

SERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST

APOSTLE PAUL



SECTION ONE

INTRODUCING APOSTLE PAUL

SAUL'S EARLY LIFE

- ▶ born to observant Jewish family of Tarsus in Cilicia
- ▶ family came from Gischala in Galilee (Jerome)
- ▶ descent from tribe of Benjamin
- ▶ named Saul - most illustrious member of that tribe
- ▶ name Paul part of Roman triple name (Citizen)
- ▶ citizenship implies family wealth
- ▶ Paul inherited Roman citizenship at birth, possibly father or grandfather rewarded for military service
- ▶ This citizenship came with rights: fair trial, exemption for humiliating practice like scourging, appeal to Caesar
- ▶ clearly knowledgeable in greek thought (philosophy)
- ▶ Yet, was educated first and foremost in Jerusalem in the traditions of his people (Judaism)
- ▶ trained in the school of Gamaliel
- ▶ Gamaliel head of rabbinical school founded by Hillel - this does not necessarily make Paul a Hillelite (more on this later)

CONVERSION

- ▶ “For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge.” (Rom. 10:2)
- ▶ “For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers.” (Gal. 1:13-14)



CONVERSION

- ▶ “Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. [...] And Saul approved of their killing him. On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in 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 both men and women and put them in prison. (Acts 7:58, 8:1-3)





SECTION TWO

PAUL'S GOSPEL

Paul's new vocation involved him not so much in the enjoyment and propagation of a new religious experience, as in the announcement of what he saw as a public fact: that the crucified Jesus of Nazareth had been raised from the dead by Israel's God; that he had thereby been vindicated as Israel's Messiah; that, surprising though it might seem, he was therefore the Lord of the whole world. Paul's vocation was to tell this story, the true story of Israel's God and his people, the true story of the creator and the cosmos. And his calling was to tell it to the whole world.

Wright

JEWISH BACKGROUND OF GOSPEL

You who bring good news to Zion,
go up on a high mountain.

You who bring good news to Jerusalem,
lift up your voice with a shout,
lift it up, do not be afraid;
say to the towns of Judah,
"Here is your God!" (Isaiah 40:9)

JEWISH BACKGROUND OF GOSPEL

How beautiful on the mountains

are the feet of those who bring good news,

who proclaim peace,

who bring good tidings,

who proclaim salvation,

who say to Zion,

“Your God reigns!” (Isaiah 52:7)

SECTION TWO: PAUL'S GOSPEL

The providence which has ordered the whole of our life, showing concern and zeal, has ordained the most perfect consummation for human life by giving to it Augustus, by filling him with virtue for doing the work of a benefactor among men, and by sending in him, as it were, a saviour for us and those who come after us, to make war to cease, to create order everywhere ...; the birthday of the god [Augustus] was the beginning for the world of the glad tidings that have come to men through him... (9 BC)

**“THE MORE JEWISH WE MAKE PAUL’S ‘GOSPEL’,
THE MORE IT CONFRONTS DIRECTLY THE
PRETENSIONS OF THE IMPERIAL CULT, AND
INDEED ALL OTHER PAGANISMS WHETHER
‘RELIGIOUS’ OR ‘SECULAR’.”**

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FOURFOLD GOSPEL CONCERNING JESUS

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God—the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for his name's sake.

(Romans 1:1-5)

“God’s gospel concerning his Son. A message about God – the one true God, the God who inspired the prophets – consisting in a message about Jesus. A story – a true story – about a human life, death and resurrection through which the living God becomes king of the world. A message which had grasped Paul and, through his work, would mushroom out to all the nations. That is Paul’s shorthand summary of what ‘the gospel’ actually is.”

THE RISEN JESUS

“And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. [...] And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.”

(1 Corinthians 15:14, 17)

KING JESUS

""The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you: When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands. But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.""

(2 Samuel 7:11b-16)

JESUS IS LORD

"I will proclaim the Lord's decree:

He said to me, "You are my son;

today I have become your father.

Ask me,

and I will make the nations your inheritance,

the ends of the earth your possession."

(Psalm 2:7-8)

JESUS IS LORD

“Endow the king with your justice, O God,
the royal son with your righteousness.

May he rule from sea to sea

and from the River to the ends of the earth.”

(Psalm 72:1, 8)

JESUS IS LORD

“For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him”

(Romans 10:12)

SECTION TWO: PAUL'S GOSPEL

1. In Jesus of Nazareth, specifically in his cross, the decisive victory has been won over all the powers of evil, including sin and death themselves.
2. In Jesus' resurrection the New Age has dawned, inaugurating the long awaited time when the prophecies would be fulfilled, when Israel's exile would be over, and the whole world would be addressed by the one creator God.
3. The crucified and risen Jesus was, all along, Israel's Messiah, her representative king.

4. Jesus was therefore also Lord, the true king of the world, the one at whose name every knee would bow.

It is, moreover, a double and dramatic announcement about God:

1. The God of Israel is the one true God, and the pagan deities are mere idols.
2. The God of Israel is now made known in and through Jesus himself.



