

Title: **Introduction to Galatians (Part 1)**

Passage: **Galatians 1:1a**

Theme: **The Person and Life of the Apostle Paul**

Number: **0514Gal.1a(1)**

Date: **May 25, 2014**

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{Read Passage}

[i] Freshman year in High School I took “typing”

Can you even take that as a class anymore?

Back when I was in H.S. we used typewriters (no computer word-processors). We had 2 types (pun): Manual and Electric. I started off on t/manual and mid-semester we switched. After that many weeks on a standard typewriter where you have to exert force when you type, I never could get used to t/touchy keys & nearly failed the course. I did, however, on t/manual typewriter, get to a whopping 29 WPM.

One of t/things we learned in that class was how to type a business letter. We learned that letters have parts // to use good grammar // how to type an envelope.

[ii] I share this story with you once again (intro to Jude) for a reason

Galatians is an epistle (letter). Like any letter it has features. There are ?s we can ask about it, as a letter.

Pic. an old fashioned letter // that letter inside of an envelope // that envelope as you would see it on the o/s while you also wonder what's inside once you open it.

Parts to a letter that has been sent through the mail:

- I. The Return Address – who wrote it? (v 1)
- II. The Mailing Address - who receives it? (v. 2)
- III. The Post-Mark - when was it sent / written?
- IV. The Stamp – issues of authenticity
- V. The Contents - what is it about?

## I. The Return Address

Where did t/letter come from? Who wrote it?

### A. The first word in the book of Galatians is a proper name

1<sup>st</sup> word in English; also in Grk. – Proper name: Paul (Παῦλος).

### 1. Outside of our Lord Jesus Christ there's really not a more central figure to the faith than Paul the Apostle

IMO – Even Peter (not t/1st pope) does not reach t/prominence of Paul). Cf. NT books authored by Peter (2 – 1-2 Peter) - Paul (13) *Romans; 1 Corinthians; 2 Corinthians; Ephesians; Philippians; Colossians; 1 Thessalonians; 2 Thessalonians; 1 Timothy; 2 Timothy; Titus; Philemon; and – GALATIANS.*

13 NT epistles; 87 chapters; 2,033 verses – (leave total word # to those of you who can't sleep at night – instead of sheep – you'll have to count from t/Gk. text to be accurate).

### B. Throughout history The Apostle Paul has had his critics

T.J. called him “[the] **first corrupter of the doctrines of Jesus.**” [Thomas Jefferson, to William Short, April 13, 1820]

“One of the most ambitious of men, whose superstition was only equaled by his cunning; a much tortured, much to be pitied man, an exceedingly unpleasant person both to himself and to others.” [Nietzsche]

[iv] Paul faced an unending stream of naysayers during his ministry - much of this is recorded for us in Scripture

There were those who said he wasn't a true A.

He wasn't like Peter or John.

His detractors called him a fake – a wannabe.

As much as it pained him, he defended t/legitimacy of his A. You can see that in chapt. 10-12 of 2 Cor.

Can see it here in the 1<sup>st</sup> v. of Galatians ==>

PAUL, an apostle (not sent from men, nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead),

Much of the first 2 chapters of Gal. are a defense of Paul's A. as well as His understanding of t/Gospel of grace.

He drives both points home in 2:11 ff. when he writes of t/time he had to publicly rebuke Peter in Antioch due to his hypocrisy.

Let's back up . . .

## C. Who was the Apostle Paul?

### 1. He was born Saul of Tarsus right around 5 AD

“Saul” was his Heb. name – was t/son of Jewish parents, of t/Tribe of Benj. – who named him after t/most notorious Benj. in hist. King Saul

Born in t/city of Tarsus – sw Asia Minor – just north of Jerus. 350 mi. Tarsus was a Roman colony – Paul was born a Rom. citizen (use to his political advantage).

His family was no doubt influential. Father was probably a master tent maker (Paul would have learned the craft from him). Of his mother – we know nothing (never mentions her).

## 2. We don't often use the word “Prodigy”

Prob. safe to say that's 1 adj. that was never connected to any of us in our childhood.

