



The Story of the Bible

Bible 101
New Life U
Pastor Tim LeCroy

Review: The Life of Jesus, The Messiah

- OT prophecies of Messiah
- The Birth of Yeshua ben Yosef
- Early childhood
- Teenage years and early adulthood
- Baptism by John
- Temptation in the wilderness
- First miracle at Cana; First sermon in Nazareth
- Three year itinerate ministry
- Holy Week
- Resurrection
- Ascension
- Later appearances
- Return



Lesson 5: The Apostolic Era

- The Ascension and The Great Commission
- Pre-Pentecost
- Pentecost
- Peter, James, and John
- Paul
- John again



The Ascension and The Great Commission

- Matthew 28:16-20, Luke 24:36-53, Acts 1:1-11
- Key aspects of the story
 - Jesus opened their minds to understand the scriptures (with John 20:22-23)
 - Jesus gave them a commission
 - Authority given to Jesus
 - Command to go
 - Geographical extent: All nations beginning with Jerusalem
 - Content of proclamation
 - Be witnesses of Jesus's death and resurrection
 - Proclaim repentance and forgiveness of sins
 - Teach everything he has commanded them
 - Command to baptize
 - Promise of his presence
 - Promise of the coming Holy Spirit
 - Promise of the return of Christ



Pre-Pentecost

- The disciples returned to Jerusalem with great joy to await the coming of the Holy Spirit.
- About 120 people gathered in the Upper Room (including Mary the mother of Jesus and his brothers).
- They appointed Mathias to replace Judas as the 12th Apostle.
- This lasted about 10 days.



Pentecost

- Acts 2
- 10 days after the Ascension, 50 days after the resurrection, on the 7th Sunday after Easter, the 120 were worshiping God in the Upper Room.
- As they were praying, they heard a great whooshing sound like wind blowing and cloven tongues appeared above every person.
 - These tongues symbolized the glory cloud presence of the Old Temple
- Everyone started speaking in other languages that they didn't otherwise know
 - These were known languages



Pentecost

- There were many adherents of Judaism gathered in the city for the feast. Luke records that every nation under heaven was present.
- The crowds heard the noise from the Upper Room and gathered to see what it was
- The disciples spilled out of the room speaking other languages and acting strangely (overwhelmed with God's presence).
- The crowds thought they were drunk
- Peter stood up and delivered a sermon to the crowds.
- 3,000 people believed in Jesus and were baptized





Peter, James, and John

- The Post-Pentecost Era is broken in to three phases based on the prominence of certain Apostles.
- The first era is of Peter, James, and John (Acts 3-12).
- The Jerusalem church grows rapidly after Pentecost led by Peter.
- Peter and John perform miracles in Jesus' name and engage in public preaching.
- The Judean leaders opposed them, but God's favor is with them.
- They are arrested several times, being miraculously freed.
- Persecution of the church ramps up, leading to the stoning of Stephen.



Peter, James, and John

- After the stoning of Stephen the church spreads out from Jerusalem.
- One major area of Christian believers was Antioch in Syria.
 - This is where believers were first called “Christians”
- As the church spread to Syria, so did the persecutions by the Judeans
- The Chief Inquisitor, a young Rabbi named Saul from Tarsus, was struck blind on the way to Damascus and shown a vision of the risen Christ.
 - Paul converted to Christianity after this encounter



Peter, James, and John

- Peter receives a vision that tells him to go to the Roman Centurion named Cornelius to preach the gospel.
- Peter obeys the vision and Cornelius and many gentiles are converted to faith in Christ and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- Peter gives a report to the Jerusalem Church of the salvation of the gentile believers.
- At the end of this phase, Peter is again arrested and James is executed.
- Peter is again miraculously freed from prison by an angel, but is the end of this early era of the Church's growth.

