

Sunday June 7th 2015
God Gave His Word – a Transition from the Gospels to the Epistles
The Epistles
(Part 3 of 3)

II Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

II Timothy 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Matthew 7:22 “Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ 23 “And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’

In these three messages, we are considering how God gave His Word, giving specific attention to the transition from the gospels to the epistles ó a transition seen in the Book of Acts. We would want to understand His Word correctly in order to live in light of that correct understanding being benefited from it both here and now, as well as then and there.

From the passages we just read, it is fairly easy to see that

- God *inspired* His Word, making it profitable for individuals who would be taught, reproofed, corrected, and instructed in it, to become thoroughly equipped for *good* works (as opposed to *bad* works), and
- God expects His people to be diligent in studying His Word in order to rightly divide the Word of Truth, so that we ó His workers ó will not be ashamed at the JSOC.

One of the ways that an individual could be ashamed at the judgment seat is in *not having rightly divided the Word*, thereby running the risk of practicing lawlessness. And if that be the case then that individual will be told to depart from Jesus (for the Coming Age), thereby suffering loss and shame. Our goal then is to understand God’s Word correctly, and in doing so find ourselves approved by God, and not ashamed. And the transition found at this point in God’s Word becomes part of rightly dividing the Word of Truth.

Last week, we read the opening of the Book of Acts, wherein Jesus told the disciples to go into Jerusalem and wait for the promise that the Father had given them. The promise had to do with Joel’s prophecy concerning the Holy Spirit being poured out upon the people before the great and awesome Day of the Lord. At the end of Mark’s gospel, Mark gave a synopsis of the Book of Acts in this way: **Mark 16:15 And He [Jesus] said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. 17 And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; 18 they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.” 19 So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received**

up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. 20 And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word [the word that they preached] through the accompanying signs.

And so the prophecy given to Joel *began* to be fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost with the disciples being able to speak with *new tongues*, which *confirmed their words* to Israel in calling them to repentance and in *reoffering* the kingdom to them. The disciples were able to speak in tongues, so that the Jews from all over the known world gathered in Jerusalem for the Feast, and who were yet unbelieving with respect to Jesus and His kingdom would come to faith. **I Corinthians 14:22 Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers...** It was in this way that the *reoffer* began to be made to Israel, the beginning of which took place in Jerusalem.

With that, let's lay out a quick synopsis of the Book of Acts:

Acts 1 mentions the 40 day post-resurrection ministry of Jesus to the believing Jews, then reveals His call to the disciples to go into Jerusalem and wait for the promise, as they would become His witnesses in Jerusalem, then Judea and Samaria, and finally to the end of the earth.

Acts 2 depicts the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples on the Day of Pentecost, which inaugurated the new nation of the Church, and which began the reoffer of the kingdom to Israel.

Acts 3-7 shows the activities of Peter and the disciples *in Jerusalem* giving the leadership of the Nation several opportunities to repent and believe; the introduction of Stephen (a man full of the Holy Spirit and strong in the faith) and his being stoned to death by the refusal of the leadership to repent; and the introduction of Saul, all of which began an intense persecution of the Church in Jerusalem.

Acts 8 shows this persecution being the conduit which led to the *dispersal* of the Church into the areas of *Judea and Samaria*, and beyond. Still, at this point though, the ministry of Church was confined strictly to the Jews.

Acts 9 has Saul on the road to Damascus, being zealous to persecute the members of the Church who had dispersed into these outlying areas. Here we see Saul's powerful conversion, at which point he immediately became obedient to the Lord, witnessing to the Jews in Damascus that Jesus was in fact the Lord Christ. So strong was his testimony, the Jews in Damascus sought to kill him. But instead, the Lord took him to Arabia and personally taught him there for possibly up to three years.

