

# **Study Guide for PAUL: CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH**

## **Written by Stephen K. Ray**

**BASED ON THE IGNATIUS BIBLE, RSV CATHOLIC EDITION AND  
THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, 2ND EDITION**

### **CHAPTER 1: IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME**

By the start of the first century A.D. many Jews had emigrated from Israel and spread throughout the Roman Empire. The “Jewish Diaspora” had taken Paul’s ancestors from Galilee to Tarsus in modern-day Turkey where he was born. Paul (whose Jewish name was Saul) was circumcised and raised under the Mosaic Law, yet he experienced the Greek and Roman cultures. He learned the trade of tent-making. In Jerusalem Saul studied under the famous rabbi Gamaliel and became a zealous Pharisee. When Saul was about 20 years old, rumors circulated that a rabbi named Jesus recently crucified had risen from the dead. Saul persecuted the disciples of Jesus—known in some circles as “Nazarenes.” One of these, another zealous Jew named Stephen, became a follower of Jesus and was stoned to death. Saul participated in the execution of Stephen (now recognized as the Church’s first martyr) and then galloped off to Damascus to arrest other followers of Jesus.

### **Questions for further discussion and study:**

1. Where was Saul born (Acts 21:39; 22:3)? Where had many Jews taken up residence outside Israel (Acts 2:5-11)? Saul was raised in the Diaspora (the settlement of Jews dispersed throughout the Roman Empire) who had often adopted Greek and Roman culture (referred to as Hellenization) while maintaining tight-knit religious communities. What was St. Paul’s Jewish name (Acts 7:58; 13:9)? Who was he named after (1 Sam 11:15; Acts 13:21)? From what Israelite tribe did Saul of Tarsus and his namesake come (1 Sam 9:21; Acts 13:21; Rom 11:1)? What was one of King Saul’s most notable physical characteristics (1 Sam 9:2)? Knowing Paul means “small,” how might this be an interesting play on words? Notice the Bible’s change in name usage (from Saul to Paul) when he is sent to preach to the Gentiles (Acts 13:1-2, 9, 13).

2. Even though a Jew, what citizenship did Saul possess (Acts 22:25-28)? According to tradition preserved by St. Jerome, Paul's parents were carried off as prisoners of war from Galilee to Tarsus and later freed and granted citizenship (Philemon commentary; Vir. 5 and Photius Quaest. Amphil. 116). What was Saul's trade (Acts 18:3)? How was a Jewish father to raise a son (Deut 4:9-10; 11:19; 32:45-47)? What characterized Saul's upbringing and education (Acts 22:3; 26:5; Phil 3:5-6)? Though he probably spoke many languages, what languages do we know Saul spoke (Acts 21:37; 22:2)? What were the common languages of the day (Jn 19:20)?
3. Under what great rabbi did Saul study in Jerusalem (Acts 22:3; 5:34)? The word Pharisee means "separated." What were some of the practices of the Pharisees and how did these relate to the teachings of Jesus (Mk 7:1-13; Mt 22:3-7)? How would you characterize the Pharisees' relationship with Jesus (CCC 574-75)? Were all the Pharisees opposed to Jesus (CCC 595-96)? How did Saul conduct his life in Jerusalem (Gal 1:13-14)?
4. Over eighteen hundred years before Saul's time God formed a covenant with Abraham. What did God say to Abraham and what was the sign of the covenant (Gen 17:1-14; CCC 1150)? Could a male be part of God's covenant people without circumcision (Gen 17:14; 21:4)? What happened to Jesus eight days after his birth (Lk 2:21; CCC 527)?
5. Though many Pharisees were hypocrites (Mt 15:1, 7) we can assume that others were sincere and zealous in their desire to obey God and usher in his kingdom (Acts 22:3; CCC 579). Why did some Jewish leaders want to eliminate Jesus (Jn 11:47-50; CCC 596)? Did the Pharisees feel they had justification for killing "false prophets" (Deut 13:1-5; 17:12; 18:20)? What would happen if Israel failed to obey God's commands (Deut 11:26-28)? Had there been previous insurrections that had threatened the peace in Jerusalem (Mk 15:7; Acts 5:34-37)?
6. If Saul considered Jesus a genuine threat to the Jewish nation and the coming of God's kingdom, how might Saul have justified his persecution of the Nazarenes, the followers of Jesus? Do you think it was possible for some Jews to think they were serving God by persecuting Christians (Jn 16:2; 1 Tim 1:13)? What would you have done? Should modern day Jews

be held responsibility for killing Jesus (CCC 597)?

