

# 2020-2021 Review

6/1/21

# The Early Church from Acts, Paul and the Catholic Epistles

**6/1/21**

# Introduction

- This year (Sept 2020 through June 2021), we looked at the birth of the Church (33 A.D.) until the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D.

# Early Christian Time Line

- 63 BC Roman General Pompey captures *Jerusalem*
- 37 BC – 4 AD Herod the Great – Roman Puppet
  - Archelaus 4BC-6AD - Banished by Rome
  - Herod Philip 4BC-34AD - Died
  - Herod Antipas 4 BC-39 AD – Banished
- **0-6 AD Birth of Jesus the Christ**
- 1-5 The birth of Saul of Tarsus
- 6-15 Annas – High Priest appointed by Rome
- 18-37 Caiaphas – High Priest selected by the Jews
- **12 Jesus remained in the temple for three days**
- 13 -18 AD - Beginning of Saul's studies in Jerusalem

# Books of the New Testament

- **The 27 books of the NT**
  - **Synoptic gospels (3)**
    - Matthew
    - Mark
    - Luke
  - **The Gospel of John (1)**
  - **The Acts of the Apostles (1)**

# Books of the New Testament (Cont)

## **Letters of St. Paul to the Churches (9) \* Captivity Epistles**

Romans

Corinthians 1 & 2

Galatians

Ephesians \*

Philippians \*

Colossians \*

Thessalonians 1 & 2

## **Letters of St. Paul to Individuals (4)**

Timothy 1 & 2

Titus

Philemon \*

# Books of the New Testament (Cont)

## **The Catholic (universal) Epistles (7)**

Epistle of St. James

Epistles of St. Peter (1 & 2)

Epistles of St. John (1 , 2 & 3)

Epistle of St. Jude

## **The Book of Hebrews (1)**

## **The Book of Revelation (1)**

# Early Christian Time Line (Cont)

- **20 Herod the Great began the rebuilding of the temple (completed 46 years later)**
- **26-36 Pontius Pilate – 5<sup>th</sup> Prefect of *Rome* in Jerusalem**
- **30-33 The Public Life of Jesus Christ as discussed in the four Gospels**



# Early Christian Time Line (Cont)

- 33 A.D. The early church experienced Pentecost & the descent of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-47)
  - Marked the birth of the Church
  - Tongues of fire
  - Message heard in multitude of languages
  - Peter chastised the Jews and called them to repentance and baptism
  - 3000 Jews from the world entered the Church of Jerusalem
  - The Apostles understood that their task from Jesus was to spread the “Good News” (*Evangelium*)
    - *This became known as the “Kerygma” (Read - Acts 2:14-43)*
- 33 Matthias selected by the 11 to replace Judas
- 33 Seven Deacons were appointed to assist the Apostles
  - Stephen
  - Philip

# Summary of the Kerygma

- The **promises of God** made in the OT have now been fulfilled with the coming of Jesus, the Messiah
- Jesus was **anointed by God at his baptism as Messiah**
- Jesus began his **ministry in Galilee** after his baptism
- He conducted a beneficent ministry, **doing good and performing mighty works** by the power of God
- The Messiah was **crucified** according to the purpose of God
- He was **raised from the dead** and appeared to his disciples
- Jesus was **exalted by God** and given the name “**Lord**”
- He gave the **Holy Spirit** to form the new community of God
- He **will come again for judgment** and the restoration of all things
- **All who hear the message should repent and be baptized**

# Early Christian Time Line (Cont)

- Background of those hearing Peter's first presentation of the Kerygma as discussed in Acts 2:9-11

Parthians

Medes

Elamites

Mesopotamia

Judea

Cappadocia

Pontus

Asia

Phrygia

Pamphylia

Egypt

Libya

Rome

Cretans

Arabians

# The Early Explosion of Christianity

- THE HOLY SPIRIT

- 12 Apostles

- 120 Jews/ Proselytes (Acts 1:15)
    - 3000 Jews/ Proselytes (Acts 2:41)
    - 5000 Jews/Proselytes (Acts 4:4)

# Early Christian Time Line (Cont)

- Peter and John (Acts 3:1 - 5:11)
  - Healed the man lame from birth
  - Preached within Solomon's Portico
  - Were arrested by the Sanhedrin and thrown into prison
  - 5000 who heard the word joined the Church
  - The next day, they defended their actions before the Sanhedrin who released them with a warning not to speak or preach in "the name of Jesus"
  - They reported this to the Church of Jerusalem

