

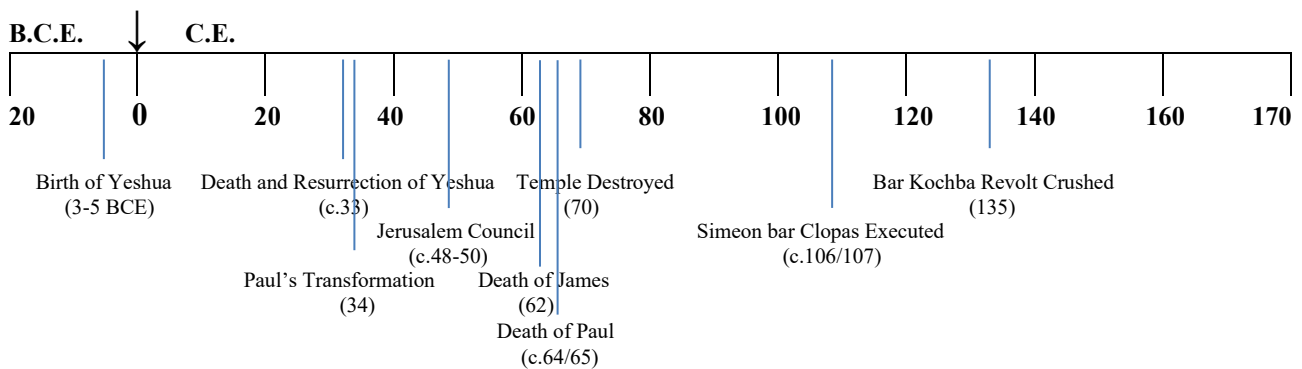
Class One
Book of Ephesians
 Rabbi Dr. Joshua Brumbach

BLESSING BEFORE SCRIPTURE STUDY

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוֵּנוּ לְעֲסוֹק בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָה.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav vetzivanu la'asok b'divrei Torah.

Blessed are You, Adonai Our God, who rules the Universe, who has brought holiness into our lives through the mitzvot and commanded us to busy ourselves with words of Torah.



I. WHO IS PAUL OF TARSUS?

- a. *Sha'ul* (*Paulos* = Greek Name)
- b. From Tarsus
- c. Born to parents who were most likely Pharisees (Acts 23:6)
- d. A Benjamite
 - i. Possibly named after the most famous Benjamite, King Saul
- e. A Roman Citizen
 - i. How did a Jew become a citizen?
 1. Manumission???
- f. Raised in Jerusalem
 - i. Paul's sister was married, living in Jerusalem and had a son (Acts 23:16)
 - ii. A protégé of Gamliel (Acts 22:3)
 1. Excelled beyond many of his contemporaries (Gal. 1:14)
- g. Supported himself as a textile worker (a "tent maker")
 - i. Tarsus had a well-known textile industry and the word "*tarsi*" came to be synonymous with "weaver."
- h. Possible member of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Acts 6:9)
- i. Well versed in Jewish sources, Greek literature and Roman Law
 - i. Often employs midrashic methodology and common eschatological understanding
- j. Often the most misunderstood figure in the NT
- k. Was beheaded in the mid-60's (64/65) during one of the persecutions of Nero.

1. Understanding Paul
 - i. A faithful Jew, called to the Nations (Gal. 2:9-10)
 - ii. Adheres to the decision outlined in Acts 15

A Selection From: “Helpful Points to Consider: The Role of Torah and Jewish Tradition In the Messianic Jewish Community”¹

Paul himself claims not only Jewish cultural identity, but always refers to himself in the present tense as a Pharisee,² who continues to observe Torah,³ attend synagogue regularly “as was his custom,”⁴ and encourages circumcision for those who are Jewish⁵ - all of which are matters of religious observance. Paul remained a devout Jew. Where he is challenged, and where there is often confusion, is in regard to his expectations of non-Jewish followers of Yeshua.⁶

Therefore, Paul shares a similar view of tradition as Yeshua. He not only upholds it when necessary, but even subjects himself to its enforcement. In Acts 23:1-5 Paul is brought before the *Sanhedrin*. During the interrogation, a command is issued for Paul to be physically struck, after which, Paul responds with a strong rebuke. When it is made known to Paul that it was the High Priest himself who commanded him to be struck, and the one whom Paul is insulting, Paul quickly apologizes and states: “I didn’t know, brothers, that he was the High Priest; for it says in the Torah, ‘you are not to speak disparagingly of a ruler of your people.’”⁷

Lastly, in Acts 28, Paul convenes a meeting with the local Jewish leaders. In his address to them he clearly argues, “I have done nothing against either our people or the traditions of our fathers.”⁸ This would also support his statement in Philippians 3:6 where he states that even in regards to the strictest observance of the Torah, he was “blameless.”⁹

¹ From a paper I presented at the 3rd Borough Park Symposium, October 23, 2012 in New York, NY.

