

STUDY GUIDE

THE APOSTLE: A LIFE OF PAUL

BY JOHN POLLOCK

ADA BIBLE CHURCH, MARCH 14 – MAY 9, 2019

THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2019:

CHAPTER 1: "FROM THE LAND OF BLACK TENTS (PP. 15–21):

1. According to the textbook, what is the most probable year of Paul's birth?
 - a. 1AD, and therefore Paul was basically a contemporary of Jesus and the other apostles
 - b. 10AD, and therefore Paul was basically a decade younger than Jesus and the other apostles
 - c. 30AD, and therefore Paul was born about the same year as Jesus' resurrection
 - d. 68AD, and therefore Paul was born about the same year as Emperor Nero's death
2. Scholars propose different theories concerning the reason why Paul is referred to by two names in the Book of Acts: "Paul" and "Saul." Pollock's theory is:
 - a. "Saul" was the official name; "Paul," which means "little" in Latin, was the nickname
 - b. "Saul" was the official name; "Paul" was the Christian name, taken from his prominent convert, Sergius Paulus (Acts 13:7)
 - c. "Saul" was the Jewish name; "Paul" was the personal cognomen of the Latin name, and Paul had a Latin name as a Roman citizen
 - d. "Paul" was the official name; "Saul," which recalled the name of the first king of Israel, was the nickname
3. Paul could boast of studying with one of the greatest Rabbis of his day. With whom and where did Paul study?
 - a. With Gamaliel, the grandson of Hillel, in Jerusalem
 - b. With Apollos, in Alexandria
 - c. With Dionysius the Areopagite, in Athens
 - d. With Maimonides, in Cordova
4. **Discussion Question:** Had the Apostle Paul ever been married? Pollock concludes that Paul probably had been (pp. 20; see also 57), but of course Paul never specifically mentions his wife in any of his epistles. What do you think?

5. **Discussion Question:** In Acts 1:8, Jesus commissions the apostles to be his witnesses “in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (ESV). Judea, Samaria, and the end of the earth can be read as concentric circles of influence, with Judea representing one’s immediate circle of influence. What are the “Judea,” “Samaria,” and “end of the earth” for your church?

6. **Discussion Question:** Acts 2 chronicles the dramatic scene of the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Different Christian traditions read the account of the gift of tongues differently. What is your church’s teaching on the gift of tongues?

CHAPTER 2: “STEPHEN” (PP. 23–31):

7. According to the textbook, Stephen and Paul debated the resurrection of Jesus, and Pollock concludes that Stephen must have won this debate. What is Pollock’s best evidence for this conclusion?
 - a. Paul’s characteristic temper must have led him to seek vengeance on Stephen after he had lost the debate
 - b. The parallels between Stephen and Paul’s education and career point to the fact that Stephen, too, must have been quite a formidable debater
 - c. Stephen’s charity work as a deacon in the church had no doubt won him favor with the poor, and so the common people regarded Stephen’s arguments favorably
 - d. Acts 6:10 states: “They could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he [Stephen] was speaking”

8. Pollock dates the stoning of Stephen—soon after which Paul was converted—to which year?
 - a. 31AD, perhaps only one year after Jesus’ resurrection
 - b. 35AD, only about 5 years after Jesus’ resurrection
 - c. 37AD, the same year as Emperor Tiberius’ death
 - d. 49AD, the same year as the Edict of Claudius

9. **Discussion Question:** Acts 2:42 reads: “And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (ESV). In what ways and to what extent should the church of today pattern itself after the earliest church? How should churches today expect to be different than the church we read about in the first chapters of Acts?

10. **Discussion Question:** Stephen’s sermon in Acts 7 comes to a head with the accusation that the people of Israel have consistently rejected God’s prophets. The sermon is confrontational, and, ultimately, Stephen is stoned to death. In our day, many Christians are more concerned about not offending non-believers than about giving clear testimony to the gospel. When is it appropriate to be confrontational in our presentations of Christian belief?

CHAPTER 3: "DAMASCUS ROAD" (PP. 33–38):

11. Pollock paints a spiritual and psychological portrait of Paul's conversion. Which of the following does Pollock NOT explore as probably part of Paul's experience immediately following conversion?
 - a. After conversion, Paul began to feel the full weight of guilt for the persecution of the church and the murder of Christians
 - b. Paul began to understand that the curse that Jesus bore when he was hanged on a tree (see Deuteronomy 21:23) was for his own sake and the sake of humanity
 - c. Paul began to develop a keen interest in the sayings of Jesus, as remembered by the early Christian community
 - d. Paul began to map out in his mind the ministry that he would have in writing epistles to the churches of the Roman Empire

12. **Discussion Question:** In Acts 10, we read about the gospel coming to a first Gentile convert: Cornelius. The meeting between Cornelius and Peter is arranged by a vision of an angel (to Cornelius) and a vision (to Peter). We receive many reports of people coming to Christ via visions today in the Middle East. Please begin to outline a theology of visions.

THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 2019:

CHAPTER 10: "PROGRESS AND PERSECUTION" (PP. 85–90):

13. In Galatia, toward the conclusion of his "First Missionary Journey," Paul experiences significant trials, including all of the following EXCEPT:
 - a. Stoning in Lystra, an incident that nearly killed Paul
 - b. Abandonment by his associate John Mark, Barnabas' cousin
 - c. Misplacing the documents of his Roman citizenship during busy travels
 - d. Public rejection by the synagogue leaders

14. According to Pollock, how would the Galatians have received Paul's teaching about the "fruit of the Spirit" (see Galatians 5:22–23)?
 - a. As revolutionary, since Paul prescribed this ethic not for one class or race but for all who are in Christ
 - b. As foreign, given that this ethic was standard in the Judaism of Palestine but not in Galatia
 - c. As irrelevant, since Galatia was culturally and ethnically homogenous
 - d. As customary, since Paul's teaching reflects the ethics of the educated in Roman society of the time

15. **Discussion Question:** In this chapter, Pollock sees Paul as someone who advanced new converts to baptism (p. 86) and to positions of ministry (p. 88) quickly. How should church leaders today go about identifying and promoting new leadership?
16. **Discussion Question:** In Acts 11:26, we learn that Christianity first became known as “Christianity” (thus, replacing the older name, “The Way”). What is at stake in choosing a name for local congregations? Should churches be free to adopt or avoid the language of “church,” “evangelical,” or even “Christian”?
17. **Discussion Question:** In Acts 12:17, we read that Peter “went to another place” after his release from prison, and tradition records that Peter went to Rome at this time. Many Christians in the first-century church and since have fled persecution and thereby carried the gospel to new territories. What is the role of persecution and the spread of the gospel in our culture?

CHAPTER 11: “STONED” (PP. 91–99):

18. Toward the conclusion of Paul’s “First Missionary Journey,” Paul comes into contact with a young man who was to prove to be the most significant protégé of Paul’s ministry. Who was this?
 - a. John Mark, who would someday lead Paul’s ministry in Cyprus
 - b. Titus, who would someday lead Paul’s ministry in Crete
 - c. Timothy, who would someday lead Paul’s ministry in Ephesus
 - d. Luke, who would someday pen the Gospel after his name and the Acts of the Apostles
19. In the city of Lystra in the province of Galatia, Paul is stoned and left for dead. According to Pollock, why did the people stone Paul?
 - a. It was a mob action, motivated by hatred of the Jews
 - b. It was a mob action, set in the confusion of a pagan sacrifice to Paul as to a divinity
 - c. It was a mob action, and the mob wished to sacrifice Paul to their gods
 - d. It was the outcome of a judicial process, initiated by the charge of blasphemy
20. **Discussion Question.** Paul certainly faced many trials during his missionary work in the first century, and Pollock does not shy away from describing these trials in some detail. What should the stand of the church in our context today be toward persecution?
21. **Discussion Question:** In Acts 14, Paul is stoned and left for dead, and from 2 Timothy 3:10–11, it may be possible to conclude that Timothy personally witnessed this event. What is that you have learned by witnessing the trials of your mentors?

CHAPTER 12: "I OPPOSED HIM TO HIS FACE" (PP. 101–106):

22. When Paul returns to Antioch after his "First Missionary Journey," Paul famously confronts Peter. Which of the following is the best description of the issue at stake in the confrontation?
- Peter wished to take along John Mark on his next missionary endeavor; Paul refused to work again with John Mark
 - Peter ate with Gentiles in Antioch but not in Jerusalem; Paul demanded that Peter abandon Kosher practices in both Antioch and Jerusalem for the sake of witness to the Gentiles
 - Peter was widely regarded as among the "superapostles"; Paul demanded that Peter recognize him as equally worthy of this title
 - Peter's ministry included the baptism of many new converters; Paul's ministry tallied few baptisms, Paul wished Peter to state that baptism was of little consequence
23. Pollock notes that the confrontation between Paul and Peter could have resulted in a permanent division in the church. How did Peter respond to Paul's criticism?
- With public repentance, admitting immediately that Paul was right and supporting Paul's position later at the Jerusalem Council
 - With private repentance, admitting that Paul was right in a personal conversation, but remaining silent concerning whether he supported Paul's position later at the Jerusalem Council
 - With indifference, admitting that Paul was right, but expressing the opinion that the issue was really overblown and irrelevant
 - With indignation, disavowing Paul's criticisms as unfair and later boycotting the Jerusalem Council
24. **Discussion Question:** In Acts 15, we read the account of the historic Jerusalem Council in 49AD, which established that one did not need to be circumcised in order to be a Christian. To paraphrase the debate, the apostles established that one does not need to be Jewish first in order to become a Christian. What burdens of cultural identity may our churches yet need to shed today in order to continue to open up the message of salvation to all people?

