

Episode One - From Tarsus to Jerusalem

**Theme: Saul's birthplace & childhood in Tarsus,
education & encounter with Stephen in Jerusalem.**

Based upon: Acts 21:39; Galatians 1:13-17; Acts 7:54-8:1

Exploring The Word: The Son of Man is a Messianic Title

Cover - Statue at St. Paul Outside Walls & Roman Road

The introductory scene on the video features an elderly man walking on a road. This is an actual Roman road 25 miles north of Tarsus that goes through the Cilician Gates. It is about five miles from the modern highway and several miles from the closest village.

Since Paul and Silas traveled this road, we traveled there to film. While we were there the elderly man came walking up the road. We communicated in sign language and then he continued walking home.

In the introduction is a scene where sheep walk up to me. This was filmed at Laodicea.

A Note From the Author

For more than 30 years I have been a serious student of Scripture. In 1986 I developed a special interest in understanding the cultural setting of the Bible and made many trips to this fascinating part of the world seeking to better understand it.

It has been my privilege to walk many of the ancient roads, climb numerous Biblical mountains, and visit most of the cities mentioned in Scripture.

After years of research and study I wrote and produced my first series on the Biblical World. **“Amazing Discoveries In The Sands Of The Past”** focused on how archaeology sheds light upon the Bible.

“In The Footsteps of Paul” is the latest installment in this series. For it I traveled to Turkey, Israel, Syria, Jordan, Greece and Italy tracing Paul’s footsteps, seeking a deeper understanding of the message he proclaimed in cities like Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, Colosse and Rome.

Each episode has a four-color study guide designed to review and broaden your understanding of the material presented and make personal application of the teachings.

May your walk with the Lord be deepened and enriched as the result of studying the life of the Apostle Paul and may God bless and enrich your faith as you follow **“In The Footsteps of Paul.”**

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Danny Chan for being a traveller with me, spending many long hours behind the lens of the camera, and joining me in the editing room. Thanks to Simon Liversidge and Lois Claussen for their assistance with the study guides and Ronald Lanham of The Image Cache for the beautiful design of the guides.

A very special thanks to my wonderful wife Helen and incredible children Stephen and Stephanie for encouraging me on this journey and sharing me with Paul.

This series is dedicated to two men who shaped and inspired my sense of exploration and learning. To Pastor O. J. Mills, for encouraging me to have a love for a deeper study of Scripture. And to Dr. William Shea for opening doors to the incredible world of the past and guiding me in my understanding of it.

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Tony Moore at Laodicea

From Tarsus To Jerusalem

The New Testament registers over **13,000** miles that Paul traveled in the first century proclaiming the eternal good news that Jesus was the Christ! We begin our journey where the apostle was born.

According to Acts 21:39 Paul was not born in Palestine but in Tarsus. This was no ordinary city; it was the capital of the Roman province of **Cilicia**.

This city’s claim to fame was its unique location. It was built at the outlet of the **Cyndus** River on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea and was the terminus for the great road traversing Asia Minor from the distant Euphrates River. Tarsus is located on the southeastern coast of modern **Turkey** and is one of the few ancient cities bearing the same name in modern times that it did then.

The river, fed by the snows of the **Taurus** Mountains to the north, carved a gorge through the rocky heights. This canyon provided the only pass through the mountains for hundreds of miles. The pass is still known today as the **Cilician** Gates. It dictated the direction of the highway providing the only outlet for the goods of Asia Minor to the southern border on the Mediterranean. The major export from the mountains was **goat hair**, or cilium. The cloth woven from this was the finest material in the world for making tents.

Locate and label Tarsus on the map found on page 8.

Who was Paul?

When we first encounter him in Acts 7:58 he is not called Paul, but is identified as a young man named **Saul**. This was his Hebrew name, in honor of Israel’s first **king**. Why did his family choose this name versus the more illustrious David? Romans 11:1 identifies his tribal background, shedding light on this question. King David was from the tribe of **Judah**; King Saul was from the tribe of **Benjamin**.

When did God first call him for his tremendous ministry to the Gentiles (see Galatians 1:15)? **Set apart from his birth**

This photo is of the Cilician Gates.

The 13,000 miles includes the journeys of Paul known from Scripture. It does not include his possible trips to Spain and other locations.

Most often Paul traveled on foot. Sea journeys were quite dangerous and he mentions being shipwrecked three times in 2 Cor 11:25. This was in addition to his shipwreck on the island of Malta in Acts 27. In Acts 27:17 the sailors passed ropes around the ship to hold it together during the storm. From my perspective as a passenger this would not have been very comforting.

“But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man” (Galatians 1:15).

Jeremiah was also called or set apart for his ministry. “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations” (Jeremiah 1:5).

Photo of worshipers at the Western Wall of Jerusalem.

The worshiper at the right is wearing the tallit and tefillin (see note at bottom of page 4 for a detailed explanation).

“If anyone thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more; circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless” (Philippians 3:4-6).

Paul probably spoke more than four languages (1 Corinthians 14:18), but was conversant in at least these four. Aramaic was the common language spoken in Palestine in the first century. Greek was the language of commerce, Hebrew the language of religion, and Latin the official language of the empire (see Acts 21:37, 40).



Praying at the Western Wall

Philippians 3:4-6 provides greater detail into his family origins:

1. He was an Israelite.
2. From the tribe of Benjamin, Jacob's only son born in the land of promise.
3. A Hebrew of Hebrews.
4. He was a Pharisee, one of the strictest sects of the Jews. Pharisee means 'separated one' and there were only about 6,000 of them in New Testament times.

