

A painting of St. Paul, an elderly man with a long white beard and hair, wearing a red robe. He is seated at a dark wooden desk, leaning forward and writing with a quill pen on a large sheet of paper. The desk is cluttered with various items: an open book on the left, a scroll on the right, and several small cards or pieces of paper in the center. The background is dark and indistinct, focusing attention on the saint and his work. The text is overlaid in a white, elegant script font.

*St. Paul's Writings*  
*Romans, Corinthians & Galatians*

# *St. Paul's Writings*

- ✚ Paul is the second most prolific contributor to the New Testament (after Luke, whose two books amount to nearly a third of the New Testament).
- ✚ [Thirteen letters are attributed to him with varying degrees of confidence]
- ✚ The letters are written in Koine Greek and it may be that he employed an amanuensis (manual laborer), only occasionally writing himself.
- ✚ The undisputed Pauline epistles contain the earliest systematic account of Christian doctrine, and provide information on the life of the infant Church - they are arguably the oldest part of the New Testament.
- ✚ Paul also appears in the pages of the Acts of the Apostles, attributed to Luke, so that it is possible to compare the account of his life in the Acts with his own account in his various letters.

# *St. Paul's Writings*

- ✚ His letters are largely written to churches which he had founded or visited
- ✚ His letters are full of expositions of what Christians should believe and how they should live.
- ✚ He does not tell his correspondents (or the modern reader) much about the life and teachings of Jesus; his most explicit references are to the Last Supper (1 Corinthians 11:17-34) and the crucifixion and resurrection (1 Corinthians 15)
- ✚ He provides the first written account of the relationship of the Christian to the Risen Christ — what it is to be a Christian — and thus of Christian spirituality.

# *Letter to the Romans*

- ✚ the longest and doctrinally most significant of St. Paul the Apostle's New Testament writings, probably composed at Corinth in about AD 57;
- ✚ Before leaving for Jerusalem, Paul wrote a letter to the church in Rome, introducing himself and requesting hospitality. But the letter is more than just an introduction; it is an extended expression of Paul's faith and passionate trust in Jesus.
- ✚ As opposed to the Corinthian church, the Roman church was not founded by Paul himself. At the time when he wrote Romans, Paul had never visited Rome, although Chapter 16 of Romans does indicate that he had acquaintances there.

# *Letter to the Romans*

- Paul's purposes in writing to the Romans was to prepare for his mission to Spain in order to plant new churches in virgin territory (15:24-29). He is stopping in Rome on the way, and one of his purposes is to introduce himself to the Roman Christians as a way of preparing for his visit and for his request for sponsorship for his outreach in Spain (15.24).



# *Historical Background*

- 📖 Jews were expelled from Rome because of Christian disturbances around AD 49 because of the Edict of Claudius. The conflict developed because Jewish Christians and Jews argued with one another over the validity of Jesus as the Messiah. Both Jews and Jewish Christians were expelled as a result of their infighting.
- 📖 Claudius died around the year AD 54, and his successor, Emperor Nero, allowed the Jews back into Rome. Gentile Christians may have developed a dislike or looked down on Jews because they theologically rationalized that Jews were no longer God's people.
- 📖 The Roman church would have to accept that the gospel was for the "Jew first and also to the Greek" ([Romans 1:16](#))

# *Letter to the Romans*

- Theme of the letter: The gospel as the revelation of God's righteousness, a righteousness that can be experienced only by faith (1.16-17).
- Romans was written
  - To correct Gentile's indifferences, even arrogance, toward the Jewish minority
  - Paul's missionary situation
  - The past battles in Galatia and Corinth
  - The coming crisis in Jerusalem
  - The desire to secure a missionary base for his work in Spain
  - The need to unify the Romans around his gospel to support his work in Spain

# *1<sup>st</sup> Letter to the Corinthians*

- Paul established the Christian community at Corinth in about 51 AD , during his second missionary journey.
- Corinth was known as a:
  - major seaport city
  - where a wide variety of pagan cults co-existed
  - It had been destroyed in 146 BC by the Romans, and re-founded a century
  - later as a Roman colony.
  - It's economy was based on trade and industry,
  - but also on "pleasure," so much so that the word "Corinthianize" was slang
  - for immoral behavior.

# *1<sup>st</sup> Letter to the Corinthians*

- Acts 18 discusses Paul's mission to Corinth. From the letter, we can gather the following:
  - Most but not all of the congregation at Corinth was working class or poor.
  - During Paul's third journey, he received disturbing news about the church in Corinth - it had factionalized because of a variety of problems.
  - Paul wrote 1 Corinthians from Ephesus in 54-57 AD to respond to these problems.

