

The Book of Romans

Paul The Apostle

Student Notes

Romans is considered by many to be Paul's premier exegesis of the gospel. It covers a great deal of issues modern society deals with.

- Romans speaks to us morally.
- Romans speaks to us intellectually.
- Romans speaks to us socially.
- Romans speaks to us psychologically.
- Romans speaks to us spiritually.
- Romans speaks to theologically.

The very first word in Romans is “Paul. So what do we know about Paul – and how does Paul’s biography mold the very letter of Romans?

- **Saul of Tarsus**

Born in Tarsus -- probably named after Israel's first king, Saul. Paul's father was

Jewish by descent, but also a Roman citizen.

Tarsus: A university town and a center of Greek culture located in Cilicia -- at the northeastern corner of the Mediterranean Sea. (Part of modern day Turkey).

1. Capital of the Roman province of Cilicia. (Jews allowed to receive Roman citizenship.) 2. Home of Stoic philosophers like Athenodorus, Zeno, Antipater, and Nestor(First century A.D.) 3. Site of one of the three great universities in the Greek world: Athens, Alexandria.

Early Education: 13 years old: Saul sent to Jerusalem to received a portion of his education under Gamaliel (grandson of perhaps the most famous rabbi who ever lived, Hillel.) Gamaliel's School: Emphasis on memorizing and interpreting of Scripture. The format was normally question and answer.

1. Paul taught matters of Greek culture and philosophy, as well as Jewish law. 2. Trained in family trade: Leather worker. (Tent making was a fairly common occupation in Tarsus.)

No direct evidence Saul ever met Christ during his earthly life. Probably completed his education & returned back to Tarsus. Some historians believe he became the leader of a synagogue in Tarsus.

Saul's zeal: "...Circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to

the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.” -- Philippians 3:2-5

Acts 7 – Saul in the city of Jerusalem when a persecution of the Christians occurred: “[They] dragged [Stephen] out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. - Acts 7:57

Saul’s testimony before Agrippa:

“I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the saints in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. In my obsession against them, I even went to foreign cities to persecute them. -- Acts 26:9-11

Conversion:

- Saul goes to the high priest and desired letters giving him permission to arrest Christians in Damascus and take them back to Jerusalem
- Blinding light – voice asking “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?”
- Blind for three days until Ananias comes and prays for him. Saul is immediately healed and Ananias baptizes him.

- Tries to immediately evangelize Damascus.
- Ends up in the region of Arabia – and for three years he receives personal revelations from Christ.

Early Ministry:

- Returns to Damascus and starts preaching again. (Gets himself in great danger and – according to 2 Corinthians 11 -- some disciples rescued him by lowering him over the town wall in a basket.)
- Rejected at Jerusalem: Barnabas takes Saul to the apostles and they give him a hearing. Paul sent back to Tarsus – (Created too many problems for the leaders to deal with).
- Pastoral Ministry: Acts 15 seems to indicate Saul started a church in Tarsus; probably founded several churches. Acts 15:41 says he went through Syria and Cilicia confirming the churches.
- Barnabas takes Paul to Antioch (far north in Syria). Paul installed as pastor for the Antioch. Barnabas and Paul become

close friends and ministry associates. Acts 11:29-30:
“The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea. This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

- **The Apostolic Era:** Antiochan prayer meeting: Holy Spirit indicates Barnabas and Saul should be sent out. From Acts 13 to 21 Paul takes three great missionary journeys.

Third journey: Paul goes to Ephesus and stays there for several years. (pastoral and evangelistic work). Leaves Ephesus & goes to Macedonia and then Corinth – 3rd time.

Writes the epistle to the Romans at Corinth (or very close geographically).