### a. History has its list of child prodigies – those who went on to great fame

**Blaise Pascal** was a 17<sup>th</sup> c. French mathematician, physicist, and religious philosopher who wrote a treatise on vibrating bodies at the age of nine; his first proof, on a wall with a piece of coal, at 11 years old, and a theorem by 16 years old. He is famous for Pascal's theorem and many other contributions in mathematics, philosophy, and physics

**Philip Melancthon**. He qualified for a Master's Degree at age 15 but was denied on account of his youth. He went on to Tübingen, where he continued humanistic studies, but also worked on jurisprudence, mathematics, and medicine. He was finally granted his Master's degree in 1516 at the age of 19 and accepted a call to the University of Wittenberg by Martin Luther, and became professor of the Greek language there at the age of 21.

**Mozart** learned to play the piano at the age of four, composed his first pieces at five and at eight wrote his first symphony.

**William James Sidis** an American child prodigy who died in 1944. He could read at 18 months. At age 7 he had written 4 books and was fluent in 8 languages. Entered Harvard at 11. His I.Q. was est. to be upwards of 300.

Any exhaustive list of child prodigies would have to include Paul.

In contrast to Peter & John, who are referred to in Acts 4:13 as αγροματος & ιδιωτης (uneducated & untrained) – Paul seemingly had t/best of everything: A gifted mind and a gifted education.

3. As a youth he was sent to Jerusalem to study under the famed Rabbi Gamaliel – a special privilege

1. Gamaliel was the son or grandson of the famous Rabbi Hillel

To be a pupil of G. would be akin to a Xn learning from TAJ (Poly.), or a 16<sup>th</sup> c. student sitting under t/tutelage of Luther, Calvin or Knox.

Acts 22:3 “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, just as you all are today.

G. prominence & esteem among t/Jews is reflected in t/Mishna: “When Rabban Gamaliel the Elder died, the glory of the Law ceased and purity and abstinence died.”

Most scholars believe that Paul would have ended up with a seat on the Sanhedrin – t/elite 70 member ruling body of Israel.

D. It's in the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter of Acts that we first encounter Paul (“Saul”)

1. Connection with the stoning of Stephen

Stephen, a young man around 30, was 1 of t/7 men chosen to relieve t/Apostles so that they could more effectively min. t/Word & Pray.

Stephen, who is described as being “full of grace and power”

Stephen, who, like his Master is falsely accused & uses that opportunity to preach before t/rulers of Israel.

In his sermon Stephen goes thru t/entire history of Israel – starting w/Abraham t/father of faith, moving on to Moses who gave Israel t/Law. From Moses, to David; from David to Solomon.

Acts 7:51–53 51 “You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did. 52 “Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become; 53 you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it.”

a. We don't know if Stephen had more to say

But t/Jewish leaders had heard enough.

1 biographer vividly describes what happened next ==>

The judges leaped from their places howling in fury. The Hall of Polished Stones, [where t/San. met during 2d Temple period - built into t/Temple's N. wall, ½ inside t/sanct. & 1/2 o/s] scene of grave debates and historic trials, reverberated to the baying of a lynch crowd, which rushed at the young defendant and manhandled him down the steps into the strong sunlight of the Court of the Priests. Across this wide, open space, down more steps, through court after court, Stephen was swept by the maddened crowd swelled by bystanders, worshipers and traders, until they had him out of the sacred Temple precincts into the streets of the Holy City.

When the northern gate was behind them and they reached the Rock of Execution, "twice the height of a man," they should solemnly have stripped him, and thrown him cleanly over to break his neck or at least to stun him, so that death by stoning would not be too unmerciful. Instead they pushed Stephen as he was, and his tangled clothes broke the fall and he staggered to his feet fully conscious.

In a judicial stoning the first stones must be aimed by those who had brought the charges. These witnesses therefore elbowed their way to the front, threw off their outer clothes and looked around for someone to guard them. A young lawyer, panting from the race through the streets, stepped forward. They recognized a Pharisee from Cilicia in Asia Minor known as Saul among Jews and Paul among Greeks and Romans.

