

Autobiographical Passages

Acts 21:37-39 As Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to the tribune, “May I say something to you?” And he said, “Do you know Greek? Are you not the Egyptian, then, who recently stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand men of the Assassins out into the wilderness?” Paul replied, “I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no obscure city. I beg you, permit me to speak to the people.”

Acts 22:3-5 “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. I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brothers, and I journeyed toward Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished.

Acts 22:25-28 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.”

Acts 26:4-5 “My manner of life from my youth, spent from the beginning among my own nation and in Jerusalem, is known by all the Jews. They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest party of our religion I have lived as a Pharisee.

Romans 11:1 I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin.

2 Corinthians 11:22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they offspring of Abraham? So am I.

1 Corinthians 15:8-10 Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy 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 was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.

Galatians 1:13-17 For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

Philippians 3:4-6 though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. 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.

- I. Saul - A Jew from Tarsus, and a Roman citizen
 - a. (speaking of Acts 22 account) “To his Tarsian heritage he owed his fluency in the Greek language and probably much of his cultural orientation. His ministry would mainly be in hellenistic cities like Tarsus; his early years in that city prepared him. To Paul’s Roman heritage he owed the legal protection that assisted him throughout his ministry. Even more, the Roman world order facilitated his extensive travels. To his Jewish heritage, Paul owed his faith and his perspective on life. More than anything else, Paul was, and always remained, a faithful Jew.”¹
 - b. Born in Tarsus, versed in Greek culture:
 - i. Spoke fluent Greek
 - ii. Familiar w/ minor Greek poets (1Co 15:33-Thais of Menander; Titus 1:12-Epimenides; Acts 17-Aratus and Cleanthes/Epimenides)
 - iii. Uniquely prepared him for entering into, engaging, and contradicting the predominant Gentile worldview
 - iv. “While Paul may have used philosophical vocabulary for his apologetic or didactic purposes, he was not constrained by the content or method of the philosophies in vogue. As a man of his era, he was aware of intellectual currents, but he was not concerned as Philo was to reconcile his message with philosophy. Paul holds the gospel to be the only means to divine wisdom (1 Cor 1:21; 2:6–16; cf. Eph 1:15–18).”²
 - c. Roman Citizen
 - i. As a citizen by birth, Paul had certain rights under the law. “The rights of a Roman citizen included *provocatio* (the right to appeal after trial), *muneris publici vacatio* (exemption from imperial duties such as military service), and the right of an accused citizen to choose either a local or a Roman trial. A right that was usually (but not always) honored in the provinces was that Roman citizens were exempt from flogging.”³
 - ii. The Roman empire itself, with its extensive roads, uniform regulations regarding taxing of travelers, and crack-downs on piracy made Paul’s missionary journeys possible.

¹Polhill, John B.: *Paul and His Letters*. Nashville, TN : Broadman & Holman, 1999, S. 5

²Hawthorne, Gerald F. ; Martin, Ralph P. ; Reid, Daniel G.: *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Downers Grove, Ill. : InterVarsity Press, 1993, S. 718

³Ibid., 140

d. A Jew

i. A Pharisee

1. “Pharisees are seen as willful, prideful, and self-righteous. They are depicted as attempting to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps to gain God’s acceptance through their scrupulous observance of the law. Recent studies have emphasized that in most instances this is not an accurate picture of Pharisees. Most of them were well aware of their own sinfulness and dependence on God. Most tended to view the law as an expression of God’s mercy, as a gift within his covenant relationship with his people. This is probably true. Still, the depth of Paul’s encounter with Christ led him to see *all religion* in a new light. Whether through law or worship or whatever, religion often becomes a human endeavor to reach God. For Paul, the only true encounter comes when God first reaches out to us. He could not but see his former Pharisaic faith as wrongheaded.”⁴
2. Studied under Gamaliel, of the tolerant followers of Hillel, but his zeal in persecuting the church may indicate a switch to the stricter school of Shammai (c.f. e4 Outline/Wright 27-30). Discussion of Yigal Amir in Wright (28) is an interesting modern parallel for zeal. “Paul’s writings do not yield sufficient evidence to show certainty whether, before he became a Christian, he was a Hillelite or an adherent of the rival school of Shammai. His statement that anyone who submits to circumcision “is bound to keep the whole Law” (Gal 5:3) might be thought to reflect the stricter Shammaite doctrine, but such a conclusion cannot safely be drawn from a statement made in a polemical context. His zeal as a persecutor of the church presents a sharp contrast to the temporizing policy advocated by Gamaliel in Acts 5:34–39, but the explanation may simply be that Paul saw more clearly than Gamaliel the serious implications of the Christian movement for the life and health of Judaism.”⁵
3. Worldview of typical 1st century Shammaite Jew - c.f. e4 Outline

