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The Man Who Turned The World Upside Down

A Study Of The Life Of The Apostle Paul

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The Man Who Turned The World Upside Down

Course Objectives

The purpose of this course is to provide an in-depth look at the life of the Apostle Paul so that the student will be able to approach his writings and teachings in the proper context. Understanding Paul's background, outlook, and the circumstances from which he penned the New Testament letters, will greatly enhance the student's ability to interpret those letters. Upon completion of this study the student should be familiar with, and able to articulate and understanding of:

- Paul's upbringing and training, both in Tarsus and Jerusalem, and the ways in which each prepared him for his life mission.
- The significance and objective nature of Paul's conversion experience on the road to Damascus.
- The specific apologetic tactics Paul used on his evangelical missions when entering a new city and encountering the Judaizing and/or Gentile elements of that region.
- The importance of Paul's disagreement with Peter and the significance of the Jerusalem Council.
- The important issues that were addressed on each of his missionary journeys, with special emphasis on Corinth and Ephesus.
- The powerful and effective apologetic outline demonstrated by Paul in Athens on Mars Hill.
- Paul's trials in Jerusalem and ultimate journey to Rome.
- The major themes of Paul's writings.
- A major "Takeaway Point" for each lesson and how it applies to the contemporary church.

Sources

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The Story of Paul the Apostle

DVD link: http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0000DHFZT/ref=olp_product_details?ie=UTF8&me=

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The Man Who Turned The World Upside Down

Course Outline

1. Early life
 - a. Family and upbringing
 - b. Education in Tarsus and under Gamaliel in Jerusalem
 - c. As rabbi and counselor to the Sanhedrin
2. The stoning of Stephen
 - a. The apparent impact of this event on Saul
 - b. Saul's mission to eradicate the heresy of "The Way."
3. Saul's conversion
 - a. It's objective nature
 - b. Interpreting differing accounts
4. Damascus and after
 - a. Saul's time of silence and solitude in Arabia
 - b. The return to Tarsus and the "lost" years
5. The First Missionary Journey
 - a. Issues with Barnabas and John Mark
 - b. Tactics in encountering the culture
6. Confrontation in Jerusalem
 - a. Issues with Peter
 - b. The letter to Gentile believers
 - c. Paul's understanding of Mosaic Law
7. The Second Missionary Journey
 - a. The Philippian Church
 - b. The Thessalonican Church
8. Paul in Athens
 - a. The setting and audience for his speech on Mars Hill
 - b. His apologetic tactics
 - i. Encounter the culture
 - ii. Expose the culture
 - iii. Evangelize the culture
 - c. On to Corinth
9. The Third Missionary Journey
 - a. Emphasis on Ephesus
 - b. Political issues surrounding his departure from Ephesus
10. Return to Jerusalem
 - a. Before the Sanhedrin
 - b. Trial before Felix
 - c. Trial before Festus
 - d. Imprisonment in Caesarea
11. Paul's final Journey
 - a. Shipwreck and the voyage to Rome
 - b. Letters from Rome
 - c. Educated assessment of Paul's final days
12. Lessons from Paul
 - a. Legalism
 - b. Libertinism
 - c. Christology
 - d. Perseverance
 - e. Vocation –vs- Avocation



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Lesson 1: Saul's Early Life

<Show Video: Intro and 6:20 – 8:20>

Born: (somewhere between 1 BC and 1 AD) in *Tarsus, Cilicia*

- 12 miles from the Mediterranean Sea :: 25 miles south of the Taurus Mountains
- *Cilician Gate* – chiseled (wide enough for a wagon) by Tarsian engineers to allow access to Roman road system to the north toward Greece and Rome
- Pompey made Cilicia a separate Roman province, but in 25 BC, the Imperial government joined it with Syria

Parents (Acts 23:6, Romans 4:1, 9:3, 11:1, 2 Corinthians 11:22, Philippians 3:5-6, 2 Timothy 1:3)

- **Father:** Most likely a master tentmaker
 - Must have been wealthy citizen (or burgess) of Tarsus
 - Reform had removed rank of citizen from all households
 - Worked in leather and *cilicium*
 - Cloth woven from the hair of large, long-haired black goats
 - To this day they graze on the slopes of the Taurus Mountains
 - Black tents of Tarsus were used by caravans, nomads and armies all over Asia Minor and Syria
- **Mother** is never mentioned
 - Died in infancy? Alienated? Simply no reason to mention her (culturally unimportant)?
- At least one **sister** (see: Acts 23:16)
- Would have referred to those outside their faith and blood as “Gentiles” (‘Nations,’ ‘Greeks’) (Pollock, 15)

“Citizen of Rome”

- *Civis Romanus*: This title was an important one – became very important later in his life
 - Seldom granted to anyone except for services rendered to Rome or for offering big bucks
 - Perhaps his grandfather had aided Pompey or Cicero when Rome first governed Cilicia
 - Father paid money?
 - Gave local distinction and *hereditary privileges that could be claimed anywhere in the Roman empire*

Name

- As a citizen, would have had a full Latin name (threefold, as in: Gaius Julius Caesar)
- First two names conferred family heritage
 - These were lost because his story was first written by a Greek colleague (Luke) who would not have understood Latin names!
- Third name (personal *cognomen*) was *Paullus*



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- Also given a Jewish name at circumcision when he was 8 days old – **Saul**
 - Romans 11:1 *“I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin.”*
 - Meaning – either “asked for” ... or ... in honor of the most famous Benjamite in history – King Saul (King David’s predecessor)

Tarsus (Pollock, 14-15)

- Columns of pagan temples dominated the marketplace
- Considered one of the most important seats of learning in Near East
 - Athenian, Roman, Babylonian, and Ninevite influences there that he had to have been familiar with
 - Would have exposed to and become familiar with Hellenic/Oriental world, but not too familiar...
- His parents were fervent Jewish nationalists and strict obeyers of the Torah: **Pharisees**
 - Would have fought to guard their son against contamination
- **Tarsus had its own University** (Pollock, 17)
 - Athenodorus – the tutor and confidant of Emperor Augustus – and Nestor
 - Both were the most distinguished pagan citizens
 - Strabo (historian writing in 19 AD) says it was, in his day, “the chief seat of learning in the world.” (Wood, 3)
 - But a strict Pharisee would not allow his son to get into pagan moral philosophy

Education (Pollock, ch. 1)

- Friendship with Gentile children was discouraged. Greek ideas were despised, but not unknown
- Could speak Greek from infancy and was familiar with Greek literature (see: Acts 17)
 - Acts 17:28 and Titus 1:12 – both quotes of Greek philosopher Epimenides
 - 1 Corinthians 15:33 – a line of iambic poetry from Greek comedian, Menander
- Working knowledge of Latin
- At home his family would have spoken Aramaic (the language of Judea, and a form of Hebrew)
 - His speech to the mob in Jerusalem in Acts 22:2 is in Aramaic
- Looked to Jerusalem like Islam looks to Mecca
 - They were the people of the promise to whom God had revealed His glory and Plan.
- School in the Tarsus synagogue taught nothing but Hebrew texts and sacred law
 - Each boy repeated phrases in chorus after the synagogue keeper (*hazzan*) until every vowel, accent, and rhythm were precisely correct.
 - Learned to write Hebrew characters on papyrus, rolled them into scrolls
 - Later would have received a roll on *vellum* (fine lamb, kid, or calf skin used for writing): The Greek translation of the OT – **The Septuagint**
- **By age 13** he would have mastered Jewish history, the poetry of the psalms and the majestic literature of the prophets. He knew every pitch change and knew it all accurately. Now he was ready for higher education.



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- **Age 14** sent by sea to Palestine to climb the walls of Jerusalem
- **Tutored under Gamaliel in Jerusalem**
 - Two schools in Jerusalem, both Pharisaic (Wood, 6-7)
 - *School of Shammai* – rested all on Scripture
 - Talmud states that the “irritability of Shammai sought to drive us from the world.”
 - *School of Hillel* – upheld tradition as more binding than the law and was more influential
 - Gamaliel was Hillel’s grandson
 - More tolerant version of Judaism
 - Where more strict Palestinian Jews would not even use the Greek language to recite their prayers etc, Gamaliel “taught a thousand boys, of whom half studied the Law, and half the ‘wisdom of the Greeks.’” (Wood, 5)
 - Remained under Gamaliel for 5-6 years
 - Taught to argue his case in a question and answer style debate known as the *diatribe*
- As a ***rabbi*** he would be part preacher, part lawyer, who learned to prosecute and defend those who broke the sacred law – *tôrâ*.
 - Ultimately, Saul would have aspired to a seat as a “ruler of the Jews” on the ***Sanhedrin***
 - The Jewish nation was a theocracy, led by the *Sanhedrin* – supreme in all religious decisions
 - This is the most the Roman government would allow
 - Religious and national leaders were identical
 - 71 members – some drawn from hereditary priesthood, others lawyers and rabbis
 - Each member served equally as judge, senator and spiritual master
- **Return to Tarsus**
 - Jew bred to a trade
 - No rabbi took fees but rather supported himself
 - Saul must have left Jerusalem in his early 20s
 - Seems logical that if he had remained in Jerusalem during the time of Jesus ministry, he would have mentioned that fact and arguing against him
 - Never mentions being an eyewitness
- **Back to Jerusalem**
 - Probably returned in his early 30s
 - Don’t know exactly why he was there but most likely because he was serving as a local *rabbi* or member of the *Sanhedrin*
- **Married with children?** (Wood, 11)
 - Parenthood was a *later* qualification required of candidates for the *Sanhedrin*, yet he never mentions a wife



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- No proof that this regulation was in force this early
- o Also true that most Jews regarded marriage by age 18 as duty
 - Some have suggested this was his reference in **1 Corinthians 9:5**
- o Maimonides did write that celibacy after age 20 was acceptable for those who wished to devote himself to study of the Law
 - This would match his comments in **1 Corinthians 7** (especially vs.8)
- **Physical Characteristics**
 - o Short
 - o Bald(ing)
 - o Black beard – Jews despised the Roman habit of shaving
 - o Exuded an aura of confidence (arrogance?)
 - o Bow-legged
 - o Some kind of physical ailment – “Thorn in the flesh” (**2 Corinthians 12:7**)
 - Both painful and humiliating (**Galatians 4:13-15**)
 - Malaria
 - Back problems
 - Epilepsy (see: **Galatians 4:14**, scorn = “spit out”)
 - o Men would spit in the presence of an epileptic in a fit to keep themselves from taking on the evil

Discussion Questions

- How did Saul’s childhood in Tarsus help to shape him for later service? Would it have benefited him more to have been born and raised in Jerusalem?
- Does the fact that Saul does not seem to have first hand knowledge/experience with Jesus’ teaching help or hurt his credibility in preaching the Gospel? Why or why not?
- Explain the impact of Saul’s being trained under Gamaliel in the School of Hillel.
- Which aspect of Saul’s early life strikes you as the most significant in forming his character and personality?