# *1<sup>st</sup> Letter to the Corinthians*

- Paul spends most of the first four chapters addressing these problems:
- After Paul left Corinth, other Christian missionaries (incl. Apollos) came through the city preaching a gospel possibly different from Paul's
  - This caused divided and conflicting loyalties among the Corinthians.
  - They believe that certain apostles possess superior knowledge, and they are therefore superior to others if they acquire this knowledge (ch.1:10 ff)
- Several members of the community were trying to surpass one another in displays of secret knowledge (gnosis?)
  - by speaking in tongues, and using charisms to glorify themselves rather than to serve God.

# *1<sup>st</sup> Letter to the Corinthians*

- ✚ Some of the members have been indulging themselves at Eucharistic meals, getting drunk and eating everything before others arrive
- ✚ Some of the members have begun to believe that they are already enjoying the full benefits of salvation in the here and now as members of the church.
- ✚ There was widespread immorality among the community, particularly in the case of a man living with his father's wife (ch.5)

# *1<sup>st</sup> Letter to the Corinthians*

- ❏ Disputes between those within the community had gotten so bad that they were suing one another in pagan courts (ch.6).
- ❏ Many were concerned about whether or not it was sinful to get married, when they believed the end time was fast approaching (ch.7).
- ❏ Some were concerned about whether or not it is blasphemous to eat meat that had previously been sacrificed to idols (ch.8).

# *1<sup>st</sup> Letter to the Corinthians*

## Themes & Important Passages:

- ✚ 11:23-26 is the earliest written account of the institution of the Lord's supper in the New Testament.
- ✚ Paul claims that discernment is necessary before partaking in the Eucharist; one must be worthy.
- ✚ In 11:29-30, he implies that those in the church who are ill or dying are that way because they "ate and drank judgment on themselves."
- ✚ Self-sacrifice. Paul states that it is more important to build up the church than to build up one's self:
- ✚ In 14:4-5, Paul applies this to charisms in the church. Speaking in tongues, he claims, builds up the self, while prophecy builds up the church.

# *1<sup>st</sup> Letter to the Corinthians*

- In 10:23-30, Paul addresses the issue of eating meat that has been sacrificed to idols:
  - One should not do it if it will be a stumbling block to faith, particularly someone else's faith.
- "Many parts of one body." Paul asserts in ch.12 that there are many different spiritual gifts in the community, but all come from God, and all who possess such gifts are essential parts of the "body of Christ," or the Church.
  - So all should be treated equally (12:13). Reference 11:17-22, proper conduct at Eucharist.

# *1<sup>st</sup> Letter to the Corinthians*

- Chapter 13 is the famous "Hymn to Love," among the most famous of Paul's writings.
  - Here Paul uses agape as opposed to eros.
  - Eros is love that seeks to possess another in order to fill an emptiness in one's self.
  - Agape, in contrast, is "unmotivated," it is totally giving and concerned only with the well-being of the one loved.
  - It begins with God's love for us revealed at creation (he needs nothing from us in return), and
  - In Paul's mind it is also the type of love revealed in Christ's sacrifice on the cross.
  - The passage ends with the mentioning of the so-called "Christian virtues," of faith, hope and love. Paul claims that agape/love is greater than any charism within the Church.

# *1<sup>st</sup> Letter to the Corinthians*

- In Chapter 9, Paul vigorously defends his rights as an apostle.
  - Some in Corinth have questioned the authority with which Paul speaks (See also 15:6-9, where Paul places Jesus' appearance to him on the same level as all of his other appearances).
  - In 10:19-23, Paul states plainly what he has been willing to sacrifice for the sake of the gospel.
- The essence of the kerygma and the resurrection.
  - In 15:1-11 Paul states the essence of the message, an early example of how Jesus' significance was understood.
  - Details about Jesus' life and teachings are scarce.

# *1<sup>st</sup> Letter to the Corinthians*

- 15:12-58 deals entirely with the nature of the resurrection; both Jesus' and the eschatological resurrection.
  - Paul argues that when we are resurrected we will have new/different bodies, just as Christ had a new body.
  - He uses soma (spirit & body, or spiritual body) rather than sarx (flesh/corpse).
- Paul's mission for the Church in Jerusalem.
  - In 16:1, Paul mentions a collection for the "holy ones," the disciples who lead the church in Jerusalem.
  - Paul's meeting on this occasion with the Jerusalem Church will have a profound impact on his message.

# *2<sup>nd</sup> Letter to the Corinthians*

- ✚ After Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, Timothy traveled through Corinth only to find that the situation there had further deteriorated.
- ✚ Paul's first letter had apparently been ineffective in mending the divisions within the community.
- ✚ Timothy reported this news to Paul in Ephesus, and Paul immediately set out by sea to visit the Corinthian church.