7. How many Pharisees and Jewish priests believed in Jesus (Acts 21:20-21)? How many Jews believed on the first Pentecost (Acts 2:41)? Before the term Christian was used, what were the early believers called (Acts 24:5, 14)? Who was one of the Greek-speaking Jewish converts "full of faith and of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 6:5-8)? What led to Stephen's trial (Acts 6:8-15)? What did some Jews accuse Stephen of saying (Acts 6:13-14)? What did many of the Jewish leaders think about Jesus (CCC 596)? From the Pharisees perspective, what might happen if the Nazarenes advanced unchecked (Lk 19:41-44; Jn 11:48; CCC 596)?
8. Read Stephen's defense before the Jewish court, the Sanhedrin (Acts 7:1-53). If you had been a zealous Jew hearing Stephen's condemnation of the Jewish leadership, how might you have reacted? How did the Jewish leaders react (Acts 7:54-58)? What happened to Stephen (Acts 7:59-60)? Who was present at the execution, giving his full consent (Acts 7:58; 8:1; 22:20)? Do you think Saul thought that he was serving God? Explain the zeal and the goal of the Pharisees (CCC 579)? What did Stephen, just like his Lord, pray with his last breath (Acts 7:60)? St. Augustine said, "If Stephen had not prayed thus, the Church would not have had Paul" (Sermon 382). What do you think St. Augustine meant?
9. What happened to the believers after the martyrdom of Stephen (Acts 8:1, 4; 11:19-21)? What did Saul do next (Acts 8:3; 26:9-11)? What other man was rewarded for his zeal—killing to defend God's righteousness (Num 25:6-13; Psa 106:30-31)? Might Saul have been trying to follow Phinehas' example (Gal 1:13-14; Phil 3:6)? Where did Saul go to persecute "the Way," the followers of Jesus (Acts 9:1-2; 22:4-5)?

## **CHAPTER 2: CHOSEN BY GOD**

On the road to Damascus Saul was confronted by Jesus Christ and fell to the ground blinded. From heaven Jesus chose Saul and commissioned him to preach the gospel. Saul was baptized and regained his sight at the hand of Ananias. The Jews, shocked by what they perceived as Saul's betrayal of their cause, plotted Saul's death but he escaped over the city wall in a basket. Knowledge about Saul's early travels as a Christian

believer is sketchy but we know he went to “Arabia”—possibly to Mount Sinai—met with Peter in Jerusalem, preached in Tarsus and elsewhere, and after at least fourteen years went to Antioch (where the followers of Jesus were first called “Christians”). The Holy Spirit, through the Church, commissioned Saul as an apostle along with Barnabas. The first missionary journey lasted several years. Starting from this point Scripture uses Saul’s Roman name, Paul.

### **Questions for further discussion and study:**

1. After the martyrdom of Stephen many believers fled Jerusalem. To where did they flee and why was Saul chasing them (Acts 9:1-3; 11:19)? Saul and his men were headed to what city (Acts 9:2; 22:5; 26:11-12)? Around the year A.D. 35 something happened that changed history—an event important enough to be recorded three times in Scripture (Acts 9:3-9; 22:6-11; 26:12-18). What was it?
2. Artists usually portray Saul falling from a horse on the Damascus road, but Scripture does not mention a horse. However, how did many military officials travel, and how did Paul travel as a prisoner (Acts 23:23-24)?
3. When Saul fell to the ground, what did Jesus ask him (Acts 9:4-5; 26:14-15)? Why didn’t Jesus ask “Why are you persecuting my people?” or, “Why are you persecuting my Church?” What does the word church mean (CCC 751)? What is the Church (Eph 1:20-23; CCC 752, 771, 779, 809, 1474)? How would you explain the concept of the Mystical Body of Christ? Who is the head of this body (Eph 1:22; Col 1:18; CCC 669, 792)? How do head and body make one body of Christ (Eph 5:31-32)? How does the marital relationship illustrate the relationship between Christ and the Church (Eph 5:22-33; CCC 772, 796, 1616-17)? How did Paul later refer to the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12)?
4. How is the Christian “placed into Christ,” that is, brought into the Church (Rom 6:3-4; Gal 3:27; 1 Pet 3:21; CCC 537, 846, 1213, 1227)? Where is Christ (1 Cor 3:16-17; Eph 2:20-22, 3:17; Col 1:27; CCC 797)? What is Christ’s relationship/connection to the Church (Jn 15:4-7; CCC 755, 1988)? How is the mystical union with Christ and his Church the foundation for Paul’s theology (CCC 787-89)? How did

Our Lord's simple question become the seed or cornerstone of Paul's theology? How is the persecution of the Church a persecution of Christ? How does this help the Church understand her identity (CCC 787-89)?

