

1. Paul through the lens of Zealots:

- We often don’t have the complete historical and cultural context when we talk about Paul and his actions.
- There existed an entire Zealot movement that impacted his thinking.
- Look at Paul – along with a possible explanation of his parents and upbringing -through the lens of Zealots.

2. Paul (Sha’ul) was Zealous (Phil. 3:4-6):

- Jesus wants to harness the ‘zealous’ energy and point it in the right direction.
- Paul is going to take the Gospel to Rome! God needs ‘zealous’ energy!

3. Paul’s (Sha’ul) bonafides:

- Philippians 3:4-6
- Galatians 1:13-14

4. Paul’s background from Scripture:

- Born in Tarsus of Cilicia (Acts 21:39)
- Roman citizenship (Acts 22:25-26)
- Brought up in Jerusalem (Acts 22:3)
- Studied as a disciple under Gamaliel (Acts 22:3)

5. Acts 21:37-22:5 –

- Aramaic? Or Hebrew?

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- Gamaliel – a famous Rabbi from the House of Hillel (a Very famous Rabbi).
 - Hillel did not advocate violence.
- The “Way” – a name for the early Christian movement.

6. Gamaliel the Rabbi and Paul (Sha’ul) the Disciple –

- A disciple is supposed to be like his/her Rabbi.
- Not “know what the Rabbi knows” but “be what the Rabbi is.”
- Gamaliel does not advocate violence (like Hillel) – but how does Paul act?
 - Paul was not like his Rabbi.
 - Just as many of the disciples were not like Jesus until his spirit could redeem them.

7. Gamaliel – a Pharisee- defends the Disciples:

- One of the most remarkable passages of scripture.
- Gamaliel – a demonstration of **Wisdom** – how do you ACT in the face of uncertainty?
 - Wisdom is about **action** – not just knowledge or information - after you have considered all of the aspects of a situation.
 - How are you going to act?
- **Acts 5: 33-39-**
 - “consider carefully” (v. 35) – Wisdom
 - A History lesson of what happened with other Messianic movements
- **Wisdom:**
 - v. 38 – if the movement is of man (man’s idea), it will fail (think Tower of Babel)
 - v. 39 – if the movement is actually of God – then you can’t stop it anyway and will only find yourself fighting God.

8. What are Paul’s roots? What was his family?

- **Gischala** - (Hebrew *Gush Halav*) – a town in Galilee that eventually became 2nd to Gamla as a Zealot stronghold.
 - John of Gischala – lead a revolt during the war with Rome (66AD-70AD).
- Jerome (Saint Jerome) – translated the Bible from Hebrew to Latin. The Latin Vulgate.
- Jerome's commentary on Philemon¹:

“Some say that the apostle Paul’s parents were from **Giscala in Judea** and that when the province was devastated by the Romans and the Jews scattered, they emigrated to Tarsus in Cilicia, where Paul was born. Here he inherited as a young man the personal status of his parents. Thus he could state: “They are Hebrews, but so am I; they are Israelites, so am I; they are Abraham’s seed, so am I.” And again, “I am a Hebrew of the Hebrews.” These indicate that he felt himself more of a Jew than a citizen of Tarsus.

- In both 4 BC and 6AD, there were uprisings in Gischala.
- Is it possible that Paul’s parents – part of the Zealot movement of Gischala – took part in the uprisings and were then scattered by Rome in an effort to quell the Zealot fever?
- If Paul’s (Sha’ul) parents were Zealots – how can we envision Paul’s upbringing?

¹ <http://catenabile.com/com/583ba9de205c248f42e53054>