

# TLCBiblical.com Video Series

## 119 The Epistles

### 1. Introduction

The bulk of the New Testament is made up of a group of formal letters that were written to encourage, inform, correct and teach the recipients. These writings are the substance of the unique doctrine of the New Testament and provide a link to the rest of the scriptures. In this video we'll examine the Epistles.

### 2. The epistles

There are 21 of these books written by 5 authors who are

- a. Peter
- b. Paul
- c. James
- d. John, and
- e. Jude.

An epistle is simply a letter with a more formal mode of address. These letters in the New Testament were written to individual Christians, congregations in specific locations, congregations in geographic regions and to Christians in general. These books are:

- a. Romans
- b. 1 Corinthians
- c. 2 Corinthians
- d. Galatians
- e. Ephesians
- f. Philippians
- g. Colossians
- h. 1 Thessalonians
- i. 2 Thessalonians
- j. 1 Timothy
- k. 2 Timothy
- l. Titus
- m. Philemon
- n. Hebrews
- o. James
- p. 1 Peter
- q. 2 Peter
- r. 1 John
- s. 2 John

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- t. 3 John
- u. Jude

Let's take a look at each of these

#### **3. Romans**

Written to Christians in Rome, Paul addresses the nature of faith in a world that largely has turned from God. Paul asserts that the power of God is the Gospel and appeals to his own countrymen as well as all people to demonstrate true faith in service to the Lord beginning with obedience to the Gospel. In the opening of the book Paul describes the downward spiral of the ancient world into idolatry and rejection of God followed by those in the first century who had established their own righteousness rejecting the word of God.

#### **4. 1 Corinthians**

Christians in the affluent city of Corinth had developed a number of problems including taking legal action against each other, allowing sexual immorality to exist in the group and failure to conduct themselves properly in worship to God. Paul deals with their jealousy and competition regarding spiritual gifts providing information on what these gifts were for and how they were to be used with the explanation that these things would pass in favor of the completion of God's work.

#### **5. 2 Corinthians**

Paul's second letter to the Corinthians was written to encourage acceptance of those who repented of error, other questions among the group which included concerns about the second coming of Christ and the resurrection. Paul also defends his apostleship from those who cast doubts on his teaching and credibility.

#### **6. Galatians**

Written to Christians in the region of Galatia by the apostle Paul to confront error being taught concerning the Law and its place in the lives of Christians particularly Gentile converts.

#### **7. Ephesians**

Paul's letter to the Ephesian Christians reminds them that they being Gentiles were once separated from God but have been included in the family of the saved through Christ. Paul encourages the Ephesians to be strong and faithful in their service to God.

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#### **8. Philippians**

Paul writes to the Philippians encouraging them and acknowledging their support for the preaching of the Gospel. Paul exhorts them to be unified, faithful and wary of false teachers.

#### **9. Colossians**

The Colossian Christians had been impacted by doctrines that appear to have a gnostic character to them. Paul deals with the nature of Christ, his relationship to God, the kingdom, or church and need to serve God with the inner being. Paul ends the letter with a personal greeting including a note about one of his traveling companions who had been sick who was from Colossi.

#### **10. 1 Thessalonians**

Paul writes his first letter to the Thessalonians as an encouragement to continue in their work and love for the saints. Paul reminds them that the commandments that he preached to them were from Christ and exhorts them to be faithful.

#### **11. 2 Thessalonians**

Christians in Thessalonica had been troubled by teachings about the second coming of Christ and whether those who had died would be able to go to Heaven as well as other things. Paul addresses these in his letter and encourages the Thessalonians to be faithful and patient. Paul indicates that letters were being circulated that were supposedly written by the apostle but were instead false.

#### **12. 1 Timothy**

Paul's first letter to a young preacher converted by the apostle during his travels reminds Timothy to be strong and provides direction on what he should teach. The letter stands as a practical guide for those who would teach and for all Christians facing a variety of challenges.

#### **13. 2 Timothy**

Paul's second letter to Timothy encourages the young preacher to remain strong and teach sound doctrine. Paul's death is imminent as can be seen from the closing verses of the book and so he exhorts Timothy to persevere and be faithful.

#### **14. Titus**

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Titus is another young preacher who had been left on the island of Crete to appoint elders and set the church in order there. Paul covers the things that needed to be taught and the attitude that Titus must have in his teaching.

#### **15. Philemon**

A personal letter from Paul to Philemon whose slave, Onesimus, had run away, found Paul and been converted. Paul asks Philemon to receive Onesimus as a brother rather than a servant.

#### **16. Hebrews**

The writer of Hebrews is not identified in the book but based on certain phrases used and the overall writing style it appears to be a work by the apostle Paul. Some scholars believe the letter may have been written by Apollos, an Alexandrian Jew who was skilled in the Old Testament scriptures and an eloquent writer. Many accept Paul as the author of the book based on statements that contain phrases and figures used by Paul in his other writings. The letter is a detailed analysis of the Law of Moses in contrast to the Gospel. The writer shows that the Law has passed away and explains this in detail. The writer also rebukes the recipients for not progressing in learning about the scriptures so they could teach others. The theme of the letter is the superiority of Christ over the Law.

#### **17. James**

In this short writing James confronts internal attitudes such as hypocrisy, lust, greed and arrogance in dealing with others. He also shows how God does not create our problems but is able to bless us if we are truly faithful to him.

#### **18. 1 Peter**

Peter addresses this letter to Gentile Christians in the area of Asia Minor. The book touches on faith, conduct, personal relationships and the need to be strong in the faith. Peter exhorts them to remain steadfast in the face of persecution reminding them that they are working for an eternal reward.

#### **19. 2 Peter**

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Peter's second letter is addressed to those of like precious faith and references those whom he had written to in the first letter in chapter three. The letter reinforces the source and reliability of the word, warns about false teachers and outlines attitudes that will shape the minds of those in the future who scoff at the message. The book ends with a discussion of the second coming with an exhortation to remain faithful and diligent so they do not fall short of the reward. Peter makes mention of Paul's writings as well which further unifies that singular message of the New Testament.

#### **20. 1 John**

John's first letter appears to address certain gnostic ideas and warns about false teachers. His focus is on the spiritual nature of Christ, God and our relationship with them. John urges the recipients to remain faithful, keep themselves from sin and act as God would have them behave.

#### **21. 2 John**

John's second letter is a commendation of those the letter is addressed to for their faithfulness and a warning about false teachers. John reveals his intent to visit them soon to discuss other matters as well.

#### **22. 3 John**

John's final letter is addressed to Gaius who is noted as faithful. John notes the actions of Diotrophes who has taken a preeminent position over the local group of Christians. John tells of his plan to visit so they can speak face to face and ends with an encouragement to follow that which is good.

#### **23. Jude**

Jude addresses his letter to those who are sanctified by God and are united through Christ. The letter is an admonition to defend the faith and watch for those who would pervert the word. Jude describes the attitude of those who will mock the message of the Gospel and encourages us to be faithful and teach those around us. Jude reveals some things that are not found elsewhere in the scriptures including Satan's desire to have the body of Moses when he died and a prophecy by Enoch who was taken by God and did not die physically.

#### **3. Next**

In the next video we will look at the New Testament book of prophecy