5. Where did Saul's men take him (Acts 9:8-9)? Was this the way Saul had expected to arrive in Damascus? How did God use a simple layman to bring Saul into the Church (Acts 9:10-19; 22:12-16)? Why did it take great courage for Ananias to obey God (Acts 9:13-14)? Based on the work and merits of Christ, how were Saul's sins washed away (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Mk 16:15-16; CCC 1257, 1427)? What fell from Saul's eyes (Acts 9:18)? Are there any possible indications Paul had lingering eye problems (Gal 4:13-15; 6:11; 2 Cor 12:7)?
6. For what was Paul destined (Acts 9:16; 26:15-18)? What did Saul begin doing immediately after baptism and what was he proclaiming and proving (Acts 9:19-22; CCC 442)? How did the Jews in Damascus and Jerusalem respond to Saul's preaching (Acts 9:23-24, 29)? How did Saul escape and from where exactly this time (Acts 9:25; 2 Cor 11:32-33)?
7. Scholars still debate the sketchy details of Saul's life for the next years, but we gain some helpful biographical information from Acts and Galatians (Acts 9:26-31; 11:19-30; Gal 1:15-2:21). Sometime after escaping Damascus, where did Saul go (Gal 1:17)? What mountain does he say was in Arabia (Gal 4:25)? Where had God taught Elijah (1 Kings 19:8-15)? Where had Moses spent forty years in preparation for his role as leader (Ex 3:1-2; Note: Mount Horeb is another name for Mount Sinai)? Why might Saul, zealous for the Law, want to visit Mount Sinai while developing his theology of law and grace? How might God have prepared Saul in the wilderness?
8. After emerging from Arabia, where did Saul go (Gal 1:17-18; Acts 9:26-29)? How did the different groups in Jerusalem—the disciples of Jesus and the Jewish opposition—react to Saul, the new convert (Acts 9:26-29)? Who introduced Saul to the believers (Acts 9:26-27)? Who alone did Saul consult for fifteen days (Gal 1:18-19; to identify Cephas, see Jn 1:42)? What happened to Saul and to the Church (Acts 9:28-31)?
9. What was going on in Antioch, the third largest city in the Roman Empire (Acts 11:19-21)? When and where were

believers in Jesus Christ first called “Christians” (Acts 11:26)? What happened when the prophets and teachers were ministering to the Lord in Antioch (Acts 13:1-3)? In Acts 13:2, what does the word ministering mean (CCC 1070)? The word apostle comes from the Greek for “one who is sent”; how does the Catechism explain apostle (CCC 858-59)? From where were Paul and Barnabas “sent out” (Acts 13:4)? The account of Paul’s first missionary journey can be read in Acts 13:4-14:28. Notice when his Jewish name Saul is dropped and his Roman name Paul is picked up (Acts 13:7-13). In the early years, where did the Churches meet (Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19; Philem 2)?

10. What was required of a Jew to be included in the covenant people of God (Gen 17:10-14; Ex 12:48; Lev 12:3)? Many men of a particular group joined the followers of Jesus; who were they (Acts 6:7, 15:5; CCC 595)? Since Jesus was proclaimed as the Jewish Messiah, what did many Jews insist the Gentiles do to be saved (Acts 15:1, 5)? Were the Jews ever able to keep the whole law (CCC 578)? Where did Paul go to challenge the view of some of the Jews that circumcision was required (Acts 15:2, 6)?
11. To whom did Paul submit his gospel (Gal 2:1-2)? What did Peter decide (Acts 15:6-11)? What did the council write (Acts 15:13-29)? What did Paul do next (Acts 15:30-41)? From these passages, does it appear that Paul functioned as a “Lone Ranger” or did he function within the hierarchy of the Church? Does salvation come by faith in Christ or by circumcision and obeying all the 613 laws of Moses (Rom 3:28; Gal 2:16; CCC 161, 183)? Is the Good News of Jesus Christ only for the Jew (Mt 28:18-20; CCC 543, 831)? Comment on Paul’s approach to this Jewish/Gentile issue and compare it with the Catholic/Protestant contention over “faith vs. works”.