Paul

- Acts 13-28 and his 14 Epistles
- Saul was born in Tarsus in the Roman Empire (modern day Turkey)
- He was educated at the school of Rabbi Gamaleil, the best school of Judaism at the time.
- He was a fast rising star, joining the party of the Pharisees.
- As Christianity exploded after Pentecost, Paul was zealous to persecute those he considered to be dangerous heretics within Judaism.
- He was present at the stoning of Stephen, with official sanction from the high priest to persecute Christians.
- After Stephen's death, Saul "ravaged the church" causing many people to flee Jerusalem.



Paul

- As Christians fled, Saul received sanction from the High Priest to pursue them in Damascus and bring them back to Jerusalem for judgment.
- On the road to Damascus, Saul was blinded by a dazzling light and heard a loud voice saying, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?”
- Saul replied, “Who are you, Lord?”
- The voice answered, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.”
- Jesus instructed Saul to go ahead to Damascus.
- At the same time, the Lord appeared in a vision to Ananias, a Christian disciple. He told him to go find Saul and pray for him.
- Ananias prayed for Saul and he was cured of his blindness.
- Saul believed in Jesus and was baptized.



Paul

- Saul immediately begin proclaiming that Jesus is the Messiah in the synagogues of Damascus.
- The leaders then began to make plans to arrest Saul, but the disciples lowered him from the city walls in a basket.
- Saul then went to Jerusalem and was introduced to the Apostles, who were very skeptical at first. But Barnabas vouched for him.
- Saul then began preaching and disputing with the Hellenists (because he spoke fluent Greek).
- The leaders of the Hellenists then made plans to arrest him, but Saul again escaped and went back home to Tarsus.
- Saul then spent three years praying and training for his future ministry.



Paul

- At the end of the three years, Saul, now called Paul, was sent out from Antioch on a mission with a fellow leader named Barnabas.
- They went from town to town in Asia Minor (Turkey) speaking in the synagogues, and after they were ejected, openly about Jesus.
- Paul returned to Antioch and wrote several of his letters to the churches (1 Corinthians and Galatians among them).
- Paul would go on two more missionary Journeys recorded in Acts, and possibly a fourth alluded to in his letter to the Romans.



