

Paul: The Man

God's "chosen instrument to carry his name to the Gentiles"

Paul's Name

"Saul, who was called Paul"

Paul's Name

Roman Names

- Traditional Roman names for male Roman citizens consisted of three parts (and not two as it is usually the case today): the *praenomen*, the *nomen* and the *cognomen*.
- The *praenomen*: a person's given name
The *nomen*: the name of the founding member of the clan
The *cognomen*: the particular family name
- For example: Gaius Julius Caesar

Paul's Name

Roman Names

- Paul three-part name is not recorded in Acts or in the epistles
- Paul's Hebrew name is "Saul" meaning "desired"

Paul's Name

Roman Names

- **Paulos** is the Greek equivalent of the Latin **Paulus**. The latter is attested as both a *praenomen* (though rarely) and a *cognomen* (quite frequently—e.g., Sergius Paulus in Acts 13:7).
- Notice Paul's introduction in Acts...
But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him (Acts 13:9 ESV)
- It suggests that **Paul** was his family name (*cognomen*) while **Saul** was his Jewish personal name. Paul might also be a nickname for "the small one."

Ben Witherington III, *The Paul Quest*, (Downers Grove IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), p. 72; David E. Graves, *Biblical Archaeology*, Volume 2, (Toronto: Electronic Christian Media, 2018), pp. 175-176

Paul's Name

Roman Names

- Significantly, the change of name in Acts comes not at the point of Saul's Damascus Road encounter but where he begins to do missionary work in the Greco-Roman world, specifically when he begins to approach a man named Serius Paulus! This may suggest an initial missionary strategy, attempting to identify with one's audience by assuming a Greek name.
- In any case, there was a very good reason for Paul not to go around the Greco-Roman world calling himself Saulos. In Greek *saulos* was used for someone who walked in a sexually suggestive manner like a prostitute.

Ben Witherington III, *The Paul Quest*, (Downers Grove IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), p. 72

Paul's Birthplace

Tarsus in Cilicia, "no ordinary city"

Paul replied, "I am a Jew and a citizen of Tarsus in Cilicia, which is an important city."

Acts 21:39 NLT

Paul's Birthplace

"Tarsus, no ordinary city"

- Tarsus was a significant city on the southern coast of Asia Minor.
- Situated on the river Cydnus, it sat in a wide plain with hill country behind and the snow-covered Taurus Mountains in the distance.
- Eastern Cilicia was a fertile plain but western Cilicia was forested and mountainous. The main pass through the mountains was called the "Cilician Gates."
- Tarsus served as a gateway for travelers heading inland.

Peter Walker, *In the Footsteps of Paul*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Books, 2019), pp. 40-41
M. N. Tod, "Tarsus," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1939), vol. v, pp.2914-2917



Paul's Birthplace

"Tarsus, no ordinary city"

- Tarsus was the capital of Cilicia, then a part of the province of Syria, but it had the title of metropolis and was a free city.
- As such, it was visited by figures such as Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Mark Antony and Cleopatra.

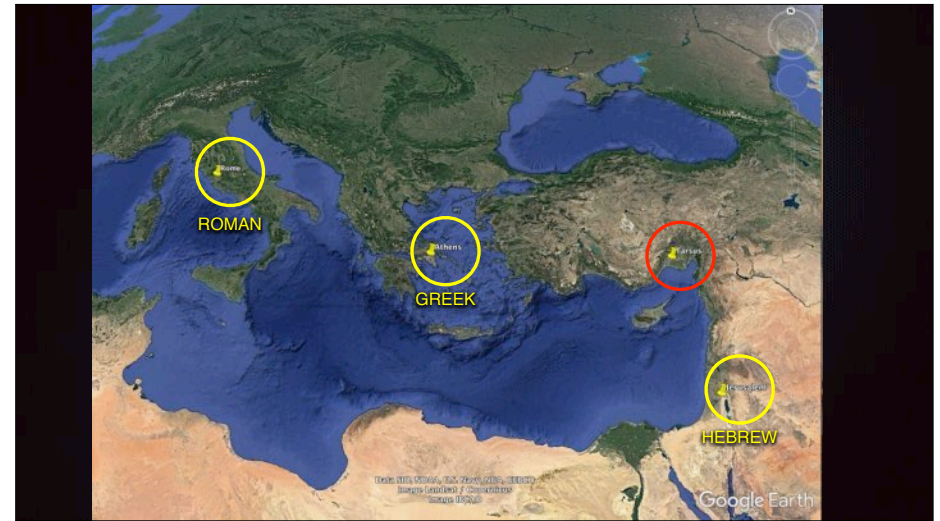
Peter Walker, *In the Footsteps of Paul*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Books, 2019), pp. 40-41