ii. Persecutor

1. **Acts 8:3** But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.

⁴Polhill, John B.: *Paul and His Letters*. Nashville, TN : Broadman & Holman, 1999, S. 29

⁵Hawthorne, Gerald F. ; Martin, Ralph P. ; Reid, Daniel G.: *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Downers Grove, Ill. : InterVarsity Press, 1993, S. 682

2. **Acts 26:11** And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme, and in raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities.
 3. Interesting thought concerning persecution: “This was the negative aspect of his zeal for the Law and traditions of Israel, which perhaps found a positive outlet in the proselytization of Gentiles. His words, “If I ... still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted?” (Gal 5:11), have been thought to point in that direction.”⁶ The Christian approach to the law, circumcision, and the Gentiles was a big driver of the persecution out zeal for the law. Cf Acts 6:14;15:1;21:1 and Bruce 71-72 for zeal for the law and motivation to persecute. The preaching of a crucified Messiah was an offense and blasphemous, because the man was clearly accursed by God (Deut 21:23).
- iii. Though unprepared for a crucified and risen Messiah, Paul’s Jewish worldview and his zeal for God prepared him to grasp the earth-shattering significance of the revelation of Jesus as the risen Lord and to lead the mission of bringing the gospel to the Gentiles.
- II. Conversion/Calling – “Apprehended by Christ” - Phi 3:12
- a. On the road to Damascus
 - i. **Acts 9:1-3** But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.
 - ii. “Why would the Christian Hellenists have fled to *Damascus*? There was an extensive Jewish community in Damascus...with a significant component of God-fearers and proselytes in their synagogues, all of which would have made the city a prime place for the witness of the hellenist Christians.”⁷
 - b. Conversion Accounts (Acts 9:3–9; 22:6–11; 26:12–16a)
 - i. Notice – “Why are you persecuting me?” – Jesus identifies with his followers, such that their suffering is his suffering, and their persecution is his persecution – cf Paul’s emphasis on the unity of the church with Christ (Polhill 47)
 - ii. “It is hard for you to kick against the goads” – ““Kicking against the goads” was a Greek proverb about fighting a god, possibly originating with the classical Greek

⁶Ibid., 682

⁷Polhill, J. B. (1999). *Paul and his letters* (46). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman.

playwright Euripides.”⁸ “it is futile and hopeless to kick against God’s movement in one’s life. Christ was taking hold of Paul, irresistibly. He could not stop it. It was futile and foolish to try.”⁹

- iii. “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting” – “Imagine how those words must have impacted the zealous persecutor. He had sought to stamp out the Christians for their proclamation of a *dead* Messiah. How it must have cut Paul to the quick. Jesus of Nazareth, the “King of the Jews” (John 19:19), who died on that Roman cross, was not dead at all. He was alive! He was indeed the King of the Jews, the long-awaited Messiah. In his pride and misguided zeal, Paul had persecuted the Messiah!”¹⁰

“Until that moment Paul had taken it as axiomatic that one who had died the death on which the divine curse was pronounced by the Law (Deut 21:23) could not be the Messiah, the elect one of God, as his followers claimed. Their claim was blasphemous. But now their claim was manifestly true. He had seen and heard Jesus, the crucified one, alive and glorified.”¹¹

