

# The Epistle of Romans I Background

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With this sermon we are going to begin an extended series on the Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Romans. We will take whatever time it takes to go through and study it. Let's take a survey and you will see that there are four main parts to the study booklet—*The Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Romans—An In-Depth Study and Special Word Studies from the Greek*:

1. Introduction
2. The main body of the translation
3. The special word studies from the Greek
4. The Greek Interlinear

In the introduction the only thing I'm going to mention is that in the original, inspired order of the placements of the books of the New Testament they should come as follows: Matthew, Mark, Luke John, Acts, James, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> John, Jude, and then Romans.

Romans has some things which are very difficult to understand, but we'll try and make them understandable. We have five pages of the Introduction and then we come to the body of the translation. I tried to make this translation as exacting as I possibly could.

from: *The Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Romans: Special Word Studies from the Greek*

I just want to cover a couple of things from the first two paragraphs:

The Apostle Paul's Epistle to the Romans is one of the most important books of the New Testament.

Without a doubt it is the most important.

It contains the fundamental basis of true Christian Scriptural salvation...

The wording of that is very deliberate! It has to be true, it has to be Scriptural, it has to be Christian, and it has to be salvation.

...through faith in Jesus Christ by grace. Most professing Christian religions misunderstand and misinterpret what Paul wrote concerning faith and grace vs law and commandment-keeping. The Epistle to the Romans is one of the books of the New Testament which they use to justify their belief that professing Christians are not required to keep the commandments and laws of God. Once these basic teachings

are misinterpreted and misunderstood, then many other basic doctrines, which the Apostle Paul wrote about in *Romans*, are also stripped of their true meaning.

Since some of the things, which Paul wrote in the Epistle to the Romans, are very difficult to understand, it is essential to undertake special word studies of the Greek. As we study each important doctrine through these special word studies, we will learn that while some of the teachings he was inspired to write are "difficult to understand," **they are not impossible** to understand. In fact, we will learn as we study these doctrines, with the aid of these special word studies that they are not as difficult or as hard to understand, if each doctrine is carefully studied in a systematic way.

Let's just take a survey of the major topics.

1. **To Believe** (pg 1)—that starts right out in the first chapter.

I took all the verses out of Romans and listed them by chapter where it talks about *to believe*. *To believe* is the verb form of faith.

2. **Faith** (pg. 4)—With all of the Scriptures pulled in full—'en toutoo.' What I did, I pulled in all the definitions, as they applied, out of the *Belief's* booklet, into each special word study. But, I didn't put any of the Scriptural references other than those which are in Romans. Otherwise, we would have such voluminous things here we could never get on with it.

Notice how many [Scriptures] we had on *faith* and *belief*.

3. **Grace of God** (pg. 8)—again, I took the definition out of the *Belief's* booklet and put it in there so that we have a full understanding of it.
4. **Justification** (pg. 11). What I'm going to do in my personal study, while we are going through this, I am going to translate key sections of Galatians, because you can't go through Romans without going back to Galatians.
  - a) To be Just (pg. 12)—that is *one who is just*.
  - b) Justification (pg 13)

- c) Righteousness (pg 14)—I brought in out of the *Beliefs* booklet: righteousness of the law, righteousness of faith and then the last paragraph I have a detailed definition of *righteousness*.
5. **The Laws and Commandments of God** (pg 19)—again I took all the definition out of the *Beliefs* booklet and put it there. Then I broke it down this way:
- a) Commandment (pg 20)—the Greek word and definition for it
- b) The Law (pg 20)
- c) The Law with the Definite Article (pg 21)
- d) Law used without the Definite Article (pg 23)—a very important section. As we’re going to see, that is going to be a key to understanding what Paul taught—*very important!*
- e) Work, Works, Works of Law and to Work (pg 25)—you go ahead and read the section there, but I’ll just mention this:

In the book of Romans a great error in translation was done. I explain it here. The term in the Greek: *works of law*—which then is ‘ergon nomou’ means *works* (plural) of a law or any law. The *King James* translators added two definite articles: *the works of the law*—and they didn’t make it italics so we would know they added it. That’s not in the Greek. It makes a vast difference in our understanding of what Paul wrote. When you say ‘*the works of the law*’ what do you think of? *Commandment-keeping!* That’s where they get off and say you don’t have to keep the commandments. So, I’ll leave you in suspended animation with that since we’re just doing a survey!

I’ve taken these in importance as we meet them as we come along:

6. **Hope** (pg 28)—that actually comes from the word *faith*.
7. **Love** (pg 29)—I took the full definition of love out of the *Beliefs* booklet; plus, I added quite a section, which was not in the *Beliefs* booklet, on pgs 30-31, explaining the difference between ‘agape’ and ‘philos’ and the verbs of them, too. I think you’ll find it very interesting.

That gives us a survey of what we’re going to cover when we go through the book of Romans. It is undoubtedly the most important book that we have.

Let’s understand something else concerning the Word of God. We know that the Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, ‘*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.*’ That becomes very important when we’re studying in the book of Romans. Let’s also understand something from the Old Testament relating to the Word of God. I want you to remember the sermons concerning the importance of anyone who is teaching the Word of God, to teach the things that God has commanded and not to be teaching something that God did not command.

Psalm 138:1: “I will praise You with my whole heart; before the gods I will sing praise to You.” That doesn’t mean he’s going out before the pagan gods and singing praise unto God. It is in the face of any other god—which is not a god—he will sing praise to the *true God!* That’s what that phrase means.