Paul's Birthplace

"Tarsus, no ordinary city"

- Though Tarsus was a Roman town, it was also a Jewish colony. The religions of the times all met there.
- It was one of the great seats of culture also. Thus the city provided the opportunity for Paul to be schooled in the social, political, intellectual, moral, and religious life of the period.
- "It was because Tarsus was a cosmopolitan city with 'an amalgamated society' that it possessed the peculiar suitability 'to educate and mold the mind of him who would in due time make the *religion of the Jewish race* intelligible to the *Greek-Roman world*.' As a citizen of Tarsus Paul was a citizen of the whole world."

M. N. Tod, "Tarsus," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1939), vol. v, pp. 2914-2917



Paul's Jewish Heritage

"A Jew of the tribe of Benjamin"

Paul's Jewish Heritage

"A Jew of the tribe of Benjamin"

- Paul was a Jew born in the city of Tarsus in the Roman province of Cilicia:
"I am a *Jew*, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, ... (Acts 22:3 ESV)

Paul's Jewish Heritage

"A Jew of the tribe of Benjamin"

- Paul was from the tribe of Benjamin:

If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; (Philippians 3:4-5 ESV)

Paul's Jewish Heritage

"A Jew of the tribe of Benjamin"

- He was named Saul

Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." (Acts 7:58-59 ESV)

Paul's Education

"Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained"

Paul's Education

"Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained"

- Paul was educated under Gamaliel:

"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day". (Acts 22:3 ESV)

- Gamaliel was a famous Jewish rabbi of the period, a member of the Sanhedrin: *But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in honor by all the people, stood up and gave orders to put the men outside for a little while. (Acts 5:34 ESV)*

Paul's Education

"Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained"

- Paul was educated as a Pharisee:

*If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a **Pharisee**; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. (Philippians 3:4-6 ESV)*

Paul's Education

"Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained"

- Paul's family must have been well off, as he did not have to attend the pagan schools of philosophy in Tarsus. Instead, he was sent to Jerusalem to the academy of Gamaliel, who was the grandson and most distinguished disciple of Hillel, the greatest Jewish sage of the Second Temple period ("Herod's Temple").
- Some people, citing Acts 22:3, believe that Paul was brought up in Jerusalem years before he entered the academy. At 13, Paul would have become a "son of the commandment" and taken his place alongside the men of the synagogue.

Educational Opportunities, *Journeys of Paul Study Guide*, p. 1

Paul's Education

"Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained"

- There were four major religious schools of thought within Jewish religion in the Second Temple Era (536 BC–70 AD): Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Zealots.
- The Pharisees were often the most vocal and influential.
- The goal of a strict Pharisee was to master the traditions of the Jews, their history, and the Torah (scriptures). Paul knew the law, written and oral, and observed it with strictness.

Educational Opportunities, *Journeys of Paul Study Guide*, p. 2
www.welcometohosanna.com/PAULS_MISSIONARY_JOURNEYS/0.1WholsPaul.html [2015-01-12]

Paul's Education

"Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained"

- The Pharisees (meaning "set apart," one who was separated for a life of purity) opposed the Sadducees, emphasizing strict interpretation and observance of the Mosaic law in both its oral and written form.
- Unlike the Sadducees, they believed in the resurrection of the dead — a literal resurrection of the body — and a future, messianic age.
- At different times they were a political party, a social movement and a school of thought.

www.welcometohosanna.com/PAULS_MISSIONARY_JOURNEYS/0.1WholsPaul.html [2015-01-12]

Paul's Education

"Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained"

- Of all the major sects, only the Pharisees survived the destruction of the temple in AD 70, because they taught that the worship of God was not confined to the Temple in Jerusalem, and stressed the direct relation between the individual and God.
- Some of the most stinging rebukes Jesus issued were directed toward the Pharisees. He criticized them on the grounds that for all their commendable observance of rules and tradition, they were unrepentant, neither loving God nor loving people.
- After the destruction of the Second Temple, the Pharisaic sect was re-established as Rabbinic Judaism.

