

PAUL, OR SAUL OF TARSUS

rated in Gen 12–50, which may be divided into three broad parts focusing on the stories of Abraham (Gen 12–25), Isaac (Gen 25–26), and Jacob and his descendants (Gen 27–50).

The patriarchs were the first bearers of God's promise to future generations (see **Covenant**). Genesis 12–50 narrates a series of linked promise episodes that trace the beginnings of the plan of salvation in human history. The remaining books of the Bible chart the fulfillment of these promises as they build up to a final fulfillment in Christ (CCC 704–6, 2570–74). The patriarchs are thus more than the genealogical fathers of Israel: they are the spiritual fathers of all who believe (Heb 4:1–28). Thus Abraham's righteousness made him "the father of all who believe" (Rom 4:11; cf. Gen 12:2, 15:5–6).

PATROBAS A Christian of Rome who received greetings from Paul in Romans (16:14).

PATROCLUS The father of **Nicanor**; he was an official in the Seleucid army (2 Macc 8:9).

PAU The royal city of King Hadar of Edom (Gen 36:39; cf. 1 Chr 1:50).

PAUL, OR SAUL OF TARSUS One of the greatest theologians, writers, and missionaries in the history of the Church. Paul had a decisive role in the spread of the Christian faith and was known as the apostle to the Gentiles (Rom 11:13).

Paul's letters make up approximately one-third of the New Testament. The letters attributed to Paul are Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians,

1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon; the Letter to the Hebrews may also have connections with the apostle. (See *also under individual letters for other details on Paul.*)

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I. LIFE OF PAUL

A. *Early Life and Conversion*

The book of Acts and his own writings give us little information about the early life of Paul. Born Saul in the town of Tarsus, in the Roman province of Cilicia, he was a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin (Rom 11:1; Phil 3:5), but he also possessed Roman citizenship—a useful privilege that entitled him to important legal rights (Acts 22:25–29). He was sent at some time to Jerusalem, where he studied "at the feet of Gamaliel," the famous rabbi (Acts 22:3), and became a zealous member of the **Pharisees** (Acts 26:5). Paul thus received an excellent education and was one of the most erudite and learned figures in the early Church.

He first encountered the Christian faith in Jerusalem, where the Church had taken root. Saul was an inveterate enemy of the Church and was present at the martyrdom of Saint Stephen, "consenting to his death" (Acts 7:58–

8:1). He was still a young man when he assumed a leading role in the persecution of the Christians (Acts 7:58, 26:10; 1 Cor 15:9; Gal 1:13).

He was "still breathing threats and murder against the disciples" when he set out for Damascus to arrest Christians (Acts 9:1-2). On his way he was stopped by a vision of the risen and glorified Christ, an event that is recounted three times in the book of Acts (Acts 9:1-19; 22:5-16; 26:12-18). With overwhelming clarity he understood that the Jesus who was worshipped by the Christians he had persecuted was the divine Messiah. This extraordinary event forever changed his life and mission.

Left blind by the light, Saul was taken to Damascus where he sat in darkness for three days. After he was baptized by **Ananias** (Acts 9:17-18), Saul accepted the challenge offered to him by God, and his sight was restored. Leaving Damascus (an event described in Gal 1:17 but not mentioned in Acts), Saul withdrew into Arabia, presumably for prayer and meditation. He then returned to Damascus and began preaching the faith. Owing to the danger of being seized by the governor under King **Aretas** of Nabatea and possibly being murdered by the local Jews (Acts 9:23-25; 2 Cor 11:32), Saul made a secret escape from the city, being lowered over the wall in a basket.

B. Missionary Labors

Three years later he came to Jerusalem to spend more than two weeks with the apostle Peter (called "Cephas," Gal 1:18). Perhaps around A.D. 46, Saul was at Antioch in Syria where the Holy Spirit declared: "Set apart for

me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them" (Acts 13:2).

Here Acts mentions that Saul "is also called Paul" (Acts 13:9), and from here on the narrative calls him Paul. He may well have had both names most of his life: even today, many orthodox Jews retain the custom of having a Jewish name for family and synagogue, and a Gentile name for business with the outside world. Acts thus begins to call Paul by his Gentile name when his mission to the Gentiles gets under way.