Paul watched approvingly as each witness picked up a heavy jagged stone, raised it above his head and threw it to gash and maim the man below. Then Paul heard Stephen's voice. In pain but clearly, he spoke as if to someone invisible but close: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

Stones showered as the mob scrambled to complete what the witnesses had begun. Stephen mastered his pain while blood gushed from cuts and bruises. He knelt down in an attitude of prayer. Paul could not miss the words that came with loudness amazing in a dying man: "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." [Pollack, 3-4]

"Lord, do not hold this sin against them." - last verse of chapter 7 ==> 8:1 AND Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. And on that day a great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

8:3 But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house; and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison.

Paul under the authority of t/Sanhedrin, took charge of a movt. to systematically persecute and suppress t/disciples of this inconceivable Messiah-figure, Jesus of Nazareth.

Paul relentlessly pursued Xns. He threw them into dungeons. He cast his vote in favor of their death by stoning. He gleefully watched as others were publicly flogged -- the "forty stripes save one" – not a sight for the faint of heart.

He remained unmoved as men—and women—staggered away with backs a mass of weals and blood. He was equally unmoved by the refusal of grown men to be humiliated by a beating in front of neighbors. It was said that Jews beaten in synagogue would almost die of shame, but these seemed to be glad, and some called out that they were praying for those who . . . persecuted them. [Pollack, 14-15]

### E. But it all changed for Paul

How does a man filled with misguided religious passion & a murderous zeal become a peaceful, joy-filled follower of that which he once tried to destroy?

#### 1. How does that happen for any of us? – GRACE

Work of God in regeneration by the Holy Spirit.

John 1:12–13 **12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.**

Augustine as a rebellious young man hears a child's voice "from a nearby house" repeating the words, "pick up and read, pick up and read." Augustine takes up a Bible and reads t/command: "put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in its lusts."

a. For us it wasn't that dramatic – not like Paul's conversion

But I would suggest that in the final analysis your conversion was no less miraculous.

1 Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

2. Pick up the story in chapter 9

1 NOW Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, 2 and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

a. Paul was a bounty-hunter of sorts

The bounty for him was personal reward for religious zeal. He was a hunter and Xns were his prey. He sought and was granted official letters from t/HP of Israel that he could present to t/syn. at Damascus giving him authorization to arrest these Jesus people so that he could bring them in chains to Jerus. for punishment.

3 And it came about that as he journeyed, he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; 4 and he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"

Here comes a light brighter than t/noon day sun. It's blinding. And a voice, probably in Aramaic, thunders; it was the voice of Jesus.

5 And he said, "Who art Thou, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, 6 but rise, and enter the city, and it shall be told you what you must do."7 And the men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but seeing no one. 8 And Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus. 9 And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

Repentance? Regret? Eyes blinded physically that now saw spiritually.

2 Corinthians 4:6 *For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.*

Damascus - Damascus – where Paul was going to arrest Xns. One of them whom Paul would have arrested was a man named Ananias. A "certain disciple" (v. 10)

. . . and the Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Behold, here am I, Lord."11 And the Lord said to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying,12 and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight."13 But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Thy saints at Jerusalem;14 and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call upon Thy name."15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name

before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;16 for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake.”

Did you catch that last line? [^]

Jesus was the Suffering Servant. Should His followers expect less?

Philippians 1:29 For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,

Writing in A.D. 56 (2 Corinthians 11:24–29)

24 Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep.

Scourging [records 1 historian] was regarded as the correction of a brother, purging his offense that he might resume a place in the family of the synagogue. The alternative was excommunication, to be flung out of Israel, a fate that Paul, regarding the synagogues as Christ's potential spearheads, would wish to avoid.