² Acts 23:6, Acts 26:5, Philippians 3:5-6, etc.

³ Acts 21:20-26, Acts 25:8, Philippians 3:5-6, etc.

⁴ Acts 13:1, 13:14, 13:42-44, 14:1,17:2, 17:10, 17:17, 19:8, etc.

⁵ Acts 16:1-5.

⁶ Who are not obligated to the same religious obligations of Jewish observance, but share in the blessings.

⁷ Acts 23:5

⁸ Acts 28:17

⁹ Also see: Acts 25:8.

Paul's Letter to the Ephesians

II. BOOK OF EPHESIANS

- a. The primary theme of the entire book is Unity and emphasizes “the mystery of God’s will” (1:9; 3:3-4:9; 5:32; 6:19)
 - i. The theme of Unity is articulated in cosmic terms as well as relationships and households.
- b. Written possibly around 60-62 CE
 - i. Traditionally, the letters to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon were assumed to have been written by Paul during his imprisonment in Rome (Acts 28:16-31), therefore, these books were called the “prison epistles.”
- c. Who is the primary audience of this letter?
 - i. *Gentiles!* (particularly in Ephesus)
- d. Ephesians delineates a new social order
 - i. Gentiles are to reject their previous lifestyles and understand their new-found spiritual relationship to the Jewish people, as those who were “once far off but have been brought near (2:13).”
 1. Through faith in Yeshua Gentiles are now part of an extended Commonwealth of Israel, sharing in the same blessings as Israel, but without the same covenantal obligations.
- e. Imagery familiar from Jewish apocalyptic literature appears in reference to “this age” and the “age to come,” and the distinction between the children of light and the children of darkness in 1:18, 2:1-2 and 5:8-14 can be compared with, for example, the DSS (1QS 3:13-4:14).
- f. Its structure falls more or less into two approximate equal parts:
 - i. 1-3 = Theological teachings
 - ii. 4-6 = exhortations to more upright behavior befitting a new life in Messiah.

III. OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

- I. Greetings (1:1-6)
- II. Unity in the Body
 - a. Unity through Yeshua (1:7-12)
 - b. Assurance of faith (1:13-14)
 - c. Sha’ul’s prayer (1:15-23)
- III. Made alive in Messiah (2:1-10)
- IV. Gentiles, through faith, brought into Commonwealth of Israel (2:11-3:19)
 - a. Fellow-citizens in the Family of God (2:19-22)
 - b. Paul’s Ministry to the Gentiles (3:1-19)
- V. Exhortation (3:20-4:10)
- VI. The Believer in the Body (4:11-32)
- VII. The Believer in the World
 - a. Children of Light (5:1-20)
 - b. Advice in Relationships (5:21-6:9)
 - c. God’s Armor (6:10-18)
- VIII. Final Greetings (6:19-24)



TIMELINE OF PAUL AND HIS LETTERS

- c.9 CE** **Paul's Birth in Tarsus**
- 34/35 CE** **Paul's Experience *En route* to Damascus**
- c.47-48** **Paul's First "*Shelichut*" Journey**
- c.48-50** **Jerusalem Council**
c.48-50 Galatians
- c.49-52** **Paul's Second "*Shelichut*" Journey**
c.49-51 First Letter to the Thessalonians
c.49-51 Second Letter to the Thessalonians
- c.53-58** **Paul's Third "*Shelichut*" Journey**
c.53-54 First Letter to the Corinthians
c.55-56 Second Letter to the Corinthians
c.57 Romans
- c.59-62** **Paul's Arrest, Journey to Rome, and Awaiting Trial Before Nero**
c.62 Ephesians
 Philippians
 Colossians
 Philemon
- c.62-64** **Paul's Released from Prison**
c.62-64 First Letter to Timothy
c.62-64 Titus
c.64-65 Second Letter to Timothy
- c.64/65** **Paul's Final Imprisonment and Execution in Rome**