The First Missionary Journey

Paul and Barnabas, along with **Mark**, set out on what is called the first missionary journey to Cyprus and southern Asia Minor (Acts 13:4-14:28). Paul preached and founded Christian communities in Antioch, Pisidia, Iconium, and elsewhere.

His strategy was to seek out the local synagogue as the base of his missionary operations and move on from there. In this way he was able to reach both Jews and Gentiles with the Gospel message. At Lystra, where he cured a cripple, Paul and Barnabas were revered by the crowd as gods (Acts 14:8-18). His labors also caused local disturbances, and at one point he was stoned by a mob and left for dead (Acts 14:27). Nevertheless, the return of Paul and Barnabas to Antioch (ca. A.D. 49) brought with it Paul's joyous declaration that the Gentiles were eager for conversion and that "he had opened a door of faith" to them (Acts 14:27).

At the end of this first mission, which was one of the early efforts at systematic outreach to non-Jews, Paul was forced to confront the

theological question of whether Gentile converts needed to be circumcised according to the Law of Moses. Since some Jewish Christians insisted on circumcision, Paul brought the matter to Jerusalem, where the Church's first council convened in about A.D. 49. Paul's stance was vindicated when Peter and the elders made it clear that circumcision was *not* to be forced on Gentile believers who had come to embrace the Gospel (Acts 15:1–11).

Second Missionary Journey

Paul set out on the Second Missionary Journey (around A.D. 50) with **Silas** (Acts 15:36–18:22). It lasted about two years. He traveled to Tarsus and then revisited the churches of Asia Minor. **Timothy** joined him at Lystra (Acts 16:1–3). It is possible that at this time he converted the Galatians of central Asia Minor (*see Galatians, Letter to the*). Paul was then told in a vision to go to Macedonia. He crossed the Hellespont and thus brought the faith into Europe. Reaching Philippi, he made his first convert, a Macedonian named Lydia, who came from Thyatira (Acts 16:14–15). After being imprisoned briefly for exorcising a slave girl of a "spirit of divination" (Acts 16:16–18), Paul journeyed to Thessalonica, Beroea, and then Athens. In Athens he encountered Greek philosophers, including Stoics and Epicureans. They listened to his words but were largely unmoved (Acts 17:16–34), and Paul moved on to Corinth. He stayed there for some time, well over a year, firmly establishing the Christian community there (Acts 18:1–18). Leaving Greece, he sailed to Palestine and rejoined the church in Antioch.

Third Missionary Journey

The Third Missionary Journey began soon after (around A.D. 53) (Acts 19:1–21:16). He paid another visit to Asia Minor and then went to Ephesus, where he stayed for two years and taught in the "hall of Tyrannus" (Acts 19:4–10). While at Ephesus, he also wrote his First Letter to the Corinthians. His departure proved necessary owing to the rioting of silversmiths who were upset at the shrinking business in the shrine of the goddess Artemis (Acts 19:23–41).

Going on to Philippi, in Macedonia, he wrote his Second Letter to the Corinthians. Proceeding to Corinth, he wrote his magnificent letter to the Romans, but he kept his sojourn a short one, his intention being to gather money to relieve the hunger then afflicting the Christians in Judea (Rom 15:25–26; 1 Cor 16:3). On his way back to Jerusalem, he met the elders of the church at Ephesus in Miletus, bidding them a tearful farewell with the premonition of his impending imprisonment and martyrdom (Acts 20:17–37).

C. Imprisonment

Back in Jerusalem, he was attacked by his Jewish enemies, beaten by a mob, and rescued from death by a squad of Roman soldiers (Acts 21:27–36). When he was subsequently brought before the Sanhedrin on charges of bringing Gentiles into the Temple, he skillfully divided the council by appealing to the Pharisees' belief in the resurrection against the Sadducees' denial of it (Acts 22:30–23:10). Invoking his rights as a Roman citizen, he was sent to Caesarea for trial before the governor. The procurator Felix put him in prison for two years

(ca. A.D. 58–60), and the trial was held only under Felix's successor Porcius Festus. Paul, as was his right, appealed to Caesar; so off to Rome he went, after meeting and much impressing King **Herod Agrippa** (Acts 25–26). Under Roman guard, Paul sailed for Rome and was shipwrecked on the island of Malta (Acts 27:1–28:10). When he finally reached Rome, he was warmly received but kept under house arrest for about two years (ca. A.D. 60–62, Acts 28:11–31). He probably wrote his letters to the Colossians, the Philippians, Philemon, and perhaps the Ephesians (the so-called captivity Epistles) while in Rome.