Take Away Point

See Saul’s upbringing and background as an inspiration to view our own lives as being primarily centered on God’s call to a holy life.



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Lesson 2: The Stoning of Stephen

<Show Video: 2:37 – 6:08>

Sadducee

- The politically powerful sect of the Jewish leadership
- Disappeared in 70 A.D. with the fall of Jerusalem
- Did not believe in resurrection of any kind or in a personal Messiah
- Denied that oral law was binding or authoritative
- Interpreted Mosaic Law more literally than the Pharisees
- Attributed all to free will – God did not make things happen
- Rejected the idea of a spiritual world – angels and demons
- Only the books of Moses were canonical

Pharisee

- Accepted oral tradition as well as the Mosaic Law
- Accepted both free will and the sovereignty of God as canceling each other out (?)
- Had a very complicated view of a hierarchy of angels and demons
- There was a future for the dead, immortality for the soul, and reward/punishment after death

Essene

- A sect that separated from the Pharisees because the Pharisees did not follow strict enough observance of the purity laws of the Torah
- Many believe that this was the sect of which *John the Baptist* was a member
- Communal ownership of property
- Marriage not condemned but was avoided
- Attributed all that happened to fate

Zealot

- Only around between 6 B.C. (Herod the Great) and when the final remnant died at Masada in 73 A.D.
- Bore allegiance only to God – refused to pay taxes to a pagan emperor
- Held fiercely to Jewish tradition
- Opposed to the use of the Greek language in Palestine
- Prophesied a coming time of salvation

Sanhedrin condemns Christ to death – thinks the “uprising” has been dealt with

Conspiracy in **Matthew 28:11-15** is an admission that the tomb was empty!

After the Resurrection and Pentecost the “priests, and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees ... were greatly disturbed because the Apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead.” (**Acts 4:1-4**)

- Head of the *Sanhedrin* (Supreme Court) was a *Sadducee*

Read: Deuteronomy 21:22-23

- The idea that Jesus was Messiah was repulsive to the Jewish leadership!
- He was a cursed, common criminal
- Apostles had been jailed for their blasphemous speaking but had escaped miraculously (**Acts 5:17-24**) only to be discovered back at it again (**Acts 5:25**). The full body of the *Sanhedrin* brought them to be questioned by the high priest

• Read Acts 5:27-33

- o Saul was either a member of the Sanhedrin or a lawyer/advisor to it



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- o He therefore heard this speech by Peter/Apostles
- **Read Acts 5:34-42**
 - o Recognize anyone?
 - o Restraint and tolerance – the wisdom of Paul’s mentor

Saul pursued Stephen vindictively; stirring enmity, dissension, and jealousy while insulting and deriding Jesus. Stephen did not retaliate.

Stephen (Pollock, 20-23)

- About the same age as Saul – with the “face of an angel” (**Acts 6:15**)
- Chosen as a leader of the seven men (**Acts 6:3**) to minister to the church in Jerusalem
 - o Contrary to Saul, spent much of his time in service to widows – food and necessities
 - o *Traditionalist* party of the Christian church tended toward exclusion from the Greek-speaking “Hellenists” (Wood, 14)
 - o *Progressive* party was more inclusive
 - Greek was OK to speak
 - o Significant that the charge brought against Stephen was that he aimed to “change the customs which Moses delivered to us.” (**Acts 6:14**)
- As well educated and as powerful a thinker as Saul
 - o Spoke Greek and Aramaic for sure
 - o Saul would have seen his social concerns as a waste of academic talent
 - o Saul jealous (?) that people loved and respected him (where they feared Paul)
- Recounted (**Acts 7:1-53**) Jewish history and how it pointed to the Messiah
 - o In the minds of the *Sanhedrin*, Stephen spoke against the Temple!
 - Note Stephen’s proclamation in verse **7:48**: “the Most High does not live in houses made by men...” (reference to **Isaiah 66:1-2**)
 - o This must have greatly impacted Paul
 - See his speech before the leaders of Athens in **Acts 17:24**
- **Read Acts 7:54-8:1**
 - o Paul was involved, and probably oversaw, the stoning of Stephen (**7:58-8:1**)

Stoning

- Taken to a cliff (“Rock of Execution”) with a drop at least the height of two men (Wangerin, Pollock, 13)
- Stripped and pushed off to fall on rocks below and break his neck
 - o At a minimum, this would stun him so that the death was not too “unmerciful”
- Leader of the stoning (Saul?) would drop a large boulder onto the chest to crush ribs and incapacitate
- Crowd would then hurl stones of all sizes
- Aim is to obliterate the victim as a way of deterrence for others who may be sympathetic



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After this event, and throughout the following winter, the Jewish authorities embarked on systematic suppression of “The Way” with *Saul as the chief agent* of that suppression. (Wood, 19)

- He was “a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and a violent aggressor” (**1 Timothy 1:12-13**)
- He “laid waste” to the Church at Jerusalem, entering private houses and hauling men and women off to prison (**Acts 8:3**)
- He had them flogged (**Acts 22:19**) in his effort to make them blaspheme the name of Jesus (**Acts 26:11, 1 Corinthians 15:9, Galatians 1:13**)
- When he ran out of victims in Judea, he was still “breathing out murderous threats against the disciples (**Acts 9:1**)
- Went to the High Priest and begged to be sent to Damascus (**Acts 9:2**) to continue his work
 - o The heretical “Way” had been known to have moved north to spread its poisonous message and Saul’s aim was to stop it.

Paul set out to Damascus to lead the persecution there. He was a terrorist on a mission ...

Discussion Questions

- Discuss the different Jewish sects and the conflict that Jesus’ resurrection was causing among them. How did Saul’s being a Pharisee from the School of Hillel play into his view of the situation?
- What is your view of the role Gamaliel played in the events described? How do you see Saul’s training under him conflicting with his actions that fell more in line with the Shammai school of Pharisees?
- Try to see the events described from Paul’s point of view. Describe how Saul may have viewed Stephen’s actions as they related to upholding Jewish tradition. Knowing his background, is Saul’s reaction understandable? What is his motivation?
- Stephen knew, while giving his speech, the repercussions it might bring. Saul was most likely listening. What impact do you think Stephen’s speech had on Saul, if any?
- How does Saul’s leadership in the persecution of *The Way* become significant? Why was he on his way to Damascus? What was his mindset as he set out on the trip?

Take Away Point

We live in ignorant bliss about the reality of the church’s global suffering. Stephen’s courage and dedication to the Truth should serve to inspire us toward a similar witness. We have no idea how our actions may inspire those around us as Stephen seemed to forever impact Saul.



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Lesson 3: Saul's Conversion

<Show Video: 00:39 – 2:40 and 8:21 – 10:38>

Why was Saul on his way to Damascus?

- Why Damascus?
 - o About 150 miles northeast of Jerusalem – 4 to 6 days travel on foot
 - o The nearest important city outside the Holy Land
 - o Trade hub so likely the “virus” might spread rapidly from there
- What was happening to the church?
 - o The law of unintended consequences ... the scattering of the church
 - o Same old story ... God’s ways may not make sense to us before we know the outcome

What actually happened to Saul on the road to Damascus? (Wright, Ch. 8)

- Saul was not “changing religions”
 - o He believed he was receiving a fuller revelation about the religion to which he already held
- His experience was objective
 - o Many modern “spiritualists” claim that Saul’s experience was simply an internal, subjective one that “worked for him”
 - o A first-century Jew would not have seen it that way
 - o The “heavens” meant the air around you ... the environment in which you lived

Paul's Own Accounts

Galatians 1:11-17

I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. ¹²I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

¹³For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. ¹⁴I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers. ¹⁵But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased ¹⁶to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man, ¹⁷nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus.

- “revelation” in verse 12 is the Greek word *apokalypsis*: “an unveiling of the truth itself” from Jesus himself. This was not a second hand story he got from Peter, James and John
- Referred to Jesus as “Messiah”
- The description (vs. 15) is reminiscent of the call of the prophets
 - o See: **Isaiah 49:1**, **Jeremiah 1:5** – both called “from the womb”
- “... his Son *in* me ...” (vs. 16) – has been used to claim this was only Saul’s internal, subjective experience.
 - o The Greek word here is *en*: “in or through”



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- o But context dictates this should be taken as *through* ... where Saul's life would be a reflection of the life of Jesus.

1 Corinthians 9:1

Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not the result of my work in the Lord?

- Here the Greek word *heoraka*: "I have seen," is always used for ordinary sight – something visual, not something private "vision."

1 Corinthians 15:8-11

and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

- Here the Greek word *ophthe*: "he appeared," can be used as either a public or private "appearance."
 - o Proximity to **1 Corinthians 9:1** (above) suggests he was using it in the same way
 - o "... last of all ..." makes his seeing the last part of a sequence that came to an end
 - o It is not part of some ongoing set of spiritual experiences
- The context of the entire 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians is with regard to a bodily resurrection
 - o Not information that was passed on from someone else
 - o Lists witnesses "who are still living" and can be interrogated
- This *is not* a description of something that was just going on in Saul's head!

There are other references ...

Acts 9:17 – Ananias

Acts 9:27 – Barnabas

Acts 26:16 – same verb as 1Cor 15

Luke 24:39 – "flesh and bones"

...but you get the gist ...

Luke's Descriptions (Wright, 388-398)

Acts 9:3-9

As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "**Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?**"

⁵"Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "**I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,**" he replied. ⁶"**Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.**"

⁷The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. ⁸Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus.

⁹For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

- This is Luke telling the story to his own readers
 - o Luke was not there
 - o In the accounts that follow (below), Luke is enabling the reader to listen in as Paul tells the account to two different audiences



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- An introduction to Saul/Paul to explain how he was transformed from persecutor to preacher

Acts 22:6-11

"About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. ⁷I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, 'Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?'"

⁸"Who are you, Lord?" I asked.

"I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting," he replied. ⁹My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me.

¹⁰"What shall I do, Lord?" I asked.

"Get up," the Lord said, "and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do."