### **CHAPTER 3: RUNNING THE RACE**

Sent by the Holy Spirit through the Church, Paul embarked on three missionary journeys through the Roman Empire bringing the Gospel to the Gentiles and establishing local churches. He traveled over six thousand miles during these journeys—through Israel, Syria, Asia Minor (modern Turkey), Greece and the surrounding areas. He went to the Jews first, and then to the

Gentiles. He preached a salvation of grace, faith and obedience to Christ and denounced those who taught that salvation came through circumcision and the Mosaic law. Paul suffered beatings, whippings, stoning, imprisonment, and even shipwreck. Eventually Paul was arrested and imprisoned for over two years in Caesarea. He appealed to Caesar in Rome. He was running the race Jesus had set before him.

### **Questions for further discussion and study:**

For this chapter it would be helpful to use a map of Paul's travels.

1. What happened between Barnabas and Paul after their first missionary journey and why (Acts 15:36-41)? Who became Paul's new traveling companion (Acts 15:40)? How many of Paul's letters do we have in the New Testament? List them. Notice a couple of Paul's letters that seem to have been lost (1 Cor 5:9; Col 4:16)?
2. Embarking on his second missionary journey, where did Paul initially go (Acts 15:41—16:8)? What happened to change his plans (Acts 16:9-10)? Where did he then go, whom did he meet, and where (Acts 16:11-13)? Discuss Lydia and her conversion and why it was a milestone in history (Acts 16:14-15)? How did Paul get into trouble and what was the result (Acts 16:16-24)? What miraculously happened and what was the result (Acts 16:25-30)?
3. What did the Philippian jailer ask, and how did Paul answer (Acts 16:30-31)? Believe is a word pregnant with meaning. It's like a zip file that needs to be unzipped. What is the opposite of the word believe (Jn 3:36)? Explain the depth of the word believe and how it implies total commitment and obedience. How is one saved (Jn 3:16; Rom 1:5; 16:26; Eph 2:8-10; CCC 161-62, 977, 1257)?
4. What happened to the jailer after midnight (Acts 16:32-34)? Who was baptized (Acts 16:33; CCC 1226)? What example does that set for us (CCC 1250-52; 1655)? What is accomplished through baptism (Rom 6:3-5; Jn 3:3-5; 1 Pet 3:21; CCC 978, 1265-74)? Circumcision was the rite of initiation and a sign of the covenant in the Old Testament; what replaced circumcision in the New Covenant (Col 2:11-12; CCC 527)?

5. Remembering that the noun refuse often refers to waste or excrement, how did Paul view his prior attempts at righteousness merely through human effort and without faith in Christ (Phil 3:7-9)? How should we apply this attitude to our daily lives? How were Paul and Silas sent away from Philippi (Acts 16:35-40)? How did Paul make legitimate use of his Roman citizenship?
  
6. After leaving Philippi, where did Paul go, and what happened again (Acts 17:1-9)? You can read about Paul's stay in Thessalonica in Acts 17:1-10)? What later concerned the Thessalonians (1 Thess 4:13; 2 Thess 2:1-2)? The Thessalonians were afraid that those who died would miss the return of Christ and that maybe Christ had already returned and left them behind. What did Paul write to encourage them (1 Thess 4:13-18; 2 Thess 2:2)? For the what, who, how, and when of the resurrection from the dead, read 1 Corinthians 15 and CCC 997-1001. Will the bodies of the faithful remain in the grave (CCC 989)?
  
7. When is the second coming of Christ to take place (CCC 1038)? In Scotland in the mid-1800s, a new teaching arose among many non-Catholics. Commonly known as "the rapture" it subsequently made its way to America through the annotations in the Scofield Reference Bible. This teaching claims that Christ will secretly reappear before the Last Day—before the Second Coming—to snatch believers and take them to heaven. But in the context of biblical theology and in light of the constant teaching of the Church, "the rapture" is an novelty—a newly invented doctrine. Unfortunately it has caused much confusion among some Christians. How many times does/will Christ come (CCC 524, 2612)? What will take place before the Second Coming of Christ (Mt 24:1-51; Lk 18:8; 21:7-32; Jn 15:19-20; 1 Thess 5:2-3; 2 Thess 2:4-12; CCC 675, 769)? What awaits the individual at the moment of death; what awaits the world at the second coming of Christ (Heb 9:27; CCC 1021-22; 1040)? What has the Church always taught about the end times and the return of Christ (CCC 673-77)?
  