CHAPTER 15: "ACROSS TO EUROPE" (PP. 121–125):

25. Many scholars surmise that Luke joined Paul's ministry team at Troas. Pollock only alludes to the reason for this general consensus, but which of the following best represents the reasoning behind the theory that Luke joined Paul's ministry team at Troas?
- At Pergamum, not far from Troas, there was a thriving medical center at the Shrine of Aesculapius, and this medical center may have attracted Luke to the region
 - It is possible that Luke and Titus were brothers, and therefore Luke would probably have hailed from Antioch in Syria
 - Luke, who was the author of the Acts of the Apostles, begins to use the plural pronoun "we" in describing Paul's ministry team at Troas
 - In the face of little evidence, the most responsible conclusion is that Luke was a Macedonian whom Paul converted at Troas
26. Pollock does not discuss in detail the "Macedonian Vision" that Paul received at Troas, but which of the following would best describe the significance of this vision from the perspective of Paul?
- The vision convinced Paul of that the Macedonians would be receptive of the gospel too, although Paul had formerly thought the Macedonians would not listen to his preaching
 - The vision of the man from Macedonia confirmed God's call away from Ephesus, where Paul had wanted to go for some time, and instead redirected Paul to the Grecian peninsula
 - The vision was instrumental in encouraging Paul to take the gospel out of the synagogue and bring it to the Gentiles for the first time
 - The vision led Paul to cross from the continent of Asia to Europe for the first time
27. **Discussion Question.** One notable feature of Paul's ministry in Philippi is that he was willing to receive free board and lodgings from Lydia and perhaps other in the fledgling church there. Paul's epistle to the Philippians will later express his thanks to the church there for their hospitality. How do should we evaluate the practice of receiving hospitality in Christian mission today?

CHAPTER 19: "LAUGHTER IN ATHENS" (PP. 147–152):

28. According to Pollock, would Paul have visited the Acropolis while in Athens? Why or why not?
- Yes, because Paul loved artistic culture as an expression of God's creativity
 - Yes, because Paul would have wished to be aware of the surrounding culture in order to be able to articulate the gospel to it
 - No, because Paul respected the seductive power of idolatry on himself and those who might witness him in the temple area
 - No, because Paul simply would not have had time for tourist sites while on mission in the city
29. Pollock describes the two principal schools of philosophy represented in Athens during the first century: the Stoics and the Epicureans. Which of the following is an accurate representation of the teachings of these two schools?
- The Stoics maintained that people should face the future without fear and accept whatever may come; the Epicureans taught that there is no higher good in life than to experience momentary pleasure
 - The Stoics dedicated themselves to the building and beautification of porches; the Epicureans dedicated themselves to the perfection of the culinary arts
 - The Stoics taught that people should live in accordance with nature and despise social conventions; the Epicureans developed early mathematics
 - The Stoics are remembered for pioneering the philosophical dialogue; the Epicureans are remembered for their application of paradox
30. **Discussion Question:** Pollock sees Paul as demonstrating a thorough grasp of classical philosophy in his famous sermon on Mars Hill (Acts 17:22–31), concluding that Paul alluded to Eumenides, Plato, Epimenides, Aratus, and Euripides. In what ways and to what degrees ought Christians to familiarize themselves with secular culture today?