It was the duty of the judges to estimate how much corporal punishment, up to the prescribed thirty-nine lashes, the culprit could take. Paul's physique was such that he was awarded the lot. Watched by the congregation he was bent and bound between two pillars. The hazzan, possibly the same who had taught him as a boy, solemnly tore at his robe until his torso was bare. The hazzan picked up a heavy whip formed by a four-pronged strap of calf hide with two prongs of ass hide, long enough to reach the navel from behind and above. He stood on a stone and with one hand, using "all his might," brought it down over Paul's shoulder to curl round and cut his chest. Thirteen lashes were counted, while a reader intoned curses from the Law: "If

thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, The Lord Thy God, then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful . . ."

After the thirteenth on the chest the whipping was transferred to the back, thirteen hard strokes across one shoulder, thirteen across the other, cutting across weals already bleeding. The pain may be gauged by a description of flogging in early Australia from the autobiographical novel Ralph Rashleigh, for whom the first dozen strokes were "like jagged wire tearing furrows in the flesh, and the second dozen seemed like the filling of the furrows with molten lead . . . Sensations of intense and intolerable pain." The synagogue elder in charge could stop the punishment if the prisoner collapsed or lost control of his bowels but such mercy can have been exercised seldom, for the scourger was expressly indemnified if the victim died. Paul endured to the end, tasting not only the agony he had inflicted on others but the sharing of his pain with Jesus.

Physically, he was marked for life ==>

Gal. 6:17 . . . **I bear on my body the brand-marks of Jesus.**

2d c. doc. from Asia Minor called The Acts of Paul and Thecla includes a description of Paul: short in height, rather bald with a long nose and a projecting or strong brow, and bowlegged – a deformity common among men who have been severely flogged.

**22 But Saul kept increasing in strength and confounding the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ. Damascus . . .**

**F. Second half of the Book of Acts is dominated by the Apostle Paul**  
3 missionary journeys that connect history to t/epistles, incl. Galatians.

Beatings; imprisonments; miracles; preaching; 1000s of mi traveled by land & sea; shipwrecks; souls added to t/CH & local CH's est.

### 1. AD 36 - Paul's First Visit to Jerusalem after conversion (v 18)

Stays almost 2 wks (Acts 9:26). His preaching angers some Jews to the point where they plot to take his life (Acts 9:29). He is soon sent by church brethren to Caesarea and back home to Tarsus (Acts 9:30).

### 2. AD 36 to 40 Paul travels back to his hometown of Tarsus and stays there 4 years

Paul, in 30s. Sort of drops out of history for a time. Very likely that his return was to sharing t/Gospel w/family & friends. Fact that we don't read of a work in Tarsus which Paul calls “no insig. city” may indicate that he wasn't well received.

There's no record in Acts of what he writes in 2 Cor 11:24: **Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes.** Some scholars believe that these scourgings occurred while he was in Tarsus.

Barnabas travels to Tarsus seeking Paul's help with t/fledgling church in Antioch. They journey from Tarsus back to Antioch and stay in the city for an entire year (Acts 11:25-26).

A first c. Prophet “Agabus” warns of an impending famine.

Acts 11:28–30 28 . . . **Agabus stood up and began to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world. And this took place in the reign of Claudius.**

Tacitus, Suetonius and Josephus – all near contemp. historians, record food shortages at this time. A collection is taken for the brethren in Judea which Paul and Barnabas deliver.

### 3. First Missionary Journey (Acts 13-14)

Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch.

Acts 13:1–3 1 NOW there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers . . . 2 And while they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”3 Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

From Syrian Antioch Paul, Barnabas and John Mark begin the first missionary journey (Acts 13:4-52, 14:1-25). They travel to at least 8 cities or regions – including Galatia.

Back to A. where they stay for almost three years (Acts 14:26-28).

### 4. The Conference in Jerusalem

Paul, Barnabas travel to Jerusalem to meet with other church leaders regarding the Judaizers (men from Judea) dispute re: circumcision. . .

Back to Antioch to update the church regarding the decisions reached in Jerusalem (Acts 15:30-32).

### 5. Second Missionary Journey

Paul takes Silas with him to Tarsus. They go to the cities of Derbe and Lystra where Paul meets Timothy (1Tim 1:2, 4:14).