www.welcometohosanna.com/PAULS_MISSIONARY_JOURNEYS/0.1WhoIsPaul.html [2015-01-12]

Paul's Roman Citizenship

"Paul, a Roman citizen, in chains"

Paul's Roman Citizenship

- We know that Paul was a Roman citizen because he used his citizenship privileges on two occasions.
- The first was during his mistreatment in Philippi.
As they stretched him out to flog him, Paul said to the centurion standing there, "Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who hasn't even been found guilty?"
When the centurion heard this, he went to the commander and reported it. "What are you going to do?" he asked. "This man is a Roman citizen."
(Acts 16:37-38)

Paul's Roman Citizenship

- The second was during his imprisonment in Caesarea:
But when they had stretched him out for the whips, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, "Is it lawful for you to flog a man who is a Roman citizen and uncondemned?"
When the centurion heard this, he went to the tribune and said to him, "What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman citizen."
So the tribune came and said to him, "Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?" And he said, "Yes." The tribune answered, "I bought this citizenship for a large sum." Paul said, "But I am a citizen by birth."

Paul's Roman Citizenship

So those who were about to examine him withdrew from him immediately, and the tribune also was afraid, for he realized that Paul was a **Roman citizen** and that he had bound him. (Acts 22:25-29 ESV)

Obtaining Roman Citizenship

Roman citizenship might be gained in one of several ways:

- One might be **born into the privilege** through parents who were Roman citizens, as the apostle Paul was. "I was born a citizen," Paul replied. (Acts 22:28)
- A **slave** could be granted citizenship by his master after long service or out of kindness.
- A **soldier** who had completed his compulsory service could be granted citizenship.

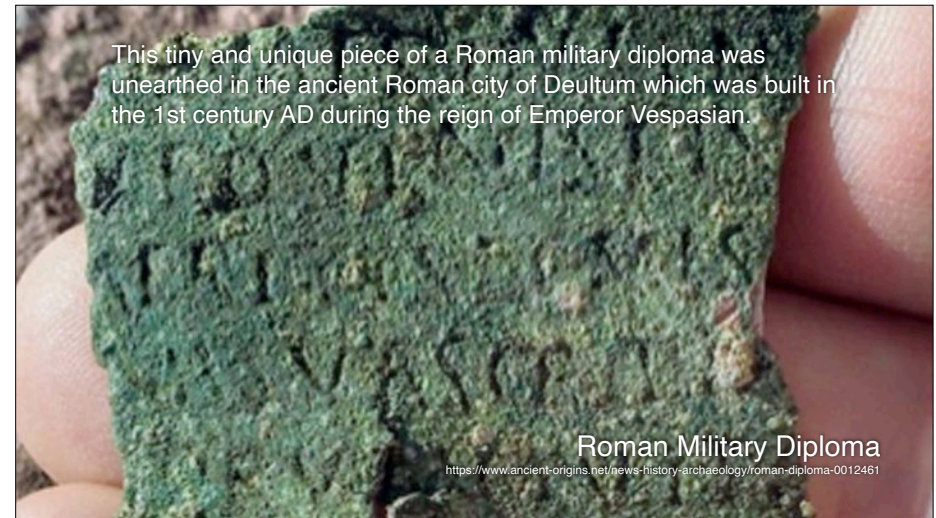
David E. Graves, *Biblical Archaeology*, Volume 2, (Toronto: Electronic Christian Media, 2018), pp. 175-176

This image (housed in the Getty Museum, 73.AC.39.1-2) shows one of two leaves of a certificate of discharge from the Roman army, hinged together by wires looped through the holes at the corners.

This discharge occurred under the Emperor Domitian, on November 7, AD 88, to Dassio, an auxiliary soldier who served in the army in Syria.

Roman Military Diploma

<https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/objects/7049/unknown-maker-one-plate-of-a-roman-military-diploma-roman-ad-88/>



This tiny and unique piece of a Roman military diploma was unearthed in the ancient Roman city of Deultum which was built in the 1st century AD during the reign of Emperor Vespasian.

