



WHY THE CHURCH?

PART 3

PART 3 OF A 3 PART SERIES

WHY THE CROSS

WHY THE RESURRECTION

WHY THE CHURCH

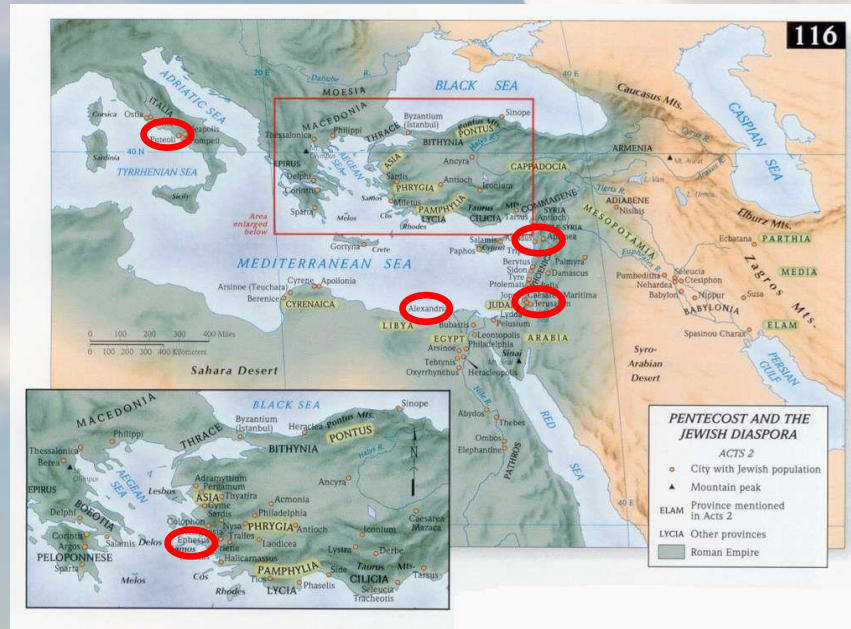
INTRODUCTION:

- In our previous lessons we tracked the activities of the twelve apostles who preached the Gospel in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth
- We also explored the immense efforts of the apostle Paul who diligently proclaimed the truth about Jesus Christ to his fellow Jews and he was also instrumental in one of the largest missionary endeavors to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles
- These missionary activities take place during the first century and are recorded in the book of Acts and the various letters written by the apostles and others

INTRODUCTION:

- The church (toward the end of the 1st century) expanded throughout the known world of that era and several key cities became central hubs of Christianity:

- Jerusalem
- Ephesus
- Antioch
- Rome
- Alexandria in Egypt



- In this lesson we will look at a number of other key leaders who work alongside the apostles as the church expanded in these cities during the 1st century

MARK (ALSO KNOWN AS JOHN MARK)

- Background information:

- He was a Jewish Christian

- He lived in Jerusalem with his mother Mary during the early days of the church

- ❖ Their home was used as a Christian meeting place (Acts 12:11-12). *Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were hoping would happen." When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying*

- ❖ There is no information about who his father was

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MARK (ALSO KNOWN AS JOHN MARK)

- Background information:

- He was a close friend of the apostle Peter (I Peter 5:13)

- ❖ In the early days of the church in Jerusalem (33-47 AD), it is believed that Mark became familiar with Peter and his preaching

- ❖ This close relationship with Peter is probably what led to the gospel account dictated by Peter to Mark which became our earliest record of the life of Jesus Christ - The Gospel according to Mark. The date the gospel was written is unknown, but it is believed to have been written prior to A.D. 70



MARK (ALSO KNOWN AS JOHN MARK)

- At a later point, Mark will travel to Antioch and accompany Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey. (Acts 12:25, Acts 13:5)
- For some unstated reason, Mark travels as far as Perga in Pamphylia (modern day southwestern coast of Turkey) and then leaves and returns to Jerusalem. This created some problems between Mark and Paul for a season of time
- Mark was not welcome to travel with Paul and Barnabas on their second missionary journey. (Acts 15:36-38)



