**What You Should Know from NT5-Pauline Epistles**

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1. When and how was the Apostle Paul converted?
   1. Circa AD 32-36, Saul (as he was then known) was enthusiastically helping to persecute Jews in and around Jerusalem who had converted to faith in Jesus as the Messiah. On the way to Damascus with documents permitting him to arrest Jewish-Christian converts there, he had a miraculous encounter with the risen Jesus and was struck blind. He was taken into Damascus, where God sent a Christian – Ananias – to heal his blindness and explain the faith to him, which started Paul’s Christian ministry.
2. What was Paul’s original name, and why was it changed?
   1. Saul.
   2. His name was changed, apparently on the 1st missionary journey, as a mark of the major spiritual change in his life, at the time that it became clear God has especially called him as a missionary and evangelist.
3. What was Paul’s religious experience before becoming a Christian, and why was this important?
   1. Paul was a Jewish Pharisee, the son of Pharisees, who had been educated in the Jewish Law in Jerusalem by the famous Gamaliel.
   2. Paul’s training and expertise in the Jewish Law allowed him to ground his understanding and teaching of the Christian faith in the history of God’s covenant promise of a Messiah, and to respond to Jews who challenged the new Christian faith based on their own Jewish history and traditions.
4. Where was the “base of operations” that Paul maintained throughout his ministry?
   1. Antioch of Syria, where Peter had first founded a church, and where Paul and Barnabas converted Gentiles to the faith and created the first predominantly Gentile Christian church.
   2. It was from Antioch that Paul launched each of his missionary journeys, and to Antioch that Paul always returned between trips.
5. Why is Paul called “the Apostle to the Gentiles?”
   1. The first Gentile converts were Cornelius the Roman Centurion and his family, who responded to preaching from the Apostle Peter. But it was Paul who – though he continued throughout his life to also preach in Jewish synagogues wherever he went – carried the Gospel message to other parts of the Roman Empire (Asia Minor, Macedonia and Greece) that were predominantly Gentile, planting churches all along the way.
6. Why are the Pauline letters in the order in which they occur in the New Testament?
   1. They are generally in order of length – from Romans, which is longest, to Philemon, which is shortest – and NOT in chronological order of writing.
7. What was the special importance and result of the Jerusalem Council (c. AD 50), as recorded in Acts 15?
   1. Following the conversion of the first Gentiles to faith in Christ (in Caesarea and then Antioch) some Jewish Christians were insisting these Gentile converts had to be circumcised and follow the Mosaic Law in order to be Christians.
   2. Based on the testimony of Peter, Paul and Barnabas, the Jerusalem Council (the ruling body for the early church) decided that Gentiles did not have to become Jews or conform to Jewish Law to be followers of Jesus – a decision that was declared by James, the half-brother of Jesus, who had become head of the Jerusalem Council.
8. Where and to whom was Paul’s First Missionary journey, and who were his companions?
   1. The First Missionary Journey of Paul (45 AD) was from Antioch of Syria, by sea to the island of Cyprus, then on to Asia Minor (modern day central Turkey) to plant churches in the towns of the southern portion of the Roman province of Galatia – Perga, Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe.
   2. Paul was accompanied on this journey by Barnabas and – for the first part of the trip – by Barnabas’ cousin, John Mark (who later wrote the Gospel of Mark).
9. What caused the falling-out between Paul and Barnabas before their Second Missionary Journey?
   1. Barnabas wanted to again take his cousin, John Mark, with them, but Paul did not agree because John Mark had deserted them early on their First Missionary Journey.
   2. As a result, Paul and Barnabas parted ways – Paul taking Silas overland though Tarsus and Asia Minor; Barnabas taking John Mark and sailing to Crete.
   3. All these men – Paul, Barnabas and John Mark – were later reconciled, based on positive references to the other in Paul’s later letters.

