

STELLENBERG BYBELSKOOL

Momente wat Paulus se lewe gevorm het Sessie 1. Paulus se vroeë lewe



Ken jy die apostel Paulus? Ek vermoed dat ons almal met 'n besliste "ja" sal antwoord. Ekself het van kleins grootgeword om gereeld die naam in die Bybel en Sondag in die kerk te hoor. Hoe het hy gelyk? Die prent hierbo is 'n fresco van Paulus wat in 'n katakombe in Rome gevind is en uit die 4 de eeu dateer. Die vroegste beskrywing van Paulus se gelaatstrekke kom uit 'n boek wat nie in die Bybel opgeneem is nie, naamlik die Handeling van Paulus wat uit die 2 de eeu dateer en hom as volg beskryf:

"a man small of stature, with a bald head and crooked legs, in a good state of body, with eyebrows meeting and nose somewhat hooked, full of friendliness; for now he appeared like a man, and now he had the face of an angel."

Ons eie prentjie van Paulus is waarskynlik uit 'n 'n magdom van bekende, maar gefragmenteerde tekste gevorm. Dit kan verwarrend wees wanneer jy dit in die Bybel probeer volg, want jy moet gedurig tussen tekste rondspring en dit is nie maklik om sy lewe kronologies te rangskik nie. Sy vier sendingreise is vir ons 'n raamwerk om sy lewe beter te verstaan. In ons Bybelskool reeks gaan egter sy lewe volg deur by belangrike momente wat sy lewe gevorm het stil te staan. Vir my was dit verrassend om te ontdek hoe gebeurtenisse in Paulus se lewe sy perspektief op God en die wêreld verander het.

- Paulus se vroeë lewe (van Tarsus tot in Damaskus).
- Paulus se bekering (van Damaskus tot in Antiogië).
- Paulus in Galasië
- Paulus in Efese
- Paulus in Korinte.
- Paulus op pad na Rome.



Ons begin met 'n paar interessante gedagtes, waarby ons ook in ons reeks by gaan uitkom en wat ons help om sy bediening in 'n ander lig te sien. Daarna iets in kort oor sy vroeë lewe.

Was Paulus dan nie 'n dissipel nie? Paulus was nie een van Jesus se 'n dissipels nie, maar word 'n apostel genoem. Ons weet nie of Paulus ooit Jesus voor sy kruisiging in lewende lywe gesien of geken het nie. Hy het beslis nie kennis gedra van alles wat Jesus tydens sy bediening in Galilea gesê of gedoen het nie. Die historiese Jesus (lewensverhaal soos beskryf in die vier Evangelies) was nie soseer vir Paulus van belang nie en daarom verwys hy ook nie in sy briewe daarna nie. Vir Paulus is Christus se sterwe en opstanding die kern. Die Jesus wat hy op die pad na Damaskus ontmoet was die gekruisigde Jesus wat uit die dood opgestaan het en daarom gebruik Paulus altyd die begrip Christus Jesus (en nie Jesus Christus).

Hoe pas Paulus se briewe in by die vier Evangelies? In ons gedagtes is die vier Evangelies (Matteus, Markus, Lukas en Johannes) oer as Paulus se briewe. Die perspektief is gegrond op die volgorde van die Nuwe Testament. Dit is egter die teenoorgestelde. Paulus se vroegste briewe dateer uit rondom 50 nC en die Evangelies 20-40 jaar later (die Evangelies is waarskynlik tussen 70-90 nC geskryf). Dit beteken dat hulle eers na die dood van Petrus en Paulus se dood saamgestel is.

Was Paulus die outeur van al sy briewe? Nie al die briewe wat aan Paulus toegesê is, is self deur hom geskryf nie. Die volgende sewe briewe word as Paulus se eie beskou: 1 Tessalonisense, Galasiërs, 1 & 2 Korintiërs, Filippense, Filemon en Romeine. Die brief aan die Efesiërs, Kolossense, 2 Tessalonisense, 1 & 2 Timoteus en Titus word Deutro-Pauliniese briewe genoem en is geskryf deur Paulus se navolgers wat sy leringe en ervaringe vir opeenvolgende geslagte lewendig wou hou. In vergelyking met Paulus se eie briewe is die temas, taal en skryfstyl van hierdie briewe anders. Alhoewel die brief aan die Hebreërs anoniem geskryf is, is daar sommige wat meen dat Paulus die outeur kon gewees het.

