



August 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 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus. and Philemon.

2 Thessalonians: This second letter to the community at Thessalonica is much like the first, except in Chapter 2, which is the heart of the letter. This section deals with a problem threatening the faith of the community. A message involving a prophetic oracle and apparently a forged letter was presented to the community regarding the parousia. Paul warns against this false teaching exhorting the community to remember his teaching to pray for divine strength.

1 and 2 Timothy and Titus: These three letters form a distinct group within the letters of Paul. All three suggest they were written late in Paul's career. These three letters are addressed not to congregations but to those who shepherd congregations.

1 Timothy: This letter was written to Timothy, whom Paul had converted, who is described as the administrator of the entire Ephesian community. The letter instructs Timothy to restrain false teaching and proposes principles pertaining to his relationship with older members of the community. He gives rules for aid to widows and selection for the office of bishop and deacon as well as other important elements of Timothy's role within the community.

2 Timothy: This letter takes on a more personal tone as Paul writes again to Timothy. Paul is portrayed as a prisoner in Rome who feels that Christians have not rallied to his support. Thus, he now looks to God. The letter also recalls his mission days with Timothy. Paul points to his preaching of the gospel as the reason for his imprisonment and urges Timothy to prepare others to replace him just as he prepared Timothy. Paul urges Timothy not to stop preaching out of fear, for the Christian message must be proclaimed.

Titus: Titus is addressed as the person in charge of developing the church on the large Mediterranean island of Crete. The topics of church life and structure are discussed, especially the character of the assistants Titus is to choose. Paul, who has never visited this community, tells Titus that his community is to serve as a leaven for Christianizing the social world about it. Good works are to be the evidence of their faith in God.

Philemon: This short letter addressed to Philemon, Apphia and Archippus, was written by Paul while he was imprisoned perhaps in Rome. The letter concerns a slave from Colossae who had run away from his master. The slave was converted to Christ by Paul and then sent back to his master with this letter asking that he be welcomed by his master, not just as a slave but as a brother in Christ. Paul breathes into this letter the spirit of Christ and of equality within the Christian community.