- iv. Ananias sent to restore his sight and give him direction (cf Acts 22:14-16):
Acts 9:15-16 But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.”
- v. The Lord himself visited Paul in the Temple and commissioned him to go to the Gentiles (Acts 22:17-21)
- c. OT Pattern of Prophetic Call (Polhill 50) – cf Paul’s own allusion in Gal 1:15 (Jer 1:5)
 - i. Appearance of blazing light (Ezek 1:26-28)
 - ii. Vision of the Lord on His throne (Ezek. 1:28; Isa. 6:5; Jer. 1:6)
 - iii. The Lord lifts up the prophet and affirms him (Ezek. 2:1–2; Isa. 6:6–7; Jer. 1:7–8)
 - iv. The Lord calls him to mission (Ezek. 2:3–7; Isa. 6:9–10; Jer. 1:9–10)

III. Early Years

- a. (Acts 9) After Paul is called/converted he begins proclaiming the gospel immediately in Damascus and Arabia – “He is the Son of God” - the Jews plot to kill him, he escapes by being lowered in a basket

⁸Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament* (Ac 26:14). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

⁹Polhill, J. B. (1999). *Paul and his letters* (47). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Hawthorne, G. F., Martin, R. P., & Reid, D. G. (1993). *Dictionary of Paul and his letters* (682). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

- b. After 3 years he goes up to Jerusalem, but everyone is afraid because of his reputation as a persecutor. Barnabus vouches for him and he begins preaching in Jerusalem – Jews plot to kill him again
 - c. Paul returns to Tarsus, likely preaching and ministering there for several years
 - d. Barnabus takes him to Antioch / relief to Jerusalem during the famine
- IV. First Missionary Journey
- a. Antioch
 - i. Sort of home base for the missions
 - ii. Sent out by the Holy Spirit
 - b. Cyprus
 - i. Blinded Elymas, a magician and Jewish false prophet, at the sight of which the proconsul believed the gospel
 - ii. Saul/Paul – switch to the Roman name – "some of Luke's readers recognize for the first time that Luke is writing about someone of whom they had already heard"¹²
 - c. South Galatia
 - i. John Mark, who had been assisting, leaves and goes back to Jerusalem
 - ii. (Acts 13) Preached in Antioch in Pisidia and were well received, until the Jews saw the crowds they were attracting and stirred up opposition (zealous or jealous). Seeing the Gentiles beginning to crowd in, the message Paul was proclaiming may have finally dawned on them.
 - iii. They encountered similar opposition in Iconium and fled to Lystra (Lisstra)
 - iv. (Acts 14) In Lystra (Lisstra), Paul healed a lame man and the people mistook them for Zeus (Barnabas) and Hermes (Paul) - giving them an opportunity to preach against idolatry – until some Jews from the previous town opposed them and had Paul stoned.
 - v. In spite of the opposition, they won many converts in those towns.
- V. Antioch
- a. (end of Acts 14) Returned to tell of the amazing work that was being done among the Gentiles
 - b. Some men came down from Jerusalem and were teaching that Gentile converts must be circumcised. (Acts 15:1-2). This is one possibility for the timing of Paul's confrontation with Peter in Galatians 2. The controversy brought them all to Jerusalem to settle the issue.
- VI. Jerusalem Conference
- a. This issue, along with the issue of ritual purity when dining with Gentiles were the biggest controversies of the early church. Much time is devoted to Jew/Gentile relations in Paul's letters. In Galatians we see the circumcision argument come to a head, and in other letters such as Romans and 1 Corinthians we see the issues regarding food and drink.
 - b. Given our situation of being separated by 2000 years of rejecting circumcision as a requirement to be in the people of God, it's difficult to see what the big deal is. However, the circumcision party had a somewhat weighty argument ts that might have gone something like this:

¹²Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament (Ac 13:9)*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

