



Paul and Letter Writing

## Structure of Paul's Letters

### 1. Opening

- the sender of the letter is named
- Paul identifies himself; sometimes includes co-senders
- also interesting to see how Paul addresses himself in the epistles and the occasion that prompted the composition of the epistles
- the addressees of the letter are specified

## Structure of Paul's Letters

### 1. Opening

- the salutation – greetings/grace/peace
- the prayer which was usually a thanksgiving
- The function of thanksgiving period
  - Paul Schubert, *Form and Function of the Pauline Thanksgiving*
  - Gordon Wiles, *Paul's Intercessory Prayers*
  - Peter O'Brien, *Introductory Thanksgiving in the Letters of Paul*
  - David Pao, *Thanksgiving: An Investigation of A Pauline Theme.*

## Structure of Paul's Letters

### 2. The Body

- The Diatribe – debate, originally classroom instruction in philosophical circles where teacher poses a question/statement in anticipation of objection
  - Rom 2:25-29
  - Rom 3:1
  - Rom 5:20 and 6:1

## Structure of Paul's Letters

### 2. The Body

- Parenthesis – exhortation
  - 1 Thess is good example
  - Rom 12:1-15:13
  - Eph 4-6
  - Gal 5:13-6:10

## Structure of Paul's Letters

### 2. The Body

- Hymns and confessional statement
  - Eph 5:14; Phil 2:6-11; Col 1:15-20; 1 Tim 3:16
  - Use of traditional materials, possibly with adaptation

## Structure of Paul's Letters

### 3. The Closing

- No specific pattern
  - Travel plans or personal situation (Rom 15:22-29; 1 Cor 16:5-9; Eph 6:21-22)
  - Prayer (Rom 15:33; 1 Thes 5:23)
  - Commendation of fellow workers (Rom 16:1-2; 1 Cor 16:10-12)
  - Prayer requests (Rom 15:30-32; Col 4:2-4; Eph 6:18-20)
  - Greetings (Phil 4:21-22; 2 Tim 4:19-21; Philemon 23-24)

## Structure of Paul's Letters

### 3. The Closing

- No specific pattern
  - Final instructions and exhortations (1 Cor 16:13-18; 2 Cor 13:11; Gal 6:11-17; 1 Tim 6:20-22)
  - Autographed greeting (1 Cor 16:21; Gal 6:11; Col 4:18; 2 Thess 3:17)
  - Benediction (Rom 16:20; 1 Cor 16:23-24; Gal 6:18; Eph 6:24; Phil 4:23 Titus 1:15)
- Paul exercises great freedom in the closing, depending on the letter he is writing

Date	Letters	Provenance
48-49	Galatians	Jerusalem? Antioch?
Early 50s	1 Thessalonians	Corinth
Early 50s	2 Thessalonians	Corinth
Mid 50s	1 Corinthians	Ephesus
Mid 50s	2 Corinthians	Macedonia, most likely Philippi
Mid to late 50s	Romans	Corinth
Early 60s	Philippians	Roman Imprisonment
Early 60s	Ephesians	Roman Imprisonment
Early 60s	Colossians	Roman Imprisonment
Early 60s	Philemon (same time with Colossians)	Roman Imprisonment
mid 60s	1 Timothy	Macedonia
mid 60s	Titus	? unknown
mid to late 60s (before 68)	2 Timothy	Roman Imprisonment

The dating of Paul's letters is notoriously difficult especially for Galatians and the Pastoral Epistles (1 & 2 Timothy, Titus).