# *2<sup>nd</sup> Letter to the Corinthians*

- This visit is believed to be the "painful visit" Paul refers to in 2 Cor 2:1.
  - The reason it was painful for Paul is that someone in the church confronted him publicly and challenged his authority as an apostle (2 Cor 2:5-11).
  - Paul left the church humiliated, and planned to pay a return visit after a brief cooling off period, but he later changed those plans believing that another visit would only cause more pain, and instead he wrote a letter "with many tears" (2:4-3, 7:8-9).
    - ◆ This letter has been lost, although some have argued that it is contained within the text of 2 Cor 10-13.
    - ◆ Titus carried this letter, and returned to Paul with the news that the Corinthians had a change of heart, and sought to reconcile with Paul (7:5-10).

# *2nd Letter to the Corinthians*

- Paul wrote 2 Corinthians in 57 AD in response to this promising news
  - 2 Cor is among Paul's most personal letters, and as such it is often difficult to follow Paul's train of thought or to interpret the letter's meaning.
  - It has been argued that one reason the letter is so difficult to follow is that it is actually a compilation of several letters, and scholars have suggested that from two to five letters have been edited together to form the text as we have it.
  - It is generally agreed that there are at least two separate letters present in 2 Cor,
    - one in ch. 1-9, and the other in ch.10-13.

# *2nd Letter to the Corinthians*



## Letter A: 2 Cor 1-9

- In this letter, Paul discusses his recent travel plans and recent dealings with the Corinthians.
- In 2:5-11, Paul reveals that the "tearful" letter he had previously sent had resulted in the disciplining of the person in the community who had publicly challenged him: here Paul urges the church to treat him mercifully.
- In 3:7-18 Paul contrasts the new covenant in Jesus with the old covenant formed with Moses.
- In ch.8-9, Paul again brings up the collection for the "holy ones" in the church in Jerusalem. In the context of this discussion, Paul explains his theology of giving.

# *2nd Letter to the Corinthians*

## 🏰 Letter B: 2 Cor 10-13

- This section of the letter is characterized by a sudden, harsh change in tone which has led many scholars to identify this part of the letter with the "tearful" letter referred to by Paul.
- In ch.10 Paul offers a bit of biographical information about himself: apparently his physical presence was unimposing, causing many of his detractors to label him as "weak" (10:10). In
- 10:11, Paul demands to be judged by his actions, not his appearance.
- In 11:1-14, Paul mentions the problem at Corinth about which he is most concerned: the presence of "super apostles" who preach a gospel different from his and perform mighty deeds to back up their claim of having apostolic authority. Paul contrasts himself with these false apostles by claiming that true authority comes from suffering for the sake of the gospel, something both Paul and the Corinthians have done (11:16-29).
- In 12:2-4, Paul offers a few details about his experience of the risen Christ. In 12:7 Paul goes on to mention the controversial "thorn in the flesh" that was given to him (see 12:7-9).

# *Galatia*



Phrygia and Galatia were regions in what today is central Turkey. Pictured above are is an area of Galatia near the city of Ankara. The Roman province of Galatia included the traditional area of Galatia along with the towns of Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe to the south. A number of congregations were established in this region, although their precise location is unknown.



In the third century B.C., Celts from Gaul in Europe (comprising present-day northern Italy, France, Belgium, western Switzerland and the parts of the Netherlands and Germany) came into the region. The name "Galatia" recalls that these the ancestors of the people in the region came from Gaul in Europe. The word "Gaul" is the basis of the word "Galatian." The Roman province of Galatia included the traditional area of Galatia along with the towns of Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe to the south.

The picture above shows the features of a Galatian man.

# *Galatians*

- ✚ Galatians is critical to our understanding of the relationship between possessing faith and (good) works, or in Paul's words, faith and the law.
- ✚ Galatians has also been used as a source of valuable historical information about the relationship between Paul's gospel and the gospel of the Jerusalem church, led by Peter and James.
- ✚ The two most likely dates are:
  - 54-55 AD from Ephesus, and therefore one of Paul's earlier letters.
  - 57 AD from Macedonia, and therefore a later letter.

# *Galatians*

## The Letter itself:

- ✚ Galatians is the only undisputed Pauline epistle without a thanksgiving (see 1:6-10, compare to 2 Cor 1:3-5; 1 Cor 1:4-5; 1 Thess 1:2-5), an indication of how disappointed Paul is with the Galatians.
- ✚ The letter is modeled after a courtroom setting, with Paul as the defendant, the newcomers as the accusers, and the Galatians as the judge.
- ✚ Paul's letter to the Galatians is an eloquent, often vehement defense of his spiritual authority and the founding principles of his mission. Paul wrote that the Law of Moses was intended to serve in the interim until the Messiah arrived. Believers are called to freedom, while the Spirit of God works directly in their hearts to transform their lives.

