

The Life and Theology of Paul: All of God's Promises in Christ

Resources

- F.F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Eerdmans, 1977).
- Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, trans. John R. De Witt (Eerdmans, 1997).
- N.T. Wright, *Paul: A Biography* (HarperOne, 2018).

Highlights from the Life of Paul

- Basic Statistics
 - Paul wrote 13 of the 27 books of the New Testament, 87 of its 260 chapters.
 - Paul wrote about 23.4% of NT; his missionary companion Luke wrote about 27.4%.
 - Thus more than 50% of the NT was written by Paul or under his influence/supervision.
- Background
 - Ethnically Jewish, Roman citizen from “university city” of Tarsus in Cilicia (modern Turkey).
 - Educated in both biblical (Acts 22.3) and pagan literature (Acts 17.28, Titus 1.12).
 - Multilingual: could read Hebrew, spoke both Aramaic (Acts 22.2) and Greek (Acts 21.37).
 - Religious zealout: “...so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers,” (Gal. 1.14).
- Worldview (Wright, 18-23)
 - God had chosen Israel both *from* the nations and *for* the nations (Gen. 12.1-3).
 - Israel's failure to be faithful to its vocation (Ex. 19.6) had led to Exile (Deut. 28.63-66).
 - God's glory had never returned to the 2nd Temple; the Exile was not over... [until Jesus!]
 - Ruled by foreigners, slaves in their own homeland, Israel hoped for a new Exodus.
 - By healing Israel's Exile (Dt. 27-32), this new Exodus would heal humanity's Exile (Gen. 3).
 - The time was drawing near, but disloyalty to Law or Temple could ruin everything...
- Conversion
 - Prior to meeting Jesus, Saul believed that heaven and earth came together in the Temple and the Law. When he met Jesus, he realized that heaven and earth met in Him.
 - When Saul met Jesus, his Jewish faith did not *stop*. Rather, it was *fulfilled*: “This was not a new religion. This was... the new world that the One God had always promised.” (Wright)
- Timeline of Life and Ministry

Date (AD)	Events
5-10	Birth of Saul of Tarsus
33	Conversion en route to Damascus (Acts 9.1-19)
33-36	Ministry in Damascus, Journey to Arabia (Acts 9.20-25; Gal. 1.13-18)
36	1 st Visit to Jerusalem (Acts 9.26-29; Gal. 1.18-21)
36-46	“Silent Decade” in Tarsus (Acts 9.30; Gal. 2.1)
46	Recruited by Barnabas to copastor in Antioch (Acts 11.25-26)
47	2 nd Visit to Jerusalem – with Barnabas (Acts 11.27-30; Gal. 2.1-10)
47-48	1 st Missionary Journey (Cyprus and Galatia)
48	Controversy with Peter in Antioch (Gal. 2.11-21); <i>Galatians</i>
49	Jerusalem Council (Acts 15)
49-51	2 nd Missionary Journey (Macedonia and Greece); <i>1 & 2 Thessalonians</i>
52-57	3 rd Missionary Journey (Ephesus); <i>1 & 2 Corinthians, Romans</i> Imprisonment in Ephesus? Prison Epistles?
57-59	Arrest in Jerusalem, Imprisoned in Caesarea (Acts 24.27), Prison Epistles?
59-60	Journey to Rome
60-62	House Arrest in Rome (Acts 28.30), Prison Epistles?
62-64	Undocumented Further Travels to East and/or Spain, <i>1 Timothy & Titus</i>
64-67	Rearrested, <i>2 Timothy</i> , Martyred in Rome