# Early Christian Time Line (Cont)

- Church of ***Jerusalem*** decided to live in a “communal” setting
  - Barnabas gave the community a parcel of land
  - *Ananias* and *Sapphira* withheld part of their profits, lied to the community, and were suddenly struck dead

# Early Christian Time Line (Cont)

- The Apostles returned to preaching in Solomon's Portico (Acts 5:12-16)
- The high priest and Sadducees were filled with jealousy and arrested them again (Acts 5:17-19)
- That night, they were freed from prison by an angel and returned to preach in the Temple (Acts 5:19-21)
- They were again brought before the high priest and the Sanhedrin who wanted to kill them (Acts 5:21-32)
- A most respected Pharisee named *Gamaliel* convinced the Council to spare them as possibly being from God (Acts 5:33-42)

# Early Christian Time Line (Cont)

- A division arose within the early Church between the treatment of Hellenist and Hebrew widows (Acts 6:1-6)
  - The Apostles selected 7 deacons to assist in ministering to the widows allowing them to focus on preaching the Gospel
- Deacon Stephen was: (Acts 6:8 - 8:1)
  - One of the seven, filled with zeal, and preached to the Jews
  - Charged with blasphemy and taken before the Council for a trial
  - Stoned and martyred in front of Saul of *Tarsus*



# Early Christian Time Line (Cont)

- The Jews began a great persecution of the Church in Jerusalem scattering the believers (except for the Apostles) throughout **Judea** and **Samaria** (Acts 8:1-3)
- Deacon Philip (Acts 8:4-40):
  - Took the Gospel to **Samaria** causing Peter and John to visit and lay hands on the believers in order for them to receive the Holy Spirit
  - Converted and Baptized an Ethiopian minister on the Road to **Gaza**
  - Continued to **Caesarea** preaching the gospel

# Early Christian Time Line (Cont)

- 33-34 Saul's (**Paul – Roman name**) conversion on the Road to Damascus
  - Saul's three years of sojourn and meditation in Arabia
  - Saul's return to Damascus and on to Jerusalem
  - Barnabas' support of Saul and his journey to Tarsus
  - **Peter's conversion of the Gentile Centurion, Cornelius**
  - Peter arrested by Herod Agrippa

# Early Christian Time Line (Cont)

- 36-37 Saul returned to *Damascus* and was supported by Barnabas in *Jerusalem* and *Tarsus*
- 37 Christian worship spread to Antioch
- 38 Saul flees *Damascus*
- 41-44 Herod Agrippa I ruled in Jerusalem
- 42 James (brother of John) was beheaded (by Agrippa II)

# Early Christian Time Line (Cont)

42 Saul was sought by Barnabas and brought to *Antioch* where the center of Christianity settled

- Philip spread the Gospel in *Samaria* and baptized an Ethiopian official
- Peter healed the paralytic, Aeneas in *Lydda*
- Peter raised Tabitha from the dead at *Joppa*
- Peter converted the Roman Centurion, Cornelius at *Caesarea*
- Peter was arrested by Herod Agrippa and freed by an angel
- 44 Famine in Jerusalem
- 45 Saul visits Jerusalem to help with famine

# Early Christian Time Line (Cont)

- 45-49 Paul's 1<sup>st</sup> missionary journey
  - *Spring of 45, they sail for Cyprus*
  - *Fall of 45, they sail for Asia Minor and arrive at Antioch of Pisidia*
  - *Fall of 46, they arrive at Iconian then on to Derbe*
  - *They may have remained 1 year in Derbe before returning to Antioch in Syria*
  - *48 was their triumphal journey to Jerusalem*

# Early Christian Time Line (Cont)

- 48-49 Herod Agrippa II ruled Jerusalem
- 49 Jews expelled from Rome by Claudius
- 49 Apostles and Paul meet for 1<sup>st</sup> council
- 49 Council of Jerusalem (resolves Judaizer issue)

# Early Christian Time Line (Cont)

- 49-52 Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey
  - Autumn 49, Paul leaves Antioch and moves through the Churches of Galatia with the letter from the council
  - Spring 50, Paul arrives in *Thessalonica*
  - 51, Paul moves to *Berea*
  - March 51, Paul arrives in *Athens*
  - Spring 51, to autumn of 52 Paul was in *Corinth*
  - Winter 50-51, Paul writes the 2 Letters to the Thessalonians
  - Paul returns to Antioch in Syria, ending the second Missionary Journey

# First and Second Letter to the Thessalonians

- A pastoral letter to the new converts who were left alone to withstand a rising time of persecution for paganism
- Contains emphasis on eschatology (teaching concerning end times)
  - Focuses on the second coming of Christ
  - Discusses the fate of deceased relatives who died before becoming aware of this new faith
  - Challenges the faithful to remain vigilant for no one knows when Jesus will return