# *Background*

- ✚ It is not written to one church, but to a group of churches in the Roman province of Galatia.
- ✚ Paul apparently never intended to establish churches there, but while traveling through the area he was stricken with an illness (4:13) that made travel impossible, so he changed plans and settled temporarily in Galatia to preach his gospel.
- ✚ After Paul left Galatia to continue his mission, the region was visited by Jewish Christians (probably from Jerusalem) preaching a different gospel.
- ✚ Apparently, many of the Galatians were won over by this new gospel and had begun to question Paul's authority.

# *Background*

- ✚ They were convinced that Paul had taught them an incomplete or abbreviated gospel in order to convert them quickly and failed to mention such requirements as circumcision or observance of the law.
- ✚ They may have claimed that Paul's gospel was not directly from Jesus at all, but had come from other humans.
- ✚ The Galatians may have also been convinced by the newcomers that Paul's gospel lacked authority because he did not know the earthly Jesus, as the apostles had.

# *Background*

- ✚ It is important to remember that all of Galatia was pagan, so there were no Jews already familiar with Judaism among the converts.
- ✚ Both gospels were new to the Galatians, and Paul probably did not have to spend a lot of time arguing against the claims of Judaism during his initial visit.
- ✚ Paul wrote Galatians in response to this challenge
- ✚ It is an apologia (apology) or defense of Paul's interpretation of the gospel.

# *Letters to the Galatians*

## **Chapter One**

- Paul seeks to defend his claim that his gospel came from a divine source – directly from Jesus Christ rather than a human one and also detailed his relationship with the Apostles (how and when he'd met them in Jerusalem).

## **Chapter Two**

- Paul describes a meeting in Jerusalem fourteen years after the one with Peter related in chapter one. Barnabas and Titus went with him to meet "those who were of reputation". There were some members of the church who sought to demand that Titus, a Gentile, be circumcised. Paul refused, viewing it as an effort to bring them back into bondage from which Christ set them free.

# *Letters to the Galatians*

## **Chapter Two (cont.)**

- ✚ Peter, and once James, Cephas, and John perceived the grace that had been given to Paul, he was extended the right hand of fellowship. They only asked that Paul be mindful of the poor, something he was very eager to do.
- ✚ The rest of the chapter describes a confrontation in Antioch between Peter and Paul. Peter, who was visiting, at first was willing to eat with the Gentiles; but when some came from James, out of fear he withdrew himself and who also influenced Barnabas, were carried away into hypocrisy. This prompted Paul to rebuke Peter "to his face", and to correct him in the presence of all. In the course of his rebuke, Paul stressed that we are justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law, otherwise Christ died in vain.

# *Letters to the Galatians*

## **Chapter Three**

- ✚ Paul asserts that we are justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law
- ✚ The Law served to keep them under guard, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. To put it another way, it was like a tutor leading them to Christ where they could be justified by faith. Once faith had arrived, the tutor was no longer over them
- ✚ Through faith they have become sons of God in Christ, for in being baptized into Christ they had put on Christ.
- ✚ Being in Christ, they are now one in Him, with all racial, social, and sexual distinctions removed as it pertains to salvation.

# *Letters to the Galatians*

## **Chapter Four**

- ✚ When Christ came, He redeemed those under the Law and made it possible for them to receive the adoption as "sons". A special blessing of this sonship was receiving the Spirit in their hearts, and now they are no longer as a slave but as a son and a heir of God through Christ
- ✚ Paul reminded the Galatians that those born of the Spirit can expect persecution by those born according to the flesh, Paul concludes that those in Christ are of not slaves but free.

# *Letters to the Galatians*

## **Chapter Five**

- ✚ Paul then stresses the need for the Christian to walk in the Spirit so as not to fulfill the lust of the flesh. He describes the works of the flesh (v19-21) “sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery, idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like.”
- ✚ The fruits of the Spirit (v22-23) “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”

# *Letters to the Galatians*

## Chapter Six

- 📖 Paul reveals those who are "spiritual" are to restore those overtaken in trespasses, and all are to bear one another's burden thereby fulfilling the "law of Christ".
- 📖 At the same time, each Christian ought to examine himself and seek to bear his own load. Further responsibilities involve sharing with those who teach, and not growing weary in doing good to all, especially those of the household of faith.
- 📖 As motivation to do good, Paul reminds them of the principles of "sowing" and "reaping", particularly as it relates to the flesh and Spirit.
- 📖 Summarizing his whole epistle in one verse, Paul reasserts that circumcision is inconsequential, and that in Christ Jesus becoming a new creation is what really matters.
- 📖 Paul closes this epistle with a prayer of peace, mercy, and grace upon those who walk according to his teaching, and upon of God.