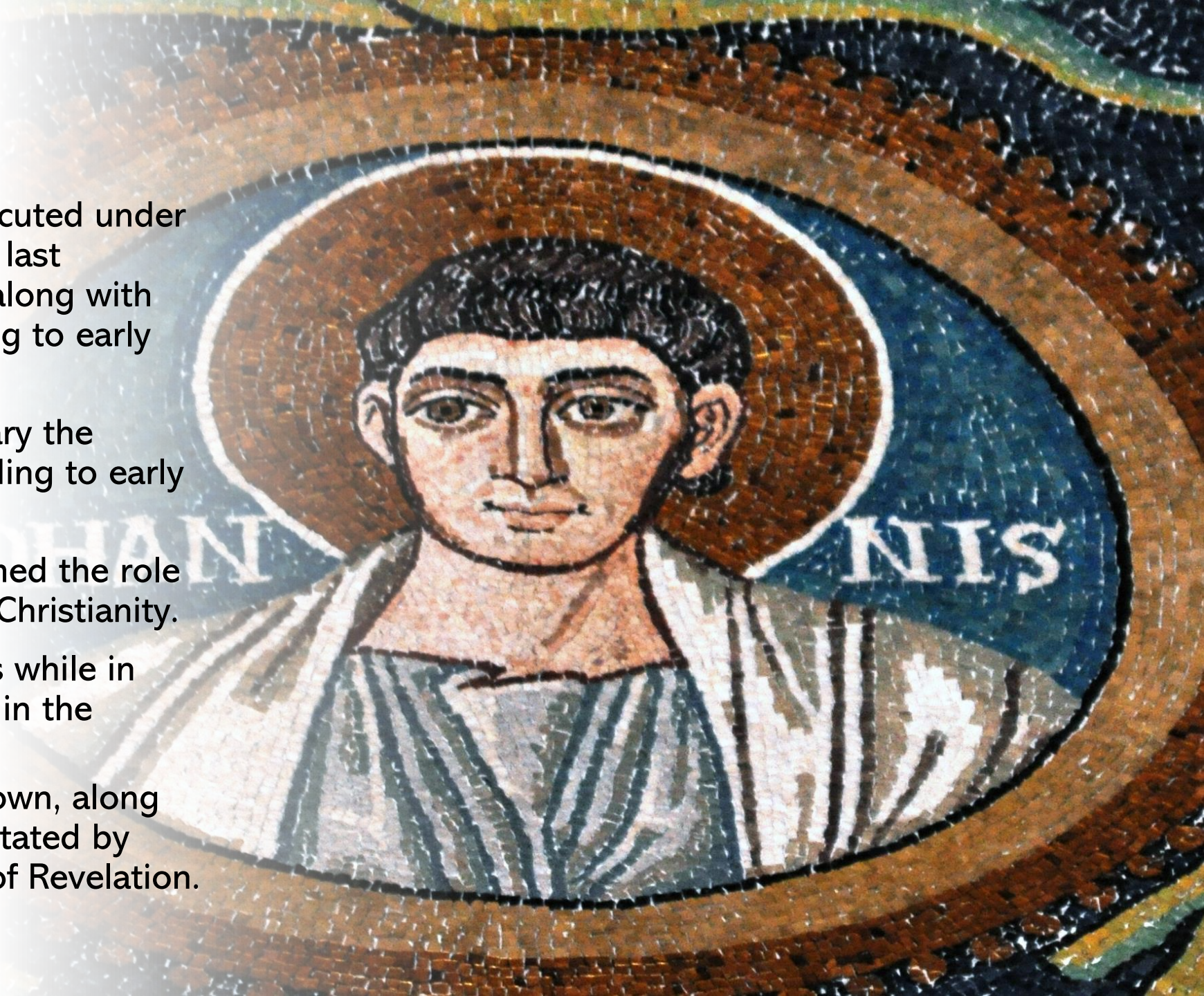
Paul

- After his third journey he traveled to Jerusalem and was arrested. He appealed to Caesar as a Roman citizen.
- Paul, under arrest, made his way to Rome where he preached in the church under house arrest.
- While in Rome he wrote several more letters (Ephesians, Colossians, and 2 Corinthians among them)
- This is where Acts ends.
- Paul was released from prison and went back to Asia Minor (likely Ephesus, but possibly Corinth) and wrote Romans and perhaps Hebrews.
- After a fourth missionary journey that went as far as Spain, Paul was again arrested under Nero.
- While in prison he wrote Philippians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, and perhaps Hebrews.
- He was executed under Nero after the great fire. Christian tradition says he was beheaded.