- **The Epistles**

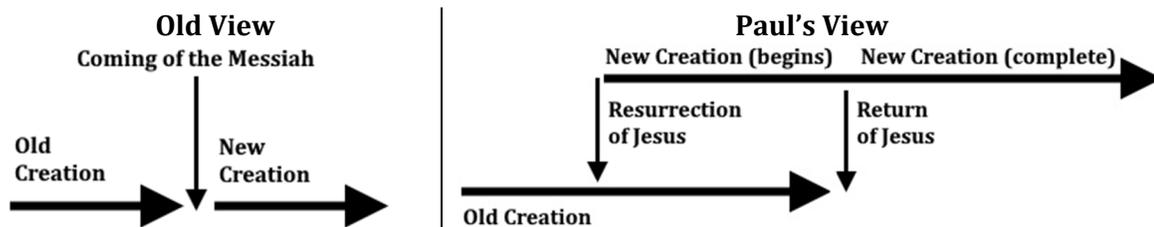
“The Epistles are not abstract philosophical or theological essays... In almost every instance, they are addressed to specific situations facing churches,” (*ESV Study Bible*).

Date	Title	Major Contributions to Paul’s Thought
48	Galatians	justification by faith alone, relationship of OT law to the gospel, Christ as the fulfillment of the OT promises, the fruit of the Holy Spirit
49-51	1 Thessalonians	the return of Jesus, esp. the resurrection of the dead
	2 Thessalonians	the return of Jesus, esp. the coming of “the man of lawlessness”
53-55	1 Corinthians	centrality of the cross, sexual ethics, Christian liberty, Lord’s supper, the unity of the church, spiritual gifts, worship, the resurrection
55-56	Philippians	Christ-centered humility, joy, and contentment in all circumstances
	Colossians	Christ’s preeminence in creation and in God’s plan of salvation, living new lives in the light and power of union with Jesus
	Philemon	how the gospel transforms deeply entrenched social norms
	Ephesians	a panorama of election, predestination, providence, and God’s love; faith and works, unity of Jews and Gentiles, spiritual warfare
	2 Corinthians	the comforts of Christ amid a life of affliction, suffering, and weakness
57	Romans	Paul’s <i>magnum opus</i> , expanding/systematizing much of his thought; new material on natural revelation, relationship of Adam to Christ, hope/promise of new creation, future of Israel, and civil government
62-64	1 Timothy	good order for young churches: public prayer, overseers and deacons, care for widows, confronting false teachers, teaching sound doctrine
	Titus	
64-67	2 Timothy	passing on the gospel, Word-centered ministry in the world’s last days

Big Ideas in the Theology of Paul

“For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you... was not Yes and No, but in him it is always Yes. For **all the promises of God find their Yes in him.**” (2 Corinthians 1.19-20)

1) **Jesus is the center of history: the already/not yet** (Gal. 4.4-5; 1 Thess. 5.4-5; 2 Cor. 5.17, 6.2):



- 2) **Jesus is the center of identity: two human teams** (1 Cor. 15.21-23, 45-49; Rom. 5.12, 17-19)
 - a. Analogy of sports team: the actions of the captain affect all team members, for good/ill
 - b. Analogy of power grid: from sin-powered “Adam grid” to Spirit-powered “Jesus grid”
- 3) **Jesus is the center of activity: we obey God in him** (Gal. 5.13-25, Rom. 7.1-6, 1 Cor. 9.19-21)
 - a. Jesus already paid everything we owe to God. By *paying* our debt, he has *bought* our debt.
 - b. We no longer owe *anything* to the law; we owe *everything* to him. Our motive is love, not law.
 - c. We follow him and keep the moral law not to *earn* life in heaven, but to *enjoy* the life of heaven.
- 4) **Jesus is the center of victory: reconciliation is vertical (God) and horizontal (others)**
 - a. Jesus’ life/death is a *double substitution* (2 Cor. 5.17-21) for our *justification* (Rom. 3.21-26).
 - b. *Sanctification* is liberation from idols and the demonic powers at work via them (Eph. 6.12).
 - c. Because Jesus has triumphed over every sin, idol, and demonic power, his power heals the alienation both of Eden (Gen. 3) and Babel (Gen. 11). Vertical reconciliation with God thus leads to horizontal reconciliation with other Christians across traditional lines (Eph. 2.1-21).