¹¹My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me.

- This Luke's account of Paul speaking to a violent mob
- In context, this is an impassioned retelling which:
 - o Highlights Paul's Jewish credentials (see: **Acts 21:37 – 22:5**)
 - o Explains why he went to the Gentiles (see: **Acts 22:15 and 22:21**)

Acts 26:12-19

"On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests.

¹³About noon, O king, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. ¹⁴We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'

¹⁵"Then I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?'"

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," the Lord replied. ¹⁶"Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. ¹⁷I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them ¹⁸to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me."

¹⁹"So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven."

- This is an account of Paul's hearing before King Agrippa II – the most powerful man in Judaism of his day
 - o Agrippa had commented that, if Paul had not appealed to Caesar (Acts 26:32) he would have been set free
 - o Shows how Paul made a great impression on the king

These accounts can be seen in light of two possible reasons for Luke's methods:

- **An appeal to commonly known stories echoing visions and revelations of God**
 - o Almost identical parallel to a commonly known story about *Syrian King Seleucus*
 - Seleucus sends an officer named Heliodorus to plunder money stored up in the Temple in Jerusalem
 - God stops the thieving pagan in his tracks just before he is about to plunder the Temple
 - His pride is humbled before the mighty power of Israel's God
 - Remember Stephen's crime – in a similar way disgracing the Temple



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- o The story of *Joseph and Aseneth*
 - Also includes a “great light,” falling on the face, repeated call by name, the question to who was speaking and the commands to get up, stand up and receive further instruction
- **To equate Saul’s call with the calls of the great prophets of Israel**
 - o Read: **Daniel 10: 5-11, Ezekiel 1:28-2:1, Joshua 5:13-15, and Exodus 3:1-5**

Luke’s aim

- To tell the story in such a way as to align Paul with the prophets and visionaries of Israel’s history
- To place him alongside the pagans who had turned around and headed in a new direction

What do the accounts really say?

- Some say the Acts 9 account contradicts the Acts 22 account ... Do they?
 - o The companions in Acts 9 “heard the sound ... but did not see anyone”
 - o The companions in Acts 22 “saw the light ... but did not understand the voice”
- Some claim that Saul just saw a dazzling light or a “being of light”
 - o Luke does not say that Jesus was the source of the light or that the light was Jesus
- Some claim that Jesus was not physically present but that Saul saw him “with the inner eye of his heart”
 - o Details above rule this out

“Kicking against the goads” (Swindoll, 27)

- A common expression found in both Greek and Latin literature
- Goads were slender pieces of timber, blunt on one end and pointed on the other
- Farmers used the pointed end to urge a stubborn ox into motion
- Occasionally the beast would kick at the goad – the more it kicked, the more likely the goad would stab into its flesh and cause it greater pain
- Swindoll suggests three “goads” that had been working on Saul
 - o *Jesus preaching*
 - Swindoll suggests that Saul could have heard Jesus preach
 - Even if he didn’t, he heard *what* he taught
 - o *Stephen’s peaceful death and words*
 - o *The actions and courageous faith of those in “The Way”*

When Saul looked up “...within the center of the light which blinded him from his surroundings he faced a Man about his own age. Saul could not believe what he heard and saw. All his convictions, intellect and training, his reputation, his self-respect, demanded that Jesus should not be alive again. He played for time and replied, “Who are you, Lord?” He used a mode of address which might mean simply, “Your Honor.” (Pollock, 31)



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C. S. Lewis likened God's conquering work on Saul to divine chess player systematically, patiently maneuvering his opponent into a corner until finally he concedes, "Checkmate."

Augustine called the conversion of Saul "The violent capture of a rebel will."

Discussion Questions

- Describe some differences you see between Paul's description of his experience on the road to Damascus and Luke's. Are they significant? Do they contradict one another?
- Give a fair view of the notion that Saul's experience on the road to Damascus seems to be subjective or psychological? What details of the description support that claim? What support can you give to defending the claim that it was not subjective, but rather an objective experience? How would you argue the case specifically?
- Some have said that Saul is describing nothing more than an intense "inner struggle" here. Considering the prior events (training under Gamaliel, Stephen's speech etc.) how would you respond to that claim?

Take Away Point

Regardless of our background and upbringing, our encounter with Christ should make us different from the world around us and mark the beginning of a transformed, holy life in Him.



The Man Who Turned The World Upside Down

Lesson 4: Damascus and After

<Show Video: 5:46 – 6:20 and 10:39 – 14:47>

Ananias – The Forgotten Hero

Tradition identifies Ananias as possibly one of the bishops of Damascus but little else is known about him.

- No great religious figure or reputation before, or after, this event
- Name derived from the Hebrew “Hananiah” – *The Lord shows grace*

His Argument: **Acts 9:13-14**

- Understandable reluctance
- **Read:** Swindoll, 31-32

His Command: **Acts 9:11-12, 15-16**

- Go!
- This man is a chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles
- I will show him how much he must suffer for my name

His Meeting: **Acts 9:17-19**

- Placing his hands on Saul
- “Brother, Saul”
- Baptized Saul immediately
 - o Judas’ house probably would have had a fountain in the atrium (garden court)
 - Had to have been a prominent Jew
 - o The Abana River flows just outside the city’s northern wall

Lessons from the encounter ... (Swindoll, 41-43)

- Surprises are part of God’s leading
- Surprises always intensify our need for faith
- Stepping out in faith clarifies God’s “plan”
- Obedience stimulates spiritual growth

The Aftermath

...Imagine the following Sabbath Day... (Pollock, 39-41)

- “At once he began to preach in the synagogues...” (**Acts 9:19b-20**)
- Saul rises to preach to a congregation that is anticipating two very different sermons
 - o Strict Jews welcomed his arrival and mission to squelch the heresy
 - o At least some of the “Nazarenes” were praying for him as the *hazzan* escorted him to the dais and handed him the scroll of the law
 - Still dressed like a Pharisee in blue-tinged robe, leather amulet and turban



The Man Who Turned The World Upside Down

“Jesus is the Son of God”

- Reaction from both sides (Read: **Acts 9:21-22**)
 - o All those who heard were astonished (Greek: *existemi* root word for “ecstatic”)
 - o Saul “grew more and more powerful...”
 - o “...baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ
 - *sumbibazo*: “knit together from several strands”

Galatians 1:11-17 “I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ...”

“...but when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, ... I did not consult any man, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus.”

- This appears to be the point at which Saul left Damascus for a time of solitude in the desert
- There is no record of where Saul went specifically, or what he did during this time
 - o What is the precedent for such a journey?
 - o Is there any evidence for what went on during this time?
 - o Who were his friends when he returned to Damascus?

Acts 9:23-25

“After many days had gone by, the Jews conspired to kill him, but Saul learned of their plan...his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall.”

2 Corinthians 11:32-33

“In Damascus the governor under King Aretas had the city of the Damascenes guarded in order to arrest me. But I was lowered in a basket from a window in the wall and slipped through his hands.”

- King Aretas (Pollock, 43-44)
 - o The father-in-law of Herod Antipas
 - Antipas married his own niece, Herodias (daughter of Herod the Great)
 - Their daughter (Salome) is the girl who danced for Herod and asked for John the Baptist’s head on a plate
 - o Jews wanted Saul killed for being a traitor/blasphemer
 - o Would not want Saul killed within the city walls (this risked their own crucifixion)
 - o Had soldiers wait outside who would, in return for a bribe, capture him and slit his throat
- Consider the irony of this scene!

Acts 9:26a

“When he returned to Jerusalem ...”

Galatians 1:18

“Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Peter and stayed with him fifteen days...”



The Man Who Turned The World Upside Down

Galatians 1:19-20

- Now who were his friends?
 - Read: Acts 9:26-29

Acts 9:30-31

Galatians 1:21-24

- Was this growth in strength and numbers a result of Saul's influence?
- Where was he? What was he doing?
- We are completely in the dark about this time in Saul's life
- Some speculate that this could be the time he studied:
 - Greek literature and/or Pagan ideas
 - Later he not only addresses these ideas...
 - He uses them to reach those who know and practice them
 - He uses his extensive knowledge of them to argue against them

"To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law ... to those not having the law ... to the weak I have become weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some..."

1 Corinthians 9:20-23

- This also seems to have been the time when he had a life-changing experience(s) ...
 - Visions and revelations
 - So intense that he only referred to this in the third person

"I know of a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows ... was caught up to paradise ... heard inexpressible things ... that man is not permitted to tell..."

2 Corinthians 12:1-3

- "fourteen years ago"
 - 2 Corinthians was written in 55 or 56 A.D.
 - This puts the experience at 41 or 42 A.D. – right in the middle of the time he spent in Tarsus
- "Third heaven"
 - 1st – the atmosphere immediately around us
 - 2nd – heavenly realm where the stars and planets move
 - 3rd – in the presence of God himself
- ... and where he first was smitten by his "thorn in the flesh"

"To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness..."

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

Acts 11:19-28

- vs 19-21



The Man Who Turned The World Upside Down

- o Remember the unintended consequences of the persecution ...
- **vs 22:** "...news of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch."
 - o Who was Barnabas and why would he have been sent to Antioch?
- **vs 25:** "...Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul and when he found him he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. ***The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch...***"
 - o Antioch ... **Read:** Pollock, 62-63
 - o "*Christiani*" the term is half-Greek, half-Latin – a new word made that was made up to signify that these were not just some new Jewish species. They were unique.

...Back to Jerusalem

- **Acts 11:29-30:** "...decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea"
 - o Remember Saul's disgust at Stephen's "wasted talent" for doing the exact same thing!

...and finally back to Antioch ...

- **Acts 13:1-3** "...The Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off."

Saul is about 47 years old before he ever begins his missionary work !

Discussion Questions

- Put yourself in Ananias' shoes as he was called to approach Saul. Do you honestly believe you would have done what he did? What did Ananias demonstrate to Saul that may have had a significant impact on his attitude?
- Describe the reactions of each segment of the audience to Saul's first sermon in Damascus. Who do you think was more surprised at its content and why?
- How long did Saul spend in Arabia? What do you think he did there? What was the purpose of that time in his life?
- Do you think Saul expanded his knowledge base during his time in Tarsus? On what evidence do you base this opinion? What purpose would this time have served in Paul's "calling?"

Take Away Point

The spiritual disciplines of silence, solitude, study and prayer should be incorporated into our lives. We are obligated to prepare ourselves to know and defend our faith in a hostile world.