Verse 2: “I will worship toward Your Holy temple, and praise Your name for Your loving kindness, and for Your Truth ...”—which we know Jesus said, ‘Your Word is Truth.’ We can put all of those back together with Psa. 119:

- Your commandments are true
- Your laws are true
- Your precepts are true
- Your judgments are true

—and everything that has to do with Psa. 119.

“...for You have magnified above all, Your name *and* Your Word” (v 2). *The Word of God is more important than the name of God*, because the Word of God is what God has spoken and God *cannot lie!* *God will change His name in relationship to the covenant He enters in with the people.*

For example: Exodus 3:14: “And God said to Moses, ‘I AM THAT I AM.’... [I am what am and will be what I shall be!] ...And He said, ‘Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, “I AM has sent me to you.”’” We could do a whole study, especially in the book of John, concerning ‘I AM.’

Exodus 6:2: “And God spoke to Moses, and said to him, ‘I am the LORD.’...” —YHVH. I just listened to a tape by some ‘Christian’ Jews where they pronounce it: YaHoVa—very interesting!

Verse 3: “And I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob *as* God Almighty [El Shaddai]. But I was not known to them *by* My name JEHOVAH.” That was not the covenant name that He used with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. When we are born into the Kingdom of God, we are going to be given our new *covenant name*. That’s why He says, ‘I have magnified My Word *above* My name.’

I think Luke 12 becomes very important for us to realize and understand. I have alluded to this several times, but now I will go directly to it and mention it, especially in relationship to what we will be studying in the Epistle to the Romans.

Luke 12:40: “Now you, therefore, be ready; for the Son of man is coming in an hour *that* you do not think.” Let’s understand that this can apply in several ways:

- to his literal return to the earth.
- when Christ brings His judgment

Verse 41: “Then Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, are You speaking this parable to us *only*, or also to all?’ And the Lord said, ‘Who then is the wise and faithful steward, whom the lord shall put in charge of his household, to give *to each one* the portion of food in season? Blessed *is* that servant whom the lord, when he comes, shall find **so doing.**’” (vs 41-43). That’s what we need to be doing here, brethren.]

Verse 44: “Of a truth, I tell you, he will set him over all his possessions. But if that servant shall say in his heart, ‘My lord delays *his* coming,’ and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidservants, and to be gluttonous and become drunk, the lord of that servant will come in a day that he does not expect, and in an hour that he does not know, and will cut him asunder, and will appoint his portion with the unbelievers” (vs 41-46).

Have we seen the execution of God’s judgment upon those who reject the teachings of God? *Yes!*

Verse 47: “And that servant who knew the will of his lord, but did not prepare, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*; but the one who did not know, and did *things* worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For to whomever much has been given, from him shall much be required; and to whom much has been committed, from him they will demand the more” (vs 47-48).

We all have the Scriptures of God in our hand. We also have available so many research things that have not been available in past generations. Do you not think that God is going to hold us responsible for understanding His Word? *Yes!* That’s why it’s very important that in these times of stress that we’re going through—upheaval and turmoil within the Church—that we *know* that we *know* the Word of God. Not just a matter that we know it, but we *know* that we *know!* There’s a difference between the two.

In the first instance, *to know* the Word of God is *to know* of the Word of God and where

certain things are. To *know* that you *know* the Word of God is to understand it and *be convicted* in your mind and *to use* the Word of God. I do believe that God is going to hold us all accountable, because we have the greatest thing that there ever was: the whole Bible!

You go back again, and I admonish you, to read Psa. 119. It says that God’s Word is ‘more precious than gold, yea, than fine gold!’ Years ago people could say, ‘Lord, I weren’t educated, I couldn’t read.’ He’ll be ‘beat with few stripes.’ Guess what’s going to happen to us if we don’t apply ourselves who have an education and have the Word of God and *do know*? Centuries ago they could say, ‘Lord, I didn’t even know that Your Word existed. All we had were parts of the book of John.

Some could say, ‘Well, all we had was the Old Testament.’ Brethren, we have *all* of the Word of God. So therefore, I think God wants us to understand it in its fullness and in great detail. And He wants us to apply ourselves to those things that are hard and difficult to understand, because He will give us understanding with His Spirit and His Word if we apply ourselves to do it. That’s what we’re going to do with this study through the book of Romans. I think it’s going to be really tremendous! I’m very excited about it myself.

Now, let’s give you a little bit of background concerning what is called *The Letter to the Romans*. First of all, I want you to look at the word ‘epistle.’ In that is the Greek word for *faith*: ‘pistis.’ We have ‘pist’ which comes from the word root of *faith*. So this is a letter of *faith* to the Romans.

I’m going to give you a little bit of background from the *Illustrated Dictionary of the Bible*. It’s talking about the letter to the Romans by Paul. I’ll just read certain sections from this and then a couple of other things.

A letter written by the Apostle Paul to all God’s beloved in Rome and now found as the sixth book in the New Testament canon.

*That is the wrong placement of it.*

It is the longest of all of Paul’s letters and offers the most comprehensive account of His understanding of the Gospel of Christ as the effectual Divine remedy for the plight of man, the universal sinfulness and guilt which no human effort can remove.

A key thing: *No human effort can change your nature!* That’s a key thing concerning all the book of Romans.

