



July Bible Tidbits— The Books of The Bible

A selection of facts and information to help you discover more of the riches about Sacred Scripture. We continue our journey through the books of the Bible, continuing now into the Epistles of Paul.

Each month we'll offer you several new tidbits in print and on-line: In print on the reverse side of the OLV Activities Calendar; On-line on OLV's Home Page (ourladyofvictorytallmadge.parishesonline.com),—below the Question of the Week!

The Letters of the Apostle Paul continue with Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and the First Letter to the Thessalonians. For some of these letters, Paul writes from prison.

Galatians: This letter was written around 54-55 AD, most likely from Ephesus. The Galatians were new Christians, converts from paganism, who were now being enticed by other missionaries to add the observance of the Jewish law, including circumcision. These missionaries were undermining Paul's authority, saying that the gospel Paul preached was not the gospel of the true apostles in Jerusalem. Paul wrote this letter in defense of his apostolic authority and his correct understanding of the faith.

Ephesians: Ephesians is the great Pauline letter about the Church. It speaks not so much of a congregation in Ephesus but of a world wide church, whose head is Jesus Christ and whose purpose is to be the instrument for making God's plan of salvation known throughout the universe.

Philippians: The first Christian community in Europe was established by Paul in Philippi, a city of some importance in the Roman province of Macedonia. Paul's letter to the Philippians was written while he was in prison somewhere, in danger of death. Much of the letter is devoted to instruction about unity and humility within the Christian community at Philippi. He also warns them against false teachers who threaten to force on the Philippians the burdens of the Jewish law, including circumcision. This beautiful letter is rich in insights into Paul's theology and his apostolic love and concern for the gospel and his converts.

Colossians: This letter is addressed to a congregation at Colossae, a city east of Ephesus. At the time of writing, Paul had not visited here. The community had been established by a disciple called Epaphras, who lived in Colossae. Paul writes against false teachers, stating simply that it is Christ who possesses the sum total of redemptive power. He states that it is only baptism into Christ that spiritually renews the human person. The community is commended by Paul for their faith because they have not yet succumbed to these false doctrines.

1 Thessalonians: This letter begins with a brief address and greeting, and then consists of two major parts. The first part is thankful optimism regarding the spiritual welfare of the Thessalonians, which is then tempered with a warning to be aware of itinerant peddlers of new religions. The second part of the letter is a call to the Thessalonians to live out the Christ life in the Spirit sent by Christ. Paul insists that moral conduct is the practical, personal expression of one Christian faith, love and hope.