The Man Who Turned The World Upside Down

Lesson 5: The First Missionary Journey

<Show Video: Chapter 4, 14:50 – 19:43>

Acts 13:4-14:28

Sixteen miles from Antioch to the sea at Seleucia (Antioch's port city) ...

- Accompanied by John Mark, Barnabas' relative (nephew)
- "helper" (Acts 13:5) is the Roman term for a "document handler"
- First stop: Cyprus – home of Barnabas

Seleucia Cyprus Salamis Paphos

- **Paphos** was the capital of Cyprus and the best harbor on the island
- **Sergius Paulus** ("intelligent man" vs. 7)
 - o "Proconsul" is the local Roman government official assigned by the Senate (not the Emperor)
 - o This is an example of the meticulous detail Luke uses
 - o He is also mentioned by the historian *Pliny* as a scientifically oriented authority
- **The Encounter with Bar-Jesus** (Elymas)
 - o Attendant/advisor to the proconsul
 - o **Read: Acts 13:9-12**
 - o Why do you think this event is notable and important?
- **Saul to Paul**
 - o **Read: Acts 13:9**
 - o Luke replaces the Jewish *Saul* with the more "Gentile-friendly" Latin name *Paul*
 - Also at this point he changes the order he had been using – "Barnabas and Saul" – to "Paul and Barnabas"
 - Signifies a role reversal/change of authority (?)

Sailed to "Perga in Pamphylia"

- After crossing a narrow plain, they encountered a barrier of mountains "steeper and fiercer" than any that may have been encountered by a Cypriot (Barnabas) or a Judean (John Mark)
- Note the brief mention (vs. 13:13) "...where John left them to return to Jerusalem."
 - o Any indication why he left? Some have speculated ... (Pollock, 75)
 - Malaria – this is a region similar to Saul's Tarsus, low and wet
 - Thought they were exceeding the commission they received for their journey
 - Resented Barnabas' surrender of leadership
 - Simple cowardice, homesickness
- Their journey north is through a barren, desolate area known for its robbers



The Man Who Turned The World Upside Down

Pisidian Antioch

- Described as a “frontier town” by Pollock
 - **Read:** Pollock, 78
- **Read:** Acts 13:14-16 (continues through vs. 41)
 - Does the format of this speech sound familiar?
 - Was Saul more successful in his rendition? (Stephen only made it to David)
- **Read:** Acts 13:42-52
 - The Jews were “filled with jealousy,” and “stirred up persecution”
 - On their attempt to preach again the second week, the Jews no longer listened respectfully but instead “*incited the God fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas and expelled them from the city.*”
 - “persecution” could have meant beatings and/or physical punishment
 - ref: 2 Timothy 3:10-11
 - These were not the Jewish leaders, but would have been the local governmental leaders
 - What does this tell you about Paul? (remember the early lessons: *Civis Romanus Sum*)
 - Saul/Barnabas’ reaction (Acts 13:46-52)
 - vs. 47: a quote from Isaiah 49:6, the “OT Great Commission”(?)
 - Isaiah’s “Servant of the Lord”: a prophecy of the nation/Messiah through whom the entire world would be offered salvation

Iconium

- Went “as usual” into the Jewish synagogue (Acts 14:1)
 - Note the tactic that Saul uses here – it is the same one he uses for the rest of his life

Paul’s aim: *Change the culture by influencing those who control it!*

- **Read:** Acts 14:4 Pollock, 90
 - Tacitus’ account of the Christians under Nero’s reign:
 - “*Hated for their secret crimes ... Convicted of hatred for the human race ... Men of the worst character and deserving the severest punishment.*”
 - This was repeated in Soviet Russia
 - Do you think it could ever be repeated again?

Lystra

- Probably first met Timothy here as a teenage boy
 - Ref: 1 Timothy 4:12 – “young man” in (about) 64 A.D.
 - Lived with his mother in Lystra (Acts 16:1)
- At the entrance to the city stood the Temple of Zeus
- Any converts here were probably Greek
 - No trace of a Jewish synagogue remains in literature or in archaeological ruins



The Man Who Turned The World Upside Down

- The “incident”
 - The legend of Zeus and Hermes – **Read: Pollock, 93-94**
 - **Read: Acts 14:8-18**
- The very next verse ... (**vs. 19**) *“Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead ...”*
 - ... *The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe*”

Derbe

- The significance of the location of Derbe

Return to Antioch

Derbe Lystra Iconium Antioch Pisidia Pamphylia Perga Attalia

- What do you think of the route they took to return?
- Why not take the shortcut through the good ‘ole Cilician Gates back to Antioch?
- Acts 14:25 – “and when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia.”

Read: Acts 14:27-28

Discussion Questions

- Recall the encounter with Bar-Jesus (Elymas) on Cyprus. Describe the various ways in which the encounter was the significant. What is the significance of Saul’s name change to Paul?
- Though the reason for the disagreement with John Mark remains unclear, describe the way it later came to reveal God’s sovereignty over the events that followed.
- How do the visits to Pisidian Antioch, Iconium and Lystra reveal Paul’s character? What do you see as the most significant aspect of each visit?
- Many of us have a picture of Paul wandering around the countryside giving impromptu sermons to pagans in an attempt to convert them to Christianity. What tactic did Paul actually institute on his First Missionary Journey for reaching the cultures he encountered? Did he alter that tactic substantially later in his life? How does it apply to us today?
- Consider Paul’s later letter to the people he visited in Galatia? Which theory about the audience of the letter do you think is the most reasonable and why? Why do you think some insist the letter was written later than the commonly accepted date?
- Paul could have taken a direct route through the Cilician Gate back to Antioch but chose to return the way he came. What does that decision reveal about Paul’s mission and character?



The Man Who Turned The World Upside Down

Take Away Point

Whether or not we ever leave the comfort of our own surroundings, we should always be prepared to encounter and change the world around us by living out the gospel message.



The Man Who Turned The World Upside Down

Lesson 6: Confrontation in Jerusalem

<Show Video: 19:45 – 24:15>

After the success of their mission, Paul and Barnabas were met with divisive teaching given by visitors from Jerusalem

- o **Galatians 2:11** “ ... when Peter came to Antioch ...”
- o **Read: Acts 15:1-21**
 - At this time Antioch was *the only place in the world* where ex-pagans were living on terms of complete equality with Christian Jews (Pollock, 100)
 - “Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching ...” (15:1)
 - Who might these men have been?
 - o “Christian Pharisees?”
 - Peter was playing both sides – **Galatians 2:12-21**
 - Was Paul out of line to rebuke Peter publicly?
 - This could have been the first (and last) church split
 - o Note Peter’s reaction (**Acts 15:6-14**)
- Paul and Barnabas decided to take the issue to the leadership Council in Jerusalem (15:2)
 - o **Galatians 2:1-2**: “Fourteen years later I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles...”
 - 14 years after his conversion ==> 48 B.C.
 - o There was no clear teaching on circumcision the Holy Spirit “will lead us in truth”
 - o Followed the custom of the Sanhedrin – calling junior members for debate

Result – The letter to Gentile believers (Acts 15:22-29)

What is the significance of this agreement?

- More than an argument about circumcision and dinner parties ...
- The four aspects of the letter each refer to idolatrous pagan practices that may have been going on at the time and that were *forbidden before their receipt of the Mosaic Law*
 - o **Idolatry**
 - o **Fornication**
 - o **Eating animals that had been strangled**
 - o **Consuming blood**
- OT heresy taught by *Balaam* (re: **Numbers 25:1-2**; **2 Peter 2:15**) that was recurring in the pagan feasts and orgies that apparently propagated in the first-century church.
 - o re: **Revelation 2:6**, **Revelation 2:15** for the practices in Ephesus and Pergamon
- These were profound issues that forced the church leadership to decide if ...
 - o Christianity would merely become another variety (denomination?) of Judaism
 - o A person could be forgiven simply and instantly by faith in Jesus Christ



The Man Who Turned The World Upside Down

- James endorsed the decision as being in accordance with prophecy (**Amos 9:11-12**)
 - **Read: Pollock, 115**

Paul's Letter to the Galatians

Did the “visitors” to Antioch drop their case after the receipt of the letter from the Jerusalem Council?

Read: Galatians 1:1-10

- This letter contained none of the sensitivity or “literary polish” of his later letters
 - Does not follow every other letter’s form with Salutation followed by Thanksgiving
- Goes straight to Rebuke, then to Request
- **1:6** – “I am astonished ...”, **2:11b** – “...I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong”, **3:1** – “You foolish Galatians ...”, **5:12** – “...as for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves!”
- Paul was angry

Paul's Purposes

- To establish with (remind) them about his credentials as a direct messenger of Christ
- To establish with (remind) them that his message had been accepted by the other Apostles
 - Reminder of the agreement with, and letter from, the Jerusalem Council
- To clarify the purpose of the law
- To proclaim and define their new life in Christ – redefining holiness – as a way to freedom from “the present, evil age”

Read: Matthew 5:17

The Law of Moses

- The Purpose of the Law
 - The list of 613 requirements
 - Not a part of Torah!
- Fulfillment of the Law
 - *Moral*
 - The Decalogue (Ten “Words”)
 - *Ceremonial*
 - Circumcision – the ultimate(?) expression of a works-based salvation
 - This is the portion of the law that Jesus made irrelevant
 - *Civil*
 - Even today, this has its basis in the Moral Law
- Salvation through the law?
 - There is general agreement, even among those who clearly disagree about other aspects of the law, that it did not offer its adherents a means of salvation. Though strict dispensationalism has been accused of espousing such a view, most scholars reject the idea. They appeal to the fact that Abram’s belief was “credited to him as righteousness” in Genesis 15:6 before the law had been given. This clearly eliminates obedience to the law as the OT method of salvation. Passages which serve to present the requirements of the law, such as Exodus 20 and Leviticus 18:5, are addressed to a covenant, believing nation which has already been redeemed.



The Man Who Turned The World Upside Down

- o Acknowledgment that salvation is by grace alone
 - **Galatians 3:21**
- o Faith is the means by which we are justified before God
 - **Romans 3:20, Philippians 3:9**
- A guide to “holiness”
 - o the actual meaning of the Hebrew root for “holy” – *qdš* – could be (and was) equally applied to a “sanctuary” or a temple “harlot” of the time. The imperative meaning of separation here cannot be limited to separation by itself. It also connotes *to what the separation is intended*

One man One nation

Discussion Questions

- The Jerusalem Council was the first such gathering recorded in church history. How does the method and result of this council set the tone for the rest of church history? What important precedents did it set?
- Using Paul’s letter to the Galatians and the discussion of the council in Acts, discuss the importance and accuracy of Paul’s view of salvation. Why was this so difficult for the Jewish Christians to accept? Why did Paul hold to such a unique/different view?
- How did Paul view Christianity in a historical context? Do you think he saw himself as founding a new religion or offering Christianity as a completion of Judaism?