Though it contains some of the elements of a true letter—a personal communication prepared for a particular group of readers rather than a literary construction employing the form of the letter—it approaches more nearly any other of the apostles writings to be a formal theological treatises.

*Absolutely is!*

Certainly, it must be said that the exposition of theology is not developed in the immediate relationship to the particular problems or errors of the Roman Church.

What they're saying is that Paul does not enumerate in this letter particular problems of the Church at Rome like he does in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians.

They say nothing is known of the founding of the Roman Church.

That's partially a true statement, partially not a true statement. Let's see what we know about the founding of the Church. Today we may not know certain facts because they weren't written down and recorded for us, that is true. So, we have to take everything at face value the way it is, but we can ferret out certain things if we would.

On the day of Pentecost, Acts 2:7: "And they were all amazed, and marveled, saying to one another, 'Behold, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it *that* we hear each one in our own language in which we were born?'" (vs 7-8).

Now, let me give you a geographical location of these that are mentioned, v 9: "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and those who inhabit Mesopotamia..." All of the area east of Palestine, including Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Iran, TransJordan, all the way over to the Indus River where Elam was—way east.

"...and Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia" (v 9). All of those are in Asia Minor; so just think of the whole country of Turkey—Jews from every area of there.

Verse 10: "Both Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya which *are* near Cyrene..." Egypt, Libya, Cyrene, which may be close to Cyprus. We know that when Paul started his ministry after his ordination, he went to the island of Cyrus.

"...and the Romans who are sojourning *here*... [strangers]... [these may have been proselyting Gentiles] (We all know it says): ...both Jews and proselytes" (v 10).

There were *Jews* from Rome, *strangers* from Rome, and I'm sure some of the strangers from Rome included some of the Roman guards who were there, some of the Roman officials who were there. They were the occupying power that was in the area of Judea.

Then it says, v 11: "Cretes and Arabians..." If you just picture this in your mind, that is covering a huge geographical area. If you also remember that everything that happened in the life of Jesus was not done in a corner. It was well known, and that most of these people had already probably heard about the events surrounding the crucifixion, had already heard about the events surrounding those dead saints who were resurrected and came back into the city. Yea, maybe even talk to some of them and said, 'Were you really dead?' *Yes, and let me tell you what it was like when I woke up in the grave.* Then someone said, 'Yeah, let me tell you what it was like when they came and knocked on the door and I opened it and there they were!' These were amazing times that were going on. This is the start of the Church at Rome.

There were 3,000 who were baptized, and many of them stayed well beyond so they could be with the apostles and learn and so forth. So, we do have an inkling of when the Church at Rome began.

continuing *Illustrated Dictionary of the Bible*:

The Church at Rome was composed mainly of Gentiles.

I'm sure that at first it was composed mainly of Jews, then later Gentiles.

Then you had a problem when Claudius forbade all the Jews to be in Rome—he chased them out. That's when Priscilla and Aquilla left and that they were able to teach Apollos at that time. Then the Jews would come back, then that created another problem. It was a Greek-speaking society. The letter was basically written to pave the way for Paul to come on his visit. The best we have as to where he was when he wrote it is the city of Corinth, because he sent Phoebe, one of the deaconesses, to hand-carry the epistle to the Church at Rome. Now, there is evidence that the Church at Rome consisted of many, many **house** churches...

Sound familiar?

...and that this epistle was passed around to all of those house churches.

That's why when you read in Romans 16, you have all of these greetings, and then he says, '...unto the

Church in the household' and so forth. It was written between 54-57<sub>A.D.</sub>

Now, I want to read to you from *The Word Commentary* concerning a little bit about the introduction to Romans. You have to weed through so much to get a few little good things out of them, because basically these people who write the commentaries are not believers. Most of them are agnostics; many of them are atheists and could care less. That's why the theology of Christianity in the world is so bad today, because the teachers at the seminaries are debunking and knocking down the Word of God. He brings out that Paul was a Jew. We'll talk about that a little bit later and get into some of the Scriptures. I think they make a mistake here by saying:

The all consuming nature of his evangelistic drive is sufficiently clear from such passages...

*and he reiterates them*

...and must have been a determinative factor in framing and shaping this letter. The point may be thus: From his own perspective, Paul was first an evangelist and missionary, and only secondarily a theologian.

I think that is an incorrect statement. They are making comparisons with their knowledge of theology today, in how they do it, in relationship to what Paul did or didn't do. You can't make any of those comparisons at all because he was an apostle of God.

Also, something that was very important. I think that Paul also understood that sooner or later there were going to be vast problems in Jerusalem. He did not write this letter to the Jews which are in Jerusalem. He wrote this letter to the Romans.

Then it talks considerably about the Gentiles who were there. One thing we will see is that Paul brought all human beings to the same level—didn't matter whether you were Jew or Gentile, free or bond, rich or poor—you are all sinners by nature. The book of Romans tells us how God is overcoming that particular problem. It also talks about how that the churches may have begun in the synagogues—which is true—and that there were a lot of what they call *God-fearing Gentiles* who were following all the precepts of Judaism, save circumcision. Then they conclude by saying:

The Epistle of Romans contains four distinct areas: Jews unconverted, Jews converted, Gentiles unconverted, Gentiles converted.

We'll cover those basically in the first three chapters as we get to it.