MARK (ALSO KNOWN AS JOHN MARK)

- Mark, a cousin to Barnabas (Colossians 4:10) will minister alongside him at a later point on the Island of Cyprus (Acts 15:39). The date for this is approximately A.D. 51
- Luke makes no further mention of Mark, Barnabas or Peter in the book of Acts after the events recorded in Acts 15
- After ministering on the Island of Cyprus with Barnabas we lose track of Mark until he travels to Rome (approx. A.D. 57)



MARK (ALSO KNOWN AS JOHN MARK)

- Mark will minister while in Rome and eventually reconnect with the Apostle Paul during Paul's first imprisonment, somewhere between the years A.D. 60-62. (Colossians 4:10, Philemon 23-24)
- After Paul is release from his first imprisonment (house arrest), Mark will remain in Rome and connect with Peter and serve with him there for a season. (I Peter 5:13)
- It appears that Mark will leave Rome for a season, probably due to the martyrdom of Peter and the persecution that the Emperor Nero was inflicting on Christians



MARK (ALSO KNOWN AS JOHN MARK)

- It is presumed that Mark heads somewhere in Asia Minor and then He will return to Rome again at Paul's request to assist him during Paul's second and final imprisonment. Apparently Timothy was to pick him up on his way from Ephesus to Rome. (II Timothy 4:11)
- Paul is martyred by Emperor Nero not long after Peter was killed (A.D. 67)



MARK (ALSO KNOWN AS JOHN MARK)

- The Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria Egypt lays claim to Mark in his final years:
 - According to their traditions, Peter had appointed Mark as a bishop and sent him off to Egypt
 - ❖ Egypt was known for its pagan idolatry
 - ❖ The principal city of Egypt at the time of Mark was called Alexandria
 - ❖ There was a sizeable Jewish community there and it was in the city of Alexandria where the Hebrew Old Testament was translated into Greek

MARK (ALSO KNOWN AS JOHN MARK)

- There are several unique stories and traditions taught by the Coptic Church about Mark, but the best description about his contribution to Christianity was his apparent passion to evangelize or lead people to faith in Christ
 - The claims to him being an evangelist are consistent with all church traditions and historical writings from other early church leaders
 - There are also stories of him healing the sick and performing miracles, wonders and signs much like the other Apostles did



MARK (ALSO KNOWN AS JOHN MARK)

- There are several unique stories and traditions taught by the Coptic Church about Mark.....
 - The result of all of the evangelistic efforts by Mark was the establishment of churches throughout the region of Alexandria and even to the remote parts of Libya
 - In addition to the establishment of churches it is believed that he (Mark) established a catechetical school (religious training center) that produced several Christian apologists for the Faith; such as Clement of Alexandria, Dionysus of Alexandria, Gregory the Wonderworker etc.



MARK (ALSO KNOWN AS JOHN MARK)

All of this “preaching about Jesus” drew the attention of the other pagan leaders who resented all this pious teaching and they (according to tradition) seized Mark, bound him with a rope and dragged him through the streets of the city. He was thrown into prison, his body was lacerated from the sharp stones from the city streets, and he awaited trial. He was again dragged through the streets the next morning and eventually succumbed to death. As if that wasn’t enough it is believed that they attempted to burn him to ensure he was dead



MARK (ALSO KNOWN AS JOHN MARK)

Although there are several traditions and stories the one clear distinctive of Mark was his apparent passion for his personal faith and desire to pass on that faith to other.....thank the Lord for Mark



LUKE

- **Background information:**

- He was probably a **Gentile** as Paul seems to differentiate him from the other Jews mentioned in his letter to the Colossians. (Colossians 4:10-14)
- He was a **physician** (Colossians 4:14)
- He was a **historian** (Luke 1:1-4)