Take Away Point

In a church divided by denominationalism and disagreement, God’s Truth and our love for one another should be our primary motivations to seek common ground and a common vision for the church.



The Man Who Turned The World Upside Down

Lesson 7: The Second Missionary Journey

<Show Video: 24:15 – 24:37 and 30:00 – 35:10>

- After they returned with the good news (and the letter) to Antioch, the church rejoiced
 - **Acts 15:30-31**
- Judas (Judas Barsabbas) and Silas (Silvanus) joined them in teaching there
- “Some time later” (**15:36**) Paul and Barnabas decided to return to “visit the brothers in all the towns where [they] preached.”

The John Mark rift (**Acts 15:37-41**)

- “Such a sharp disagreement” (vs. 39) – *paroxysm* (“sudden, violent, emotional outburst”)
- Barnabas and Mark back to Cyprus
- Paul *alone* through: **Syria – Cilicia – Derbe** (he’s 50 years old!)
 - Silas joined him later
 - **Acts 15:33** – Silas “sent off” – **Acts 15:41-6:1** – “they” begins after Derbe

Timothy joined them in **Lystra** (he’s now about 21 years old)

- **Acts 16:2-5** ?
- **Read: Pollock, 118-119**

Lystra – Phrygia – Galatia – Mysian border ...

- This was a distinct interruption by the “spirit of Jesus”
- **Read: Pollock, 120**

... continued **Troas – Macedonia** ...

Troas is where Luke joined them (note: **Acts 16:10**)

- Luke could have been an Antiochean (Syrian Antioch) who had emigrated and met Paul in Troas by coincidence
 - Possibly Titus’ brother?
- Luke could have been a pagan local whom Paul converted (Pollock, 122-123)
- The sail to Macedonia would have taken them right by **Tenedos** – the island where the Greeks built the Trojan horse

Samothrace – Neapolis – Philippi

Philippi

- A “leading city of that district of Macedonia” (**16:12**)
- Named for *Philip of Macedon*, the father of Alexander the Great
- Granite edifice on either side of the road below this 1026’ *acropolis* (“the upper fortified part of an ancient Greek city”)



The Man Who Turned The World Upside Down

- Archaeology has uncovered several pagan, idol temples but no synagogue
 - This would mean that less than 10 Jewish males live in the city (Pollock, 125)
 - Worship would be in an open air environment, probably near a river to allow for ritual ablutions
 - This fits with the Lydia story – **Read: Acts 16:11-15**
- This was the only place, as far as we know, that Paul ever accepted free board and lodging
- **Acts 16:16-40**
 - Slave girl exorcised
 - Jail and escape (note: Paul's first concern in **Acts 16:28**)
 - Magistrate's reaction – **Read: Pollock, 134**
- **The Book of Philippians** (written in A.D. 62)
 - One of the "Prison Epistles"
 - These are the people to whom he wrote "all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi"
 - 11 years from less than 10 Jews to one of the largest Christian churches
 - Read ...
 - **1:12-14** in context
 - **2:19-24** his confidence, trust, admiration for Timothy
 - **3:7-8** re: flogged and jailed
 - **4:10-13** not talking about "name it, claim it" possibility thinking
 - **4:15-16** re: Lydia's hospitality

Philippi – Amphipolis – Apollonia – Thessalonica ...

Thessalonica

- Did have a synagogue (**Acts 17:1**)
- Remained there for 4 weeks
 - **Read: 1Thessalonians 2:6b-9**
 - First place where Luke mentions that they worked for a living. Why?
 - Authors believe that the 1st journey was funded by Barnabas who sold his land to donate proceeds to the Jerusalem church
 - An act of repentance? As a Levite, he should not have owned land
 - See: **Joshua 14:4**
 - **Acts 17:2-4**: Paul "reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving ... Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas ... and not a few prominent women."
 - Women ran the entire household businesses (*oikos*)
 - Paul wasn't suggesting that anybody accept things on "blind faith"
 - Introduced a new concept of love
 - Changed their thinking from *eros* to the new, Christian concept of love: *agape* (Pollock, 140-141) – a love that purified and transformed
- The Jews were jealous (**Read: Acts 17:5-9**)

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- o Verse 6: “These men who have caused trouble all over the world (turned the world upside down)”
- o We sometimes underestimate how radical this all was
- Jason held and released but would be arrested again if they showed up in the city
- Timothy returned later (**1Thessalonians 3:1-6**)
- Paul and Silas continued – probably wanted to cross the Adriatic to Rome but had to leave fast
- The letters to the Thessalonians were written shortly thereafter from Corinth
 - o **Note: 2 Thessalonians 3:17-18:** authors speculate that imposters were trying to undermine Paul’s message by deceptively pretending to be him

Berea

- Note again: **Acts 17:11-12**
 - o “Examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true ...”
 - o Prominent women again!
- Jewish Thessalonians followed and stirred up dissension
 - o Silas and Timothy stayed temporarily but would join him soon (**Acts 17:13-15**)

Paul remains in Athens alone ...

Discussion Questions

- The text seems to suggest that Luke did not join Paul until they met in Troas on Paul’s Second Missionary Journey. Explain how one might justify the chronicle of Paul’s life before that as recorded by Luke earlier in Acts. What about Luke’s Gospel – does this offer any clues about the depth and accuracy of Luke’s knowledge? Which theory about Luke joining the team in Troas do you see as the most reasonable?
- What do you see as the most significant fact about Paul’s visit to Philippi? How might this short visit help to put his later letter to the Philippian church in context? Where and when was that letter written?
- From where and when did Paul write his two letters to the Thessalonian church? What was the most important topic those letters were meant to address?

Take Away Point

The issues that we address may vary but each can be given a reasonable response by first knowing and studying the Word so as to clarify, understand and live out our theology.



The Man Who Turned The World Upside Down

Lesson 8: Paul in Athens

<Show Video: 24:37 – 29:57>

Overview of the city ...

Acropolis – “Parthenon”

Religious temple
Contained est. 30,000 idol statues

Mars Hill – “Areopagus”

“Hill of Ares” god of thunder and war (Roman = Mars)
Previously “official” meeting place of the Court/Council
In NT times, authority only in religious/moral ideas
Evaluated new teachings/ideas and foreign gods

Marketplace – “Agora”

Informal area to discuss “all the new ideas” – centered on the *Stoa* (= porch)
This is where Socrates/Plato hung out
“Socratic Method” (teaching) of question-and-answer discussion began here
Socrates was put to death for his teachings here (monotheism)
Speech was free, but there were limits to what they would allow

Pyreas

Port city and business district

Encounter the Culture (Acts 17:16-21)

- Paul had left Berea alone, with Silas and Timothy to follow
- Apparently wandered the city to get a flavor for what he was up against (v. 16)
 - o *Petronius* exaggerated that “It was easier to find a god there than a man.”
- Reasoned (again!) “with the Jews and God-fearing Greeks” in the synagogue (v. 17a)
- “...as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there...” (v. 17b)
- Unlike those he was addressing, Paul emphasized that he did not speak on his own authority
 - o At first this could have been taken to mean he was intellectually bankrupt ...
 - The Greeks’ reaction: (vs. 18) “What is this *babbler* trying to say?” (Pollock, 151)
 - Babblers: (literally “seed picker”) slang for a gutter sparrow – a rogue who picks up scraps from the gutter, one who plagiarizes other men’s ideas because he is too lazy or dull to have his own
 - o ... until they heard how/what he argued
- He spoke of a different kind of divinity – **The Incarnation was the atom bomb that changed history**
 - o *Jesous* (Jesus)
 - Sounded similar to the name of the Ionic goddess of health
 - Especially when attached to *sōter* (saviour), this suggested a god who gave health of mind and body
 - o *Anastasis* (resurrection)
 - Greeks had myths about gods returning from the underworld and this might be another



The Man Who Turned The World Upside Down

- But Paul talked as if he referred to an actual flesh and blood person
- o The incarnation was an idea that they had never considered
- “A group of ***Epicurean*** and ***Stoic*** philosophers began to dispute with him” (v. 18)
 - o **Epicureans** (named for original proponent Epicurus, 341-270 B.C.)
 - Functionally atheists and very hedonistic
 - Creed: “Get away from all things ugly as the gods do” (Wood, 111)
 - The “garden philosophers” (flower children) retreated from nasty/violent world
 - Lived for “happiness,” defined as tranquility and peace of mind
 - “Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die.”
 - Afraid of death – your soul “melted into atoms” – no afterlife
 - o **Stoics** (a philosophy of duty and self-control)
 - Proud of producing noble, self-sufficient characters
 - Believed in one, pantheistic god – the divine *logos* (wisdom, reason, speech, expression, choice)
 - side note: *Heraclitus* (500 B.C.) was a highly influential Stoic from Ephesus, re: John 1
 - The universe is rational – the good life could only be led by having faith in human reason – wanted to live by reason alone
 - Emotions were not to be trusted because, in the end, feelings make you unhappy
- ***Notice that no intelligent Athenian worshipped the idols or believed in the polytheistic mythology we have been taught to attach to the Greeks***
 - o The “gods” existed to placate the masses!
 - o “pagan” literally translated as “country dweller” – those who believed in and practiced the traditional religions

With that in mind ...