Hoekom is daar in die Bybel twee weergawes van Paulus se lewe? In die Bybel word Paulus se lewe op twee plekke beskryf: Lukas se weergawe in Handeling en Paulus se eie weergawe in sy briewe. Let wel dat nie een van hierdie weergawes bedoel was as 'n historiese oorsig nie en plek plek van mekaar verskil.

Was Paulus se perspektiewe deur die vroeë gelowiges as normatief aanvaar? 'n Mens aanvaar dat Paulus se godsdienstige opinies en standpunte alom as normatief aanvaar is. Dit blyk egter dat in Paulus se leeftyd daar 'n magdom van stemme was wat aangaande Jesus se opstanding getuig het. Die era waarin Paulus geleef het is gekenmerk deur 'n diversiteit van godsdienstige stemme wat tot onderlinge konflik gelei het. Paulus moes homself dikwels teenoor medegelowiges wat ook in Jesus glo verdedig (Petrus en Apollos) Sy teologie is eers later, toe die Bybel saamgestel is, as normatief binne die groter kerk aanvaar.

Wat het van Paulus geword? Ons weet nie hoe, waar of wanneer Paulus oorlede is nie. Handeling eindig waar Paulus ongehinderd in Rome met sy bediening voortgaan.

Hoe moet ons die tydverloop in Paulus se briewe beoordeel? Die tydlyn hieronder bied 'n goeie oorsig van gebeure en waar in die Bybel ons daarvan kan lees. 'n Mens hou dikwels nie rekening met die lang tydsverloop tussen prominente periodes in Paulus se lewe nie.

PAUL'S LETTERS AND MISSIONARY JOURNEYS				
YEAR A.D.	MAJOR EVENTS	ACTS	PERIOD	LETTERS
34	Conversion, Damascus, Arabia	9	3 years - Arabia	
37	Jerusalem, Tarsus, Syria, Cilicia			
46-47	Antioch, Jerusalem	11	1 year - Antioch	
48-49	First Missionary Journey and Antioch	13-14		Galatians
50	Jerusalem Council and Antioch	15		
51-53	Second Missionary Journey	16-18	18 months - Corinth	1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians
53-54	Antioch			
54-57	Third Missionary Journey	19-21	3 years - Ephesus	1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians Romans
57	Jerusalem Arrest	22-23		
57-59	Caesarea Prisoner	24-26	2 years	
59-60	Journey to Rome	27-28		
60-67 circa	Rome House Arrest	28	5-7 years circa	Ephesians Colossians Philemon Philippians 1 Timothy Titus 2 Timothy

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Paulus (aanvanklik Saulus) se herkoms en latere bediening moet teen die agtergrond van die **Joodse diaspora** verstaan word. Kwessies wat daarmee verband hou het telkens sy pad gekruis. Die volgende artikel gee 'n kort oorsig van die beweging.

The Jewish Diaspora

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The Greek word "diaspora" means a scattering. And indeed there was a scattering of Jews throughout the known Greek and Roman world from the third century B.C. and on down. There's a famous utterance by Strabo, a Greek geographer of the late first century, B.C., who says that you can't go anywhere in the civilized world without encountering a Jew. And by his time this certainly was true. There were large Jewish communities in Egypt, especially in Alexandria, but even throughout the countryside, up the Nile Valley. There were large Jewish communities in

Syria, a very large one in the city of Antioch, but throughout Syria, and there were numerous Jewish communities throughout Asia Minor, modern day Turkey, just as there were Jewish communities in Greece and throughout the Italian peninsula, most especially of course in the city of Rome. Even further west, we know about Jews in southern France, and Jews in Marseilles and perhaps even Jews in Spain....

It's interesting to note that early Christianity first spread in those areas where there was a Jewish presence. That is, it spreads in Egypt, it spreads in Syria, it spreads in Asia Minor, it spreads in Greece and Italy. These are precisely areas where we know there were Jewish communities, there were Jewish synagogues and there were Jews in number scattered throughout all these areas. Presumably the earliest Christian travellers and missionaries like Paul would begin their travels by obviously approaching their brethren, approaching their fellow Jews, and converting some of them to the new path or the new religion, if I may use that word, or the new way of thinking, and perhaps using these communities as springboards from which to get access to the non-Jews in these very areas also. It's clear, then, that the Diaspora communities formed the Jewish network which early Christians as Jews were able to use for their own purposes.