8. Escaping Thessalonica, where did Paul end up (Acts 17:10)? How had the Thessalonian Jews treated Paul (Acts 17:5-9)? How did the Berean Jews receive Paul (Acts 17:11)? (Note: "Noble-minded" means noble in character, open-minded, and



willing to learn.) What were the source and the substance of Paul's preaching (1 Thess 2:13)? Was Paul just reiterating Old Testament teaching or did he also preach new revelation from God (Eph 3:4-10)? The Bereans were eager to accept newly revealed truth from the mouth of Paul, in addition to what they already held to be Scripture in the Old Testament. So did the Bereans hold to a strict "Bible alone" position?

9. In addition to the Old Testament Scriptures, which were the only Scriptures that existed at the time—what binding authority did Paul command Christians to obey (1 Cor 11:2; 2 Thess 2:15; 3:6; CCC 80-82)? How did the early Christians which were taught by Paul view tradition? The Bereans searched the Old Testament Scriptures daily to confirm Paul's teaching, to see whether Paul's new revelation was in line with what they already knew.
10. What happened in Berea, and to where did Paul escape (Acts 17:12-15)? You can read about Paul's adventures in Athens in Acts 17:15-34. What filled the city of Athens (Acts 17:16)? What are idols, and what does God think of them (Ex 20:3-5; Isa 44:13-19; CCC 2112)? What did Paul teach in the marketplace, and where did the philosophers take him (Acts 17:17-21)? Read and discuss Paul's sermon on Mars Hill (that is, the Areopagus, the Athenian court) (Acts 17:22-33)? Whom does Paul quote (Acts 17:28)? Compare this sermon with Romans 1:18-25, Wisdom 13:1-9 and CCC 28, 32, 286. How successful was Paul's preaching (Acts 17:34)?

The fourth century Church historian Eusebius wrote: "[The] Areopagite, named Dionysius, who was the first to believe after Paul's address to the Athenians in the Areopagus (as recorded by Luke in the Acts) is mentioned . . . as the first bishop of the church at Athens" (History of the Church 3, 4, 11 ed. by Schaff, The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2nd series, 1:137).

11. Leaving Athens, where did Paul go next (Acts 18:1)? How long did Paul spend in Corinth (Acts 18:11, 18)? You can read the account of Paul's Corinthian visit in Acts 18:1-18.
12. Apollo was the Greek god of prophecy. Why might it be significant that Paul uses words related to prophecy at least twenty-two times in his letters to the Corinthians? Who is the real God of prophecy (Eph 4:11; 1 Cor 12:8-10, 28)?

Prostitutes descended upon Corinth at night, and the city was famous for sexual license. How does Paul admonish the Corinthians (1 Cor 6:15-16)? What does the Catechism say about our union with Christ (CCC 796)?

13. What did some Corinthians say about Paul's speech and physical appearance (2 Cor 10:10)? An ancient document entitled *The Acts of Paul and Thekla* says that Paul was "a man small in size, bald-headed, bandy-legged, well-built, with eyebrows meeting, rather long-nosed, full of grace. For sometimes he seemed like a man, and sometimes he had the countenance of an angel" (Roberts and Donaldson, ed., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 3:487).
14. Where did Paul go after leaving Corinth (Acts 18:18-22)? You can read about Paul's third missionary journey in Acts 18:23-21:14. The account of Paul's extended stay in Ephesus is in Acts 19:1-20:1. How long did Paul stay in Ephesus (Acts 19:8-10)? What god was worshiped in Ephesus (Acts 19:24)? After leaving Ephesus, Paul again traveled north through Macedonia down to Athens and back again through Ephesus before returning by ship to Jerusalem.

## **CHAPTER 4: CONTENDING UNTO DEATH**

Paul suffered for the faith and counted everything as loss to attain eternal life. In Jerusalem he was arrested and appealed to Caesar for trial. After two years of imprisonment in Caesarea, Paul was sent to Rome in chains and placed under house arrest for another two years. During this time he wrote at least four epistles and taught all who visited him. Here the Book of Acts ends. Presumably Paul was tried and released to again travel extensively; there is some evidence that he traveled as far as Spain. Arrested, for what turned out to be the last time, under Emperor Nero, Paul was again imprisoned in Rome. There he wrote the Second Epistle to Timothy, his final letter. Paul was beheaded on the Ostian Way outside Rome's city gates around A.D. 67. Today his remains are under the Church of St. Paul Outside the Walls in Rome.