Finally it is in **Acts 10** of some 7 or so years after Pentecost of that we saw the first Gentile brought into the Church. God gave Peter the heavenly vision concerning things that the Jews had heretofore seen as unclean, now God was making clean. This was God's way of showing Peter that the way of salvation was now open to the Gentiles. And with this, Peter was given opportunity to share the good news with a group of Gentiles. Thus *began* the message being taken *to the end of the earth*.

In Acts 11 the focus began shifting away from Peter and the Jews to Paul and the Gentiles. And for the remainder of the book ó all the way through to Acts 28 ó we see Paul's ministry, described in Acts 20:21 [Paul was] **“testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ... . . . 27 “For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.** And contextually, the *whole counsel of God* would be to Acts 20:24 ... **testify to the gospel of the grace of God... [and the] preaching the kingdom of God,** which is exactly what Paul did throughout his entire ministry.

But, as we have seen the Nation of Israel continued with their unrepentive, hardened heart toward the message of the Christ and His kingdom, so that finally in Acts 28 Paul totally withdraws the reoffer of the kingdom from Israel as was depicted by the Luke 13 parable we read last week: The fruitless fig tree which had been in the vineyard, which the landowner wanted to cut down for its lack of fruit, and which had been *dug around and fertilized* for a time to see if it would at last produce fruit, did not. And due to its fruitlessness, it was finally cut down ó the reoffer of the kingdom was totally withdrawn from the Nation for the remainder of this present dispensation.

According to what we read, then, in Mark 16:20, the disciples had gone out and *preached everywhere... the Lord working with them and confirming their word through the accompanying signs.* But due to their continued unbelief, at the last of Acts we read this: **Acts 28:25 So when they** (a group of Jews in Rome) **did not agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had said one word: “The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers, 26 saying, ‘Go to this people and say: “Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand; And seeing you will see, and not perceive; 27 For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.”“ 28 Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!”** And so ends the Book of Acts.

Now, before we go into our brief study of the epistles, it might be good for us to remember something critical about Israel being set aside ó *it is only for a time.* God is not finished with Israel. The Church does not òreplace Israel,ò as so many Christians even today believe. This fact is without any doubt whatsoever! Paul makes it very clear in **Romans 11:25 For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. 26 And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: “The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; 27 For this is My covenant with them, **When I take away their sins.**” God has worked this all out in such a way so as to prove Himself faithful in everythingí in every promise, in all His Word. God is faithful to bring it ALL to pass. And this mystery, which Paul begins to bring to light, the mystery revealed and explained to him by Jesus while in the wilderness, explains that Gentiles and Jews will be joined together into one body. (We'll discuss more of that in just a moment.)**

As we continue to look at the transition in Acts, especially as we get into the epistles, we'll need to understand that the message that Paul brought to the Jews in the synagogues would, *of necessity*, be different than the message that he would give to Jews in the Churches through the epistles written during the time of the reoffer. (A Jew who had repented and believed became part of the

Church; while the Jews in the synagogues had not yet repented.) And so when Paul began his missionary journeys so many of the Jews outside of Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria would not have been given a chance to hear the reoffer. So during the Book of Acts, as Paul went from city to city, he would *always* go to the synagogues first, before going to the Gentiles.

One example of the type of message that Paul would bring to the Jews in the synagogues can be seen in Acts chapter thirteen. While this is a really long portion of Scripture we'll read now; please give attention. It will give us an idea of what happened over and over again during these years.

Acts 13:14 But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down. 15 And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, "Men and brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on."

16 Then Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, "Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen: 17 The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He brought them out of it. 18 Now for a time of about forty years He put up with their ways in the wilderness. 19 And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land to them by allotment. 20 After that He gave them judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. 21 And afterward they asked for a king; so God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. 22 And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.' 23 From this man's seed, according to the promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior--Jesus-- 24 after John had first preached, before His coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. 25 And as John was finishing his course, he said, 'Who do you think I am? I am not He. But behold, there comes One after me, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to loose.'

