

New Testament Letters: Historical Context

Last week we learned how to apply the Old Testament laws to New Testament life
This week we will discuss some of the context for reading the letters in the New Testament

Video/Lecture Notes

- The first context in which we find the letters is the larger storyline of Scripture. The letters are written at the end of the story and are looking back on the whole.
- The letters are written during the height of the Roman empire, with its hierarchical society and domineering rulers which were not well disposed towards Christianity
- Each letter also was written to address a particular people at a particular time, facing particular issues. Understanding the “why” of a letter can help us understand its contents.
- When we understand how the good news of Jesus was applied to specific context, we can take the principles and re-apply the good news in our own context today.

Discussion

Read **Colossians 1:15-23**. How does an understanding of the larger story of scripture help us when we read this passage?

Read **Romans 1:1-7**. How does this passage fit in the context of the Roman empire with Caesar ruling over the nations? Use a Bible dictionary to look up some of the terms in the passage (e.g. Son of God, gospel, lord).

Read **I Corinthians 1:10-12; 5:1-2**. What insights do these descriptions of the situation at Corinth give us as we read through the book? What other information about Corinth might be helpful to know?