LUKE

- **He wrote two Books which comprise 28% of the New Testament**

- The Gospel according to Luke

- The book of Acts

- He first meets up with Paul while the group (Paul, Silas & Timothy) visited Troas

- Luke will then join them on their travels to Macedonia and he becomes a traveling companion of Paul's and perhaps even Paul's personal physician

- Luke will be with Paul at the end of Paul's life as well. (II Timothy 4:1-11)



LUKE

- Luke's greatest contributions are the two books that he wrote, although neither claims him to be the author
 - The authorship by Luke (though disputed by some) is derived by his use of the word "we" in his writings as well as historical and linguistic evidence
 - Both books are written to Luke's friend name Theophilus
- We have very little information about Luke's ministry outside of what transpired during Paul's journeys. There is also very little known about him from church tradition other than it was believed he was an evangelist prior to meeting Paul and continued using that gift throughout his life



TIMOTHY

- Timothy's family background:

- His father was Greek (Acts 16:1) and there is no mention of his father being a Christ follower
- His mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois are noted for their sincere **faith** (II Timothy 1:5). They are considered devoted followers of Christ and it is believed they had a godly influence on young Timothy. (II Timothy 3:15)



TIMOTHY

- He becomes one of Paul's traveling companions, **closest friend**, and labeled as "**Paul's son in the faith**" (Acts 16:2-3, I Timothy 1:18, 4:14, II Timothy 4:5, Romans 16:21, I Corinthians 16:10, Philippians 2:19-22, I Thessalonians 3:2).
- He became sort of a representative or messenger/emissary for Paul and eventually was recognized as an **authoritative spokesperson**. (Acts 19:22, I Corinthians 4:17, II Corinthians 1:19, Philippians 2:19, I Thessalonians 3:2-6)



TIMOTHY

- Sometime after Paul was released from his first Roman imprisonment, he took Timothy with him as he revisited some of the churches in Asia. On that journey they will visit **Ephesus** and Paul will leave Timothy behind to Pastor or Shepherd the people and help put things in order. (Approx. A.D. 65)
 - One of the issues in Ephesus was the influence of **heresy** (false teaching) and Timothy was given the challenge to address these matters and set things straight. (I Tim. 1:2-11, 18-20, 4:1-5)
 - Timothy used Paul's advice and counsel to lay a foundation for how people in the church were to **conduct themselves** toward one another
 - Timothy used the principles laid out by the apostle Paul to build sound **leadership** within the church. (I Timothy 3)
 - Paul's letters to Timothy served as both an encouragement to him to continue in the work of ministry but also provide **sound doctrine** for all Christians to follow even into our modern day



TIMOTHY

- Timothy may have spent some time with Paul as a prisoner himself, so he understood the life of suffering for the Lord. (Hebrews 13:23, Philemon 1:1)
- Sometime during Paul's second imprisonment he will write Timothy a second letter in which he will ask him to come and see him and bring some very important items. II Timothy 4:13)
 - Paul's cloak/coat
 - Paul's books (probably Old Testament Books)
 - Paul's parchments (his own personal writings/letters)



TIMOTHY

- After Timothy visited Paul in Rome and brought him these requested items, he **returns to Ephesus** to govern the church as their bishop/overseer
- Timothy's contribution to the church was his faithful **preaching** and **teaching** of the same truths that he learned from Paul – even in the midst of strong **persecution** and influence of serious **heresy**
- Tradition claims that Timothy died a martyr's death (Approx A.D. 80)
 - The most consistent stories state he attempted to stop a pagan procession of idols and ceremonies by openly preaching or declaring it to be wrong
 - This resulted in him being seized, then beaten, dragged through the streets and finally stoned to death

TITUS

- Background Information on Titus:

- He was Gentile (Galatians 2:3)

- He was probably one of Paul's converts (Titus 1:4)

- He became a co-laborer with Paul

- His first assignment was to aid in the collection of monies for the Jerusalem Church from the church at Corinth (II Corinthians 8:6, 12:18)