- i. All of the leaders of God's people from time of Abraham until now had to be circumcised. The apostles were and even Jesus was. Why should the Gentiles not follow in his footsteps?
 - ii. Truth is not determined by popularity and just because Gentiles don't like the idea, should we then abandon the truth.
 - iii. Jesus never said that circumcision was no longer necessary
 - iv. The Abrahamic covenant, under which we are saved, has an everlasting requirement of circumcision and rejecting this cuts you off from the covenant.
 - c. The Jerusalem Conference of Acts 15 recognized that salvation has come to the Gentiles by faith apart from circumcision, and this is evidenced by the fact that they have received the Holy Spirit, who is the seal and the down-payment of salvation. Therefore, it would not be in line with the gospel to require them to be circumcised. Secondly, they established grounds on which Jews and Gentiles could fellowship, requesting that the Gentiles abstain from 4 things in deference to their Jewish brethren:
 - 1. from food polluted by idols
 - 2. from sexual immorality
 - 3. from strangled meat
 - 4. from blood
 - d. John Polhill writes: "The issue of table fellowship was no small thing. It was in the context of the fellowship meal that Christians observed the Lord's Supper. Table fellowship symbolized the unity of the faith of the early church around its one Lord. There was give-and-take at the Jerusalem Conference. The Jerusalem leaders granted Paul the legitimacy of his law-free Gentile mission. The decrees requested the Gentiles to adjust to Jewish-Christian scruples to the degree that table fellowship would be possible."
- VII. **Letter to the Galatians** (before or after Jerusalem Council, perhaps as late as 3rd mission)
 - a. The date of the letter is debated, with the issue centering on (among other things) whether the Jerusalem meeting in Galatians 2 is the same as that described in Acts 15.
 - b. Regardless of the date, the problem Paul is opposing is the same. The Galatians were being told that in addition to faith in Christ, they must also be circumcised and follow the law. This letter is an appeal to the Galatians to not forsake the gospel of Christ for this perversion of the gospel. It also includes a defense of Paul's authority as an apostle coming from Christ, not from men.
 - c. The harshest tone of all the NT letters, perhaps reflecting his affection for them (Gal 4:12-20) and his anger at their quick desertion of the truth
- VIII. Second Missionary Journey
 - a. Antioch – (end of Acts 15) Brought back the ruling from Jerusalem and remained there teaching
 - i. They decided to return to the churches they had established to check on them and encourage them.
 - ii. Barnabus and Saul disagree over whether to bring John Mark along, and end up going separate ways. Paul takes Silas with him.
 - b. Derbe, Lystra
 - i. (Acts 16) Paul picks up Timothy in Lystra (Lisstra)
 - ii. Has Timothy circumcised (his mother was a Jew)

1. According to the Mishnah, a child born of mixed parentage was considered a Jew when the mother was Jewish.¹³
- iii. 1 Cor 9:19-21 - "For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. "
- c. Philippi
 - i. Paul was prevented by the Spirit from entering Asia and is led to Macedonia
 - ii. (Acts 16:11) Lydia believes and receives them into her house
 - iii. (Acts 16:16) Demon-possessed slave girl was praising Paul, until he cast out the demon. This got them arrested, beaten, and jailed because the girl made lots of money for her owners.
 - iv. (Acts 16:25) Worshipping in prison, and a miraculous deliverance. Preached the gospel to the jailer and his family.
 - v. Paul reveals that he is a Romans citizen, and they apologize for the trouble
 - d. Thessalonica
 - i. (Acts 17) Preached to Jews in the synagogue, but once again some Jews stirred up opposition (zeal), and brought them before the authorities, accusing them of saying that Jesus is King rather than Caesar.
 - e. Berea
 - i. Paul and co. snuck off to Berea and continued preaching there, with the Bereans much more willing to consider the teaching and compare it to scripture.
 - ii. The Jews from Thessalonica followed and continued their harassment, chasing Paul out of town.
 - f. **1 and 2 Thessalonians**
 - i. Intense persecution
 - ii. Paul writes initially to encourage and comfort them in their faith, and to remind them of the hope of the Lord's coming
 - iii. The second letter probably came shortly after the first, possibly clearing up misunderstanding and countering those who were teaching that the coming had already happened
 - g. Athens
 - i. While Paul is waiting for Timothy and Silas to Athens, he notices the rampant idolatry in the city. He seized the opportunity to engage the Jews in the synagogues and whoever happened to be in the marketplace.
 - ii. The philosophers thought him little more than a foolish babbler, but ironically they thought he was preaching two gods, Jesus and Resurrection.
 - iii. Epicureans and Stoics
 - iv. Paul preaches before the Areopagus
 1. God as creator
 2. God's providence