CHAPTER 23: "A SCHOOL AT EPHESUS" (PP. 175–181):

31. Pollock concludes that Paul conceived of the plan to establish a collection for the "poor saints in Jerusalem" during his stay in Ephesus. Pollock mentions each of the following as motivations contributing to Paul's desire to gather such a collection EXCEPT:
- The exercise would strengthen the faith of individual believers as each would give to capacity
 - The project would unite the fledgling churches spread across modern-day Greece and Turkey
 - Establishing such a collection would affirm the centrality of Jerusalem in the network of early Christian churches
 - Paul may have hoped to be able to purchase the release of prisoners in Jerusalem so that they could join him in his mission to Spain
32. In Ephesus, Paul founded a school of theology in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. Which of the following is NOT true concerning the aims and operation of the school?
- Paul lectured during the heat of the day, from about 11am to 4pm, when the rest of workers in the city would have retired from their businesses and rested
 - Paul accepted modest tuition fees so that he could dedicate himself fulltime to the development of new lessons
 - We do not know the exact content of these lessons, but Paul's epistles offer a clear window into the type of catechetical instructed Paul delivered
 - Students would compile their own set of lecture notes while attending lessons

CHAPTER 28: "A TREATISE FOR ROME" (PP. 217–226):

33. Pollock relates the struggles that Paul faced in Corinth. It seems that Paul faced all of the following criticisms from some in the church in Corinth EXCEPT:
- Paul offered his preaching for free
 - Paul did not have letters of commendation from the church in Jerusalem
 - Paul was not an eloquent speaker
 - Paul's epistles were not regarded as theologically substantive

34. The central theme of Paul's Epistle to the Romans is the doctrine of justification by faith. To which of the following phrases does Pollock appeal in order to paraphrase this theme?
- "God puts men right through their faith in Jesus Christ"
 - "If you believe, who knows what miracles you can achieve"
 - "It is the faithfulness of Jesus Christ to the covenant that justifies all who are in him"
 - "Do your best and leave the rest to Jesus"
35. Pollock reads the ethical exhortations at the conclusion of the Epistle to the Romans as a catalogue of the virtues that Paul himself practiced. Which of the following is NOT among Pollock's descriptions of Paul from this section?
- Paul was a hospitable, generous man
 - Paul sought recompense where injustice had been committed
 - Paul did his utmost to live at peace with everyone
 - Paul had a gift for counting every person as better than himself
36. **Discussion Question:** Pollock praises Paul's Epistle to the Romans in the highest terms, calling it "a carefully constructed literary composition, which, if he had never written or spoken another word, entitles Paul to rank with Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle among the greatest intellects of the ancient world, and indeed, of all time" (p. 221). What do you regard as Paul's deepest theology in Romans? Paul's most notable literary achievement in Romans?

THURSDAY, APRIL 25, 2019:

CHAPTER 27: "AFFLICTION IN ASIA" (PP. 207–216):

37. The chapter begins with an analysis of Paul's teaching on the resurrection from 1 Corinthians 15. In this text, Paul addresses the nature of the resurrection body. Paul teaches that the relationship of the pre-resurrection body to the post-resurrection body will be like that of...
- Chaff to wheat—when the body is buried, it is a useless byproduct; when it is raised, it will represent the fruit God had always intended
 - Vine to branch—when the body is buried, it demonstrates its own dependence on spiritual reality; when it is raised, it will participate in the divine life
 - Seed to crop—when the body is buried, it is a physical body; when raised, it will be a spiritual body
 - Stone to mountain—when the body is buried, it is cosmically tiny; when raised, it will be astronomically large

38. What brought an end to Paul's three years of fruitful ministry in Ephesus?
- Paul had finally had enough of the taunts of the so-called "superapostles," and so he left Ephesus in order to seek fresh territory for his missionary labors
 - Paul's preaching had been so effective in the city that there was a notable decline of sales of silver statues of Aphrodite, and Demetrius incited a riot in protest
 - Paul's preaching had been so boring that Eutyches gathered signatures from congregants to have Paul replaced by another pastor
 - Paul's preaching had been so academic that Tyrannus advised Paul move on to Alexandria or Rome
39. **Discussion Question:** Pollock searches for a way to make sense of Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 15:32 ("What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus?"), 2 Corinthians 1:8 ("For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself") and other passages in which Paul alludes to unspeakable suffering. What caused Paul to write these words? Was it a severe beating? The thorn in the flesh? Perhaps an evil curse? What do you believe was the greatest suffering Paul ever faced? How did Paul manage not to lose heart?
40. **Discussion Question:** Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea for two years (58–60AD) would have been no doubt very difficult for Paul, not only because of the harsh conditions but also because he had no idea when or if he would be released to continue his mission to Spain. Have you or your church experienced major setbacks in Christian mission? How ought we respond to such disappointing and confusing experiences?

