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NTS101 New Testament Survey

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Research Paper

# Paul and the Apostle John

# Paul

Paul wrote over half of the books in the New Testament. Pretty amazing being that he actually persecuted Christians before that. John was an Apostle of Jesus Christ. He wrote 5 books of the New Testament. Before that he was a fisherman. These are two prominent writers of the New Testament.

Paul was born approximately 5 AD in Taursas, which was under Roman rule at the time. He was from Jewish parents and it is believed that his father was actually a Pharisee. He was born with the Jewish name Saul. Acts 22 tells us that he was educated in the Jewish law at Gamaliel.

Later in life he began persecuting Christians. Galatians 1 and Philippians 3 tell how he was trying to put the Christian faith away. Acts 1 tells us how Saul was part of agreeing to put Stephen to death by stoning.  The Bible does not really go into detail as to

why he was so determined to eliminate Christianity. Some scholars believe he was indeed part of the Pharisees that wanted this fairly new Christian ideology smothered by any means necessary.

In approximately 33-35 AD, Saul experiences his conversion to Christianity himself. In Acts 9, it tells of him being stopped by a bright light while he was traveling to Damascus. The bright light was Jesus Christ showing himself to Saul and convincing him that he was to stop the persecuting and start doing Gods will. In fact Acts 9: 6 tells us that Jesus told him to "get up and go to the city, and you will be told what you must do."[1] To put an additional point across to Saul, Jesus even takes his sight from him. Saul does as he is told and for three days he fasts and prays. After the three days Ananias is sent from God, restores Saul's sight and tells him that God wants Saul to "be filled with the Holy Spirit"[2] according to Acts 9:17. Soon after his conversion Saul started being referred to as Paul. Some scholars believe it was because of

1 Holman Christian Standard Bible. Copyright 2006 by Holman Bible Publishers. Acts 9: 6.

2 Holman Christian Standard Bible. Copyright 2006 by Holman Bible Publishers. Acts 9: 17

his conversion, others think it was his other name because back in that time Jewish males often had two names. Either way he started being “Paul” in Acts 13.

Paul traveled on three major missionary journeys. He visited Churches and synagogues proclaiming that Jesus is the only way to eternal life. He taught that faith in God through Jesus Christ will give you 100% contentment in life even though we as Christians will have many struggles that come with that faith. Paul even spoke at the Council of Jerusalem on the subject of circumcision of Gentiles. Paul helped start Churches and even checked up on them after leaving to continue his journeys. He also checked up on pastors and elders. These letters of encouragement and instruction are found in the Bible. All together Paul wrote 13 books or letters that are part of the New Testament. They include Galatians, 1st and 2nd Thessalonians, 1st and 2nd Corinthians, Romans, Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, Philippians, 1st and 2nd Timothy, and Titus.

Paul’s letters are almost half of the books of the New Testament. Part of our foundation of faith in Jesus Christ is based off of what Paul encountered, taught, and ultimately wrote about.  New and old Christians can learn and study the gift and freedom from our faith journey by reading Paul’s letters. Then they can apply that knowledge to their life and take that to unbelievers around the world. Unbelievers can look at his letters and read about this most important figure in history that can change their life dramatically. His name is Jesus Christ.

## The Apostle John

The Apostle John was born approximately 6 AD in Bethsaida, Galilee, of the Roman Empire. He was the son of Zebedee and Salome. James, another one of the 12 disciples of Jesus, was his brother. He was a fisherman with his brother and father before he began his journey with Christ. In fact, this is where Jesus approached John. He was in a boat working with Zebedee and

James when he was “called”[3] as the scriptures say. He and James immediately left there father and joined Christ on his mission.