Expose the Culture (Acts 17:22-28)

- “Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship ... *TO AN UNKNOWN GOD*” (meant to cover any they might have missed) (v. 22b-23)
 - o Many commentators claim Paul was being “polite.” Does it sound polite to you?
 - o This statement leaves two possibilities...
 - *Paul is clueless*
 - Based on what we’ve studied, what are your thoughts on that?
 - *Paul is being sarcastic* – he’s on to them

The genius of Paul

- “... *objects of worship*” (vs. 23)
 - o Exact quote from a passage in Aeschylus’ *Eumenides*
 - o This is a passage in which the character Athene tells how the Court of Areopagus came to be instituted! (Pollock, 153)



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- “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples made by hands (vs. 24)
 - o This is a concept that played to, and paralleled, Stoic philosophy
 - o It is also a paraphrase Stephen used in his speech in **Acts 7:48** (“the Most High does not live in houses made by men...”), and a reference to **Isaiah 66:1-2**
- “... And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.” (vs. 25)
 - o This is a reference to Plato’s *Republic* (10th Book) speaking about the Author of the Universe
- “For in him, we live and move and have our being” (vs. 28a)
 - o Quote from the Cretan poet Epimenides’ *Cretica* (600 B.C.)
- “As some of your poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’” (vs. 28b)
 - o Quote from Cilician poet (and Stoic philosopher!) Aratus of Soli (315-240 B.C.) in his work, *Phaenomena*
 - o Also used by the Greek poet Cleanthes (331-233 B.C.) in his *Hymn to Zeus*

*Zeus fills the streets, the marts,
Zeus fills the seas, the shrines or the shores, and the rivers!
Everywhere our need is Zeus!
We also are his offspring.*

- o This brought the realization that all their learning had hit a dead end. The God of whom Paul spoke was no cheap marketplace god whose image appeared on every corner. He was the God who created the universe! (Swindoll, 210)

Evangelize the Culture (Acts 17:29-34)

“Therefore ...” (vs. 29)

- Paul has engaged them at their own game – the logical result is his appeal to submit to the truth of what he has said ...
- If we are God’s “offspring,” we have no reason to think God is an image of gold etc ...
- (vs. 30) Imagine Paul motioning toward the Parthenon above him when he says, “In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he command all people everywhere to repent ...”
 - o “all people” was a slap in the face to these intellectuals who touted themselves as being dedicated to the pursuit of truth
 - o How dare he call them to repent?!
- By this tactic, Paul drove a wedge through Greco-Roman culture that was never extracted
 - o The leaders could not let him demean “the gods” before the masses
 - o Also, they couldn’t admit that idols were OK because they were smarter than that
 - o This is the same kind of opening he used to split the Pharisees/Sadducees
- Theism was a fearful thing in ancient times
 - o Atheism was invented to let them off the hook of accountability for their hedonism



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- o Socrates and the early Christians were similarly labeled *atheistos*
 - One who denies the traditional religion of the Athenian establishment
- In contrast to the video (“few were persuaded”), note: **Acts 17:32-34**
 - o “...others said, ‘We want to hear you again on this subject’”
 - o “A few men became followers of Paul and believed”
 - o “Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus ...”

The acceptance of Christ by a Stoic leader would be like the President of Harvard converting to Christianity after listening to your sermon!

Read: Pollock, 155

... then to Corinth

Here he met *Aquila* and *Priscilla* – most likely already Christians who had recently returned from Rome

- Emperor Claudius’ decree of 49 A.D. (**Acts 18:1-2**)
 - o “House churches” started by Jewish Christians (probably those who had been in Jerusalem at Pentecost in 33 A.D.)
 - o These sprung up in/around the synagogues to be in close proximity so as not to do “work” by walking too far
 - o 10-13 synagogues in Rome – not very well tied together
- Claudius disallowed them banding together
 - o *Suetonius* (2nd century historian) verifies this and gives a reason:
 - Because they were “*indulging in constant riots at the instigation of one Chrestus.*” (Pollock, 144)
 - A common misspelling of “Christ”
- Jewish Christians leave Rome – Aquila and Priscilla among them
- Gentile Christians are left alone to meet in houses
- In 54 A.D., Nero reversed the edict, allowing Jews to return but many didn’t bother
- Those who did return would not enter Gentile homes (unclean, not kosher)
 - o This resulted in a cultural rift within between Gentile and Jewish Christians
- ***The Book of Romans***
 - o Paul, writing Romans in 56-57 A.D., is attempting to mend the internal distress so that they can evangelize externally (see: **Romans 15**)
 - o Note the similar issues addressed in Romans 6 to those addressed by the Jerusalem Council
 - **Romans 6:1-13**
 - The issue of *Mosaic Law* stated in **Romans 6:14-15**

“Living like Corinthians”

- **Read: Pollock, 161-162**



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Timothy and Silas arrive ...

- Report problems (persecution, death) in Thessalonica
 - o Paul's letter meant to encourage
 - o Also meant to address their worries about Christ's return and end times
- Brought money gift from the Philippians
 - o Allowed them all to preach
 - o Conversion of Crispus (the "synagogue ruler") and his family
 - "Synagogue Ruler" – Those who were responsible for calling readers and preachers, arranging the services and maintaining order
- Assurance of Christ himself compels Paul to stay 18 months (**Acts 18:9-11**)
- Sailed away after cutting his hair in Cenchrea (see: **Numbers 6:1-8**, Nazirite vow?)

... Ephesus ...

- Finally made it there! (remember his diversion from Mysia earlier in the journey)
- More on Ephesus later (3rd Journey) but this was a major Asian cultural and population center
 - o On par with Rome, Corinth, Antioch and Alexandria

Sailed from Ephesus ... **Caesarea – Jerusalem –Antioch**

Discussion Questions

- Paul was escorted to Athens but then remained there alone. What do you think his disposition might have been at that time? How did he respond to his circumstances? What had prepared him for this time?
- Outline Paul's approach in addressing the intellectual leadership in Athens. To what did he appeal in arguing his case?
- Many writers describe the impact of Paul's speech in Athens as minimal. Do you agree? Why or why not?
- Those discussing their "new ideas" in Athens were common. What were the most radical topics Paul addressed that made his views so remarkable? Why do you think Paul was able to so readily capture the attention of the Aeropagan Council?

Take Away Point

The application of Paul's example in Athens as a model for evangelism today requires that we know, and be ready to engage, the culture that surrounds us. This requires great effort on our part but its rewards are eternal.



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Lesson 9: The Third Missionary Journey (Emphasis on Ephesus)

<Show Video: 35:11 – 39:55 and 41:05 – 45:05>

At the end of the summer of 52 A.D. ... “After spending some time in Antioch, Paul set out from there and traveled from place to place throughout the region of Galatia and Phrygia ...” (Acts 18:23)

Derbe – Lystra – Iconium – Antioch ... (the ‘ole stomping grounds)

Introduction of Apollos (Acts 18:24-28)

- A “learned man” from Alexandria with “thorough knowledge of the Scripture”
- Impressed Aquila and Priscilla with his fervent, accurate, bold preaching
- Went to Achaia (Corinth) and was “a great help” there

While Apollos was gone ... **Paul arrived at Ephesus**

The City of Ephesus

- A major Asian cultural and population center on par with Rome, Corinth, Antioch and Alexandria
 - **Read: Pollock, 180 & below**

Apollos apparently had not experienced the presence of Jesus at work in the world as Paul had but only the “baptism of John” (repentance)

- On Paul’s return, he met with a small band of followers who understood their faith in the same manner as Apollos
- **Read: Acts 19:1b-7 Pentecost in Ephesus?! (re: Ephesians 5:18-19)**

The School of Tyrannus

- When the synagogue refused to continue to allow Paul to preach there, he was offered use of the local gymnasium by the schoolmaster Tyrannus
 - “tyrant” – a nickname given him before conversion or he may have been the descendant of a tyrant?
 - **Gymnasium** – The gymnasium was first built as an institution for military and athletic training of the young Greek citizens. A free-born citizen’s education also included intellectual and artistic subjects, all taught at the public gymnasia. The gymnasium developed into the center of Greek social activity, which included lectures on philosophy, medicine and poetry. Cults of the traditional gods of the gymnasia were worshipped at these facilities as well. The Greek gymnasium had humble beginnings. The first were mostly found in open fields located on the outskirts of town, usually near a stream, river, or body of water to provide easy access for bathing after strenuous exercise and games. As these games became more popular they were developed into park-like facilities. Sporting activities were the first use of these open spaces. Ball games, wrestling, running and jumping were the most popular sporting activities, but it wasn't long before the peaceful atmosphere attracted orators, teachers and picnickers. Small buildings were erected, large numbers of trees were planted, running tracks were built and the open spaces became smaller. As the cities increased in population and territory, many of them with high walls built around them, sometime around 400 BC, these open spaces were



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encroached upon even more. There was no longer room to hold running races, and so they were conducted on the streets of the city. These changes all led to the building of huge gymnasium buildings more toward the city center or near the seashore. And in turn, these buildings changed the character of the Greek gymnasium. The gymnasium was a public institution, open to all citizens 18 years of age or older. Administration of the many gymnasiums in a city was provided by distinguished citizens. Usually one person handled one facility. Their official title was *gymnasiarch*. They selected and scheduled the gymnasium's teachers, trainers and lecturers.

Archaeology has shown that Ephesus had several gymnasia, the largest of which was near the harbor. Tyrannus must have been the *gymnasiarch* of one of these.

- During “siesta time” (11:00 to 4:00 according to Western Text manuscripts) Paul was allowed use
- When Tyrannus returned, Paul would move into private houses to teach (**Acts 20:20**)
- Literate learners (“disciples”) would take notes on scraps of papyrus
 - o Jews had been familiar with rolls/scrolls on which the Scriptures were written
 - o Here, for the first time, these separate pages of notes were sewn together
 - o This was the genesis of the *Codex Style* manuscript which later became the universal standard for books for centuries to come (Pollock, 186)
 - *Books originated as the Christian disciples’ notebooks!*
- These workshops became popular even among the pagans and slaves so that Paul became famous around the city ... He continued this for 2 years

Paul’s teaching against the cultural backdrop ... **Read: Pollock, 187**

The Temple of Artemis

Although the foundation of the temple dates back to the seventh century BC, the structure that earned a spot in the list of Wonders was built around 550 BC. Referred to as the great marble temple, or temple D, it was sponsored by the Lydian king Croesus and was designed by the Greek architect Chersiphron. It was decorated with bronze statues sculpted by the most skilled artists of their time: Pheidias, Polycleitus, Kresilas, and Phradmon. It was the largest building in the Greek world and was made *entirely* of marble.

The temple served as both a marketplace and a religious institution. For years, the sanctuary was visited by merchants, tourists, artisans, and kings who paid homage to the goddess by sharing their profits with her. Recent archeological excavations at the site revealed gifts from pilgrims including statuettes of Artemis made of gold and ivory... earrings, bracelets, and necklaces... artifacts from as far as Persia and India.

On the night of 21 July 356 BC, a man named Herostratus burned the temple to ground in an attempt to immortalize his name. He did indeed. Strangely enough, Alexander the Great was born the same night. The Roman historian Plutarch later wrote that the goddess was “too busy taking care of the birth of Alexander to send help to her threatened temple”. Over the next two decades, the temple was restored and is labeled “temple E” by archeologists. And when Alexander the Great conquered Asia Minor, he helped rebuild the destroyed temple.