Now then, let's illustrate some of the problems that the Jews had with Gentiles. They give a quote here out of the *Book of Jubilees* (chapter 22:16)—and lo and behold I've got a *Book of Jubilees* at home and I look to see if it was correct and it is correct: *Book of Jubilees* (chapter 22:16):

Here is the attitude that the Jews had toward the Gentiles: "Separate yourselves from the Gentiles...."

I want you to think about how Peter got snagged in this a little later in Gal. 2.

...Do not eat with them. Do not perform deeds like theirs. Do not become associates of theirs. Remember, their deeds are defiled. All their ways are contaminated and despicable and abominable."

*So, here's the solution:*

Foristious writes: "In his wisdom, the legislator

I think that's referring to Moses, but please let's understand one thing: When the Jews speak of Moses, that includes everything that *they have done down through the centuries to add to it!* They considered what they did was equivalent to and, yes, in many cases, greater than what Moses did. They got carried away to such an extreme that they said that if a rabbi would make a decision counter to the laws in the Scripture, that God Himself was bound to uphold that decision because of the importance of the rabbis.

That sounds like the Catholics. *Yes, indeed!* We will find in another study that Catholicism came out of Alexandrian Judaism, without a doubt!

Separate yourselves. Do not eat with them and so forth.

In his wisdom the legislator surrounded us with unbroken palisades and iron walls to prevent our mixing with any of the other peoples in any matter. So, to prevent our being perverted by contact with others, or by mixing with bad influences, he hedged us about on all sides with strict observances connected with meat and drink and touch and hearing and sight after the manner of the law.

That is heart and core and part of the problem in Romans and especially in Galatians. They also had another problem, which was that they had a sense of distinctiveness that they—because of their physical inheritance and their religion and circumcision—were privileged above any other people.

Romans 2:25: “For on the one hand, circumcision profits if you are observing *the Law*; on the other hand, if you are a transgressor of *the Law*, your circumcision has become uncircumcision!” An ***unthinkable statement!*** You need to understand this! This is powerful! This is unthinkable! because these people—the Jews, converted and unconverted—figured they had special privilege over everybody. This is tough stuff here!

Verse 26: “Therefore, if the uncircumcised is keeping the requirements of the Law, shall not his uncircumcision be reckoned for circumcision? And shall not the uncircumcised, who by nature is fulfilling the Law, judge you, who, with *the letter and circumcision, are a transgressor of the Law?*” (vs 26-27).

You talk about fighting words of the highest nature! Now you know why the Jews were out to kill Paul at every turn. The Jews figured because they were Jewish by genetics, Judaism by religion, that they had special gifts and special favors of the covenant and the law. When we come to Rom. 7 we’ll see why Christ had to die.

Here is part of the curse that they brought upon the Gentiles. This is taken from the *Psalms of Solomon*. I did not have that book to find out whether it is true or not. The *Psalms of Solomon* is not in the Scriptures. This is an apocrypha writing. And it’s very doubtful that Solomon wrote this, but here is the quote just show the attitude:

The destruction of the sinner is terrible, but nothing shall harm the righteous.

That is ‘we Jews who are circumcised are righteous; all Gentiles uncircumcised are sinners by nature. Look at the conflict that this creates.

Nothing shall harm the righteous of all these things, for the discipline of the righteous for the things done in ignorance is not the same as the destruction of the sinners.

I want you think about why God had to destroy Jerusalem, destroy the temple, scrape it off the face of the earth! *Because of these attitudes right here!*

The Lord has spared His devout, He will wipe away their mistakes with discipline.

*Their own works!*

For the life of the righteous goes on forever, but sinners shall be taken away to destruction.

This is why they considered themselves ‘the privileged elect.’ To this day it comes down to

whenever you talk with someone who is a Jew, he always lets you know, ‘I am a Jew.’ Paul said it doesn’t make any difference. Coming from Paul that is just like sticking a knife under the fifth rib. What they did, they separated themselves with the distinction of circumcision, food laws and the Sabbath.

Now, let’s go the Scriptures. I want to bring to your attention a book *The Harmony of the Life of St. Paul*—not as the Catholics view it—by Frank J. Goodwin (logos.com). He lays out parallel accounts about Paul’s life. I’m going to cover the Scriptures that are laid out here.

Let’s begin with the early training of Saul. Remember, his name originally was Saul. Was there not another man who was called Saul, who was the first king? Was he not a failure because of disobedience and his lying cursed all the way through? *Yes!* Now we have Saul, and we’re going to find out that ***God deals only in the impossible!*** What do I mean by that?

When Satan got Adam and Eve to sin, I bet that *Satan thought it’s impossible for God to work His plan*. But He had a way! Then we got Cain to do what he did, and ‘oh no, it’ll never go, I’ve really got it.’ But God raised up a replacement. Then we got the whole world to sin and God had to destroy it with the Flood, and Satan said, ‘*Now I’ve got them, God has got to destroy all of them.*’ ***But there was Noah.*** So God did the impossible and saved the human race through Noah. Then it came the Tower of Babel right after and it was ‘Boy, now I’ve got them all together’ and ***God did the impossible*** and confused their languages and scattered them abroad. Then God also did ***something else which was impossible:*** He called Abraham at age 75!