- He also had the distinct pleasure of representing Paul in the Church at Corinth and dealt with the continued issues of immorality there



TITUS

- His next assignment (in between Paul's two Roman imprisonments) was to help in the establishment of churches on the island of **Crete**. (Titus 1:5)
- In similar fashion Paul will write a letter to Titus that provides instruction on how **leadership** was to function within the church (Titus 1)
- Secondly Paul will write some basic instruction as to how Christians were to conduct themselves within the church - something they apparently needed due to their pagan background. (Titus 1:12, Titus 2-3)





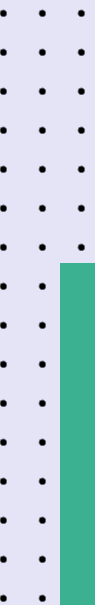
TITUS

- We know very little about the ministry of Titus beyond his involvement with the apostle Paul, but here are a few tidbits of info:
 - Our last mention of him in Scripture is during Paul's final imprisonment in Rome where he is sent on a missionary journey to Dalmatia (modern day Croatia)
 - We have no record of his death from any church tradition, but some conclude he died around 95 AD.



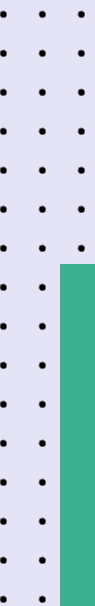
JAMES (AUTHOR OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES)

- The New Testament primarily records four men who are named James:
 - James the son of Zebedee and one of the original 12 Apostles.
(Mark 1:19)
 - James the son of Alphaeus also one of the original 12 Apostles
(Mark 3:18)
 - James the father of Judas not Iscariot (Luke 6:16)
 - James the half-brother of Jesus or sometimes called James the Just
(Gal. 1:19)



JAMES (AUTHOR OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES)

- Assuming the author of James was one of these four; then most probable author of the Epistle would be James the Just (the half-brother of Jesus):
 - It is unlikely that the author is James the son of Zebedee for he was martyred by King Agrippa I (Acts 12:2) which would have preceded the writing of the Epistle
 - It is doubtful that it is James the son of Alphaeus (even though the Roman Catholic Church advocates for his authorship), for his location of ministry, dates and actual ministry service just doesn't fit this Epistle
 - James the father of Judas (not Iscariot) just doesn't fit the position of the person described in this Epistle



JAMES (AUTHOR OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES)

- This would leave James (the half-brother of Jesus) as the most probable author. If you recall – Mary and Joseph had children after Jesus was born. (Matthew 13:55)
 - There is much similarity to the speech recorded by James in Acts 15 to that of the Epistle of James
 - The James of Acts 15 became the recognized leader of the Jerusalem church
 - This James became a believer after Jesus' resurrection. (Jn. 7:5, I Cor. 15:7)
 - The early church leaders (Origen, Eusebius, Athanasius, and Augustine) support the view that James the brother of Jesus is the author of the Epistle

JAMES (AUTHOR OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES)

- James' contribution to the church:
 - The Epistle itself which contains many of our foundational doctrines and practices, as well instructions on persevering in the midst of trials. Where would we be without James words of; "count it all joy...."
 - His wise discernment and instruction at the Jerusalem Council in dealing with the issues surrounding the Gentiles coming to faith in Christ
- It is believed he died a martyr's death by being thrown from the summit of the Temple, then stoned, and finally his skull crushed with a club until dead



JUDE (AUTHOR OF THE EPISTLE OF JUDE)

- In the same manner that we had four possible conclusions for the author of the Epistle of James; we have 3 possibilities for the author of Jude:
 - Judas the half-brother of Jesus
 - Judas the Apostle
 - Judas a leader in the church of Jerusalem
- Anyone of these people are viable candidates but for me the reference to being the brother of James (Vs. 1), the style of writing and more importantly the content of the Epistle itself - points to Judas the half-brother of Jesus