¹³Polhill, J. B. (1999). *Paul and his letters* (136). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman.

3. The worship of idols is folly
 4. God commands all men to repent, and he has a appointed a day when he will judge the world through Jesus Christ
- h. Corinth for 18 Months
- i. (Acts 18) Aquila and Priscilla
 - ii. Corinth was densely populated. “Typical dimensions of excavated city apartments (*insulae*) are from eight to fourteen feet in width by twelve to twenty-four feet in length as the *total* living area. Often ten to twenty persons would occupy a single room of this size.¹⁴
 - iii. And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, “Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people.”
 - iv. To the Jew first
 - v. Tentmaking
- IX. Return to Antioch through Cenchreae (sencree-eye), Ephesus, Caesarea (sess-uh-ree-uh), Jerusalem
- X. Third Missionary Journey
- a. **1st Letter to the Corinthians**
 - i. Response to a previous letter, which Paul quotes several time throughout
 - ii. Moral and doctrinal problems were dividing the church. Paul addresses several issues, such as spiritual gifts, marriage, food offered to idols, and the resurrection.
 - iii. Collection for the poor in Jerusalem (16:1-4; also in Romans and 2 Corinthians, possibly Gal 2:10)
 - b. Ephesus for 3 years
 - i. (Acts 19) Disciples of John – “Baptizing groups that claimed John as their founder existed into the 4th century”
 - ii. Countering false religion
 1. The demons humiliate the sons of Sceva and the power of the followers of Christ was made known
 2. V18 – burning their magic books
 - iii. Riots
 1. (v23) The incident seems to have occurred toward the end of Paul’s ministry in Ephesus. It may well have been around the time of the Artemision, when pilgrims came from all over the empire to participate in the festivities. The sales during that time could “make or break” those engaged in the production of replicas of the goddess and her temple. Demetrius was a leader in the local guild of silversmiths. Luke says that he made silver shrines of Artemis (replicas of the temple). Terra-cotta replicas of the temple have been found, and the temple appears on numerous silver coins, but no silver temple replicas have been found. Silver copies of the image of Artemis have also been discovered. One can thus imagine that Demetrius’s business thrived, furnishing the pilgrims with

¹⁴Polhill, J. B. (1999). *Paul and his letters* (216). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman.

souvenir shrines to take home or to present to the temple as votive offerings.¹⁵

2. The preaching of Christ was turning out to be bad for business
 3. The temple of Artemis was a source of civic pride for the people of Ephesus, and the craftsmen used that to turn the crowds against Paul.
 4. The town clerk comes to Paul's defense
- c. Corinth
 - i. A "painful visit" (2Cor 2:1; 2Cor 13:2)
 - d. Ephesus
 - e. Troas
 - f. Macedonia
 - i. Collection for the saints in Jerusalem (2Cor 8)
 - g. **2nd Letter to the Corinthians**
 - i. It appears that some outsiders had come to Corinth and were challenging Paul's authority and leadership. Polhill: "Paul's leadership was challenged by a group which claimed that one's apostolic status needed to be validated by external, verifiable signs, such as speaking ability, miracles, and "good references." Paul saw a different set of criteria as the real marks of an apostle—the marks of the cross."¹⁶
 - ii. Boasts in his weaknesses and sufferings
 - iii. Speaks at length of the collection, referring to the outpouring of grace in Macedonia
 - h. Illyricum
 - i. Greece
 - j. **Letter to the Romans**
 - i. Rome does not appear to have been founded by an apostle (perhaps the gospel was brought back by some who had converted at Pentecost – acts 2:10)
 - ii. Paul wrote to express his desire to visit and preach the gospel among them and likely to address some issues, such as Jew/Gentile divisions in the church, and concerns regarding food and drink.
 - iii. He presents the failure of both Jew and Gentile to obtain right standing before God, and that this can only come through faith in Jesus Christ. He discusses our reconciliation with God, our new life in Christ, and walking by the Spirit. We see how God, in his sovereignty, has brought about the salvation of the Gentiles through Israel's rejection of Christ. He then proceeds to exhort the Romans to lives of worship in light of God's great mercies.
 - iv. Thesis statement: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."
 - k. Philippi
 - l. Troas