26 Men and brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to you the word of this salvation has been sent. 27 For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled them in condemning Him. 28 And though they found no cause for death in Him, they asked Pilate that He should be put to death. 29 Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb. 30 But God raised Him from the dead. 31 He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people. 32 And we declare to you glad tidings--that promise which was made to the fathers. 33 God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.' 34 And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus: 'I will give you the sure mercies of David.' 35 Therefore He also says in another Psalm: 'You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.' 36 For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; 37 but He whom God raised up saw no corruption. 38 Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through

this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; 39 and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.

40 Beware therefore, lest what has been spoken in the prophets come upon you: 41 ‘Behold, you despisers, Marvel and perish! For I work a work in your days, A work which you will by no means believe, Though one were to declare it to you.’”

42 So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. 43 Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

44 On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. 45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul. 46 Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, “It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. 47 For so the Lord has commanded us: ‘I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.’”

48 Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. 49 And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region. 50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. 51 But they shook off the dust from their feet against them, and came to Iconium. 52 And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

And so on to Iconium they went! What do you think would happen there? The same thing and more! **Acts 14:1 Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed. 2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren. 3 Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. 4 But the multitude of the city was divided: part sided with the Jews, and part with the apostles. 5 And when a violent attempt was made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to abuse and stone them, 6 they became aware of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding region. 7 And they were preaching the gospel there.**

On and on this type of thing went, city after city. Paul would take the message to the Jews first, some would believe, but the majority wouldn't, so then he would take the message to the Gentiles. And then a persecution would often arise, expelling him from the city, and so he would go to the next city and do the same thing. But those Jews who did believe became part of the Church.

And so the things that Paul would say to the Jews in the synagogues would be different than what he would have to say to the Jews within the Churches through the epistles. And so, with that, let's

now look at what he would have to say to the Jews through the epistles, during the time of the reoffer.

The Epistles

In rightly dividing the Word of Truth, we'll have to remember that the epistles should be divided into two different groups ó the group of epistles written *during* the time of the Book of Acts (when the reoffer was still active and the Church was mostly made up of Jews), and the group of epistles written *after* Acts 28:28 (when there was no longer a reoffer to Israel, and the numbers of Jews being added to the Church began to dwindle while the numbers of Gentiles grew exponentially).

And then as we begin to glimpse the epistles, let's make sure that we understand this also: *the main theme of the epistles is no different than the main theme of the entirety of God's Word.* The Old Testament, the gospels, the Book of Acts would have the exact same focus, as would the epistles. It all has to do with the Coming Kingdom. The only difference would be the recipients! The epistles are *letters written to the Church*; letters that contain the offer of the kingdom to His people ó the ñnew man in Christö. None of the epistles is written to an un-saved people group, not even one! And while there are passages that could lead an un-saved person to salvation, each and every epistle is written for the edification and growth of the Church.

Then another thing to remember in this is the fact that God would expect the same things from the Church, as He expected from Israel. He would expect fruit-bearing. When Jesus withdrew the offer of the kingdom from the Jews He said this: **Matthew 21:43** **"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it."** And so the epistles reflect the offer of the heavenly kingdom to the Church, and along with that offer being made, He would only expect the same thing from us that He expected from Israel ó fruit-bearing! This would be reflected in not only Paul's epistles, but in the others as well.

Here is a list of the epistles that were written *during* the years covered in the Book of Acts:

James wrote:	James	45-48 AD
Paul wrote:	I Thessalonians	52AD
	II Thessalonians	53AD
	I Corinthians	57AD
	Galatians	57AD
	II Corinthians	58AD
	Romans	58AD
Anonymous:	Hebrews*	?????

(*The date of the writing of Hebrews is somewhat nebulous, but I am putting this epistle in this timeframe, due to the focus of content.)