JUDE (AUTHOR OF THE EPISTLE OF JUDE)

- Whatever the case this Jude writes with a heart of love and understanding while at the same time expressing concern for the impending heresy and error that was encroaching on the church. His letter prepared the believers of his day to be strong and remain faithful even in the midst of persecution, turmoil and uncertainty
- Our best records show this Jude to be a missionary in his early life and an apologist (defender of the faith) in his later years
- The actual location of his ministry and date of his death is unknown



HONORABLE MENTIONS

- Apollos:

- He was a highly educated Alexandrian Jew who assisted Paul with the church at Corinth and eventually served as their bishop
- Some traditions claim he also served the churches on the Island of Crete
- Martin Luther and other modern scholars hold that he wrote Hebrews



HONORABLE MENTIONS

- Barnabas:

- His birth name was Joseph
- He was one of the earliest Christian disciples in Jerusalem
- He primarily served the churches in Syria and on the Island of Cyprus. He is considered the founder of the Cypriot Orthodox Church. He was martyred by being stoned to death



HONORABLE MENTIONS

- **Acquila** and **Priscilla** – A Christian missionary couple who travelled with Paul and served in **Corinth** and **Ephesus**
- **Onesiphorus** – a close **friend** of Paul's
- **Epaphroditus** – a missionary companion of Paul's and most traditions claim he was the first bishop of **Philippi**
- **Lydia of Thyatira** – considered as the first European Christian convert and probably instrumental in the establishment of the house Church at Philippi



HONORABLE MENTIONS

- **Phoebe** – (Romans 16:1) might have hosted the house church in **Cenchreae**, and provided shelter and hospitality to Paul when he was in need. She is referred to as a servant or deacon/deaconess and might have been entrusted by Paul to deliver his letter to the church at Rome
- **Epenetus** – (Romans 16:5) named as the first convert in Asia (probably Ephesus)
- **Gaius** – (Romans 16:23) a travelling companion of Paul's (Acts 19:29) and served in some type of host or at least recognized for his hospitality – probably in Corinth.
- **Rufus** – (Romans 16:13) a believer and a son of the man named Simon (Mark 15:21) who was forced to carry the cross for Jesus. It would appear, based on what Mark and Paul write, that Rufus and his family became Christians after Jesus' death and resurrection

CLOSING REMARKS

One thing that stands out among all the servants within the New Testament is they loved the Lord Jesus, followed Him, and in most cases if not all they gave their lives for Him. For this we should be eternally grateful for they provided us with the Truth which we must continue to follow and guard until Jesus returns!



CLOSING REMARKS

- As the 1st Century ended and many of the Apostles and early church leaders had either passed away by natural causes or were martyred - one thing that did not end was the Church.
 - The church was vibrant, strong and on the move because where two or more were gathered together in the Name of Jesus – God was there with them through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
 - Beyond the 1st Century, the church was expanding to what was then the “known world” and thanks to the Roman Empire’s expansion – those who continued to proclaim the Gospel used the benefits of that expansion (roads and other means) to continue in spreading the Good News!



CLOSING REMARKS

- There were risks and challenges that the church faced and as a result new leaders stepped up to face those challenges. Many of those new leaders of the 2nd Century and beyond were personally mentored by those church leaders of the 1st Century. Here are just a few:

- Ignatius of Antioch – a disciple of Peter and John

- Justin Martyr

- Polycarp – probably a disciple of John and an eventual elder/overseer of the church at Smyrna (one of the seven churches of Asia)



CLOSING REMARKS

- In addition to preaching and teaching the Gospel these leaders of the church battled heresy and false teach far into the 3rd century and beyond
- This required a steadfast spirit and unwavering commitment to the truths of the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles
- It wasn't an easy road and standing up for the truth brought persecution and attempts to water down that truth through false teaching
- Eventually the church "at large" gathered themselves together through various councils and creeds which ultimately produced the Scriptures that we have today – but that is a lesson for another day!