¹⁵Polhill, J. B. (1999). *Paul and his letters* (225). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman.

¹⁶Polhill, J. B. (1999). *Paul and his letters* (263). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman.

- i. (Acts 20) 7 days
 - ii. Paul talks so long that Eutychus falls asleep and out of a 3 story window. Paul raises him from the dead and then continues on his journey. (cf 1Ki 17:21-22; 2Ki 4:34-45)
- m. Miletus
 - i. Final sermon to the elders of Ephesus: (22-32) “And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again. Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all of you, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish everyone with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. “
- n. Caesarea
 - i. (Acts 21) Paul repeatedly warned not to go to Jerusalem
 - ii. Prophet Agabus predicts that Paul will be bound by the Jews and handed over to the Gentiles
 - iii. Paul says he is ready to go to jail or even die in Jerusalem
 - iv. “Let the will of the Lord be done.”
- XI. Jerusalem – Things heat up
 - a. Paul reports of the great works God has done among the Gentiles
 - b. James asks Paul to demonstrate to the Jews that he still keeps the law himself and that the rumors about him are untrue.
 - c. Jews charged with teaching against the Jews, the law, and the temple. Incorrectly charged with defiling the temple by bringing Gentiles.
 - d. He was actually rescued from the mob by the Romans soldiers
 - e. Paul addresses the crowd in Hebrew and gives his testimony, but they turned against him upon mention of the Gentiles
 - f. “Is it lawful for you to flog a man who is a Roman citizen and uncondemned?”
 - g. Brought before the council – Ananias:

“Ananias was a Roman vassal, known for his greed and for stealing the tithes belonging to the poorer priests. The zealot revolutionaries killed him in a.d. 66, about eight years after this hearing.”¹⁷ Exodus 22:28

¹⁷Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament (Ac 23:2)*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

- h. Paul noticed the council was divided between Sadducees and Pharisees and took advantage
 - i. The Jews plot to kill Paul and the Roman commander had him moved to Caesarea to go before Felix
- XII. Caesarea – imprisonment
- a. Acts 24 - Paul gives his defense before the Roman governor Felix, answering all of the charges the Jews put forward
 - b. In spite of his apparent innocence, Felix kept Paul in prison for two years hoping that Paul would pay him a large bribe
 - c. At this point, Felix is succeeded by Festus as governor. It is here that Paul exercises his right to appeal his case to Caesar. The Jews were seeking to kill Paul, and Festus was leaning towards turning him over to them as a favor.
 - d. Festus brings him to King Agrippa, who is familiar with Jewish religion, so that he may hear the case and be able provide adequate explanation to the letter to Nero
 - e. Paul recounts his conversion for the third time (cf 9:15), appealing to Agrippa to believe the gospel
 - f. **Letter to the Philippians** (or from Rome)
 - i. Written from prison, expressing gratitude to the gift he received from the Philippians and letting them know that Epaphroditus had recovered from the illness he contracted while delivering the gift.
 - ii. The encouragement and exhortation to humility, unity, and rejoicing
 - iii. “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. “
- XIII. To Rome
- a. Crete
 - b. Malta
 - c. **Letter to Philemon**
 - i. Written to Philemon, interceding on behalf of Onesimus, a runaway slave who met Paul in prison and became a Christian. Now Paul was sending him back to Philemon, hinting that he expects Philemon to take him ‘back for good, no longer as a slave, but as more than a slave—as a dear brother’¹⁸
 - ii. “So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me. If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account.”
 - d. **Letter to the Colossians**
 - i. Paul did not establish the Colosse, but it was likely a by-product of his ministry in Ephesus.