D. Final Years

Details about his final days are not given in the NT. Some maintain that Paul must have been martyred at the end of his imprisonment in Acts 28. Others give a more probable account—namely, that Paul must have been released to continue his missionary activity, traveling perhaps as far west as Spain (*1 Clem.* 5.7) and as far east as Crete (Titus 1:5). Arrested again, he was taken back to Rome, kept in close confinement, and apparently knew his death was imminent, as is clear from his Second Letter to Timothy (in particular 2 Tim 4:6–8). He was martyred around A.D. 67 by Emperor Nero, most likely beheaded as reported by Tertullian. According to the apocryphal *Acts of Paul*, his place of martyrdom was on the left bank of the Tiber; he was said to have been buried in a cemetery on the Via Ostia owned by a Christian named Lucina, the site where the Basilica of S. Paolo Fuori le Mura (St. Paul-Outside-the-Walls) was built.

II. PAUL'S THEOLOGY

Paul's theology is not found systematized and set forth in a single treatise; it must be gleaned from his many epistles. Indeed, he is often considered the greatest theologian of early Christianity, and his teaching has had an enormous influence on Christian thinking ever since.

A. Theology of the Trinity

Several times Paul affirms the Jewish doctrine of monotheism—the belief that God is “one” and has revealed himself as the God of the Bible (Rom 3:30; Gal 3:20; 1 Tim 2:5). However, he discovered in the Gospel another truth, namely, that God, who is Father, has an eternal Son (Gal 1:16). The Son of God is likewise the divine Lord, and through him the created world came into being (1 Cor 8:4–6). He humbled himself and came into the world as the man Jesus Christ, so that all might be saved through him (Phil 2:5–8; 1 Tim 1:15). Christ is thus the image of the unseen God (Col 1:15), the one in whom “the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” (Col 2:9). His death for the sins of the world was a powerful sign of God's love for the world (Rom 5:8).

The mystery of God unfolded still more when Paul realized that the Spirit was also the divine Lord (2 Cor 3:17). The Spirit, like the Son, was sent forth from the Father for a saving mission to the world (Gal 4:4–7). Indeed, the divine Spirit is both the “Spirit of God” and the “Spirit of Christ” (Rom 8:9). As such, he alone can be said to search out and comprehend the thoughts of God (1 Cor 2:10–11). Through his indwelling in the believer, the love of God is

poured out in the human heart, producing in our lives a fruitful harvest of "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal 5:22-23).

In essence, Paul teaches that God is a trinity of divine persons (2 Cor 13:14), through whom the gifts of God are given to men (1 Cor 12:4-6) and the whole drama of salvation is orchestrated and brought to fulfillment (Eph 1:13-14).

B. Theology of Salvation

Paul is rightly known for his teaching on salvation, which is fuller in his writings than in any other writings of the NT. Its essence is set forth in the Pauline doctrine of **justification**—that is, his teaching that believers are made righteous in Christ (Rom 5:19) and made sons of God through the Spirit (Rom 8:14-15). Justification constitutes a salvation from sin and death and separation from God (Acts 13:38-39; Rom 5:9-11). It is the world's rescue from the fallen condition of Adam and the dominion of darkness to a state of peace with God in the Kingdom of his Son (Rom 5:1, 12-21; Col 1:13-14). Justification takes place in the liturgical context of **baptism** (1 Cor 6:11).

On the one hand, Paul insists that salvation is not a human achievement; it is not something we can earn or merit for ourselves by good works (Rom 3:28; Eph 2:8-9; Titus 3:5). His point is that no human action, nothing but the grace of God can establish us in Christ or make us sons of God. On the other hand, the gift of salvation must be received by faith (Rom 3:21-26; Gal 2:15-16, 3:26), which in Paul's theology involves not only mental

acceptance of the Gospel, but also an obedient response to the full range of the demands it makes upon the Christian (Rom 1:5; 2:13; 6:17-22). This includes such things as keeping the commandments of God (Rom 13:8-10; 1 Cor 7:19) and submitting to the leading of the Spirit (Rom 8:1-7).