Roman Military Diploma

<https://www.ancient-origins.net/news-history-archaeology/roman-diploma-0012461>

Fragementary Roman Military Diploma from Carnuntum

User:MatthiasKabel, CC BY-SA 3.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/> via Wikimedia Commons



Obtaining Roman Citizenship

The outside face reads:

The Emperor Caesar Domitian Augustus Germanicus, son of the deified Vespasian, pontifex maximus, holding the tribunician power for the eighth year, acclaimed "Imperator" seventeen times, having been consul fourteen times, censor for life, father of his country, has granted to the infantrymen and cavalry who are serving in five cavalry companies and two infantry, namely, the select Praetorian, the steadfast Gallic and Thracian, the Phrygian, the Sebastena, the Antianan of Gauls and Thracians; the First Gaetulian cohort and the First Augustan Thracian cohort —

David E. Graves, *Biblical Archaeology*, Volume 2, (Toronto: Electronic Christian Media, 2018), pp. 175-176

Obtaining Roman Citizenship

which are in Syria serving under Publius Valerius Patruinus --- and likewise to the men honorably discharged from these companies and cohorts who have served twenty-five years (their names are listed below), and to their children and descendants [to these the Emperor has granted] citizenship and the right of Roman marriage with the wives whom they had when citizenship was granted to them or, if any are unmarried, with those women whom they might marry later, with only one wife for each man.

David E. Graves, *Biblical Archaeology*, Volume 2, (Toronto: Electronic Christian Media, 2018), pp. 175-176

Obtaining Roman Citizenship

Dated on November 7 in the consulship of Manius Otacilius Catulus and Sextus Julius Sparsus (88 A.D.). To the soldier DASSIO, the son of Dasens, a Pannonian of the company of Phrugvans commanded by Marcus Helenius Priscus. This copy has been checked against the bronze tablet posted at Rome on the Capitol on the left side wall of the Public Record Office."

David E. Graves, *Biblical Archaeology*, Volume 2, (Toronto: Electronic Christian Media, 2018), pp. 175-176

Obtaining Roman Citizenship

- If you **worked for the government**, upon discharge you would receive a document making you a Roman citizen.
- If someone **performed an exceptional deed** for the state or a government official, then citizenship might be decreed as an appropriate reward by the state for this valuable act of service (*Cicero Balb. 8.19*).
- Large groups of people could be made citizens through **colonization** or by assimilation through a Roman law (*Strabo Georg. 5.1.6; Seutronius Jul. 28*).

David E. Graves, *Biblical Archaeology*, Volume 2, (Toronto: Electronic Christian Media, 2018), pp. 175-176

Obtaining Roman Citizenship

- A final means was through some form **financial consideration** provided in the form of either money, supplies or products, and allowing the giver to purchase their citizenship (*Cicero Phil. 2.92; 5.11-12; Cassius Dio Hist. Rom. 10.17.4-8; Tacitus Ann. 14.50.1*)
Then the commander said, "I had to pay a lot of money for my citizenship." (Acts 22:28 NIV)

David E. Graves, *Biblical Archaeology*, Volume 2, (Toronto: Electronic Christian Media, 2018), pp. 175-176

Value of Roman Citizenship

- Roman citizenship was a passport for travel throughout the Roman Empire. Paul's Roman citizenship would have provided him with advantages that would have assisted his work as a traveling evangelist... he would have an instant **entrée** to any city in the Empire, especially Roman colony cities like Corinth or Philippi. Given his social status, he would command **respect**, especially whenever he announced his citizenship. He would have ready access to Roman **roads** and could have traveled with other Roman citizens or even with Roman soldiers on a mission if need be. His positive **interaction** with the praetorian guard while under house arrest (see Philippians 1) was no doubt in part because they were not disposed to ignore a Roman citizen.

Ben Witherington III, *The Paul Quest*, (Downers Grove IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), pp. 71, 73

Value of Roman Citizenship

- Roman citizenship brought with it a certain level of respect. Paul was at any rate a "Roman gentleman," as is shown by the dignity of his bearing before governors and kings and the **respect** accorded him by the proconsul **Sergius Paulus**, the procurator **Porcius Festus**, and the centurion **Julius**, whose prisoner he was in the voyage to Rome.