# Early Christian Time Line (Cont)

- **53-58 Paul's 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey**
- Paul began this journey from Antioch with a visit of encouragement to the Churches of ***Galatia*** (Acts 18:23)
  - Meanwhile, Apollos of Alexandria arrived in ***Ephesus*** and began preaching the Baptism of John (baptism of repentance)
  - Priscilla and Aquila corrected his error, and baptized him with the Holy Spirit, and sent him to ***Corinth*** where he strengthened the Church there with his great rhetoric (Acts 19:1-20)
  - Paul waited until he arrived at ***Ephesus*** in **April of 54** to write the **Letter to the Galatians** in response to the issues that arose during his journey through ***Galatia***

# Early Christian Time Line (Cont)

- 57 three Christians from Corinth deliver a letter to Paul at Ephesus asking for clarification
- 57 Paul writes his First Letter to the Corinthians from Ephesus
- 58 Paul writes his Second Letter to the Corinthians from Philippi
- Paul arrives at Corinth
- 58 Paul writes his Letter to the Romans
- 58 Paul leaves Corinth overland and then returns by sea to Caesarea

# The Letter to the Galatians

- A defense of the gospel against the challenge to the Judaizers to maintain the tenants of Judaism
- A defense of Paul's credential as an Apostle of Christ

# The First Letter to the Corinthians

- Responds to a report by a delegation of women who visited him in Ephesus
- The report addressed a number of vices that were beginning to fracture the five year old church to include:
  - Sexual immorality and incest
  - Multiplying lawsuits
  - Denial of the Resurrection
  - Careless celebration of the Eucharist
- This letter was designed to hold things together until he could visit the church in person

# The Second Letter to the Corinthians

- Strengthen his relationship with loyal supporters who were about to fall prey to the groundless claims of “false apostles”
- Defend his apostolic authority against those who doubted or denied it
- Resume his collection for the poor Christians in Jerusalem
- Confront the false apostles and Corinthian followers
- His planned visit to Corinth

# The Letter to the Romans

- Introduce himself and his teachings to the Roman Christians in preparation for his planned visit
- Hoped to establish the Roman Church as his missionary base for a new phase of evangelization in the eastern Mediterranean (Spain)
- Ease tensions that were straining the unity and fellowship of the Roman Church
  - Division between Jewish and Gentile Christians
  - Argued for unity within the church

# Early Christian Time Line (Cont)

- Paul spends seven days with Philip the Evangelist in *Caesarea*
- The Prophet Agabus from *Judea* prophesied that Paul would be bound by the Jews at *Jerusalem* and turned over to the Gentiles
- Paul leaves *Caesarea* and travels on to *Jerusalem*, ending his Third Missionary Journey
- Paul was received by James and the elders in *Jerusalem* where he related his ministry to the Gentiles
- James asked Paul to participate in a Nazirite vow of four men to demonstrate his Jewishness

# Early Christian Time Line (Cont)

- Jews from Asia (*Ephesus* ) started a riot against Paul in the Temple
- Paul was rescued from the Jews by the Roman tribune
- Enroute to the Roman barracks, Paul makes an appeal to the Jews ending in a riot
- Paul is taken before the Jewish council which he divided by appealing to the Pharisees over the Sadducees, and was again rescued by the Roman soldiers
- Paul hears about a plot against his life, and the tribune moves him under guard at night to *Caesarea*



# Early Christian Time Line (Cont)

- **59-60 Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea**
  - Paul is tried before Felix, the 13<sup>th</sup> Roman Tribune (Governor)
  - Paul is tried before the 14<sup>th</sup> Roman Tribune Festus
  - Paul is tried before King Agrippa II
- 50s-60s Letter of James written by James the Bishop of Jerusalem
- **60-69 Luke's Gospel completed**
- 63-64 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter written sometime after 57 A.D.