1. Where and to whom was Paul’s Second Missionary journey, and who were his companions?
   1. The Second Missionary Journey of Paul (51-54 AD) was overland to revisit the churches in Derbe, Lystra and Iconium; then across central Asia Minor (modern day central Turkey) to the city of Troas on the Aegean Sea; then across to Macedonia (in Europe) and Greece – including (among others) the cities of Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and Corinth; before returning by sea to Asia Minor; visiting Ephesus before returning by way of Cyprus to Jerusalem.
   2. Paul was accompanied on this journey by Silas, and was later joined by Timothy and Luke.

1. What prompted Paul to cross the Aegean Sea for his first visit to Europe?
   1. While in Troas, a city in Asia Minor on the coast of the Aegean Sea, Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia asking him to come across and help them. Paul and his companions responded by boarding a ship and traveling to Neapolis, the port closest to the city of Philippi, where Paul had his first Gentile converts.
2. Who were Paul’s first converts to Christianity in Europe?
   1. Lydia, a woman who sold purple cloth, and her household in Philippi.

1. Where and to whom was Paul’s Third Missionary journey, and who were his companions?
   1. The Third Missionary Journey of Paul (54-58 AD) was overland from Antioch of Syria, through Asia Minor (modern day central Turkey) to Ephesus (where he stayed over two years); then across to Europe to revisit many of the cities in Macedonia and Greece; returning by way of stops on several Aegean islands and ports in Asia Minor; and then back to Jerusalem.
   2. Paul was accompanied on this journey by Timothy and Luke, and perhaps others.

1. Where did Paul spend the longest period of time in all his missionary

journeys?

* 1. Ephesus, where he stayed for between 2-1/2 and 3 years.

1. What is believed to be the first New Testament book written?
   1. Either the Epistle of James, written by James the Just, the half-brother of Jesus and head of the Jerusalem Council; or Paul’s Letter to the Galatians. Both would have been written late in the AD 40s or early 50s.
2. What was the primary problem facing the Galatian churches that prompted

Paul’s letter to them?

* 1. False teachers had come to the new Christians in the churches of Galatia and mislead them, telling them:
     1. That they had to be circumcised and follow the Jewish Law to become Christians.
     2. That Paul was not an apostle, that he had no authority, and that they should stop listening to him.

1. What is the purpose of Paul’s letter to the Galatians?
   1. To counter the false teaching of legalistic “Judaizers” who had been telling the Galatian Gentiles they had to be circumcised and follow the Mosaic Law to be followers of Jesus.
2. Why has Galatians been called the “Magna Carta” of the Protestant

Reformation?

* 1. Paul’s writing in the Book of Galatians provided the theological basis for the Reformation in that it clearly advocates salvation by faith alone, apart from good works – as in Galatians 2:16: *“Know that a man is not justified on the basis of the works of the Law, but on the basis of the faithfulness of Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified on the basis of Christ’s faithfulness, and not on the basis of the works of the Law—for no flesh will be justified on the basis of the works of the Law.”*

1. What two theories relate to the recipients of Paul’s letter to the Galatians?
   1. The North Galatia Theory – that the Book of Galatians was written to unknown churches in the region in northern Asia Minor that had historically been called “Galatia,” and that Paul perhaps had planted these churches during his Second Missionary Journey. This would mean the Book of Galatians would have been written *after* the Council of Jerusalem – which seems unlikely because the Council addressed the very issue Paul is writing about in Galatians (whether Gentile converts must be circumcised), yet Paul makes no mention that the Council had already decided the issue.
   2. The South Galatia Theory – that the Book of Galatians was written to the churches Paul and Barnabas had planted in the Roman Province of Galatia (Lystra, Derbe, Iconium, and Pisidian Antioch), which extended further south than the area that had been called “Galatia” before the arrival of the Romans This makes sense, as these churches were among the first planted, and the Book of Galatians could then have been written before the Council of Jerusalem resolved the matter of Gentile Christians and circumcision.
2. What is the purpose of Paul’s two letters to the church in Thessalonica?
   1. To encourage them in the midst of persecution, and especially to clarify misunderstandings the Thessalonians had about the Second Coming of Jesus, because of false teachers.
3. How many letters do we believe Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, and why

do we believe this?