(go to the next track)

At the impossible age of 100—and Sarah was 90—Isaac was born! Then Rebecca could not conceive, so *impossible* she did conceive and born two sons; the same way with Rachel and Jacob, that she could not conceive and finally did. Then we come to ***the greatest impossibility of all:*** God became a human being! God walked the earth manifested in the flesh! God in the flesh—not a hundred percent flesh—could not have been, but you understand what I’m saying:

- ***he died!*** *Another impossible thing!*
- ***was resurrected back to life!*** *Another impossible thing!*
- ***God calls us,*** *another impossible thing!*

to fulfill what Paul wrote. ***He calls those that are nothing to bring about the destruction of those that***

**think they are everything!** It's exemplified in Paul's life.

Paul was not liked by hardly anybody, except those who knew him personally greatly loved him. Everybody else hated him. So, let's pick up on his early training. I'm not going to give the flow or the context of these. In this book *The Harmony of the Life of St. Paul*, he's laid it out here in a very good harmony. By the way there's also a *The Harmony of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles*, that's quite good, too.

Acts 21:39: "But Paul said, 'I am a man *who is* indeed a Jew..." When he says 'I am a Jew' he is not saying that he is from the tribe of Judah. He is saying he is a *practicer* of Judaism. It's important to understand.

"...a citizen of Cilicia from Tarsus, which is no insignificant city..." (v 39). Then there are some other places there. {note: Acts 22:3; 23:34} In both of these he says that he was 'of Tarsus'; so that's where he was born.

2-Corinthians 11:22. This is interesting, speaking of the false apostles, Paul says: "Are they Hebrews? **So am I**. Are they Israelites? **So am I**. Are they *the* seed of Abraham? **So am I**."

We'll see a little later when we get into chapters 9-11, that *not all* the seed of Abraham are the 'children of the promise.' What are some of the 'seed of Abraham' that are *not* the 'children of promise?' *Ishmael, the six sons by Katura, Esau (from Isaac)!* Then we have of the 12 sons that were chosen, there were those who were chosen from within: Ephraim and Manasseh.

- there were false apostles saying they were Hebrews
- there were false apostles saying they were Israelites
- there were false apostles saying they were of the seed of Abraham

Now then, he goes one step further. Let's go come to Philippians 3:4: "Though I might also have *reason to* trust in *the* flesh. If any other thinks he has *cause to* trust in *the* flesh, I *have* much more: Circumcised on *the* eighth day; of *the* race of Israel, **from *the* tribe of Benjamin**... [not a Judahite] ...a Hebrew of Hebrews..." (vs 4-5).

He spoke Hebrew; wrote Hebrews; plus, being born in Tarsus, he wrote and spoke Greek and was very fluent in both. One of these reference books that I read mentioned—which I think is true—that Paul did his own translation of the Old Testament into Greek, with the exception of the book of Hebrews. I am convinced that he had Luke

write the book of Hebrews. They don't know who the author was, but I'm here to tell you that any writing with the name of Paul on it would have been burned on arrival at Jerusalem. No one would have ever read it. In the book of Hebrews, the Septuagint translation was used, because that's what they used at Jerusalem for the Greek speaking. Otherwise Paul did his own translating.

Let's think about this for a minute. If he did his own translating and was a *Hebrew of Hebrews* and knew the Hebrew language concerning sacred names, if it were important, he would have gone into it in detail. Furthermore, knowing both Hebrew and Greek, would he have not inserted the Hebrew names of God? *Yes!* So therefore, God inspired him to write it wholly in Greek the way we have it today. That's important! So, if you get any sacred-namers coming after you, you've got them!

Then he says, "...with respect to law, a Pharisee" (v 4). *Boy oh boy oh boy!*

Now, let's look a little bit at his education. Let's understand something: Paul—called Saul before he was called Paul—was well known! He was a gifted man of accomplishments.

Acts 22:3: "I am a man *who is* indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city... [he was talking to the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem; brought up in Jerusalem] ...at the feet of Gamaliel... [the leading teacher of the law and Judaism at the time] ...having been instructed according to *the* exactness of the law of our fathers, being a zealot for God, even as you all are this day." He shows in Rom. 10 that they were misplaced. They had a zeal, but not the true knowledge.

Acts 23:6: "Now when Paul learned that one part were Sadducees and the other *part were* Pharisees, he cried out in the Sanhedrin, 'Men *and* brethren, I am a Pharisee, *and* a son of a Pharisee..." As far as credentials in Judaism, you can't get any better, no better, the top! Crème de la crème!

Acts 26:4: "The manner of my life from childhood, which from *the* beginning was among my nation in Jerusalem, all the Jews know..." He was a public figure. Who can we think of today that has a reputation like this that we would know? He [Paul] was well known!

The Jews knew this, v 5: "Who knew me from the first, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion, I formerly lived *as* a Pharisee." (vs 4-5).

Again, ***an impossible thing!*** Call someone so steeped in Pharaiseeism and legalism and lawism! ***An impossible thing, to teach grace!*** But he was

taught.

1-Timothy 1:12—we know that he said, concerning law, that he was blameless. “And I thank Jesus Christ our Lord, Who has empowered me, that He counted me faithful, putting *me* into the ministry.” I think that’s something that should be emphasized. He was *put into* the ministry! Paul certainly did not appoint himself!

Verse 13: “Who was previously a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent person; but I obtained mercy because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief.”

