



BIBLE STUDY, GALATIANS and EPHESIANS

Pope Benedict XVI, "I am pleased to announce officially that we shall be dedicating a special Jubilee Year to the Apostle Paul from 28 June 2008 to 29 June 2009, on the occasion of the bimillennium of his birth, which historians have placed between the years 7 and 10 A.D."

In response, Saint Richard's Bible Study for the spring of 2009 will be devoted to these two letters, which demonstrate both the range of passion and the literary skill of this Apostle to the Gentiles.

How little we truly know about this man who perhaps more than any other mortal was responsible for our own faith heritage. Luke provided most of the background of what we know about Paul in the Acts of the Apostles. Paul himself was undisputedly responsible for six letters which most scholars consider to be preferred source material.

Dutifully raised a Jew in Tarsus, the capital of Celicia, but influenced by the Greek culture prevalent there, he would have had to travel as a young man to Jerusalem to study the Works of the Law under Gamaliel. Filled with zeal by this experience, he would have behaved much we might expect to the challenge to his beliefs posed by the followers of Jesus. Jesus, after all, had been tried, convicted, condemned and executed by the Jewish authorities as a blasphemer.

So, Paul participated in the stoning of Stephen, and relentlessly pursued other Christians beyond Jerusalem to incarcerate them.

Then, on the road to Damascus, he encountered the Lord, "saw" Jesus who spoke to him and commissioned him (1 Cor 9:1). Paul's zeal was redirected. Thereafter, the tyrannizer became the tyrannized one. What he endured on our behalf is best summed up in his own words:

2Cor 11:22-28, TREB Are they Hebrews? So am I. Israelites? So am I. Abraham's descendants? So am I. Are they servants of Christ? I am mad to speak like this, but I can outdo them: more often overworked, more often imprisoned, scourged more severely, many a time face to face with death. Five times the Jews have given me the thirty-nine strokes; three times I have been beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I have been shipwrecked, and for twenty-four hours I was adrift on the open sea. I have been constantly on the road; I have met dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my fellow-countrymen, dangers from foreigners, dangers in the town, dangers in the

wilderness, dangers at sea, dangers from false Christians. I have toiled and drudged and often gone without sleep; I have been hungry and thirsty and have often gone without food; I have suffered from cold and exposure. Apart from these external things, there is the responsibility which weighs on me every day, my concern for all the churches.

Father Dorhaur returns to give our introduction to this series on Tuesday, February 10. Do join us. [Sign up today](#) and take a Syllabus from the stand in the narthex of the church.