instruction
  - Persuasion (not coercion!)

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## Mission Era I: Paul’s Early Christian Communities

### PAUL THE MISSIONARY & FOLLOWER OF CHRIST

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## Paul’s Spirituality

- “Cruciformity” (Michal Gorman)
  - Conformity to the Crucified Christ
  - “I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ— that is Jesus Christ crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2)
- Evidence of Paul’s Cruciform Life of Faith
  - “Not ashamed of the gospel” (Christ crucified)
  - Cross was the main “stumbling block” for Saul (curse)
  - “I will boast in the cross of Christ” (not resurrection)
  - “I carry the marks (*stigmata*) of Jesus” (bodily identification)
  - “When I am weak, then I am strong” (Christian worldview)
  - Cruciform Love (voluntary enslavement to others)

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## **Paul's Missionary Strategy**

- Evangelized strictly in Roman provinces
- A "pioneer" in mission work
  - Principle #1: Not to evangelize where others already had (2 Cor. 10:13-16)
  - Principle #2: Move to new fields once a place is "established"
- Location of witness: urban centers
  - Synagogues
  - Philosophical debating centers
- Continued nurture of churches (letters, visits, co-workers)

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