A.T. Robertson, "Paul The Apostle," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1939), vol. iv, pp. 2265-2289

Value of Roman Citizenship

- Roman citizenship affected the ability to conduct business.

"In the realms of **business** (holding property, making contracts, and paying taxes), domestic affairs (getting married, having legitimate children and making wills), and litigation (courts, custody and punishments), the citizens were accorded better treatment than was the imperial subject who did not possess the franchise." (Rapske)

David E. Graves, *Biblical Archaeology*, Volume 2, (Toronto: Electronic Christian Media, 2018), pp. 175-176

Value of Roman Citizenship

- Roman citizenship came with certain legal protections:

Citizens could not be flogged or detained if they had not been tried in court
*"Is it legal for you to flog a **Roman citizen** who hasn't even been found guilty?"*
(Acts 22:40 ESV)

Citizens had the right to appeal to a magistrate. *"But if there is nothing to their charges against me, no one can give me up to them. I appeal to Caesar."* (Acts 25:11 ESV)

Citizens could not be executed without legal trial; and only the emperor could sentence a citizen to crucifixion. According to tradition, as a Roman citizen, Paul was beheaded with the sword.

David E. Graves, *Biblical Archaeology*, Volume 2, (Toronto: Electronic Christian Media, 2018), pp. 175-176



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BNUHqdCY6tw>

Influence of Roman Citizenship

- Paul would seize upon the Roman empire as a fit **symbol** of the kingdom of heaven. *"Our **citizenship** is in heaven"* (Philippians 3:20); *"Ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-**citizens** with the saints"* (Ephesians 2:19).
- Paul would show the Roman genius for **organizing** the churches established by him. Many of his churches would be in Roman colonies (Antioch in Pisidia, Philippi, Corinth, etc.).

A.T. Robertson, "Paul The Apostle," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1939), vol. iv, pp. 2265-2289

Influence of Roman Citizenship

- He would show his conversance with Roman law, not merely in knowing how to take advantage of his rights as a citizen, but also in the use of legal terms like “adoption” (Galatians 4:5)... So in Galatians 3:24 the tutor or pedagogue presents a Greek custom preserved by the Romans...

A.T. Robertson, “Paul The Apostle,” *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1939), vol. iv, pp. 2265-2289

Proof of Roman Citizenship

- Birth registration was introduced during the reign of Augustus (27 BC–14 AD) in 4 AD.
- A Roman citizen would register the birth of his child within thirty days before a Roman official. It was not mandatory like the census and someone who did not register did not automatically lose his Roman citizenship.

Ben Witherington III, *The Paul Quest*, (Downers Grove IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), pp. 71, 73

Proof of Roman Citizenship

- The citizen would then receive a wooden *diptych* with waxed surfaces on the inside which acted both as a birth certificate and a certificate of citizenship for the child.
- The wooden *diptych* was seven inches high and six inches wide, written on the waxed surfaces were the date of birth, the name of seven witnesses and the abbreviation *q. p. f. c. r. e. ad k.* (the letters *c.r.e* meant *cieum romanam/num exscripsi/t*) indicating the possession of Roman citizenship.
- The *diptych* could be used for life to prove citizenship and was written only in Latin until the time of Emperor Severus (222-235 AD).

Ben Witherington III, *The Paul Quest*, (Downers Grove IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), pp. 71, 73

Proof of Roman Citizenship

- In Paul's day, proving one's citizenship if called upon to do so could be a challenge. The small wooden *diptych* containing the certificate of citizenship was portable, but as Jerome Murphy-O'Connor points out, this item was too precious and too easily lost for carrying far from home. Furthermore, if the certificate's authenticity was disputed, the original witness who signed it had to be produced—something an itinerant missionary like Paul could not do...

Ben Witherington III, *The Paul Quest*, (Downers Grove IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), pp. 71, 73

Paul's Physical Appearance

"...and his legs were a little crooked..."