### **Questions for further discussion and study:**

1. You can read about Paul's short and troubled stay in Jerusalem, leading to his arrest and transport to Caesarea, in

- Acts 21:15-23:35. What relatives of Paul are mentioned (Acts 23:16)? How did Paul again assert his Roman citizenship (Acts 22:25-29)? Who transported Paul safely from Jerusalem to Caesarea and how was he transported (Acts 23:23)? What was provided for Paul to ride upon (Acts 23:24)?
2. How long was Paul imprisoned in Caesarea (Acts 24:27)? You can read about Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea in Acts 23:23-26:32. While in court, what right of Roman citizenship did Paul assert (Acts 25:10-12)? Who was Paul's royal visitor and how did Paul defend himself (Acts 25:13-26:32)? Before whom did God say that Paul would proclaim his name (Acts 9:15)? You can read the story of Paul's trip by sea from Caesarea to the Italian coast in Acts 27:1-28:13.
  3. What did Jesus tell Ananias at the time of Saul's conversion (Acts 9:15-16)? What kind of physical suffering did Paul experience (2 Cor 11:23-25; Acts 16:22-23)? If you had been dragged outside a city and left for dead after being pummeled with stones, would you have gotten up and gone back into the city (Acts 14:19-20)? What other sufferings did Paul experience (1 Cor 4:11; 2 Cor 11:26-28; 2 Tim 2:9)? What happened to Paul on the way to Rome (Acts 27:14-44)? What happened to Paul on the island of Malta (Acts 28:1-6)?
  4. What did Paul say about his sufferings and the sufferings of Christ (Col 1:24; CCC 618, 1508)? How was Our Lord perfected (Heb 2:10)? What did Paul write about the believer's sufferings and the end result of suffering (Rom 8:17-18; 2 Cor 4:17; Col 1:24; CCC 1460)?
  5. Read about Paul's journey from the port city of Puteoli on the coast of Italy up to Rome in Acts 28:13-29. What was the extent of Paul's first imprisonment in Rome (Acts 28:30-31)?
  6. The Acts of the Apostles ends with Paul's first Roman imprisonment around A.D. 62. Where did Paul intend to visit (Rom 15:24, 28)? From Rome, in A.D. 96, St. Clement of Rome wrote: "After [Paul] had been seven times in bonds, have been driven into exile, had been stoned, had preached in the East and in the West, he won the noble renown which was the reward of his faith, having taught righteousness unto the whole world and having reached the farthest bounds of the West" (1 Clement 5, 7 in Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*,

59). From the geographical perspective of Rome, what would the “farthest bounds of the West” probably refer to? What conclusions could be drawn from St. Clement’s comment? Paul also traveled extensively in the period between his two Roman imprisonments evangelizing and revisiting the churches he had established.

7. Concerning Paul’s second Roman imprisonment we read, “Next to the Senate chamber [in Rome] was the Senate office building. At the foot of the Capitol adjacent to the Forum was the Mamertine Prison, where noted prisoners were kept before execution. It is thought that Paul was here during his second Roman imprisonment (see 2 Timothy) and from here was taken away to be executed” (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, 4:233). Read Paul’s last recorded words to Timothy, his son in the faith, in 2 Timothy—possibly his last will and testament, so to speak. Probably from the depths of the Mamertine Prison, what did Paul ask Timothy to bring (2 Tim 4:13)? Who stayed faithful to Paul right to the end (2 Tim 4:11)?
8. Consider an early writing: “Thus publicly announcing himself as the first among God’s chief enemies, he [Nero] was led on to the slaughter of the apostles. It is, therefore, recorded that Paul was beheaded in Rome itself, and that Peter likewise was crucified under Nero. This account of Peter and Paul is substantiated by the fact that their names are preserved in the cemeteries of that place even to the present day. It is confirmed likewise by Caius, a member of the [Roman] Church, who . . . speaks as follows concerning the places where the sacred corpses of the aforesaid apostles are laid: ‘But I can show the trophies [tombs] of the apostles. For if you will go to the Vatican or to the Ostian way, you will find the trophies of those who laid the foundations of this church’” (Fragment of Disputation with Proclus preserved in Eusebius’ History of the Church 2, 25, 5 in The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2nd series, 1:129-30.). Based on the above quotation, what do you think the early Christians believed about the earthly end of both Peter and Paul?
9. In A.D. 306 an early saint wrote: “The renowned Paul, oftentimes having been delivered up and put in peril of death, having endured many evils, and boasting of his numerous persecutions and afflictions, was even himself put to the

