

Dear Friends and Family,

After some thought and prayerful consideration,
we will venture next into the book of Romans together.
While Romans comes immediately after Acts in the New Testament,
Rome is actually the last place Paul ever lived.
Paul was taken to Rome after he was imprisoned in Jerusalem
which concluded his third missionary journey.

Paul probably wrote the letter to the church at Rome in response
to specific questions from the church.

In particular, there seems to be a theme of Jew-Gentile struggles within the unified church.
Most scholars believe he wrote the letter during a two month period while he was in Corinth.

Acts 20:2-3 speaks of this period of time.

In 1 Corinthians 1:14, a man by the name of Gias is mentioned.

Gias is also mentioned in Romans 16:23 as Paul's host,
likely while he is writing the letter.

Paul, having been arrested at the end of his third missionary journey,
and being a Roman citizen,
appeals to Caesar and is eventually sent on to Rome to stand trial.
The book of Acts ends with Paul living under house arrest in Rome.
For two full years he welcomed all who would come to him
AND he continued to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Paul arrived in Rome in 60AD.

Lived under house arrest until 62AD.

Released sometime between 62-64AD.

Re-arrested and put to death sometime between 64-67AD.

Pastor's Point of View

The big question: **Why was Paul called as a missionary to the gentiles?**

In this Pastor's Point of View we are going to walk through some of the historical background text found in Acts. Therefore, rather than break up this devotional into specific days, I will outline all of the texts of Acts so you may work through them at your own pace.

- I. Saul's persecution of the Church: READ Acts 7:58-8:3 and Acts 9:1-2
 - A. What examples are there of the persecuted church today?

- B. Are there still people like Saul? Do examples come to mind?
- C. Is it possible to think one is serving God while actually working against God? How does this happen?
- D. What about after his conversion, are there people like Paul living today?

II. Saul's Conversion: READ Acts 9:3-19

- A. Acts 9:15 - What was Saul's calling?
- B. Note that Saul is heading to and told to wait in Damascus.
- C. Think about all of the different perspectives in this passage.
 - 1. As a fellow traveller with Saul, what may have been in the thoughts of those who were with them?
 - 2. Saul recognized that it was God speaking to him, did the others with him do the same?
 - 3. What happened to their lives after this moment in time? Surely, they saw Paul's radical transformation as well. Which side did they pick?
- D. What are some things that can happen to a movement when a key player/ leader is no longer leading and is actually fighting against the very movement he was once leading?
- E. In the pro-life sector, several abortionists have come forward, sorrowful for their part in the abortion industry. These people are now some of the strongest advocates FOR life and speak with much knowledge and personal regret, but God uses their past in mighty ways.

III. Saul in Jerusalem: READ Acts 9:26-30

- A. Acts 9:26-30 - To where was Saul sent away?
- B. Acts 9:11 - Where was he originally from ?
- C. Acts 9:27 - Who vouched for Saul in Jerusalem?
- D. Look at a map of Paul's first missionary journey

https://www.conformingtojesus.com/images/webpages/pauls_first_missionary_journey1.jpg

- 1. Find Tarsus and Antioch
- 2. Note that there are two different locations for Antioch
- 3. The Antioch to the East of Tarsus is the location of the church in Acts 11
- 4. The Antioch to the West is Pisidian Antioch which Paul will not reach until Acts 13.

IV. Barnabas: READ Acts 11:19-26

- A. Acts 11:22 - Who was sent to Antioch to explore the gospel being proclaimed to the gentiles?
 - 1. Why is this important?
 - 2. Is this a method that is important in the church today?
- B. Acts 11:25-26 - What did Barnabas do after he arrived at Antioch?
- C. Acts 11:26 - How long did Saul and Barnabus teach together at Antioch?
 - 1. Why is this important?
 - 2. It is easy to hear the words of a changed man, it is better to believe the fruit of a changed man. What does God say about fruit?

3. Matthew 7:15-20. Have you run into this problem personally?
 - D. Acts 11:26 - What significant event took place for the first time in Antioch?
- V. Gaining trust: READ Acts 11:27-30
- A. Something very important happens at this time, what is it?
 - B. Recall that Saul was once not trusted by the Apostles and was sent away from Jerusalem (Acts 9:11)
 - C. What is Saul entrusted with now?
 - D. Did this change in trust happen overnight?
- VI. Primacy: READ Acts 12:25-13:52
- A. Note Acts 12:25 and Acts 13:1
 1. Barnabas' name is continuously listed first.
 2. In Acts 13:1 Saul is listed last among those at Antioch.
 3. This is likely an important and intentional literary style used by Luke here in Acts.
 4. Why do you think this is?
 - B. Barnabas and Saul are set apart by the Holy Spirit for a unique work, what is it?
 - C. What noteworthy event takes place (almost without mention) in Acts 13:9?
 1. Notice how the language begins to change in vs 13 "Paul and his companions"
 2. Once Paul's name is changed in the text, Luke records the change, by noting in the way the narrative is written.
 - D. Take note of Paul's boldness in preaching in Acts 13:16-43.
 - E. What key event takes place in Acts 13:45-47
- VII. Hardship: READ Acts 14:19-28
- A. What happens to Paul?
 - B. How would you react in this situation?
 - C. What irony is there in this encounter?
 - D. Acts 19:22 - What does Paul do?
- VIII. What to do with Gentiles? READ Acts 15
- A. This chapter outlines a disagreement
 1. It addresses the conversion of gentiles
 2. It solidifies Paul's ministry to gentiles
 3. When he begins his second missionary journey it is strictly to the gentiles.
 4. How can disagreements or hard situations send us in a direction we may not have considered?
 5. How does God use conflict in our lives for HIS good?
 - B. Note in Acts 16:3 on the Sabbath, Paul does not go to the Synagogue but instead goes outside the gate to a place of prayer.
 1. Why is this important?
 2. What is significant about prayer?

As we study this book together, we will dive deeply into some of these key questions. This outline will hopefully be a resource to provide you with a base knowledge regarding Paul's travels and his missionary call to the gentiles. May we be bold like Paul, grounded in truth, encouraging others in hardship and suffering.

“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 to faith; as it is written, “BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.”

- Romans 1:16-17

Peace be with you all!
Pastor Matt

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*Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us **RUN** with endurance the race that is set before us -- Hebrews 12:1*