When St Paul visited Ephesus to preach Christianity in the first century AD, he was confronted by the Artemis’ cult who had no plans to abandon their goddess. And when the temple was again destroyed by the Goths in AD 262, the Ephesians vowed to rebuild. By the fourth century AD, most Ephesians had converted to Christianity and the temple lost its religious glamor. The final chapter came when in AD 401 the Temple of Artemis was torn down by St John Chrysostom. Ephesus was later deserted, and only in the late nineteenth century has the site been excavated. The digging revealed the temple's foundation and the road to the now swampy site. Attempts were recently made to rebuild the temple, but only a few columns have been re-erected.

Read: Pollock, 189 (middle)



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The Case Against Paul

He challenged the wedding of commerce and religion

- Several Asian cities had helped build the Temple and were therefore represented in the hierarchy of priests allowed to worship there (Pollock, 188)
 - Pagans also regarded it as a center for trade/commerce
- Paul's emphasis on *how* to live went harshly against the cultural grain

He spread the word

- The example of *Philemon*
 - Wealthy businessman from Colossae who probably had come to Ephesus to trade
 - Met Paul, was convicted by his message, and converted to Christianity
 - Returned to Colossae w/Epaphras (an Ephesian) who traveled with him to other cities nearby (Hierapolis, Laodicea)
- This strategy was apparently very successful in the surrounding region
 - A tactic Paul used to reach the pagan "country-dwellers" without having to go there himself

He threatened the system

- The city/temple was a hotbed of sorcery, the occult and magic arts
 - Note later references in his letter back to the Ephesians
 - **Ephesians 1:18-21** Christ's power, authority and dominion over all
 - **Ephesians 2:18** Access through one spirit
 - **Ephesians 4:3-6** Unity of the Spirit
 - **Ephesians 5:8-16** Children of light, not darkness. Live well.
- Paul countered with miracles of his own – a new practice with the exception of Troas and Iconium
 - **Read: Pollock, 189-191** excerpts and **Acts 19:11-16**
- The unbelieving leadership had to counter ...
 - Gallio's decision in Corinth disallowed Paul's arrest for propagating an unlawful cult
 - Jews couldn't apply domestic law because he had removed himself from their jurisdiction

The solution ...

-- *The following is educated conjecture based on conflicting historical alternatives (Pollock, 192) --*

... accuse Paul of robbery of the Temple Tax owed to Jerusalem

- All Jews were expected to pay a tax, which was collected for the Asian provinces in Ephesus
- Because of the rapid growth of The Way, contributions to the fund dropped sharply
- Jews lodged a formal complaint of temple robbery with the Roman authorities
- ***The Riot in Ephesus (Acts 19:23-41)***



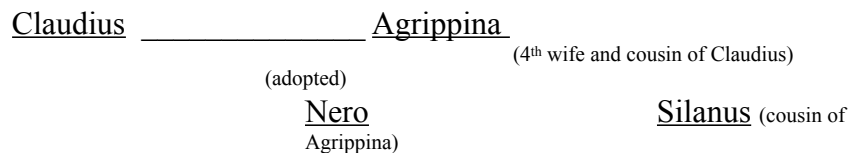
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The Plot Thickens ...

- **Silanus** – *Proconsul of Asia* – had Paul arrested in 53 A.D. even though he knew the charges were contrived
 - o Imprisoned in Ephesus – though it was a lenient imprisonment
 - *Civis Romanus Sum* again!
 - Probably still able to teach and move about chained to a guard
 - o Some believe he wrote Philippians from prison here (re: Pollock, Ch. 25)

Caesar Augustus

(great grandchildren)



- Agrippina had Claudius poisoned so that her son Nero could take the throne
- Because her cousin Silanus also had rights (by blood) to the throne, she had to have him killed to ensure Nero's position
- o In 54 A.D. Silanus refused to have Paul convicted
 - Though an actual demonstration of Roman justice, the net effect was to mark Paul as a man protected by Silanus
 - When Silanus was assassinated by Agrippina, Paul became a target for those who replaced him (Silanus)
 - Celer and Helius took over the province pending the arrival of a new proconsul, and "proceeded to liquidate their enemies." (Pollock, 201)

Time to "get out of Dodge" (**Acts 20:1**)

- Paul heads to Troas, Macedonia and, eventually, Corinth ...

Discussion Questions

- Paul used the Greek gymnasium in Ephesus as a center for teaching the gospel. Yet the gymnasium of those days was also a place for naked exercise and self-infatuation. How do you reconcile Paul's willingness to use such a place with a proper Christian worldview? Is there a lesson in this for us today?
- What does Paul's example in Ephesus offer us as we confront the hedonistic, amoral, materialistic society in which we live?



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- Do you think the explanation for Paul's departure from Ephesus is reasonable? Why or why not?
- What new tactic did Paul institute for spreading the gospel from Ephesus (hint: think Philemon)? Do we have any evidence for the effectiveness of this tactic?

Take Away Point

Compare and contrast the situation in Ephesus with the modern challenges we face in confronting pluralism, spiritualism and widespread New Age thought in our culture.



The Man Who Turned The World Upside Down

Lesson 10: Back to Jerusalem To Take a Stand

<Show Video: 46:10 – 51:06>

Arrived in Corinth winter of 56-57 A.D.

- Romans written from there
- **Read: Pollock, 227, 229**

Paul had expressed his desire to head west to Rome and Spain in the past, but his heart seemed to call him back to Jerusalem to demonstrate his love for his own people (through the offerings) and declare Christ to his own people once and for all.

- Note near the end of his letter to the Romans (15:30-33), *“Pray that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea and that my service in Jerusalem may be acceptable...”*

From Corinth, Paul planned to sail to Caesarea for the return

- Caught wind of a plot by Corinthian Jews to use him as a man-overboard drill
- Changed plans to set off on foot back the way he had come
- Walked from Troas to Assos (about 30 miles) alone to contemplate his future
 - o Rome or Judea? – **Read: Pollock, 241**
 - o Note Paul was “in a hurry to reach Jerusalem” after this (**Acts 20:16**)

Interesting note (see Appendix 1: “Tychicus of Asia” from *Touchstone*, July/August 2005)

- (Double click on the image on the following page to expand)
- The burden and danger associated with this band of brothers and the practical/physical difficulty of their mission.

Port stop of 2-3 days in Miletus (50 miles west of Ephesus) allowed him an opportunity to visit the Ephesian elders for one last farewell (**Acts 20:17-38, 21:1a**)

Tyre – Ptolemais – Caesarea – Jerusalem

The prophecy of **Agabus** (**Acts 21:10-11**) Paul’s response (**Acts 21: 13-14**)

- **Agabus** had credibility from his prophecy of the famine that struck the Roman Empire (**Acts 11:27-30**)
- Also accompanied by *Philip* (of Ethiopian eunuch fame and a fellow deacon with Stephen)
- Paul stayed “for a number of days” in Caesarea (**Acts 21:10**)
 - o Why, if he was in such a hurry to get to Jerusalem?

The report to, and decision of, the Council of Jerusalem

- **Read: Acts 21:17-26**
- In his letter to the Romans, Paul had urged them never to do evil that good might come. Now, is he rejecting his own advice?



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- Accompanied by the four men with whom he had shared the ritual purification, Jews assume he had brought uncircumcised pagans into the Temple
- This was grounds for lynching
- Read: **Acts 21:30-40**
 - o Paul recounts his “bio” and experience on the road to Damascus
 - o The final straw for the Jews: **Acts 22:21**

The Roman garrison commander arrests and orders Paul to the barracks, not knowing the cause of this serious civil disturbance

- **Read: Pollock, 255-256**
- *Lysias* (the Roman commander) assumes he is an illiterate, troublemaking Egyptian
 - o “May I say something to you?” (**21:37**) is in Greek
 - o “A citizen of no ordinary city” (**21:39**) is a quote from the poet Euripides
- *Civis Romanus Sum* again!
- **Note that, without this claim, Paul would never have made it to Rome!**

Before the Sanhedrin

Lysias releases Paul and orders that the Jewish leadership deal with the problem

- Using the same tactic he used in Athens, Paul splits the Sanhedrin
 - o Note the argument of the Pharisees (**23:9**)
 - Paul was convinced that the Pharisees would believe in Jesus if they saw him as Paul did
- The violence of the riot before, and within the Sanhedrin here, must have been frightening
 - o God’s reassurance (**Acts 23:11**)
- Some 40 Jews took a vow to not eat or drink until they had killed him
 - o Paul’s nephew warns him (**23:16-22**)
 - o Our only reference to Paul’s family – he had a sister
 - Pollock notes that from this point on Paul has money at his disposal – reconciliation?

Trial before the Roman Governor Felix

- Transferred to Caesarea under cover of night and kept under guard in Herod’s palace
- **Read: Acts 23:27-29**
- *Ananias*, the high priest from Jerusalem, argues his case
 - o High priest since 47 A.D. and described as “one of the most rapacious men ever to disgrace the office” (Pollock, 257)
 - o His case is full of lies
- Note that *Felix* was “well acquainted with the Way” (24:22)
 - o Married to a Jew, *Drusilla*
 - o Notoriously greedy – described by *Tacitus* as a man who “... exercised the power of a king with the mind of a slave.” (Pollock, 261)



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- o Had arranged for the high priest (Jonathan, who had preceded Ananias) to be assassinated in the Temple
- o Was “afraid” of Paul’s message
 - ***Paul was trying to evangelize him!***
- Paul held for **two years** as a political favor to the Jews
 - o Felix was unwilling to antagonize the Jews by acquitting Paul
 - He was also not prepared to commit an injustice by condemning him
 - o Another riot in Caesarea in 59 A.D. had him recalled to Rome in disgrace (Pollock, 266)
- Succeeded by *Porcius Festus*

Trial before Festus

- *Festus* was a more noble character who died after only 2 years in office
- Refused to order Paul back to Jerusalem – made Jewish authorities come to him again
- Demanded legal proof of Paul’s crimes but none was offered (**Acts 25:17-19**)
- Paul realized that the procrastination of *Felix* would probably not improve under *Festus*
 - o **Read: Pollock, 267-268**
 - o Paul had found a way to get to Rome!
- Forwarded the case to *King Agrippa*

Paul appeals to Agrippa

- *Agrippa* the son of Herod Agrippa I and a Jewish proselyte
- Titular king (title in name only, devoid of real political power) of the Roman state set up in northeast Palestine
- Unmarried brother of *Bernice*, with whom he lived in incest
 - o *Bernice* later went to Rome and became the mistress of Emperor *Titus* – the general who leveled Jerusalem and slaughtered its inhabitants
 - o *Drusilla* was their sister (nice family)
- **Read: Acts 26:4-5, 8**
 - o **26:17-18** quoting Jesus to open Agrippa’s eyes about his need to repent
 - o **26:28** Still evangelizing!
- **Read: Acts 26:28-32**

Paul gets his wish and sails for Rome ...

