

Trek: His Love Book - Bible Summaries

2. Mark

Theme: Jesus the Servant

Author: John Mark

Date: A.D. 55-56

Verse: *For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many. (Mark 10:45)*

Mark is the shortest of the four Gospels. The author focuses on Jesus Christ as a servant, with particular emphasis on His ultimate service of dying on the cross. One third of the book deals with the events of the week leading up to the crucifixion. Mark's emphasis can be seen in Mark 10:45: *For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.* Mark includes many miracles that show Jesus' love for people. We read how Jesus healed many who were deaf, dumb or blind, raised a little girl to life, fed a hungry crowd of 5,000, and welcomed little children. Believers met in Mark's mother's house, and Peter visited there often. In fact, Peter was probably the source of much of Mark's information about the events of Christ's life.

3. Luke

Theme: Christ the Man

Author: Luke

Date: A.D. 63-68

Verse: *For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost. (Luke 19:10)*

Luke was a physician who often accompanied the apostle Paul on his missionary journeys. Luke's main purpose in his Gospel is to show Jesus Christ as a perfect man. It is from Luke that we get the most details of Jesus' birth and boyhood. He traces the genealogy of Christ back to Adam and continues through His life chronologically. Luke makes his purpose clear early on: *Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from*

the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught (Luke 1:3-4). Luke's Gospel is actually Volume 1 — his history continues in the book of Acts. The parables in this Gospel reflect the deep concern Christ had for lost mankind as expressed in Luke 19:10: *For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.* Luke also wanted his readers to understand that there was a solid historical basis for believing in Jesus Christ. The well-known opening to the account of the birth of Jesus Christ is just one example of how he ties his history to events and people in the secular world. *In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) (Luke 2:1-2).*

9. Galatians

Theme: Christian Liberty

Author: Paul

Date: A.D. 55

Verse: *It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. (Galatians 5:1)*

Galatians is Paul's angriest letter. He wrote it to the church in Galatia, which he'd founded on his second missionary journey. The members of the church were being swayed from their faith by the Judaizers — men from Jerusalem who were trying to force the Gentiles to obey the Jewish law. In the letter, Paul corrects two errors. He explains that: 1) Man's salvation is not dependent upon him keeping parts of the law, in addition to faith in Christ. 2) The justified believer cannot become perfect by keeping the law. In this epistle, Paul wrote the most severe warnings against those who preach another gospel, and he made it clear that the law is not binding on

Christians. The Christian life is not doing things to be saved or to gain special favor from God. The two systems, law and grace, cannot exist together. Paul ends the letter with a clear explanation of how we are to live under grace.

13. 1 Thessalonians

Theme: Christ's Return

Author: Paul

Date: A.D. 51

Verses: *For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words. (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18)*

Thessalonica was the capital city of the Roman province of Macedonia (Greece). Paul visited and started the church on his second missionary journey but was forced out of town by the Jewish leaders. Paul received word that the members of the church were remaining true to the faith and resisting all opposition. He wrote from Corinth to say: ... *we were encouraged about you because of your faith. For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord (1 Thessalonians 3:7-8).*

Paul also used the letter to explain God's revelation to him regarding the rapture of the Church before the tribulation and establishment of Christ's millennial kingdom and how it would affect those who had already died in Christ.

14. 2 Thessalonians

Theme: Stand Firm

Author: Paul

Date: A.D. 51

Verse: *So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter. (2 Thessalonians 2:15)*

Just a few months after Paul sent the first letter to the church in Thessalonica, he received the news

that a misunderstanding had risen. Somebody had written a letter in Paul's name claiming that the day of the Lord (Christ's second coming to earth, at the end of the tribulation) had already occurred. As a result, some members of the church had stopped working. The apostle explained to the Christians that they were mistaken. He assured them that the day of the Lord won't happen until after the *man of lawlessness* (the Antichrist) has come.

15. 1 Timothy

Theme: Leadership

Author: Paul

Date: A.D. 63

Verse: *Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. (1 Timothy 6:12)*

Paul's first letter to his young friend and coworker, Timothy, was a manual on effective leadership in the churches in Ephesus and other Asian cities. He stresses the importance of holding sound doctrine (Chapter 1); instructs on proper worship (2-3); warns against false teachers (4); teaches about church discipline (5); and explains the duties of a pastor (6). Paul's message can be summed up by 1 Timothy 4:11-16: *Command and teach these things. Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity...devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift... Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely ...*

16. 2 Timothy

Theme: Endurance

Author: Paul

Date: A.D. 67

Verses: *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)*

At the end of Paul's life, when he knew he was about to die, he wrote this letter to Timothy. He was in Rome, enduring a much harsher imprisonment than he'd faced on earlier occasions. Christian persecution under Emperor Nero was in full force. Most of Paul's friends, afraid for their own lives, had abandoned him. Paul told Timothy to stand firm and ... *But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God (2 Timothy 1:8).*

- Paul foresaw an increase in apostasy (rejection of faith) and wickedness (the result of apostasy) and warned Timothy to watch out. The apostle filled the letter with advice and encouragement for the young man who was facing the challenges of pastoring the church in Ephesus, but he kept returning time and again to one theme — the importance of remaining true to Scripture.
- Paul received the truth directly from God and communicated it to Timothy. Now Timothy was to consider that truth something valuable that was committed to his care and to guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit (2 Timothy 1:13-14).
- Timothy needed to be diligent to labor to discover the truth of the Word, and to have the courage of his convictions (2:15).
- Timothy was to study the Word because it would teach him doctrine, point out and correct errors in his life, straighten him out when he got off the path and educate and discipline his character (3:16-17).
- Timothy was to preach the Word every chance he had, to correct those on the wrong path and to encourage those on the right path (4:2).

Near the end of the letter, Paul wrote about his own ministry in words that should be the pattern for every believer: *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith (2 Timothy 4:7).*

17. Titus

Theme: Encouragement

Author: Paul

Date: A.D. 63

Verses: *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this*

present age, while we wait for the blessed hope — the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. (Titus 2:11-13)

Titus was a young Greek coworker whom Paul used as proof that a Gentile could be saved without being circumcised or following the Jewish law (Galatians 2:3). Some years later, Paul left Titus on the island of Crete to ... *straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town...(Titus 1:5)* This letter was the apostle's instructions on how to carry out those tasks. Scattered through the book, Paul includes statements that explain the spiritual truth behind his practical teaching.

18. Philemon

Theme: Forgiveness

Author: Paul

Date: A.D. 61

Verse: *But I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that any favor you do will be spontaneous and not forced. (Philemon 1:14)*

In his other letters, Paul lays out the doctrine given to him by the Holy Spirit and explains how we should live in light of that doctrine. In Philemon, we see an illustration of what teaching and application looks like in an actual, real-life situation. Philemon, to whom the letter is addressed, was a believer living in Colossae. He was a man of considerable wealth. Onesimus, his runaway slave, had recently been led to the Lord by Paul, who was imprisoned in Rome. With this letter, Paul was sending Onesimus back to Colossae, and he begged Philemon to receive his slave as a Christian brother. "If Onesimus has done you any wrong or owes you anything," Paul wrote, "you can hold me responsible." Paul's love and concern for His friends and fellow believers is evident throughout the short letter.