Let’s see what he did to persecute the Church; Saul the persecutor. Our first introduction to Saul is in the book of Acts, chapter seven. This is the account of Stephen’s witness to the Sanhedrin—Boy! what a witness! I tell you, that was something! It was so profound that when they were stoning Stephen, he said, ‘I looked up into heaven and I saw the throne of God and the Lord standing at the right hand.’ He wasn’t sitting, he was standing watching what was going on.

Acts 7:57: “Then they cried out with a loud voice, *and* stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord, and cast *him* out of the city *and* stoned *him*. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man called Saul” (vs 57-58). So, he was right there urging them on—‘yes, go get him.’

- Don’t you think that Saul knew of Jesus?
- Don’t you think that he knew of the ministry of Jesus Christ?
- Don’t you think that he took the Pharisaical stance
  - ✓ that He [Christ] was *born of fornication*?
  - ✓ that He was *a blasphemer*?
  - ✓ that He was the *Son of Belial*?
  - ✓ that He was the *Son of Baalzebub*?
- Don’t you think that he understood that Jesus was crucified?
- Could it be that he was there when Christ was crucified?

Howbeit, not in the judgment, but perhaps maybe as a spectator. Doesn’t say! He didn’t say! But at least you have to consider these things.

- Was he not the leader in the forefront of persecuting and killing the brethren of God?

*Yes!* And we’re going to see how effective he was at it.

Verse 59: “And they stoned Stephen, who called upon *God*, saying, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ And he fell to his knees *and* cried with a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not lay this sin to their charge.’ And

after he had said this, he died” (vs 59-60).

Was part of the answer to this prayer the call of Saul? *I don’t know!*

Acts 8:1: “Now, Saul had consented to killing him. And that day a great persecution arose against the Church that *was* in Jerusalem; and all *the believers* were scattered throughout the countries of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. But Saul was ravaging the Church...” (vs 1-3).

This means *to destroy!* This means *as a wild boar with tusks is rooting up!* Here in California we have what are called *feral pigs*. These are the wild pigs! What do they do? *They come in at night and destroy and tear everything up!* You can have the loveliest garden in the world and it can be all gone the next morning when you wake up! All the feral pigs come in and root it up!

Notice what he did. Look at the authority that he had: “...*going* from house to house, entering in and dragging *out* men and women, *and* delivering *them* up to prison. Therefore, those who were scattered passed through *everywhere*, preaching the Word of the Gospel” (vs 3-4).

You have to search here and there through the New Testament to understand how the Apostle Paul was before his conversion. So he put a little here and a little there, because he didn’t want to brag on the whole story all at once because it was so gruesome.

Acts 22:4: “*And* I persecuted this way... [the way of Christ] ...unto death, binding and delivering up to prisons both men and women, as also the high priest and all the elderhood bear witness to me...” (vs 4-5). The high priest was right there when he was being questioned at this particular junction.

“...from whom I received letters to the brethren... [other fellow Jews, not brethren in the Church in this particular case] ...*and* went to Damascus to bring bound to Jerusalem those who were there also, in order that they might be punished” (v 5).

Verse 19: “And I said, ‘Lord, they themselves are aware that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue those who believe in You.’”

What are we really looking at here? Let’s get a contemporary person of notoriety of about the same ilk and we will understand the magnitude of what we are talking about. Let’s think of the two letters ‘SS’—the Gestapo. Let’s think of the famous general of the ‘SS’ who carried out the final solution: Heinrich Himmel; who, by the way, was a trained Jesuit. That’s equivalent to what Saul was



before he was called.

Now, ***you talk about an impossible thing!*** Can you imagine a synagogue of Jews receiving, in open arms—hugging, kissing and embracing—Heinrich Himmel? ***NO!*** Even though he said, ‘I’m sorry, I’ve repented, I’ve repented to God; I have a message to you from God.’ ***BAM!*** Get out of here! Now you know why the Jews didn’t like Saul, who became Paul.

Paul shows his deliberation in it; he shows his planning; his plotting; his scheming; his evil thoughts toward it.

Acts 26:9: “For this *very* reason, I truly thought in myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus the Nazarean, which I also did in Jerusalem; and many of the saints I shut up in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests...” (vs 9-10).

It’s like going to a judge and you get an order. This was a court order from the Sanhedrin giving legal authority to do this. Amazing stuff!

“...and when they were put to death, I gave *my full* consent against *them*.... [said, ‘yes, do it.’] ...And *by* punishing them often in all the synagogues, I compelled *them* to blaspheme. And being exceedingly furious against them, I persecuted *them* even as far as to foreign cities” (vs 10-11). He wasn’t going to let any them get away.

We will see his attitude later. I imagine there were many, many times later when he was converted, when the Apostle Paul was praying, that he thought about these things and it inspired him to work harder. It brought him to a deeper level of conversion and repentance. I imagine that he also had dreams where he would see the faces of those people that he was doing that to. Can you imagine what it’s going to be like at the resurrection when they are all resurrected, having been martyred by Saul and lo and behold standing on the same Sea of Glass is the one who did it? ***You talk about an impossible thing!***

Galatians 1:13: “For you heard of my former conduct when I was in Judaism...” The Jews’ religion in the Greek—if you will look at the Interlinear—is *Judaism*.

“...how I was excessively persecuting the Church of God and was destroying it; and I was advancing in Judaism *far* beyond many of *my* contemporaries in *my own* nation...” (vs 13-14)—which were in Christ. He didn’t show up there. We’ll see that he did for a little bit, but God gave him a vision ‘you better get out of here’—and he did.