sword and beheaded in the same city [Rome]" (St. Peter of Alexandria, Penance, canon 9 in Jurgens' *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, 1:259). Again, what did the early tradition of the Church teach about Paul's earthly end?

10. "There is a tradition (accepted by Eusebius and Jerome) that after being acquitted when his appeal was heard, Paul was arrested again and subjected to the more rigorous imprisonment and trial in Rome to which reference is made in 2 Timothy 1:16-18; 4:16-18. There was no acquittal this time; he was convicted and beheaded with the sword at the third milestone on the Ostian Way, at a place called *Aquae Salviae*, and buried on the site covered by the basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls—a probably authentic location. These last proceedings against him may well have been an incident in Nero's proceedings against Christians about A.D. 65" (Hawthorne, Gerald F., Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, 687).
11. Note the information provided by scholars concerning the church which is built over Paul's tomb: "The basilica of Saint Paul outside the walls, the second largest Roman church after [St. Peter's at] the Vatican, stands in *via Ostiensis* about 2 kilometers from the Aurelian walls near the left bank of the Tiber. It stands on the burial place of the Apostle to the Gentiles and has never ceased to be the destination of pilgrims and ordinary visitors. ... Saint Paul was buried in the small graveyard adjacent to *via Ostiensis*, not far from the area called *Ad Aquas Salvias* (nowadays known as Three Fountains) where he was martyred in 67 AD" (Anna Cerioni and Roberto Del Signore, *The Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls* [Rome: Pontificia Amministrazione della Patriarcale Basilica di San Paolo, 1991], 5). Discuss why it is important to preserve the tombs and relics of the saints. Why do you think the early Christians built churches over the tombs of the saints?
12. What did Paul write about his life during his first Roman imprisonment (Phil 3:7-11)? What did Paul write about his earthly end during his last imprisonment in Rome (2 Tim 4:6-8)? When you approach the end of your earthly life, how will you summarize your life and your service to Christ? Will you be ready to meet your Lord?

## The Catholic Challenge

We have viewed Paul: Contending for the Faith. Now having gone through the study guide, you should be better equipped to understand St. Paul and his impressive role in salvation history from a Catholic, biblical, and historical perspective. You should also better understand the Roman and Jewish worlds, the kingdom of God, the Jewish/Gentile issue, how we are justified and saved, and how much we as Christians must be prepared to suffer for the gospel. Now, let's answer some questions about Paul: who he was, what he did, and how he taught us to run the race in The Catholic Challenge.

1. How did Saul's early years in Tarsus prepare him for his future ministry?
2. How did Saul's training under Gamaliel in Jerusalem prepare him for his preaching of the gospel?
3. Do you think Saul believed he was truly serving God when he persecuted the Church? Why?
4. Why did some of the Jews accept Jesus as the Messiah and why were others so hostile to him?
5. How would you explain the "Mystical Body of Christ"? How did Jesus' question to Saul on the road to Damascus become the foundation of Paul's theology?
6. What does the phrase "works of the law" refer to and how does Paul argue against these works as a means of justification before God?
7. Why is salvation not by faith alone? What does the word believe mean and what else is required of the believer for salvation and a right relationship with God?
8. What is baptism and how does it fit into the scheme of salvation?
9. What does the word Christian mean? Where and when was this word first used?

10. Why was Paul so willing to suffer for Christ and how should we view suffering for the Gospel?
11. What was Paul's relationship to Peter and the Church?
12. How did the Church exercise authority in New Testament times? How did that become the prototype for the Church and the councils today?
13. With Paul as an example, whom should we evangelize today and how?
14. What do you "count as refuse" for the sake of gaining Christ and attaining to the resurrection from the dead?
15. What does the word martyr mean, and what does the Church teach about martyrdom? Are you prepared to be a martyr? Why or why not?
16. What attitude should we have toward the great saints who have gone before us and what can we do to follow their example?

### **For Further Reading**

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