

THE WHOLE BIBLE: 66 BOOKS IN 10 WEEKS

1 Thessalonians – Hebrews

THE CHALLENGE OF READING EPISTLES

- 21 of 27 NT books are letters | first documents of NT
- letters are pastoral responses to problems
- like listening to half of a phone conversation
- challenge of applying original context to modern world

1 THESSALONIANS

- major theme is the Second Coming of Jesus

The Doctrine of New Creation

- continuity and discontinuity with the new creation
 - this world is all there is; there is no next world
 - this world doesn't matter, only the next
- “the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night” (5:2)

How do we live in light of Jesus' return?

- holiness – “abstain from every form of evil” (5:22)
- diligence – “work with your hands; be dependent on no one” (4:12)
- courage – “the Lord himself will descend from heaven” (4:16)
- hope – “you may not grieve as others do who have no hope” (4:13)

1 Thessalonians 4

¹⁵For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸Therefore encourage one another with these words.

2 THESSALONIANS

- again, focus on Second Coming, this time on Jesus' judgment
- response to fears, “do not be shaken in mind or alarmed” (2:2)
- encouragement – “stand firm” (2:15), “comfort your hearts” (2:17)
- problem of idleness – “if anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat” (3:10)

2 Thessalonians 1:7-10

⁷When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels ⁸in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, ¹⁰when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed.

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

- 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus
- written to pastors about the organization and care of the local church
- broadly applicable to all Christians

1 TIMOTHY

- importance of right doctrine – “do not teach a different doctrine” (1:3)
- be peaceable – “he has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words” (6:4)
- importance of prayer (chapter 2)
- importance of church leadership – elders and deacons (chapter 3)
- exhortation to godliness – “pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness” (6:11)

1 Timothy 4:11-16

¹¹Command and teach these things. ¹²Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. ¹³Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. ¹⁴Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. ¹⁵Practice these things, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your

progress. ¹⁶ Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.

2 TIMOTHY

- last letter by Paul before his death
- written to encourage Timothy in the face of suffering
- ministry is suffering – “share in suffering for the gospel” (1:8)
- love the Word – “all Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” (3:16-17)

2 Timothy 4:1-8

¹ I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: ² preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. ³ For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, ⁴ and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. ⁵ As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. ⁶ For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

TITUS

- gospel belief will produce good works – “those who have believed in God may devote themselves to good works” (3:8)
- “teach what accords with sound doctrine” (2:1)
- church community – older men and women, younger men and women

Titus 1:5-9

⁵ This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you – ⁶ if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. ⁷ For an overseer, as God’s steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, ⁸ but hospitable, a lover

of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. ⁹ He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

PHILEMON

- written to Philemon about his escaped slave, Onesimus
- at the heart of the gospel is reconciliation
- the gospel transforms relationships – master and slave
- does Christianity permit or prohibit slavery?

Philemon 1:12-17

¹² I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart. ¹³ I would have been glad to keep him with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel, ¹⁴ but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own free will. ¹⁵ For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, ¹⁶ no longer as a slave but more than a slave, as a beloved brother – especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. ¹⁷ So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me.

HEBREWS

- unknown author | unusual letter, written like a sermon
- main theme: *don’t abandon faith in Christ* (5 major passages)
- supremacy of Christ – “radiance of glory of God” (1:3)
- Christ as mediator of better covenant – “he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption” (9:12)

Hebrews 3:12-14

¹² Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. ¹³ But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴ For we share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.

Hebrews 10:24-25

²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