“...being more abundantly zealous for *the* traditions of my fathers” (v14).

Verse 23: “They only heard, ‘The one who once persecuted us is now preaching the Gospel—the faith which he once destroyed.’ And they glorified God in me” (vs 23-24). He said he wasn’t fit to be called an apostle because he persecuted the Church (1-Cor. 15:9)

Acts 9:1: “Now Saul, still breathing out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, asking him *for* letters... [give me arrest warrants; give me authority] ...*to take* to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who were of that way, he might bring *them* bound, both men and women, to Jerusalem” (vs 1-2). Just like the Gestapo! ***Take them out of their homes and take them away!***

Verse 3: “But it came to pass while he was journeying, as he drew near to Damascus, that suddenly a light from heaven shined round about him. And after falling to the ground, he heard a voice say to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?’” (vs 1-4).

It shows the amazing ability of God to reach down and call Saul. God had this in mind from the beginning, because Paul said, ‘I was called from my mother’s womb.’

So, we don’t know what God is going to do with anybody—do we? ***No!*** And not knowing what God is going to do with anyone, therefore, if we show them the Truth, strength and love of God, perhaps that will inspire them to repent! That’s important! Look here, he was right on his mission; dedicated, determined, evil thoughts in his mind to get them!

So he’s knocked off his horse and Jesus said, v 5: “...‘I am Jesus, Whom you are persecuting. *It is* hard for you to kick against *the* pricks.’” They’re talking about a special plant in the area of Palestine that would grow about four inch spikes. You’ve probably seen that that’s what they made the ‘crown of thorns’ out of. Can you imagine with your bare feet kicking against something like that? That’s what Christ was telling him. ‘Look, that’s pretty tough doing it—isn’t it?’

Verse 6: “Then, trembling and astonished, he [Saul] said, ‘Lord, what will You have me to do?’.... [I guess he knew that God was dealing with him. Talk about a change!] ...And the Lord *said* to him, ‘Get up and go into the city, and you shall be told what you must do.’ Now, the men who were traveling with him stood speechless; *for* they indeed heard the voice, but they saw no one. Then Saul arose from the ground; but when he opened his eyes,

he saw no one. And they led him by the hand and brought *him* to Damascus” (vs 6-8).

You talk about a humble calling! SLAM! BAM! BOOM! Knock him down and blind! What was the lesson that Christ was teaching him? *He was spiritually blind in doing what he was doing.*

Verse 9: “But *for* three days he was not *able* to see, and he did not eat or drink.” I’ll bet he was praying! I’ll bet he was repenting!

Verse 10: “Now, there was in Damascus a certain disciple named Ananias. And the Lord said to him in a vision, ‘Ananias.’ And he said, ‘Behold, *I am here*, Lord.’ And the Lord *said* to him, ‘Arise *and* go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in *the* house of Judas for *one* named Saul from Tarsus; for behold, he is praying, And he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming and putting *his* hands on him, so that he may receive sight.’ Then Ananias answered, ‘Lord, I have heard from many *people* about this man, how many evil things he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. And *even* in this place he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name” (vs 10-14).

That’s why Christ had to give him a vision. Do you think Ananias would have believed any human being if they would have come and said, ‘Hey, great news, guess what? Saul has repented!’ *You’re kidding?* ‘No, he’s down at this house.’ *I’m not going there.* ‘The Lord said to go lay your hands on him.’ *Not a chance!* So that’s why God had to do it directly.

Verse 15: “But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for this *man* is a chosen vessel to Me, to bear My name before *the* Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel; for I will show him what great things he must suffer for My name.” (vs 15-16).

And he did! That’s why Paul said, ‘I joy in tribulation.’ He felt that was his own compensation for having wreaked havoc against the Church.

Verse 17: “Then Ananias went away and came into the house; and after laying *his* hands on him, he said, ‘Brother Saul... [I’ll bet that was hard coming out!] ...the Lord has sent me, *even* Jesus, Who appeared to you on the road in which you came, so that you might receive sight and be filled with *the* Holy Spirit.’ And it was as *if* scales immediately fell from his eyes, and he instantly received sight; and he arose *and* was baptized. And after eating food, he was strengthened. Then Saul was with the disciples in Damascus *for* a number of days. And in the synagogues he immediately began to proclaim Christ, **that He is the Son of God**” (vs

17-20). I mean, *this is an amazing turn about!*

Verse 21: “And all who heard *him* were amazed and said, ‘Is not this the man who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and who came here for this *purpose*, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?’ But Saul increased *even* more in power, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this is the Christ” (vs 21-22).

Then he had to escape being let down in a basket out the back window over a wall. He went to Arabia where he was for three years being taught of Christ directly by dreams and visions.

When you truly, truly understand about the Apostle Paul—how he was called, what he did—that ought to give us **great hope!** You run around with a guilt feeling because you’ve had this sin or that sin or the other sin. Is Christ not able to forgive that? *Yes!* If He’s able to forgive Saul, He’s can forgive you. That’s what Paul said when he wrote to Timothy. He said, ‘*Of a truth, Christ came to forgive sinner of whom I am the chief!* And he called me to set a pattern for all those who would believe afterward.’ So, we can have great hope in it.