John would go with Jesus for approximately the next 3 years until His death and resurrection. He witnessed many things during this time and wrote the accounts down which became part of the Bible. He had the privilege of experiencing many great things as well. He along with James and Peter were the only witnesses of the raising of Daughter of Jairus.[4] He also saw, first hand, the transfiguration and Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane praying on the night He was betrayed.[5] He and Peter were called upon to make the preparations for the Passover meal or as it is called, “The Last Supper”.[6] While Jesus hung on the cross, John was the last of the Apostles to stay until He died. After that John took care of Mary, the mother of Jesus, just as He had asked from the cross in John 19: 25-27. John is even referred to as “The Disciple whom

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3 Holman Christian Standard Bible. Copyright 2006 by Holman Bible Publishers. Matthew 4: 21-22 and Mark 1: 19-20

4 "Fonck, Leopold.”St. John the Evangelist." The Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol. 8. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910. 6 Feb. 2013". Newadvent.org.

5 Butler, Alban. The Lives or the Fathers, Martyrs and Other Principal Saints, Vol.IV

6 Holman Christian Standard Bible. Copyright 2006 by Holman Bible Publishers. Luke 22: 8.

Jesus loved” or the “Beloved Disciple” six times in the book of John.[7]

After Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven, John was a vital part in starting and guiding the Church along with Peter. In Acts 4, it tells us that he and Peter were even thrown in jail for their belief and the preaching of Jesus Christ.

Later on in life John would train Polycarp and Ignatius of Antioch. It is believed that John was the youngest of all the disciples and outlived all of them as well. He is also the only one to have died a “natural” death as the others were martyred except Judas of course, who hung himself.  It is believed that John died approximately 100 AD.

John wrote 5 books of the Bible. Although John wrote far less books, because of the number of chapters and verses in each book, John wrote more of the New Testament than any other author including Paul. He wrote the book of John, which is an

7  Brown, Raymond E. 1970. "The Gospel According to John (xiii-xxi)". New York: Doubleday & Co. Pages 922, 955.

account of Jesus time of his ministry, death, and resurrection. He also wrote 1st, 2nd , and 3rd John which was written to combat errors concerning the Person and work of Christ, to warn believers about false teachers, and to emphasize the demonstration of truth or error in the believer's life. Finally he wrote Revelation. This is the book that tells us about the end times. It hits on topics about the Church age, Tribulation time, Millennium, the Great White Throne Judgment and Eternal State.[8]

These books are important because John had a personal account with Jesus Christ. He spent day and night with Him for about 3 years straight. There is not a better witness to someone of something than from someone who was right there following every move and writing it down. Here we can have comfort knowing what the book of John says about Jesus is accurate, because it was written by a man who was right there while it was happening. The three other books of John are important today because it teaches us believers that good fellowship with God the Father keeps us from doctrinal and moral error, to warn against

8 Survey of the New Testament. Paul N. Benware, Moody Press: Chicago, 1990.pp266-279

any false doctrine and teachers, and to give us encouragement and commendation for staying focus on what is right. Revelation teaches us that good ultimately conquers evil. It answers many questions about the end times. It also serves as encouragement to believers that are persecuted for their faith, even today.

I choose to write about Paul and John because I think I relate to both of them the most of all the New Testament writers. I think of how God can use someone who was so far from Him, and that it only took Jesus to come to Paul and tell him how special he could be. Jesus told Paul he had a purpose for God and to give up persecuting Christians. I may not have murdered people, but I know I am a sinner that needs Jesus in my life everyday if I'm going to get through the struggles that come with being a Christian. Paul saw that and wrote encouragement on that. John was a man that loved God so much he gave up his career with his Dad to follow Christ on His mission. Leaving his parents with his brother had to be hard on the family. John knew God had a bigger plan for his life. He took that leap of faith in Christ and it paid off for him. I think of my leap of faith in becoming an Associate Pastor

and taking courses to get my degree, even though some of my family questions my decision. It is a decision I made to finally start doing what God has called me to do. I know it will pay off because God has a bigger plan for me and my journey with Him, just as John did.

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wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul the Apostle

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