¹⁸Wood, D. R. W., & Marshall, I. H. (1996). *New Bible dictionary* (3rd ed.) (849). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

- ii. Polhill - “Whatever one finally concludes about the specific problem at Colosse, several things seem to stand out. Some people at Colosse had an inadequate view of Christ. They felt the need to add to their worship and to their practice in order to ensure their full salvation. They also had an inadequate ethic. They focused on a sort of negative, fleshly self-denial, which Paul argued would in the end only aggravate the desires they were seeking to control. Their would-be piety led to serious social problems within the congregation, as some felt superior to others and sought to disqualify them from the faith. Paul saw a single solution to all these manifestations of the Colossian problem. The Colossians needed a greater grasp on their Savior, a tighter hold on their head. To the Colossian problem Paul responded with the most exalted presentation of Christ to be found in any of his epistles.”¹⁹
- iii. (15-20) “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And 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, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.”

e. Letter to the Ephesians

- i. Sometimes seen as the pinnacle of Paul’s thought
- ii. Ephesians 1:3-14, doxology in an 11-verse sentence
 1. (3-6) Praise the work of the Father
 2. (7-12) Praise the work of the Son
 3. (13-14) Praise the work of the Spirit
 4. Polhill: “In a real sense, verse 10 is the thematic verse for all of Ephesians. The entire message of the epistle is the unity of all creation that God wills to bring about in Jesus Christ—a unity manifested in the coming together of Jew and Gentile in Christ, in the oneness of the body of Christ, in the bond of family relationships and in individuals armed against the evil powers that rebel against God and threaten all unity. The idea of summing up all things in Christ is very close to the idea of reconciliation of all things (cp. Col. 1:20).”²⁰
- iii. The theme is unity under Christ from broad to narrow:
 1. Chapter 1 – Everything in heaven and earth
 2. Chapters 2-3 – Jews and Gentiles
 3. Chapter 4 – The Church
 4. Chapter 5 – Families
 5. Chapter 6 – Individuals

¹⁹Polhill, J. B. (1999). *Paul and his letters* (338). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman.

²⁰Polhill, J. B. (1999). *Paul and his letters* (362). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman.

- iv. NT Wright: “Nothing short of a cosmic soteriology. God’s plan is to ‘sum up all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth.’”
- XIV. Released from prison
 - a. Likely released from prison after a period of time in Rome, perhaps completing his goal to go to Spain, and probably back east, which would be the setting of 1 Timothy and Titus.
 - b. 1st Letter to Timothy**
 - i. Written to Timothy in Ephesus, the primary purpose appears to be combating false teachers who had crept into the church (as Paul had predicted in his farewell address). His focusing was on sound teaching and order within the church to oppose them.
 - c. Titus**
 - i. Instructions to Titus and the members of a newly formed congregation in Crete.
- XV. Arrested
 - a. Paul was re-arrested, possibly at the beginning of the outbreak of persecution under Nero. There was a massive fire in Rome in 64 AD and rumors were spreading that Nero had ordered the fires to clear the way for his urban renewal program. Nero chose the Christians as scapegoats and began a brutal campaign of persecution.
 - b. 2nd Letter to Timothy**
 - i. Paul was likely writing this letter after his second imprisonment, knowing that his certain death was soon approaching. It contains exhortation to Timothy to remain faithful to his ministry and provides some examples for him, both good and bad.
 - ii. “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.”
- XVI. Martyred