Discussion Questions

- A look at the events leading to Paul’s return to Jerusalem seems to show that the decision to return there was difficult for him, yet he made it and began the trek with enthusiasm. What evidence do we have for what might have changed his mind?



The Man Who Turned The World Upside Down

- Along each segment of the journey Paul faced difficult and unfair obstacles to his desired end. How did his background prepare him for this time in his life? Give specific examples.
- During his various trials in Jerusalem and Caesarea, Paul must have experienced dismay and frustration at the events going on around him. But instead of becoming distracted or distressed by those events he discovered a plan emerging that eventually led to his journey to Rome. What lesson is there in this for us today?

Take Away Point

The trajectory of our lives sometimes seems to be going anywhere but the way we planned. Though we should be intelligent about our choices, we must also realize that our plans are subordinate to God's sovereignty.



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Lesson 11: Paul's Final Journey

<Show Video: 51:07 – 1:00:54>

Festus commissioned a centurion named *Julius* to accompany the prisoners to Rome

- Paul, as the only prisoner of rank, was allowed two attendants and free movement aboard the ship
 - o *Luke* – the physician
 - o *Aristarchus* – a Thessalonican who had escorted Paul back on the 3rd Journey
- The rest of the prisoners/convicts were being sent to Rome as lion fodder for the Roman games or to be trained as gladiators
 - o These would have been chained below decks
- Estimated to have left Caesarea in August of 59 A.D. to arrive Rome in October
- **Acts 27:3** -- immediately Julius succumbed to Paul's charm and air of authority
- **Read: Pollock, 275**
- In port at Myra – (*Saint Nicholas of Myra* became Santa Claus)
 - o Transferred to a larger ship here
 - o **Read: Pollock, 276-277**

A powerful northwest wind out of the Aegean Sea prevented them sailing due west. Instead they “ran” south toward Crete and the protection it would afford them.

- Considered wintering in Fair Haven but the ship's Captain believed they could make it with a south wind
- The south wind turned to a violent northeaster a few days later

Fourteen days after leaving Crete (**Acts 27:27**) they were shipwrecked on Malta.

- This corresponds exactly to the reconstructed voyage of the Scot James Smith's voyage of 1848.

Paul in Rome

Kept under house arrest still – manacled and chained to a soldier – but able to continue his ministry and receive visitors while waiting for his audience with the Emperor. While there, he came in contact with three individuals who prompted his correspondence from there (Longenecker, 82-85):

- **Epaphras**
 - o Either imprisoned with him or became a regular visitor there (**Philemon 23**)
 - o Seems to have been the founder of the Colossian church (**Col 1:7, 4:12, 13**)
 - o His report of heresy threatening to pervert the Gospel in Colossae
 - *Syncretism* – mixing Jewish practices with the dualistic Greek philosophy that denied the resurrection and thought the physical world to be evil and corrupt
 - o Paul's letter to the **Colossians** proclaims the “cosmic” Christ as the one within whom all the fullness of God dwells
- **Onesimus**



The Man Who Turned The World Upside Down

- o A slave of Philemon who had robbed his master and fled to Rome
- o Paul probably met him through Epaphras
- o Paul persuaded him to return to his master
- o The book of **Philemon** is Paul's urging the wealthy man to receive his servant back as a "beloved brother in the Lord" (**Philemon 16**)
- o References to him and Tychicus (remember him?!) in Col 4:7-9 suggest that he returned to Colossae with Tychicus
 - They also probably delivered the letter to the **Ephesians** at the same time
- o The letter (Philemon) planted the seed that would ultimately lead to the abolition of slavery
 - This previously unheard of concept was the natural progression of Paul's approach:
 - *Christ consciousness in the individual extended to a Christian consciousness in society*
- **Epaphroditus**
 - o Resident of Philippi, which church had financially aided Paul at least twice before
 - o Philippians sent him with a gift and probably also to serve Paul in his confinement
 - o Apparently became seriously ill while with Paul
 - o Paul wrote Philippians ...
 - To thank them for their financial aid (Philippians 4:10-19)
 - To commend this man and defend him against any criticism that he may not have completed his task (Philippians 2:25-30)
 - Also meant to warn them against the ever-present Judaizers

Many have concluded that Paul was executed at this point because Luke's narrative in Acts ends here. But there are important clues in other letters (including the above-referenced letter to the Philippians), and in history, which allow that this may not have been the case.

- **Roman law** prescribed that a prisoner could not be held more than 2 years after an appeal if they were not prosecuted
 - o **Acts 28:30** clearly states that Paul had spent that amount of time imprisoned
- **Philippians 1:20** alludes to an approaching termination of his case
- **Philippians 2:24** and **Philemon 22** express Paul's hope that he would visit them shortly
- The letter of **Clement of Rome to the Corinthians**, written in about 96 A.D.
 - o **Read Longenecker, 85**
- **The Pastoral Epistles** (1 & 2 Timothy and Titus)
 - o Allude to events which do not fit into the Acts narrative
 - o Also name individuals that do not appear in any of the missionary journeys

A reasonable conclusion ...



The Man Who Turned The World Upside Down

- Paul was released from prison from 63-66 A.D.
 - o This is when he would have written **1 Timothy** and **Titus**
 - o In these he appears free to move about and make plans
- Paul was re-arrested in late 66 or early 67 A.D.
 - o **2 Timothy** is written from prison and its tone suggests that the end is near
 - o Listen carefully to the end of what is probably Paul's last correspondence ...
 - **2 Timothy 4:9**
 - **2 Timothy 4:11-12**
 - **2 Timothy 4:13** ...and finally ...
 - **2 Timothy 4:6-8, 18**
- Executed by Nero in 67 A.D.
 - o Tradition has it that he was beheaded

Discussion Questions

- Paul finally reached Rome as he had wanted to for some time, yet his journey there did not materialize as he had planned it. Considering that he was near 60 years old at the time of the journey, what lessons do you draw about Paul's character, perseverance and patience during these events? What influences did his personality have on those around him? Give specific examples.
- Several of Paul's letters appear to have been written from Rome as we discussed. How does the content of those letters compare to his earlier writings? What similarities and/or differences do you note in them?
- Does the conclusion drawn here about how the final chapter of Paul's life seem reasonable to you? Why or why not? Are the specific details of these events critical to the theological issues Paul addresses in his letters?

Take Away Point

The end of Paul's life stands in sharp contrast to the life of privilege into which Paul was born. Symbolic of this point is his simple, practical request for a cloak in 2 Timothy. This "big picture" view should temper the materialistic, self-infatuated view of life our society promotes, and we too often accept.



The Man Who Turned The World Upside Down

Lesson 12: Lessons from Paul

<Show Video: Chapter 10, 1:01:36 – 1:06:05>

We've looked at Paul's entire life through a magnifying glass. So the question becomes, "So what."
What is the relevance of Paul's life and message to us today?

Legalism

- *His view of The Law and the Judaizers*
 - The influence and perspective that comes from his background and upbringing
 - **Galatians**
 - **Philippians**
 - The Jerusalem Council

Libertinism

- Minimizes/denies the Lordship of Christ
- Affects our eschatology (view of the end times)
 - Jesus will be back soon ... (**1 Thessalonians**)
 - ...but not that soon! (**2 Thessalonians**)

The Person of Christ

- As it relates to The Law above
 - The divine plan of redemption is the focal point of human history made visible in the work of Christ
- As it relates to the modern denials of Christ's divinity
- "In Christ"
 - This phrase (or some variation of it) occurs 172 times in Paul's writings alone
 - 164 times in Romans through the Epistles, 8 more times in Timothy/Titus
 - "The personal and intimate communion of man with his God, and of God through Christ with man, is the basis for the Christian's life, hope and acceptance." (Longenecker, 99)
- The "Lordship" of Christ
 - **Colossians**

Dualism

- *Asceticism and Pneumaticism*
 - Body & Soul (or Inner and Outer man) cannot be separated
 - **1 & 2 Corinthians**
 - **Ephesians**
- *Gnosticism*
 - The disparagement of the supremacy of Christ
 - Remember that full-blown gnosticism did not arise until the 2nd century
 - Paul's experience was with an earlier, dualistic form of Greek thinking that he met with in the cultures he addressed
 - **Colossians**
 - Syncretism like this is very applicable today
- *His view of the Christian ethic*
 - Paul never proclaimed salvation through a renewal of character but ...
 - ... he also never taught the possibility of living the Christian life apart from being "in Christ."
 - Having the "mind of Christ"



The Man Who Turned The World Upside Down

Hierarchy and Equality

- No person is an island unto themselves
 - o Hierarchy of function ... (1 & 2 Timothy, Titus)
 - o Equality of worth and love (Philemon)
 - In the church
 - In the family
 - In society

Perseverance

- Any explanation required?

Vocation –vs- Avocation

- Vocation
 - o A regular occupation, especially one for which a person is particularly suited or qualified
 - o An inclination, as if in response to a summons, to undertake a certain kind of work, especially a religious career; a calling
- Avocation
 - o An activity taken up in addition to one's regular work or profession, usually for enjoyment; a hobby

“Paul stands as almost a unique a figure as there is in the annals of Christian history. He combined the fervency of an evangelist, the compassion of a pastor, the perception of a scholar, and the diplomacy of a statesman ... and a constant openness to the Spirit. Such an example of a Christian life and ministry stands as both a paradigm and an inspiration to us today.”

(Longenecker, 111-112)

Take Away Point

“Keep your soul in the presence of God ... This ... is your profession. For as sure as God is one God, so sure it is that he has but one command for all mankind – whether they be bond or free, rich or poor – and that is: to act up to the excellency of that nature which he has given them, to live by reason, to walk in the light of religion, to use everything as wisdom directs, to glorify God in all his gifts, and dedicate every condition of life to his service.”

~ William Law, 1728

“A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life”