They eventually end up in Troas and then on to Philippi where Paul casts a demon out of a slave. The slave's owners, who were making money off of her demonic powers, have the apostle and Silas thrown in prison. They are only set free . . . earthquake . . . Jailer (Acts 16).

They travel to Thessalonica & are forced to flee to Berea after a riot forms. The Bereans . . . more noble . . .

Paul leaves for Athens (Acts 17:13-15) where he preaches before t/Areopagus.

#### a. AD 50 to 52 - The gospel is preached in Corinth and Ephesus

Paul leaves Athens for Corinth. He meets Silas and Timothy (Acts 18:1-5). Paul stays in the city for around 18 months.

During which time he's brought before t/Procounsel Gallio on trumped up charges. He's acquitted and freed to continue to preach.

He, Priscilla and Aquila then travel to Ephesus by ship. In a short time he leaves them in order, if possible, to be in Jerusalem for the Feast (Acts 18:18-21).

#### 6. Third Missionary Journey

TAP revisits t/Galatian churches. He then goes to the Phrygia province in order to strengthen believers (Acts 18:23).

Back to Ephesus around AD 55. He's there for a little more than 3 years (Acts 19:1-20).

The group travels back to Troas (Acts 20:6). At Miletus Paul sends a message asking that the Ephesians elders come see him. He warns about false teachers "savage wolves" (Acts 20:26-31). He then sails to Patara and then to Tyre (Acts 21:1-4). After spending a week in Tyre he sails to Caesarea (Acts 21:5-6). While in the city Paul stays in his home of Philip the evangelist for a few days. The apostle then leaves for Jerusalem (Acts 21:10-15).

## 7. Paul visits James in Jerusalem

Goes to the temple with four Jewish converts (Acts 21:18-26). His arrival at the temple causes a riot to break out. A mob seizes Paul and begins to savagely beat him after he is dragged outside the temple area. The angry mob of Jews, however, disperses when Roman soldiers appear on the scene. The Romans arrest Paul and question him. The apostle escapes being scourged when the authorities discover he is a Roman citizen.

Paul is eventually escorted out of Jerus. under Roman guard. He is taken to Caesarea where Felix, t/Governor keeps Paul as a prisoner for more than 2 years. When Porcius Festus replaces Felix as governor in AD 60 the case against Paul is reopened.

Paul, refusing the offer to have his trial in Jerusalem, requests his case be heard by Caesar. Festus agrees and soon sends him off to Rome.

Paul, along with several other prisoners, boards a boat bound for Rome. The ship runs into bad weather as it sails to reach the port of Phoenix on the western side of Crete. It is soon driven off course and out to sea. Unable to be controlled, the ship wanders the Mediterranean for roughly two weeks. It is abandoned by its 276 passengers when it runs aground off t/island of Malta (Acts 27:37-44).

### a. Eventually arrives in Rome where he is under house arrest

3 soldiers working 8 hour shifts guard him 24 hours per day. He is allowed a great deal of freedom and continues preaching the Gospel.

Paul is acquitted and set free. He then journeys to Crete (Titus 1:5). From Create he travels to Nicopolis (Titus 3:12).

Under the persecution of Roman Emperor Nero, Paul is again arrested and imprisoned in Rome. Right around AD 66. Paul is in his early 60s – an old man in those days.

#### 8. John Pollock wrote a classic book on the life of the Apostle Paul

Opposed, arrested, deserted, Paul would have been hurried by the Via Egnatia and the Adriatic to Rome, and flung into jail. Or he may have returned to Rome before arrest, since he mentions leaving Trophimus at Miletus and Erastus at Corinth as if they had been together on the journey westward. If so, intending a brief visit to encourage the decimated community in Rome he joined the underground existence of Christians who went about their normal affairs in daytime but gathered for preaching and prayer in the catacombs at night. The walls have several mural portraits of Paul: a long face and nose, unruffled yet eager expression, the beard white and the head nearly bald. They date from the next century, too late for the artists to have seen Paul themselves; but in childhood they could easily have heard old men describe him from their own childhood memories.