1-Corinthians 15:3: “For in the first place, I delivered to you what I also had received...” He received it directly of Christ. Why could he not receive it from any man? *I don’t think there was any man who would teach him.* Would Peter? Would James? Would John? *No!* Christ had to do it directly! That gave Paul, after conversion, a great independence that he needed to uphold the Truth of God. It gave him great insight into the problems of Judaism as it began to infiltrate back into the Church later. So, he received it of the Lord.

“...that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried; and that He was raised the third day, according to the Scriptures; and that He appeared to Cephas, *and* then to the twelve. Then He appeared to over five hundred brethren at one time, of whom the greater part are alive until now, but some have fallen asleep. Next He appeared to James; then to all the apostles; and last of all He appeared to me also, as one who was born of a miscarriage” (vs 3-8). That’s what he considered himself.

Verse 9: “**For I am the least of the apostles, and am not fit even to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God.** But by *the* grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me has not been in vain; rather, I have labored more abundantly than all of them...” (vs 9-10).

Yes, and we’ve got 14 Epistles of Paul, **the**

**backbone of New Testament doctrine** of which the book of Romans is the foundation. Very important!

“...however, *it was* not I, but the grace of God with me” (vs 9-10).

Let’s see where the Apostle Paul became Paul instead of Saul (Acts 13) and let’s see that after he was called, baptized, went to Arabia for three years, came back, he showed himself to the apostles for two weeks, apparently. Then he started witnessing in the synagogues in Jerusalem. God finally had to tell him, ‘Get out of Jerusalem!’ In the modern vernacular, ‘your name is mud and your person is dead.’ He went on down to Tarsus where he was.

Let’s see how he got out of Tarsus Acts 11:19: “Now, those who had been scattered by the persecution that arose concerning Stephen went through Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews only. But certain men among them who were Cypriots and Cyrenians came to Antioch *and* spoke to the Greeks, preaching the Gospel *of* the Lord Jesus” (vs 19-20). We don’t know how many of those also went over to Rome. God gave them tremendous ability with His Holy Spirit to go out and preach.

Verse 21: “And *the* hand of *the* Lord was with them, and a great number believed *and* turned to the Lord. Now, the report concerning them was heard in the ears of the Church that *was* in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he arrived and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced; and he exhorted *them* all to cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart, for he was a good man, and was filled with *the* Holy Spirit and with faith. And a large multitude was added to the Lord. Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to seek Saul; and after finding him, he brought him to Antioch. And it came to pass *that for* a whole year they assembled together with the Church and taught a great multitude. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians” (vs 21-26).

So, Paul—or Saul then—was not immediately put into the ministry, though he was later. Let’s see where he was. He had to learn, he had to study, he had to be prepared; he was put away ‘on ice’ and no one knew about him, except Barnabas. He said, ‘Oh yeah, Saul I’d better go get him maybe he can help us, because of the Gentiles.’ So he did. Here’s what happened:

Acts 13:1: “Now, there were certain prophets and teachers in the Church that was at Antioch, including Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius the Cyrenian, and Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch), and Saul. And as they were ministering and fasting

to the Lord, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Separate both Barnabas and Saul to Me for the work to which I have called them’” (vs 1-2).

Why did the Holy Spirit have to do this? Do you think any of the apostles would have ordained him as an apostle after what he did? *No!*

Verse 3: “And when they had fasted and prayed, they laid hands on them *and* sent *them* out.” So began the ministry of the Apostle Paul. And from this time forward he is called the Apostle Paul.

We’re going to see that he was one of the most profound men in all of the New Testament. It’s very important that God *did the impossible* in calling someone who was a Pharisee of the highest caliber and the most intolerant person on earth. He was a persecutor, a murderer and caused people to blaspheme. To call him and to say, ‘Okay, now that you’re so despised among the Jews I’m going to send you to the Gentiles.’ *Think on that!*

- You talk about having to eat ‘humble pie’!
- You talk about having to ‘eat your own words’!
- You talk about having to learn many, many lessons!

*Yes! Paul was the man*, and his maintaining of his independent apostleship was very important in the preservation of true Christianity as we know it, from all of the Judaizers who wanted to take it down.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Psalm 138:1-2
- 2) Exodus 3:14
- 3) Exodus 6:2-3
- 4) Luke 12:40-48
- 5) Acts 2:7-11
- 6) Romans 2:25-27
- 7) Acts 21:39
- 8) 2 Corinthians 11:22
- 9) Philippians 3:4
- 10) Acts 22:3
- 11) Acts 23:6
- 12) Acts 26:4-5
- 13) 1 Timothy 1:12-13
- 14) Acts 7:57-60
- 15) Acts 8:1-4
- 16) Acts 22:4-5, 19
- 17) Acts 26:9-11
- 18) Galatians 1:13-14, 23-24
- 19) Acts 9:1-22
- 20) 1 Corinthians 15:3-10
- 21) Acts 11:19-26
- 22) Acts 13:1-3

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Psalm 119
- Romans 16; 7
- Galatians 2
- Acts 23:34
- Romans 10

Also referenced:

Booklets:

- *The Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Romans, Special Word Studies from the Greek* by Fred R. Coulter
- *Beliefs of the Christian Biblical Church of God* by Fred R. Coulter

Books:

- *Illustrated Dictionary of the Bible*
- *The Word Biblical Commentary*
- *Book of Jubilee* (apocrypha.org)
- *The Psalm of Solomon* (apocrypha.org)
- *The Harmony of the Life of St. Paul* by Frank J. Goodwin
- *The Harmony of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles*

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