

## 4. Pauline Epistles Part 1: Letters during his missionary journeys

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### Genre

- Letter vs. Epistle. Some place a difference between letters and epistles, but this is not accepted by all. The difference between letters and epistles is that 1) a letter is not meant to be read out loud, 2) while an epistle was meant to be read to an audience.

### Journey 1 (and 3): Galatians and Romans

#### Galatians

- Author: Paul
- Audience: Galatians
- Date: AD 48
- Main Point: (preview: Galatians 1:1–5): Galatians 2:15–21
- Themes: Grace, justification, law, authority, gospel
- Topic: Intertextuality: Galatians 4:21–31 (with Isaiah 54:1)

#### Romans

- Topic: religious dynamics: Jewish-Gentile vs. Religious-Secular: That is, everyone's religious vs. some religious, some not
- Author: Paul
- Audience: Romans
- Date: AD 55–59
- Exigency: A large number of Jews had been expelled from Rome by Emperor Claudius in the late AD 40s due to their rioting, but after Claudius's death in AD 54, Emperor Nero made it possible for Jews to return to Rome. Paul wrote Romans in the mid to late 50s, just after the expulsion decrees were rescinded.
- Main Point: Romans 3:21–26
- Theme: Justification, law, faith, inclusion of gentiles
- Structure: Narrative substructure

## Journey 2: 1 and 2 Thessalonians

### 1 Thessalonians

- Author: Paul with Silas and Timothy, writing from Corinth (1 Thess 3:1)
- Audience: Thessalonians
- Date: AD 51
- Exigency: Acts 17:1-9 with 1 Thess. 2:1-12
  - Acts 17:1-9 – Summary: they started to preach for only 3 weeks, were beat. They were accused of sedition (political conspiracy against Rome).
  - So in 1 Thess. 2:1-12 Paul distances himself from a traveling sophist who made a living by their travels.
- Main Point: 1 Thess 3:11-13

### Topic: Epistolary Criticism

I. Introductory Salutation: - A. Sender - B. To Addressee - C. Greetings (Chairein in Greek) - D. A Wish for Good Health, often with a prayer to a certain deity on behalf of the Addressee  
II. Body of Letter: - A. Often begins with standard formulae - B. Comments are often brief and impersonal in tone  
III. Closing: - A. Final Greetings (includes people other than addressee) - B. Good wishes, especially for people other than addressee - C. Concluding greeting or prayer - D. Sometimes a date  
IV. Address on the reverse side of the letter (letter was usually folded)

### Topic Rhetorical Criticism

I. Prooimium - Purposes: to establish good will of the audience and to orient the readers to the basic issue to be addressed. - Other names: proem, exordium  
II. Narratio (optional) - Purpose: give facts of the case  
III. Propositio/Prothesis (one thesis) - Partitio (multiple theses)  
IV. Probatio (main argument): - Addresses the theses in the same order as presented in partitio.  
V. Refutatio (optional)  
VI. Self-Adulation (optional)  
VII. Peroratio - Purposes: to make a final emotional appeal and to summarize the main speech points. - other name: epilogue

### 2 Thessalonians

- Author: Paul with Silas and Timothy, plus an amanuensis (secretary): 2 Thess 3:17
- Audience: Thessalonians
- Date: AD 51 (2 Thessalonians is written 6 months after 1 Thessalonians) Silas and Timothy probably rejoined Paul at Corinth and related further questions that they had about the sequence of eschatological events.
- Main Point: 2 Thess 2:15-17 OR 3:4-5; Clear up misunderstanding of 1 Thessalonians

### “Day of the Lord” in Thessalonians

- They seem to have a different definition than “the end of the world” “day of the Lord”
- If you study “day of the Lord” in the Bible, then there are multiple days of the Lord

- 1 Thessalonians 2:16 – some may have misunderstood Paul here (and 2 Thess. Was a reaction to that). They might have thought that the expulsion of the Jews from Jerusalem was the wrath of the day of the Lord. His clarification is that this was not the day of the Lord.
- 2 Thessalonians 2:3 – Paul lays out a chronology of the day of the Lord
  1. Apostasy
  2. Man of Lawlessness
  3. Day of the Lord

## Journey 3 (and 4): 1 and 2 Corinthians

### Four letters

1. 1 Cor 5:9: “I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people”
2. 1 Cor
3. 2 Corinthians 2:3–4, 9 (“I wrote you out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears”)
4. 2 Corinthians

### 1 Corinthians

- Topic: Rhetorical criticism
- Author: Paul with Sosthenes
- Audience: Corinthians
- Date: AD 55
- Main Point: 1 Cor 1:10: No division
- Structure:
  - Introduction 1:1–10
  - Argument: 1:11–16:12
    - Issues made known to him 1:11–6:20 via Chloe’s household
      - Divisions among people: 1–4
      - Sexual immorality causing division: 5–6
    - Issues made known to him via letter: 7:1–16:12)
      - Marriage: 7
      - Meat to Idols: 8–10
      - Matters of worship: 11–14
      - Resurrection: 15
  - Conclusion: 16:13–24

### 2 Corinthians

- Author: Paul
- Audience: Corinthians
- Date: AD 55–56

- Main Point: A defense of his ministry conduct. Why does this matter? Interpreting “ministry of reconciliation” and “righteousness of God” in 2 Cor. 5:18–21.
- [Scott Hafemann writes:](#)

After Titus left for Corinth, Paul himself went on to Troas to pursue his own ministry and to wait for Titus to return with news about the church. But when Titus delayed in returning, Paul feared both for Titus’s safety and for the condition of the Corinthians. Filled with anxiety, Paul left the open door he had in Troas and went on to Macedonia to find Titus (2 Cor. 2:12–13). There he met Titus and received the joyful news that God had used his letter written “with many tears” (2:4) to bring about the repentance of the majority of the church (2:5–11; 7:5–16). Unfortunately, Paul also heard that, under the continuing influence of his opponents, there was still a rebellious minority who continued to reject Paul’s authority. In response, Paul wrote “2 Corinthians” from Macedonia, a year or so after the writing of 1 Corinthians (ca. A.D. 55/56), and began to make final plans to return to Corinth for his “third visit” (2 Cor. 12:14; 13:1).

As a result, whereas in 1 Corinthians we see Paul the pastor, striving to fill in the cracks in the Corinthians’ way of life, in 2 Corinthians we encounter Paul the apologist, fighting for the legitimacy of his own apostolic ministry. His goal in doing so, because of his confidence in the power of the Spirit in those in whom Christ dwells (cf. 2 Cor. 3:18; 5:17; 13:1–5), is to give the rebellious one more chance to repent, thereby showing that they are in fact a new creation (5:16–6:2). Thus, like Paul’s earlier tearful letter, 2 Corinthians aims, yet again, at the repentance of those who have accepted a different gospel in order to spare them God’s judgment (cf. 2:9; 10:6; 12:19; 13:1–10). At the same time, Paul’s apology provides an opportunity for those who have already repented to demonstrate the genuine nature of their faith (6:14–7:4). Specifically, he calls the repentant to separate from the unbelievers in their midst and to participate in the collection for Jerusalem (6:14–7:4; 8:1–9:15).