# The Epistle of James

- Most likely written by James (the lesser), the Bishop of Jerusalem in the late 50s
- It was very Jewish, like the wisdom literature of the Old Testament
- Luther totally misunderstood it (out of context), and initially left it out of his translation of the new testament (as the book of straw)
- It helped clarify the theology of Paul and established the scriptural basis for the Sacrament of the Sick

# The Epistles of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter

- These two letters written by Peter can be seen as the most beautiful jewels of the New Testament
- It was most likely written in the Spring of 63 and Summer of 64 from Rome to the churches of Asia Minor
- Written to encourage the Christians under the Jewish and Roman persecutions to remain in the faith
- It contains some beautiful baptismal imagery to include its relationship to the death of Jesus

# The Epistles of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter (Cont)

- Father pointed out that “born again” was a reference to Baptism
- This was universally understood until the writing of the Protestant reformer Zwingli in the 16<sup>th</sup> century

# Early Christian Time Line (Cont)

- **60-61 Paul's Fourth Journey (in chains) to Rome**
  - Paul traveled by sea to *Crete*
  - Paul was shipwrecked on the Island of *Malta*
  - Paul traveled over land from *Piteoli* to *Rome*
- **62 Luke completes the Book of Acts**

# Early Christian Time Line (Cont)

61-63 Paul was placed under house arrest for three years awaiting trial (First Roman imprisonment) where Paul wrote the Captivity Epistles

- Letter to the Ephesians
- Letter to the Philippians
- Letter to the Colossians
- *Letter to Philemon*

# The Letter to the Ephesians

- Focuses on the theme of the “mystery” of Jesus Christ once concealed but now revealed
- Emphasis on the mystery of Christ the Redeemer whose death was a vicarious sacrifice for the redemption of Jews and Gentiles alike
- Also, a presentation on Christ’s ecclesial body, the Church

# The Letter to the Philippians

- Does not address any doctrinal or disciplinary crisis
- A letter of thanks and encouragement to a congregation of dear friends
- The Philippians were supporting Paul in his imprisonment through gifts and prayer
- The two main issues to be resolved were the conflict between two Philippian women and the dangers of possible Judaizer missionaries
- In preparation for the arrival of Timothy



# The Letter to the Colossians

- Responds to concerns expressed by the Church founder who visited in prison concerning certain agitators who were planting doubts about the new faith among the members of the Church
- Reassures the believing Gentile Christians of their Christian inheritance
- To address an early form of Christian Gnosticism along with certain philosophical elements for Jewish and Hellenistic thought

# The Letter to Philemon

- An impassioned appeal to Philemon, a friend and owner of the runaway slave Onesimus
- A request to welcome Onesimus back as a Christian brother, friend, and equal
- In preparation for Paul's visit upon his imminent release from prison

# Early Christian Time Line (Cont)

63-66 Paul was released from house arrest and then visited the Orient

- Release from prison
- Journey to Spain

64-68 Christian persecution begins under Nero

66-67 Paul travels with Titus to *Crete*

- Paul spent the winter in *Nicopolis*
- Paul write the Epistle to Titus
- Paul wrote the First Epistle to Timothy

# Early Christian Time Line (Cont)

## Second Roman Imprisonment

- Paul arrested in *Troas*
- Paul was imprisoned in a Roman prison
- Paul wrote Second Timothy from prison

# The Letter to Titus

- To assist Titus (Bishop of Crete) in his efforts to organize the converts into communities with elders and presbyters to lead the flocks
- Encourage and authorize Titus in his spiritual and organizational efforts
- Place full confidence in his leadership abilities
- Ask him to meet Paul in *Nicopolis* for the winter

# The First Letter to Timothy

- To encourage Timothy (Bishop of Ephesus) to overcome a serious pastoral crisis in which teachers and shepherds were leading the flock away from the certainties of divine revelation into speculation
- Much of the letter addresses Timothy's pastoral responsibilities in stabilizing the church with sound doctrine and the appointment of reliable pastors

# The Second Letter to Timothy

- To encourage and summon Timothy to visit him in his final imprisonment in Rome
- Since the problems in the Church in Ephesus have continued to worsen, Paul urges Timothy to fulfill his teaching mission with zeal and endurance
- Challenges Timothy to overcome his youthfulness and timidity by being manly and strong in the grace of God
- Calls the loyal Timothy to come to him in Rome before it is too late

# The Letter to the Hebrews

- Though it may not have been written by Paul, most believe it contains his teachings
- Directed at Jewish Christians living in Palestine, who appear to be on the verge of apostatizing
- Presents a contrast between the Old and New Testaments and priesthood



# Early Christian Time Line (Cont)

- 64 Emperor Nero begins persecution of Christians
- 64-67 St Peter and St. Paul martyred in *Rome*
- **66-69 Mark's Gospel completed**
- **66 Herod's temple completed**
- 66-70 War of the Jews
- 70 Destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem resulting in the end of the practice of Mosaic Judaism

# The Explosion of Christianity

- 12 Apostles
- Grew to over
- 2.2 Billion Christians
- In the World by
  - 2010