Saulus se vroeë lewensjare

Die Bybel gee ons baie min informasie oor Saulus se vroeë lewe. Hy was 'n Griekssprekende Jood wat rondom dieselfde tyd as Jesus gebore is en in 'n Joodse gemeenskap (Joodse diaspora) in Tarsus (Sisilië) grootgeword het. Die feit dat hy as jong man Jerusalem toe gestuur is om as Fariseër onder die rabbi Gamaliël in Jerusalem te studeer, is 'n aanduiding dat hy uit 'n ryk/invloedryke omgewing afkomstig was.

Saulus as Fariseër

The Pharisees were an influential religious sect within Judaism in the time of Christ and the early church. They were known for their emphasis on personal piety (the word *Pharisee* comes from a Hebrew word meaning “separated”), their acceptance of oral tradition in addition to the written Law, and their teaching that all Jews should observe all 600-plus laws in the Torah, including the rituals concerning ceremonial purification.

The Pharisees were mostly middle-class businessmen and leaders of the synagogues. Though they were a minority in the Sanhedrin and held a minority number of positions as priests, they seemed to control the decision-making of the Sanhedrin because they had popular support among the people.

Among the Pharisees were two schools of thought, based on the teachings of two rabbis, Shammai and Hillel. Shammai called for a strict, unbending interpretation of the Law on almost every issue, but Hillel taught a looser, more liberal application. Followers of Shammai fostered a hatred for anything Roman, including taxation—Jews who served as tax collectors were *persona non grata*. The Shammaites wanted to outlaw all communication and commerce between Jews and Gentiles. The Hillelites took a more gracious approach and opposed such extreme exclusiveness. Eventually, the two schools within Pharisaism grew so hostile to each other that they refused to worship together.

The Pharisees accepted the written Word as inspired by God. At the time of Christ's earthly ministry, this would have been what we now call the Old Testament. Unfortunately, the Pharisees gave equal authority to oral tradition, saying the traditions went all the way back to Moses. Evolving over the centuries, the Pharisaic traditions had the effect of adding to God's Word, which is forbidden (Deuteronomy 4:2). The Gospels abound with examples of the Pharisees treating their traditions as equal to God's Word (Matthew 9:14; 15:1-9; 23:5; 23:16, 23; Luke 11:42). Jesus applied the condemnation of Isaiah 29:13 to the Pharisees, saying, “Their teachings are merely human rules” (Mark 7:7).

The Pharisees taught the following doctrines:

1. God controls all things, but decisions made by individuals also affect life's

course.

2. There will be a resurrection of the dead (Acts 23:6).
3. There is an afterlife, with appropriate reward and punishment on an individual basis. The Messiah will set up His kingdom on earth.
4. The spiritual realm, including the existence of angels and demons, is real (Acts 23:8).

Many of the Pharisees' doctrines put them at odds with the Sadducees; however, the two groups managed to set aside their differences on one occasion—the trial of Jesus Christ. To accomplish the demise of Jesus, the Sadducees and Pharisees united (Mark 14:53; 15:1; John 11:48-50).

The Pharisees were responsible for the compilation of the Mishnah, an important document with reference to the continuation of Judaism beyond the destruction of the temple. Rabbinical Judaism and modern-day synagogues owe their existence to the Pharisees' work.

In the Gospels, the Pharisees are often presented as hypocritical and proud opponents of Jesus. The Lord stated it bluntly: "They do not practice what they preach" (Matthew 23:3). As a general rule, the Pharisees were self-righteousness and smug in their delusion that they were pleasing to God because they kept the Law—or parts of it, at least. As Jesus pointed out to them, however scrupulous they were in following the finer points of ritualism, they failed to measure up to God's standard of holiness: "You have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness" (verse 23).

Of course, not every Pharisee was opposed to Jesus. Nicodemus was a Pharisee who rightly considered Jesus "a teacher who has come from God" and honestly sought answers from Him (John 3:1-2). Nicodemus later defended Jesus before the Sanhedrin (John 7:50-51) and was on hand at Jesus' crucifixion to help bury the Lord's body (John 19:39). Some of the early Christians were Pharisees, as well (Acts 15:5).

The apostle Paul was trained as a Pharisee, and his credentials in that group were sterling (Acts 26:5). Paul called himself "a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless" (Philippians 3:5-6). But Paul found that his performance of the Law could not produce true righteousness. After he placed his trust in Christ's finished work on the cross, he desired to "be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith" (verse 9). No one, not even the strictest Pharisee, is justified by keeping the Law (Galatians 3:11).