

Paul: A Man of Grace and Grit
Part 1
January 28, 2004

Besides Jesus Christ, Paul is probably the most influential person with respects to Christianity.

- Wrote at least 13 books of the New Testament

- Provides most of the doctrine we know.

His Background

Paul was born in the city of Tarsus.

- Was born Jewish.

- Was also born a Roman citizen. See Acts 22.28

His family did not allow their Roman citizenship dictate what they did but instead were very devout Jews and brought up Saul in the strictest of ways. See Philippians 3.

- This is why Saul becomes a Pharisee.
 - Studied under the great Gamaliel. See Acts 22.3

As we know from the Gospels it was the Pharisees that wanted Christ dead in particular.

Saul as a Pharisee

- Was present when Stephen was stoned to death
 - See Acts 7
- Most likely was part of the group the crucified Christ.
- Saw how the apostles endured the persecution that was placed on them
 - Acts 5
 - The interesting part here is when Gamaliel seems to stand up in favor of the apostles instead of against them.
 - Most likely upset young Saul
- According to Acts 22 and Acts 26 Saul did some of the following:
 - Imprisoned all believers
 - Women
 - Men
 - Children
 - Voted to have them killed when able
 - Especially Stephen
 - Went all over the place to get Christians

Saul's Conversion

- This takes place in Acts 9
 - Paul was on his way to round up other Christians
 - Was instantly blinded by God.
 - Was also confused on what was going on.

- Changed his life forever.

Lessons to Learn

- Everyone has a dark side
 - We aren't perfect
- No one is beyond hope
- God offers us a new beginning
 - This becomes the central theme of Paul's writings

Applications for daily life

- Allow God to forgive you of your past.
- Forgive yourself of your past.
- Pray daily for the strength to live in light of your future, not past
 - This means knowing where you are headed.
 - 1 Peter 3.15
- Share the Gospel with all people.
- Live on the promise found in Hebrews 10.17