CHAPTER 29: "FACING THE FUTURE" (PP. 229–235):

41. At the conclusion of Paul's Third Missionary Journey, Paul planned to sail from Cenchreae (the port city of Corinth) to Jerusalem in order to celebrate Passover. What turn of events intervened and forced Paul to change plans and travel to Jerusalem by a land route?
- Paul received a vision of an angel warning him that the ship would founder and all on board would be lost
 - Paul received a message from the churches in Galatia, asking that he come through and strengthen them with his preaching one more time
 - Paul ran into financial difficulties and was forced to find a less expensive way back to Jerusalem
 - Paul became aware of a plot to knock him unconscious and throw him overboard at night while enroute to Jerusalem

42. While returning to Jerusalem by land, Paul stopped over in Troas and preached to the church there. It was at this meeting that Eutychus fell to his death from a second story window but was resuscitated by Paul. Which of the following is NOT one of the details that Pollock provides in order to help explain Eutychus's sleepiness?
- Paul's message had to be translated from Hebrew into Greek, and Eutychus could not understand Hebrew
 - The crowd of hearers was crammed into a small attic space, and the air was hot and stuffy
 - The lamps in the house produced smoke that accumulated in the upper areas of the room and created a soporific effect
 - Eutychus was exhausted from his day of manual labor and had eaten the "agape" with the other Christians
43. Paul's address to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20 is one of the most detailed and emotionally moving of the Book of Acts. Pollock hypothesizes that Luke's record of the speech is quite accurate based on which of the following
- Luke may have used a medical shorthand to record the speech
 - Luke relied on multiple eyewitnesses of the event and cross examined them on the details of the speech
 - Paul had probably given the speech from a manuscript, and Luke would have had access to this manuscript
 - Standards for accuracy were different in antiquity, and Luke probably freely composed the speech in Acts 20 based on a few genuinely Pauline teachings

THURSDAY, MAY 9, 2019:

CHAPTER 33: "SHIPWRECK" (PP. 265-273):

44. According to Pollock, which of the following is the correct description of the ship aboard which Paul sailed to Rome?
- 189 persons aboard, approximately 400 tons, and single-masted
 - 239 persons aboard, approximately 400 tons, and double-masted
 - 276 persons aboard, approximately 500 tons, and single-masted,
 - 318 persons aboard, approximately 500 tons, and double-masted

45. Which of the following seasons was unnavigable in the ancient world and for which of the following reasons?
- Spring, because sailors become too lovesick to sail anywhere but home
 - Summer, because the dead heat creates doldrums which could exhaust supplies of fresh water
 - Winter, because the skies were often overcast and sailors could therefore read direction from the stars
 - Winter, because the most powerful winds and largest storm waves occur
46. In response to what crisis does Paul say to the centurion and soldiers: "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved?"
- With the ship's supplies completely drenched in the storm, the ship's cooks asked to leave in search of new ship to serve
 - During the dead of night, a small band of slaves planned to jump overboard and swim to freedom
 - Under pretense of dropping the anchors, several soldiers lowered the dingy and attempted to escape before the ship became beached on the rocks
 - Julius and the captain and owner of the ship planned to disembark at Fair Havens in search of medical supplies for the final portion of the journey

CHAPTER 36: "NO KIND OF DEATH" (PP. 293–298):

47. At the conclusion of Paul's imprisonment in Rome, he wrote to Timothy and asked him to bring all of the following EXCEPT:
- Letters of commendation, which he had secured from the elders of the church in Jerusalem
 - Papyrus rolls, which would have been handwritten notes of the sayings of Jesus and possibly copies of his own epistles and Luke's writings
 - Vellum parchments, which were probably represented the Law and the Prophets
 - A winter sheepskin cloak, which was perhaps a present from Philemon made of Colossian wool

48. Which of the following represents Pollock's reconstruction of the details of Paul's trial?
- a. Paul was on trial as an instigator of the fire of Rome, imprisoned in the *Aquae Salviae*, the hearing was conducted at the great basilica in the Forum before Domitian, and although Paul had hoped for a show of support from many Christians, none were present with him
 - b. Paul was on trial as an instigator of the fire of Rome, imprisoned in the Mamertine, the hearing was conducted at the great basilica in the Forum before Nero, and although Paul had hoped for a show of support from many Christians, none were present with him
 - c. Paul was on trial for charges of blasphemy, imprisoned in the Mamertine, the hearing was conducted at the great palace in Split before Diocletian, and Luke, Timothy, and Silas were present with him
 - d. Paul was on trial for charges of blasphemy, imprisoned in the *Aquae Salviae*, the hearing was conducted at the great basilica in the Forum before Nero, and Luke, Timothy, and Silas were present with him