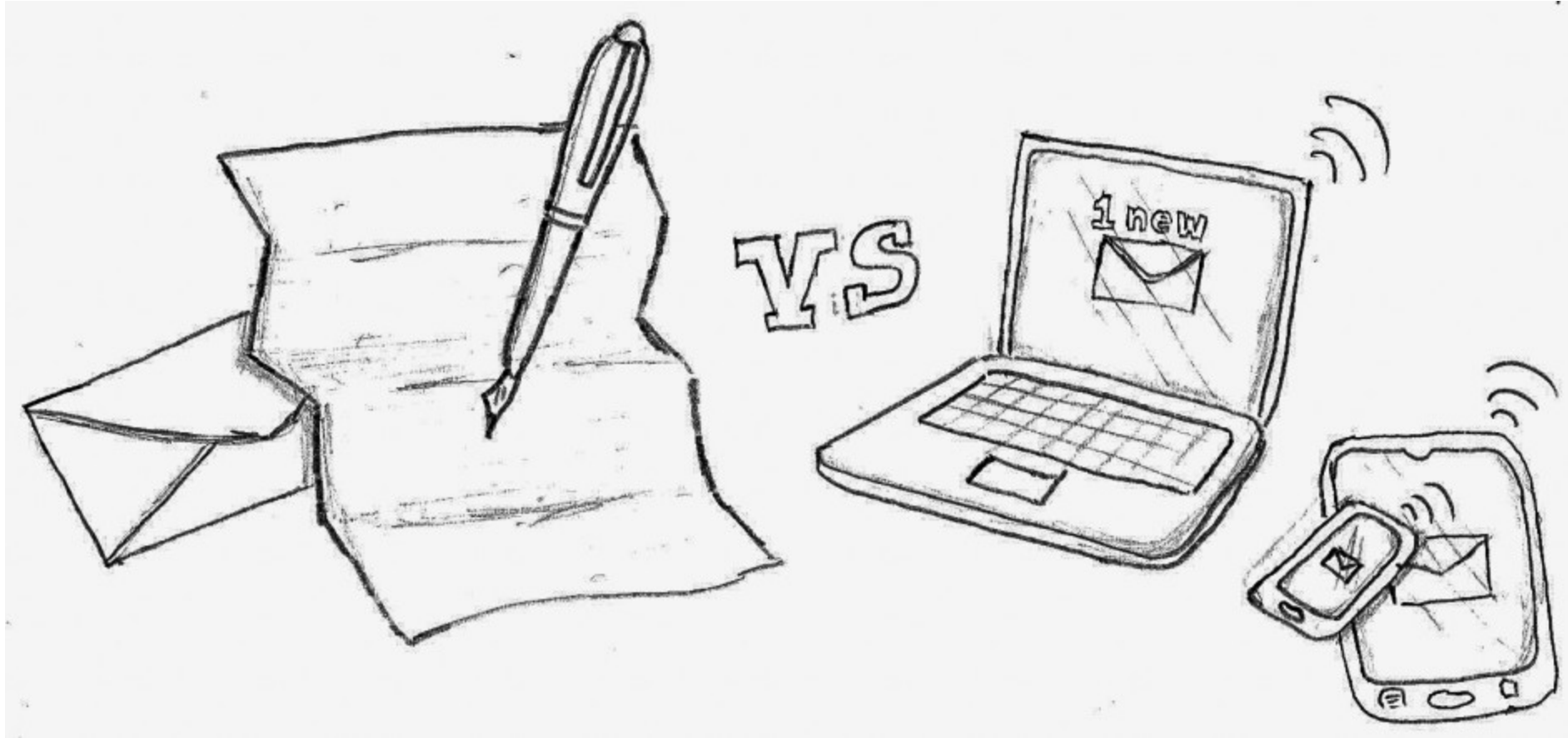
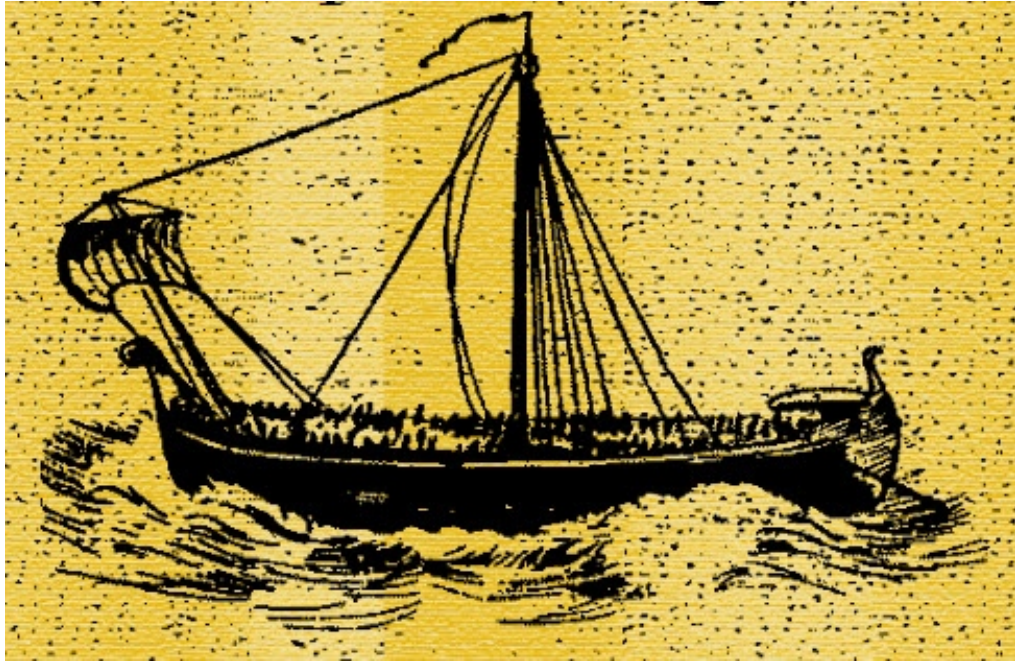