Paul's Appearance

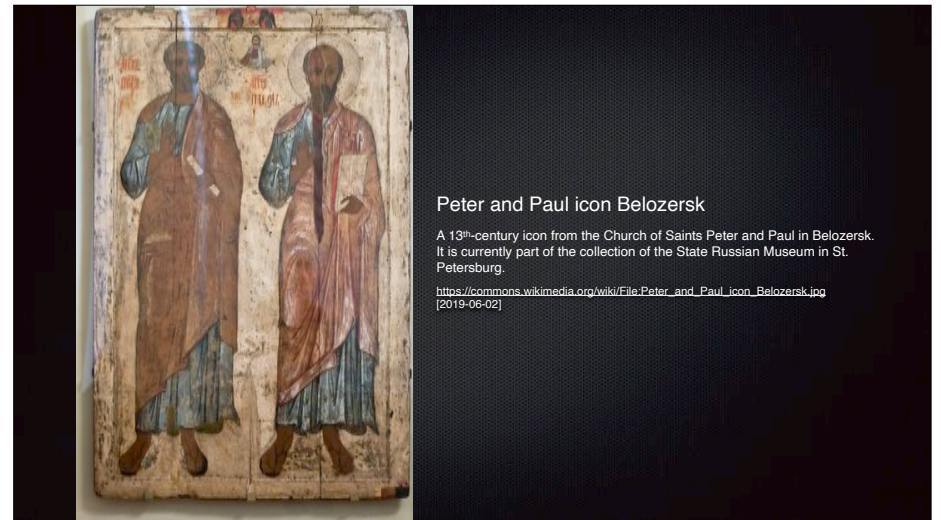
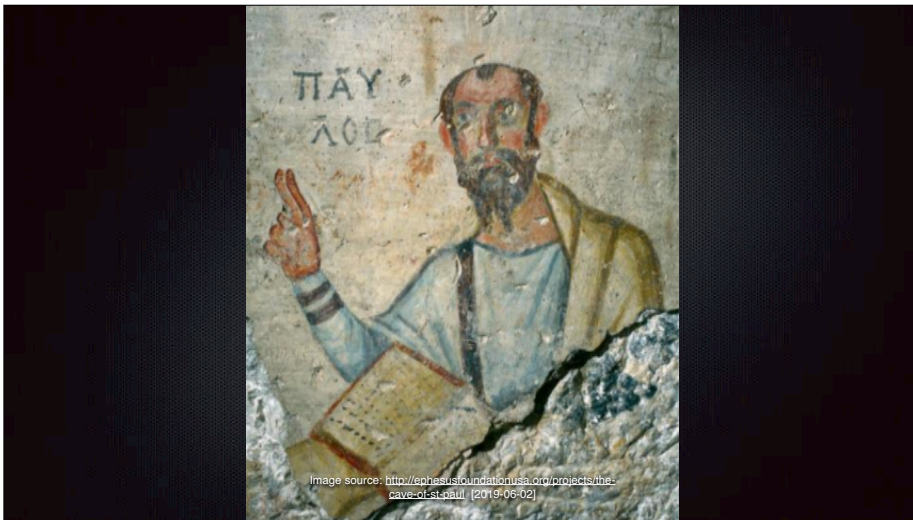
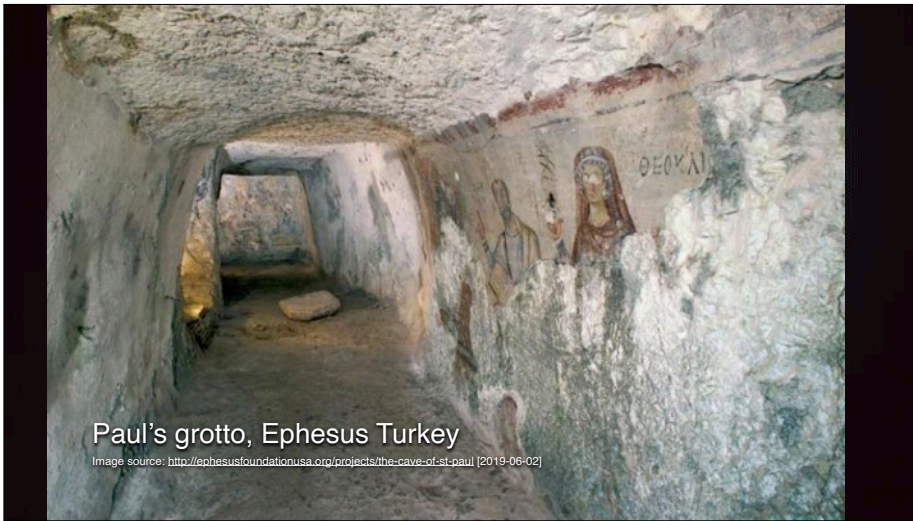
- In the apocryphal book *The Acts of Paul and Thecla*, Paul is given a full physical description that may reflect oral tradition: in the Syriac text "he was a man of middling size, and his hair was scanty, and his legs were a little crooked, and his knees were projecting, and he had large eyes and his eyebrows met, and his nose was somewhat long, and he was full of grace and mercy; at one time he seemed like a man, and at another time he seemed like an angel."