* 1. Four in total, based on references in the two letters we now have to other letters he had written to them.

1. What is the purpose of Paul’s letters to the church in Corinth?
   1. To instruct and restore the Corinthian church for immature and unspiritual conduct – especially divisions between members, immoral conduct, abuses of the Lord’s Supper, false teaching regarding the resurrection, and (in 2 Cor.) to defend his authority as an Apostle.
2. What was the purpose of Paul’s Letter to the Romans, and how does this

differ from most of his letters?

* 1. Most of Paul’s letters were written to address specific problems that were affecting churches Paul had planted, and which he knew well.
  2. But Paul had not planted the church in Rome, and had not visited it at the time the Book of Romans was written, so rather than addressing specific problems affecting the church the letter to the Romans is a more general theological explanation of the Gospel message.

1. What is considered the Apostle Paul’s greatest theological treatise?
   1. The Letter to the Romans, which is Paul’s longest letter, and which addresses the full theological scope of the Christian faith in the most comprehensive way of any New Testament books.
2. What are Paul’s “Prison Letters,” and why are they called that?
   1. Paul’s letters to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon, which he wrote during his first imprisonment in Rome, probably around AD 60-63.
3. What is the purpose of Paul’s letter to the Ephesians?
   1. To remind and reassure the Christians in Ephesus of the gospel of salvation by grace through faith alone, and to describe the nature and role of the Church in God’s eternal plan – especially as reflected in their privileges and responsibilities as Christians.
4. What is the purpose of Paul’s letter to the Philippians?
   1. Paul writes to the Philippians to thank them for their support during his imprisonment in Rome, to report on his circumstances, to encourage them in the face of their own persecution, to exhort them to humility and unity, and to warn them against false teachers.
5. What notably stands out about Paul’s letter to the Philippians, setting it apart

from his other letters?

* 1. It is the warmest and most informal of all Paul’s letters, expressing great affection for all the members of the Philippian congregation.

1. What are the “Pastoral Epistles?”
   1. Paul’s three letters (1&2 Timothy, Titus) that are addressed to individuals who had oversight as pastors and church leaders, in which he gives instruction on Christian living, doctrine and leadership.
2. What causes us to believe Paul was released from his first Roman imprisonment and had a Fourth Missionary journey to Spain?
   1. The Book of Acts ends so abruptly with Paul’s first imprisonment in Rome that it has been suggested Luke planned to write more, perhaps in a third book (after the Gospel of Luke and Acts).
   2. Twice in Romans 15 Paul states quite firmly that he plans to visit Spain.
   3. There are very strong traditions among several of the Early Church Fathers that Paul was released from his first imprisonment in Rome and traveled to Spain (and perhaps even to Britain).
   4. Early Church tradition held that Paul was executed during the reign of Emperor Nero, around AD 64-68, which would be several years after the dates (AD 60-63) generally accepted as the time of his first imprisonment in Rome.
3. What is different about the way the Pauline Epistles are named, as opposed to the naming convention of other letters (the General Epistles) in the New

Testament?

* 1. Paul’s Epistles are named for their recipients (Romans, Galatians, Philippians, etc.), while the General Epistles (with the exception of Hebrews) are named after their authors.

1. What was the nature of the Gnostic heresy and which New Testament books offer theological arguments against it?
   1. Gnosticism was a philosophical heresy that claimed salvation came through special knowledge (from Greek *gnosis*, or “knowledge”). In particular, Gnosticism claimed only the spiritual realm mattered and that the material/physical world was inconsequential or even downright evil – so that the divine Jesus could not really have been incarnate in a human body; that there is no such thing as physical sin and immorality (since the body doesn’t matter); and without sin there is no need for Jesus to be our Savior. Instead the emphasis was on receiving secret knowledge, with Jesus as the chief knowledge-bringer.
   2. The New Testament books that refute Gnosticism are Paul’s letters to the Colossians, 1&2 Timothy, and Titus. Non-Pauline letters that refute it are 2 Peter, 1&2 John, and Jude.