PAUL, HIS LETTERS & CHURCHES

ST. PAUL'S BIBLE COLLEGE – ONLINE LECTURE – LESSON 20

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LESSON OUTLINE

- I. Socio-political and religious world of Paul's time.
- II. Paul and early churches.
- III. Letter writing in the First Century AD.
- IV. Pauline letters – background and classifications.
- V. Short Pauline letters (minor letters).
- VI. Theological and inspirational messages of the Pauline letters.



I. SOCIO-POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS WORLD OF PAUL'S TIME



1. INTRODUCTION

- Paul, a Jew, Hebrew, Benjaminite, Pharisee. (Phil 3:4)
- Small in stature (cf. 2 Cor 10:10)
- Great will-power.
- Learned scholar. Greek, Aramaic.

2. BIRTH AND UPBRINGING

- Born in Tarsus.
- Saul ('asked of God')
- Paulus (Acts 13:9)
- Roman citizen (Acts 23:27)
- Studied under Gamaliel (Acts 22:3)
- Unmarried?!

3. PAUL, THE APOSTLE

- 'Apostle' (Acts 14:4; Gal 1:1)
- Vision of the Risen Jesus (Gal 1:17)
- Apostle to the Gentiles
- Till the ends of the world, Rome.

4. PAUL, THE AUTHOR

- Documents of the early Christian communities.
- One fourth of the NT.
- Before the Gospels were written.
- Glimpses of original Christianity.

5. PAUL, THE THEOLOGIAN

- Doctrine of revelation.
- Doctrine of justification by faith (cf. Sola fide)
- Doctrine of the Holy Spirit.
- Doctrine of the Church. As the Mystical Body of Christ.
- Doctrine of atonement.

6. THE WORLD OF PAUL

- Jewish. Monotheism. Eschatology. Anthropology. Preaching style.
- Hellenistic. Rhetoric device. Dialectic method. Philosophy.
- Roman. Free travel. Pax Romana.
- Christian influences. Encountering the Risen Lord.

7. PAUL'S CHRISTIAN WORLD

- Stoning of Stephen.
- Kerygma. Maranatha. Messiah. Hymns. Abba, Father.
- Institution of the Eucharist. Passion narratives. Creed formula. Profession of faith.

8. MINISTRY

- Local markets. Synagogues. Riverside. Outdoor arena. Private home. Public hall.
- More imprisonments.



II. PAUL AND THE EARLY CHURCHES



PAUL'S SEVEN CHURCH LETTERS

1 Rome

5 Philippi

3 Galatia

7 Thessalonica

4 Ephesus

2 Corinth

6 Colossae



1. RELIGION OF PAUL AND HIS CHURCHES

- Specific situations.
- Instruction, exhortation, advice, warning, encouragement.
- Temporary, or permanent solutions.
- Conceptual, social, ritual, and ethical dimensions.