These particular epistles would have to be read and studied in the light of the reoffer with Israel still in view. Therefore one would expect to see very Jewish things like the Law being dealt with, as well as miraculous signs. And so you have, for example, Paul dealing with the miraculous sign gifts in I Corinthians (which we will talk about in a moment), and his dealing with the Law in Romans and Galatians, especially with respect to the Gentiles being grafted in. These things

become easy to understand *if* these epistles are read and studied in light of the time in which they were written.

Also, keep in mind that early on in all of this, the Jews in the Church wanted to maintain the keeping of Law themselves, *and* they wanted to make the believing Gentiles keep the Law also. Paul went to great lengths in these very early epistles to show the Jews within the Church that the OT Law had been *fulfilled in Christ*, and that their mindset needed to reflect this. One place this can be seen is in **Galatians 3:23 But before faith came, we [referring to the Jews] were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. 24 Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. 26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.**

It was necessary for Paul to show the Jews ó from OT Scriptures ó that it had *always* been God's plan to allow Gentiles to become part of the household of God (*cf.*, Is.9:2; 42:6; 49:6; 60:1-3; Lk.2:30-32). This was being fulfilled right before their very eyes. And due to the mix of Jews and Gentiles in the early Church, Paul had to set straight where they were to stand in these things: **Galatians 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. 2 Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. 3 And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. 4 You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. 5 For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. 6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.** Now we can understand why Paul said these things, because we can see it from the correct perspective!

And though portions of these epistles were addressed to the believing Jews within the Church helping them to understand these things, these portions are also very beneficial to the Church today as they show us what the OT had to say about the Coming Redeemer/Messiah, as well as how Jesus fulfilled the entire Law. Even now, it is a very good thing for us to study these epistles so that we, too, might grasp the significance as to how and why God gave the Law in the first place, showing us that the Law was a tutor to bring individuals to Christ; the Law is *a copy and shadow of the good things to come* (*cf.*, Heb. 8:5). Through this, we can learn more about how the Law pointed to the work of Jesus.

Also, concerning the Gentiles, even now we would need to understand what it means that we are grafted into the commonwealth of Israel through faith in the Christ, and what that means to be an heir to the Promises of Abraham through his Seed. Apart from studying the OT, we wouldn't know these things. And all of this, of course, has to do with the mystery (concerning the Gentiles being grafted in), which Paul went to great lengths to explain in his epistles. And with these specific epistles in hand, we can now be instructed in these things correctly.

Then also in these early epistles we see the use of miraculous signs being performed within the early Church, even by Gentiles. And perhaps this has seemed a bit of a conundrum up to this point, as so many in the Church are divided on the validity of the use of these gifts today. But with rightly dividing the way God gave His Word at this point, there should be no conundrum at all.

As mentioned last week, the words *sign(s)* and *miracle(s)* ó translated from the Greek word *semeion* ó are only seen in the gospels, the Book of Acts, and the early epistles. Once Israel was fully set aside in Acts 28:28, *the word is not used again in any subsequent epistle*, not even one! But prior to Acts 28:28, these signs were certainly manifested within the Church, although sometimes they being *misused*. Let's consider I Corinthians, as this is the epistle most Christians today would go to in order to try to "validate" their use of miraculous signs.

The church at Corinth was in a bit of a mess! There were contentions and divisions among them (I Cor. 1:11-13), as well as sexual immorality of such a nature that was not even named among the Gentiles (5:1)! Paul warned those in the Church there to separate from the sexually immoral, and the covetous, the idolaters, the revilers, and the like (5:11). In all of this, Paul said that the ones who do these things will have no inheritance in the kingdom of God (6:9, 10). In chapter 10, Paul uses the first generation of Israel in the wilderness as an example to them, warning the Church there that in acting as they had acted, their outcome would be the same ó no inheritance in the kingdom. Throughout the *whole* of the letter he is exhorting, correcting, warning and instructing them: **I Corinthians 11:17 Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse. 18 For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it.** Paul is really telling them to straighten up. And it is here in chapters 12-14 that Paul deals with the *misuse* of the miraculous signs within the Church at Corinth. They were so divided and so self-focused in using these gifts that Paul spent three chapters correcting their perspective. **I Corinthians 12:1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant 4 There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: 8 for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, 10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills. 12 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.**

Continuing: **13:1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.** Here in the midst of Paul reprimanding the Corinthian Church concerning their misuse of the sign-gifts, we have that great dissertation on love ó the I Cor. 13 chapter.