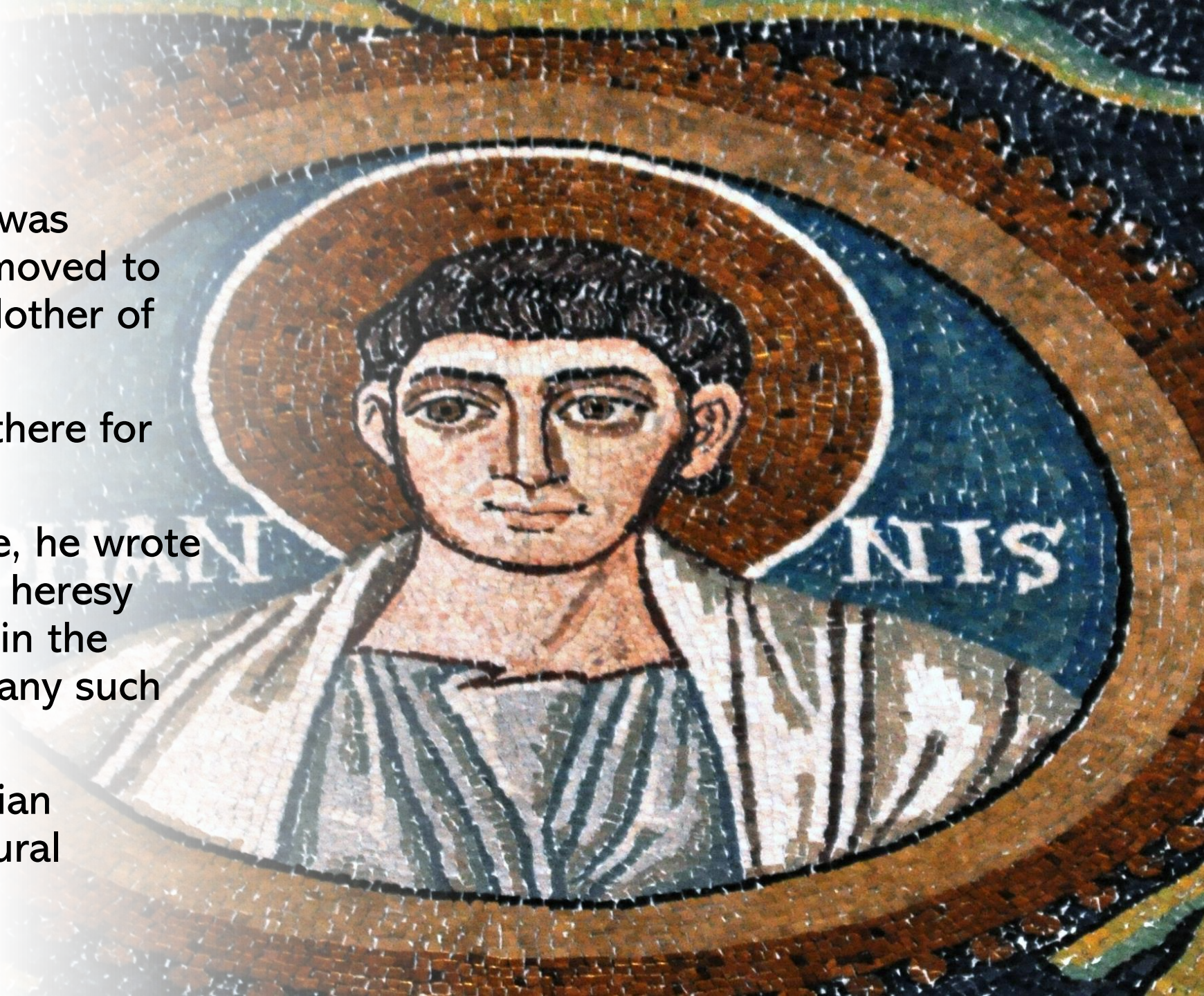
John

- After Peter and Paul were executed under the Neronian persecution, the last remaining Apostle was John, along with Philip the Evangelist (according to early church historians).
- They lived in Ephesus with Mary the Mother of Jesus (again, according to early church history).
- After Paul's death, John assumed the role as the chief representative of Christianity.
- He received a series of visions while in exile on the island of Patmos, in the Aegean Sea.
 - Those visions he wrote down, along with a series of letters dictated by Jesus Christ as the book of Revelation.



John

- After Nero's death, John was released from exile and moved to Ephesus with Mary the Mother of Jesus.
- He lived and ministered there for the rest of his days.
- Toward the end of his life, he wrote three letters to combat a heresy that denied Jesus came in the flesh and that there was any such thing as sin.
- According to early Christian History, John died of natural causes.



The End, But Also, the Beginning

- With the death of all the Apostles, the church moves into a new era of uncertainty.
- The Biblical Canon is closed with John's death.
- This begins the Sub-Apostolic Era of the church.
- We'll begin this Fall with the history of the Church's first 300 years.





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