2. THE CONCEPTUAL DIMENSION

- Eschatological orientation. *Parousia*. Non-Judaic perspective on the Law. Justification through faith in Jesus.

3. THE SOCIAL DIMENSION

- House churches. All social groups.
- Members of the One Body of Christ.
- World culture vs. Christianity.
- Leadership.
- Role of women. Cf. Rom 16:3-5

4. THE RITUAL DIMENSION

- Baptism. And Holy Spirit (Gal 3:26-28)
- Meetings. Lord's Day (1 Cor 16:2)
- The Lord's Supper

5. THE ETHICAL DIMENSION

- Law as 'Love of Neighbour.'
- Negative attitude towards body. Cf. Greek philosophy.
- Exhortations. *Parenesis*.



III. LETTER WRITING IN THE FIRST CENT. AD



1. LITERARY GENRE

- One of the literary forms. 21 out of 27 NT books are letters.
- OT letter writing (2 Sam 11:14-15; 2 Kgs 5:5-6)

2. FORMAT OF THE LETTERS

- 4 elements. Greco-Roman letter-writing.
- Opening Formula.
- Thanksgiving.
- Message.
- Concluding Formula.

3. LETTER WRITING AS AN ART

- Materials used: papyrus; reed stick. 3 letters per minute. 72 words in an hour. 20 hours to write 1 Thes.
- Continuity and discontinuity. Repetition.
- Authors: one's own hand, dictation, theme dictation, delegation.
- Paul's secretary. Tertius. Rom 16:22



IV. PAULINE LETTERS: BACKGROUND & CLASSIFICATION



1. STRUCTURE OF PAULINE LETTERS

- Salutation / greeting.
- Thanksgiving.
- Body of the letter.
- Conclusion / final greeting.

2. LETTER / EPISTLE

- Personal / artistic.
- Free / intended.
- Individual / public.
- Concrete situation / general situations.

3. NATURE OF PAULINE WRITINGS

- Philemon.
- Philippians.
- Circular. Read in other churches.

4. SOME LITERARY FEATURES OF ST. PAUL

- Prayer / thanksgiving.
- Autobiography, travel plans.
- Kerygmatic formulas.
- Homilies.
- Exhortation.
- Hymns.

SOME LITERARY FEATURES ...

- Liturgical formulas.
- Midrashic literature.
- Testimonia.
- Apocalyptic literature.
- Form of blessings.
- Rhetoric method of writing.
- Dialogue – diatribe.
- Domestic instructions.

5. KEY TO UNDERSTAND / INTERPRET PAULINE LETTERS

- Word sense.
- Sentence sense.
- Paragraph sense.
- Discourse sense.

6. HOW MANY LETTERS?

- 13 letters of Paul.
- Letter to the Hebrews.
- Letter written in tears.
- Two or three layers in the letter to the Philippians.

7. GROUPINGS

- First two epistles: 1 and 2 Thess.
- Four main epistles: Rom, 1 and 2 Cor, Gal.
- Captivity epistles: Phil, Col, Eph, Philemon.
- Pastoral epistles: 1 and 2 Tim, Titus.

8. AUTHENTICITY OF THE LETTERS

- Authentic: Rom, 1 and 2 Cor, Gal, Phil, 1 Thes, Philemon.
- Doubted: Col, 2 Thes
- Disputed: 1 and 2 Tim, Titus, Eph
- Denied: Hebrews

9. CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

- 1,2 Thes, Gal, Phil (from Corinth or Ephesus),
- 1,2 Cor, Rom, Philemon (from Caesarea or Rome)
- Col, Eph, Tit, 1,2 Tim.
- The order followed in the modern Bible is not chronological.
- It follows the Vulgate, according to the length of the letters.

10. TIME AND PLACE OF COMPOSITION

- 1 Thes (50-51 AD) from Corinth.
- 1 Cor, Phil, Philemon (54 AD spring) from Ephesus.
- 2 Cor, Gal (54 AD fall) from Macedonia.
- Romans (55 AD spring) from Corinth.



V. MINOR LETTERS



1 THESSALONIANS

- Oldest. First Letter. First NT book.
- Acts 17:1-10.
- Occasion: *Parousia*, end of times, persecution, time wasters.
- Theology: Second Coming.