And in the next chapter you have Paul specifically reprimanding them in their misuse of gift of tongues. And it is in this context that we can see the verse that we have already read that tongues is for the unbelievers (unbelieving Jews with respect to Christ and His kingdom) and not for believers (14:22).

With all the exhortations, corrections and admonishments that Paul gave the Church at Corinth in this letter, it certainly did have its effect on them! We can see this in the second letter Paul wrote: **II Corinthians 5:8 For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while. 9 Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. 10 For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. 11 For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.** And wouldn't this be the very reason for any godly exhortation and admonishment – even for us today? Hopefully, the outcome pictured here would also be the outcome for us whenever we are exhorted and admonished out of God's Word.

And so we see Paul allowing for the miraculous sign gifts at this time, but correcting the use of them. But then again, once the reoffer was completely withdrawn from Israel there was no more need for the miraculous signs (since it is the Jew that requires a sign), and so the performing of these things ceased. (These miraculous signs will come back into the picture during the Tribulation when Israel and the kingdom are back in view, as seen in the Book of the Revelation.) But for a Christian to claim the ability to perform these miraculous gifts now, well – they would be using these gifts quite literally in an *illegal* way, quite literally in the way of practicing lawlessness. And ignorance of this fact will not change the outcome of doing so. There will be great loss as a result. As we read Jesus saying to those practicing lawlessness in **Matthew 7: 23 “And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’**

And so we come to the end of Acts with Paul arriving in Rome as a prisoner. It was shortly thereafter (early in 62 AD), when he completely withdrew the re-offer of the Kingdom from the Jews due to their continual unwillingness to believe and repent (Acts 28:16-31). And with the end of Acts, we come to the

Epistles Written After the Close of the Reoffer

Here is a list of the epistles written *after* Acts 28:

Paul wrote:	Ephesians	62AD
	Philippians	62AD
	Colossians	62AD
	Philemon	62AD
Peter wrote:	I Peter	63 AD
Paul wrote:	I Timothy	63AD
	Titus	63AD

Peter wrote:	II Peter	65AD
Paul wrote:	II Timothy	66AD
Jude wrote:	Jude	75AD
John wrote:	I, II, III John	90AD
	Revelation	97AD

These epistles were written *without the reoffer* or *Israel* being in view. Additionally, the further one gets away from 62AD, the number of Jews being added to the Church decreased greatly. And with this being the case, there was no longer a need to deal with the Law or with the miraculous signs. Hence, *nothing* is said about signs, and *little* is mentioned about the Jews in these subsequent epistles. (Plus what needed to be explained to the Church-at-large about these things had already been taught in the epistles written during the period, so there was nothing else to be said.)

From this point onward, Paul's total focus is on the Church, and in that, he now deals quite a lot with Gentiles correctly understanding things concerning the kingdom and their potential participation therein. An example of his dealing with Gentiles in the Church can be seen in **Ephesians 2:11 Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh – who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands – 12 that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, 15 having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, 16 and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. 17 And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. 18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. 19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God...**

All in all the epistles would detail for us how we are to live in light of our potential participation in the Coming Kingdom. Herein contains what is necessary to gain the salvation of our souls in that Day, so as to experience life in the Coming Age. For as we have read: **II Timothy 3:16 All Scripture** [all Scripture, whether the OT, the gospels, the Book of Acts, the epistles written *before* the close of Acts, or the epistles written *after* the close of all Scripture] **is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.** May we each be the man of God found complete, having been thoroughly equipped for good works, works that will withstand the judgment fires.