Paul was once more seized, shackled, and this time placed in rigorous confinement in Rome, not as an honorable citizen on remand but "chained like a criminal. But the word of God is not chained," he could add. He was among the felons in the Mamertine or an equally obnoxious dungeon, reached only by rope or ladder let through a hole in the floor above. His weary body must lie on rough stones. The air was foul, sanitation almost nonexistent.

They put him on trial as one of those who had caused the Great Fire. If convicted, he would die as he might have died in Ephesus, as many Roman Christians had already died: driven into the arena to be torn in pieces by lions. The trial of a Citizen could not be summary: Paul

must appear before Caesar in the great Basilica in the Forum where, besides the senators and consuls on the bench, and the depraved Nero whom all Rome now hated, a large crowd of spectators packed the galleries. Paul confidently expected Christians to testify on his behalf. He looked in vain. The Terror had driven them away. "At my first defense," he wrote to Timothy, "no one took my part; all deserted me. May it not be charged against them! But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength to proclaim the word fully, that all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth." Once again he had turned a court hearing into proclamation of the gospel, and his voice had carried to the farthest gallery.

Back in prison, possibly no longer the Mamertine, he was lonely. One trusted friend had deserted, and Paul's zeal for the gospel did not let him keep others in Rome who might visit and comfort: "Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia (or Gaul), Titus to Dalmatia. Luke alone is with me." Then an Asian Christian, who being of some substance in the eyes of the authorities stood to lose much by associating with a criminal, came to Italy. Onesiphorus of Ephesus "was not ashamed of my chains, but when he arrived in Rome he searched for me eagerly and found me," and cheered Paul many times.

Paul was now able to write to Timothy, perhaps by the pen of Luke and the hand of Onesiphorus, urging him to "do your best to come to me before winter," and to find Mark and bring him, "for he can help me in the work," which continued regardless of prison walls.

Of Paul's final trial nothing is known beyond a tradition that he was condemned by resolution of the Senate on the charge of treason against the divine Emperor.

They marched him out through the walls past the pyramid of Cestius which still stands, on to the Ostian Way toward the sea. Crowds journeying to or from Ostia would recognize an execution squad by the lictors . . . and the executioner carrying a sword, which in Nero's reign had replaced the axe; by the escort, 'and by the manacled criminal, walking stiffly and bandy-legged, ragged and filthy from his prison: but not ashamed or degraded. He was going to a feast, to a triumph, to the crowning day to which he had pressed forward. He who had talked often of God's promise of eternal life in Jesus could not fear; he believed as he had spoken: "All God's promises find their 'yes' in him." No executioner was going to lose him the conscious presence of Jesus; he was not changing his company, only the place where he enjoyed it. Better still, he would see Jesus. Those glimpses—on the Damascus road, in Jerusalem, at Corinth, on that sinking ship; now he was going to see him face to face, to know even as he had been known.

They marched Paul to the third milestone on the Ostian Way, to a little pinewood in a glade, probably a place of tombs . . . where an abbey stands in his honor. He is believed to have been put overnight in a tiny cell, for this was a common place of execution. If Luke was allowed to stay by his window, if Timothy or Mark had reached Rome in time, the sounds of the night vigil would not be of weeping but singing: "as sorrowful yet always rejoicing; as dying and, behold, we live."

At first light the soldiers took Paul to the pillar. The executioner stood ready, stark naked. Soldiers stripped Paul to the waist and tied him, kneeling upright, to the low pillar which left his neck free. Some accounts say the lictors beat him with rods; a beating had been the usual prelude to beheading but in recent years not always inflicted. If they must administer this last, senseless dose of pain to a body so soon

to die, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation . . . or sword?

*"I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with"—the flash of a sword—"the glory."*

(flash/white light – much like Damascus / bookends Paul's Xn life)

Much wrapped up in that one word – 1<sup>st</sup> word in Galatians “Paul”

Philippians 3:5–11 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.

7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, 10 that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; 11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.