SECTION THREE

GOOD NEWS FOR THE GENTILES

CRITIQUE FROM WITHIN

▶ “But when God, who set me apart from my mother’s womb and called me by his grace” (Galatians 1:15)

▶ “Listen to me, you islands;

hear this, you distant nations:

Before I was born the Lord called me;

from my mother’s womb he has spoken my name.” (Isaiah 49:1)

CRITIQUE FROM WITHIN

“I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it through the Holy Spirit— I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race, the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption to sonship; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.” (Romans 9:1-5)

CRITIQUE FROM WITHIN

“Brothers and sisters, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge.” (Romans 10:1-2)

SECTION THREE: GOOD NEWS FOR THE GENTILES

ISRAEL'S TRUE FULFILMENT IS NOW TO BE FOUND IN JESUS CHRIST AND THE SPIRIT. ISRAEL REJECTED THE CALL OF JESUS, AND NOW REJECTS THE APOSTOLIC MESSAGE ABOUT JESUS, BECAUSE IT CHALLENGES THAT WHICH HAS BECOME HER ALL-CONSUMING INTEREST: HER RELENTLESS PURSUIT OF NATIONAL, ETHNIC AND TERRITORIAL IDENTITY. SHE IS, PAUL RECKONS, IN DANGER OF MAKING HERSELF SIMPLY A NATION 'LIKE ALL THE OTHERS'. BLOOD AND SOIL WERE THE MARKS OF PAGAN NATIONS; ISRAEL WAS USING TORAH AND CIRCUMCISION TO EMPHASIZE EXACTLY THOSE THINGS. THUS HER CIRCUMCISION HAD BECOME MERE PAGAN-STYLE MUTILATION; HER ADHERENCE TO TORAH HAD BECOME MERE PAGAN-STYLE ALLEGIANCE TO PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS; AND HER WHOLE SYSTEM STOOD CONDEMNED AS BEING NOW DRIVEN BY THE 'ADAMIC' NATURE THAT MADE ADAM'S TRESPASS TO ABOUND IN THE VERY PLACE WHERE TORAH WAS GIVEN.

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REALITY AND PARODY

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. (Colossians 1:15-20)



SECTION FOUR

**GOOD NEWS
FOR ISRAEL**

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

- ▶ Dikaiosune theou: the righteousness of God
- ▶ Dikaios means 'righteous' also 'just'
- ▶ Dikaiosune means 'righteousness' also 'justice'
- ▶ Dikaioun means 'to justify' but in english can't say 'to righteous'

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

“But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement,[b] through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.” (Romans 3:21-26)

SECTION FOUR: GOOD NEWS FOR ISRAEL

“Underneath the dense theology of the passage just quoted stands Paul’s central gospel scene: the death and resurrection of Jesus, seen as the point at which and the means by which, God’s covenant purposes for Israel, that is, his intention to deal once and for all with the sin of the world, would finally be accomplished. God has dealt with sin in the cross of Jesus; he has now vindicated Jesus by raising him from the dead. ‘The faithfulness of Jesus’ is thus the means whereby the righteousness of God is revealed.”

SECTION FOUR: GOOD NEWS FOR ISRAEL

“For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. Since they did not know the righteousness of God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness. Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.” (Romans 10:2-4)

SECTION FOUR: GOOD NEWS FOR ISRAEL

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”” (Romans 1:16-17)



SECTION FIVE

**RENEWED
HUMANITY**

RENEWED HUMANITY

“What Paul said about the renewal of humanity in Christ belongs exactly on the map I have drawn. On the one hand, he believed that humanity renewed in Christ was the genuine article, explicitly contrasted with the fractured and downgraded humanity which characterized paganism. On the other hand, he believed that humanity renewed in Christ was the fulfilment of the vocation of Israel, which unbelieving Israel failed to attain. Paul was now zealous to promote this genuine humanity as the God-given answer to paganism, and to urge Jews who were missing out on it that this was in fact the true fulfilment of their history and tradition.”

CENTRE OF RENEWED HUMANITY: WORSHIP

“for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God” (1 Thessalonians 1:9)

“Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. But now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable forces? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you.” (Galatians 4:8-11)

CENTRE OF RENEWED HUMANITY: WORSHIP

“Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!

How unsearchable his judgments,
and his paths beyond tracing out!

“Who has known the mind of the Lord?

Or who has been his counsellor?”

“Who has ever given to God,

that God should repay them?”

For from him and through him and for him are all things.

To him be the glory forever! Amen.” (Romans 11:33-36)

GOAL OF RENEWED HUMANITY: RESURRECTION

- ▶ 1 Corinthians 15
- ▶ Romans 8
- ▶ Colossians 3
- ▶ 2 Corinthians 4 and 5
- ▶ closing verses of Philippians 3

GOAL OF RENEWED HUMANITY: RESURRECTION

“But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body.” (1 Corinthians 15:38)

TRANSFORMATION OF RENEWED HUMANITY: HOLINESS

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” (Romans 12:1-2)

TRANSFORMATION OF RENEWED HUMANITY: HOLINESS

“Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3:12-14)

TRANSFORMATION OF RENEWED HUMANITY: HOLINESS

“Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; through glory and dishonour, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.” (2 Corinthians 6:4-10)

COHERENCE OF RENEWED HUMANITY: LOVE

“There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:28)

COHERENCE OF RENEWED HUMANITY: LOVE

“His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 3:10)

ZEAL OF RENEWED HUMANITY: MISSION

“I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.” (Romans 8:18-21)