1 THESSALONIANS ...

- “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit.” (5:16-19)
- “Test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.” (5:21-22). [Discernment formula]

2 THESSALONIANS

- 1 Thes. Sudden end. 2 Thes. Delayed Parousia. Preceded by signs.
- Encouragement amidst persecutions; correcting errors; advising them against idleness.
- Theology: Second Coming. Michael.

2 THESSALONIANS ...

- “If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. ” [3:10]
- “Do not grow weary in doing good.” [3:13]

COLOSSIANS

- Modern Turkey. Wool and textile centre. Philemon and Onesimus here. Prison letter. 58-59 AD.
- False teachings. Elemental spirits. Dietary laws.
- Paul opposes false teachings.
- Christ is the fullness of God. Firstborn from the dead. Above angels.
- Realized eschatology. Christians already risen with Christ.
- Particular church.

COLOSSIANS ...

- “If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.” (3:1)
- “Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.” (4:5-6)

EPHESIANS

- Elders at Ephesus.
- Church. Mystical body of Christ. Cosmic role.
- Marriage metaphor.
- Household codes. Wives and husbands; children and parents; slaves and masters.

EPHESIANS ...

- ... even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will ... (1:4-5)
- “may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” (3:18-19)

EPHESIANS ...

- Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us. (3:20)
- Wives, be submissive. Husbands, be loving.
- Armour of God (6:13ff)

PHILIPPIANS

- Philippi.
- Paul loved this the most.
- Gentiles.
- Happiness letter.
- Epaphroditus, and other gifts.
- Internal dissensions.

PHILIPPIANS ...

- Christological hymn.
- Rejoice.
- I can do anything ...
- I consider everything as rubbish ...

PHILEMON

- Shortest letter. Private letter.
- Slave vs. Master.
- Brother in faith.

1 & 2 TIMOTHY

- Bishop at Ephesus.
- Companion. Coworker.
- False teaching. Leadership issues.
- Love. Pure heart. Good conscience. Sincere faith. (1 Tim 1:5)
- Godliness.
- 'I bought a good battle ...' (2 Tim 4:7)

1 & 2 TIMOTHY ...

- Three metaphors of a believer / pastor: athlete, soldier, farmer.
- “Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.” (2 Tim 2:20-21)

TITUS

- Bishop at Crete.
- Church structure, false teaching.
- Good works. (2:7)



IX. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LETTERS



LIFE LESSONS

- Letters as hyphens of faith.
- Church: from particular to universal.
- Sustaining, and reaching out.
- Christified Paul. Christ at the Centre.
- Treasure of Christian doctrine.
- People do matter.



ASSESSMENT



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1. What is the meaning of 'Paulus' in Latin? **A. Small, little.** B. Asked of the Lord. C. Effeminate, affected, conceited.
 2. Which is the first Book to be written in the NT? A. Gospel of Matthew. B. Letter to the Romans. **C. 1 Thessalonians.**
 3. What is the name of famous Rabbi under whom Paul studied? A. Johannen ben Zakkai. **B. Gamaliel.** C. Hillel.
 4. How many letters were written by Paul? **A. 13.** B. 12. C. 11.
 5. What is the special message of the 1 Thessalonians? **A. Parousia and about the destiny of the dead.** B. Negligence of work. C. Immoral conduct.
 6. Which Archangel seems to be very active in 2 Thessalonians. **A. Michael.** B. Gabriel. C. Rafael.

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7. What was the false teaching that existed in the Church of Colossians? **A. Christ was one of the angelic beings intermediary between God and humans.** B. Jesus fully human and fully divine. C. Docetism.
8. Which letter gives importance to the universal Church? A. Colossians. **B. Ephesians.** C. Philippians.
9. Which letter can be termed as 'happiness letter'? **A. Philippians.** B. 1 Timothy. C. Philemon.
10. What are the Pastoral Letters? A. 1 and 2 Thessalonians. B. Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon. **C. 1, 2 Timothy, Titus.**

Paragraph Questions

1. What is the main theological message of I Thessalonians?
2. Write the theology of 2 Thessalonians.
3. Write the Ecclesiology of Ephesians.
4. Explain -Rejoice in the Lord- in the Letter to the Philippians.
5. What is the significance of the Letter to Philemon?
6. What is the message of the Letter to Titus?

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