Paul's Appearance

- "This entire description may be an example of physiognomics in reverse.
Physiognomics is the art of determining character or personal qualities from the features or form of the body, especially the face. The reverse would be to provide a physical description in order to attribute certain personal qualities.
- That is, this may be an attempt to draw a portrait of Paul based on character traits revealed in the extant Pauline letters...
- The description of Paul is not unflattering; it can properly be compared with the description of the great Greco-Roman hero figure Heracles (Hercules) as short, dark, and having a hooked nose... (Clement of Alexandria *Protrepticus* 2, Plutarch *Antonius* 4.1)

The Paul and Thecla Fresco

Paul's grotto, Ephesus, Turkey





Paul memorial in Berea

Image source: https://janelledittus.files.wordpress.com/2014/05/dsc_0428.jpg



Paul statue in Berea

https://janelledittus.files.wordpress.com/2014/05/dsc_0428.jpg

Paul's Call

"This man is my chosen instrument"

The Stoning of Stephen

- We first see Paul at the stoning of Stephen.

When they heard [Stephen's message], they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him.

But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, dragged him 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 7:54-58)

The Stoning of Stephen

And Saul was there, giving approval to [Stephen's] death.

On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him.

But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison. (Acts 8:1-3)

Paul's Conversion

Damascus Syria, AD 34

- During his persecution efforts, Paul encounters Jesus on the road to Damascus

Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.

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

Paul's Conversion

Damascus Syria, AD 34

"Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything. (Acts 9:1-9)



Paul with Ananias

Damascus Syria, AD 34

- In Damascus, Paul meets with Ananias:

In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!"

"Yes, Lord," he answered.

The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight."

Paul with Ananias

Damascus Syria, AD 34

"Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name."

But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

Paul with Ananias

Damascus Syria, AD 34

Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. (Acts 9:10-17)

Paul in Arabia

Arabia, AD 34-37

- From Galatians, we discover that Paul spent time in Arabia before meeting with the disciples:

But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, 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. (Galatians 1:15-17)

- We believe that he probably went to the region of the Nabateans who are known for the city of Petra.



Paul in Arabia

Arabia, AD 34-37

Then after *three years*, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Peter and stayed with him fifteen days. I saw none of the other apostles—only James, the Lord's brother. (Galatians 1:18-19)

Paul's Zeal

- Ben Witherington says, "There is little reason to doubt that Paul carried out physical attacks on early Christians, perhaps much like those he later endured himself (see Galatians 6:12, 2 Corinthians 11:24).
- It is possible that N.T. Wright is correct that Paul before his conversion was part of a faction of Pharisaism that sought to follow the examples of Elijah, Phineas and the Maccabees.
- He may well have been willing to own a motto later attributed to Barry Goldwater—'Extremism in the pursuit of virtue is no vice.'

Paul's Zeal

- "Paul remained a zealous person after his conversion, but now that zeal was transmuted into a vigorous spreading of the message that earlier he had tried to stop; it was transformed by the commitment to following the nonviolent sufferings of Christ rather than the example of earlier Jewish zealots.
- "Most moderns, even most modern Western Christians, would have been taken back by Paul. Certainly before his conversion, and probably after it as well, we would see him as a fanatic. We would likely prefer an enthusiastic person winning friends and influencing people through reciprocity and patronage to a fanatic going around trying to convert everyone, even those adamantly opposed to Jesus."

Paul's Zeal

- “We would also likely see Paul as too driven, single-minded and single-purposed—a person without a life apart from ministerial work. Yet Paul was no anomaly in his day. He stood in a long and proud tradition of Jewish zealots, and he was by no means the only Christian who carried that zeal over from his Jewish to his Christian life.”