C. Theology of the Church

In several places, Paul expounds a theology of the Church. His is not an individualistic vision of each believer being in a private relationship with Christ, but a collective vision of all Christians bound together in union with the Lord. No one image or metaphor can capture the full breadth of Paul's doctrine, and so we see varied depictions of the Church throughout his letters.

Most prominently, Paul depicts the Church as the body of Christ. In this vision, Christ is the head of the body, and the baptized are members of this body, each one taking its direction from the head and having a unique role to play (1 Cor 12:12-31; Eph 4:15, 5:23). Related to this, the Church is also the Bride of Christ, united with him in the most intimate ways; Christian marriage is a visible image of this greater reality (Eph 5:21-33; cf. 2 Cor 11:2). The background of this notion is the Old Testament image of the Lord as the husband of his covenant bride, Israel (Isa 54:5; Jer 3:1; Ezek 16; Hos 2:16).

The Church, according to Paul, is also intimately united to the Holy Spirit, not just individually, but again collectively. Just as the Spirit dwells within each believer, thereby making him or her a temple of the Spirit (1 Cor 6:19),

so the assembly of the faithful together constitutes the living temple of the Spirit (1 Cor 3:16; 2 Cor 6:16). This image brings out the holiness of the Church as a dwelling place of Almighty God (Eph 2:19–22).

The family of God is perhaps the most pervasive image of the Church in Paul. Unlike other prominent notions, the familial description is not confined to particular pockets in the Pauline letters; it is something that extends throughout. For instance, every time the apostle addresses his readers as “brothers,” he is working with the assumption that every Christian is a spiritual sibling of the next. The basis for this is not in the realm of metaphor at all. Rather, it is a consequence of the grace of adoption that makes all believers “sons” and “children” of God in relation to the Father (Rom 8:14–17; Gal 4:4–6). The gift of divine sonship in Christ was intended by God from before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4–5). Paul’s many references to Christians as “heirs” are also connected with this theology of spiritual kinship (Rom 8:17; Gal 4:7; Eph 1:14; Col 3:24; Titus 3:7).

PAULINE Having to do with **Paul**; an adjective often used to describe his theology or his writings.

PAULUS, SERGIUS The Roman proconsul of Cyprus and a convert to the Christian faith through Paul during the apostle’s first missionary journey (Acts 13:7–12). (See also **Elymas**.)

PE The seventeenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet (פ).

PEACE Harmony between persons and especially between God and man. Peace in the Bible is more than the absence of conflict or war: it signifies completeness, well-being, and what Saint Augustine called the “tranquility of order” (*City of God* 19.13).

The Hebrew word generally translated “peace”—*šālôm*—was understood in a host of senses. It was a common greeting and expression of regards and best wishes (cf. Gen 43:27; Exod 4:18). It also expressed a state of affairs between men characterized by peace that was achieved by treaties and covenants (cf. Josh 9:15; 1 Kgs 5:12). Above all, peace was the blessing that came from living faithfully to one’s **covenant** with God (Lev 26:3–13). The Lord desires peace and welfare for his people (Ps 35:27).

Peace is the gift of God, so Israel hoped for a Messiah to restore peace (Zech 9:9; cf. Isa 2:2–4, 11:1–9; Hag 2:7–9); the Messiah was called the Prince of Peace (Isa 9:6). Hence, peace truly is more than the mere end of fighting; it is more closely related to spiritual well-being. Prosperity and health are good, but they likewise are not peace without righteousness (Isa 48:18; 60:17).

In the New Testament, the term for peace, *eirēnē*, is used ninety-two times, mainly with the Old Testament understanding of *šālôm*. Peace is offered to another in greeting (John 20:19), and it is stressed as an expression of order and harmony (Luke 19:42; 1 Cor 14:33). The deeper themes of the OT are also still present, but they are elevated in light of the Gospel: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you” (John 14:27). Christ is the fulfillment of the Messianic expectations.