Paul grew up living in three worlds

1. His religious world was by the strictest standard Jewish.
2. The cultural and business context of the city in which he grew up was Greek and he was thoroughly familiar with it. He could easily move in the world of business and commerce. He might even have traded in goat hair, the raw material for manufacturing tents, versus actually sewing them.
3. Being born a Roman citizen guaranteed him tremendous privileges. He had the right to travel throughout the empire without being questioned. And as a citizen, he could never be crucified.



Praying at the Western Wall

What languages might Saul have spoken?

- Aramaic
- Greek
- Hebrew
- Latin

Saul was sent to Jerusalem to complete his education. He would have sailed from Tarsus to the Judean port of Caesarea, the greatest port on the eastern Mediterranean. This port, built by Herod the Great, was named in honor of Caesar and was located 50 miles from Jerusalem. Locate this city and Jerusalem on the map on page 8.

A pilgrimage to Jerusalem was the ultimate desire for Jews in his day and ours. The psalmist summed it up well when he wrote: “If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither away; let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you, if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy” (Psalm 137:5 & 6 N.E.B.).



Modern Jerusalem



Model of Herod's Temple

Arriving

in the holy city, he would have been dazzled by the beauty of the Temple of YAHWEH recently rebuilt by King Herod; it was the holiest location in Judaism.

There were four major sects of Judaism in Saul's day

1. The wealthy, aristocratic Sadducees held the keys to power in the Temple.
2. The Hellenistic Herodians compromised their faith by mixing it with Greek culture.
3. The scrupulous Pharisees attempted to obey every detail of the Mosaic Law.
4. The Essenes withdrew from society and lived a communal life in the desert.

According to Acts 22:3 Saul was trained by Gamaliel, grandson of the greatest rabbi of the era, Hillel. They were Pharisees who believed in the Scriptures and held to the hope of the resurrection of the dead.

At the time of prayer Saul would have worn the liturgical vestments—the tallit or prayer shawl—and would have put on the tefillin, the leather straps worn on the forehead and arm containing a copy of the law.

This picture of Jerusalem was taken from the Mount of Olives looking west across the Kidron Valley to the eastern wall of the Temple Mount.

There were two gates facing east: the Golden Gate and the Lion's (or Stephen's) Gate. The Golden Gate opened into the temple complex and has been closed since the Crusades. Stephen's Gate is the only gate open today.

The Essenes lived at Khirbet Qumran near the Dead Sea. When the Romans approached in 68 AD, they hid their scrolls in nearby caves before fleeing to Masada. The scrolls were discovered in 1947 by a Bedouin shepherd and are the oldest copy of Scripture known today. These are the well-known Dead Sea scrolls.

Jesus referred to the tefillin (Hebrew) and tallit in Matthew 23:5. “They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long.”

Phylacteries (Greek) are two leather pouches inside which are placed parchment copies of the law. The pouch or box is held to the forehead or arm by leather straps. The box worn on the forehead has four compartments containing four strips of parchment with the following passages written on them: Exodus 13:1-10; 13:11-16; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:13-21. The box worn on the arm contains one compartment with all four passages written on one strip of parchment. Pharisees took the instruction to bind the law on the forehead and heart literally, as do modern pious Jews. They are typically worn daily for morning prayers, except on the Sabbath and feast days. Some Pharisees in Jesus' day wore them all day long to demonstrate their superior piety.

In Numbers 15:37-41 the Lord instructed the Israelites to make tassels on the corners of their garments, with a blue cord on each tassel. This is referred to as the hem (KJV), fringe (RSV) or edge (NIV) of Jesus' garment in Matthew 9:20; 14:36. Today the tassels are placed on the tallit or prayer shawl. On page four is a photo of a worshipper wearing the tefillin and tallit during prayers at the Western Wall in Jerusalem.

“I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers” (Galatians 1:14).

Recounting the story to Agrippa, Paul said, “On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests” (Acts 26:12).

“So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:7).

The story of Stephen can be found in Acts chapters 6 and 7.

The Sanhedrin was the highest court in Judaism, consisting of 71 members, with the High Priest as chairman.

Stephen saw the Son of Man standing at the right hand of the Father’s throne. This is a clear reference to Daniel’s vision.

According to Galatians 1:14, Saul was extremely zealous for the traditions of the fathers. While his teacher Gamaliel didn’t take a direct stand against the teachings of Jesus (Acts 5:34-39), Saul believed the message of the new reformer threatened the very foundation of the traditions of the fathers.

He was commissioned by the chief priests, who were largely Sadducees, to root out the followers of the Nazarene. In Galatians 1:13 he wrote: **“For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it!”**

Yet the followers of Jesus increased every day. Even a large number of priests became followers of the Way (Acts 6:7). A Greek-speaking Jew named Stephen performed great wonders among the people. When a disturbance broke out and no one could refute Stephen’s arguments, he was dragged before the Sanhedrin. Condemned to death, he became the first Christian martyr mentioned in Scripture. He was taken through the ‘Lion’s Gate,’ known today as ‘Saint Stephen’s Gate,’ into the Kidron Valley and stoned. As Stephen was dying, he asked the Lord to forgive those who were executing him.

As he was dying he saw the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.

According to Hebrews 1:3, Jesus sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. Why the difference in these passages? **Jesus was standing at the critical moment of crisis for deliverance (see Daniel 12:1).**



The Stoning of Stephen

Acts 8:1-3 notes Saul was present and how the execution began a wave of persecution. After this, Saul was sent to Damascus with orders to destroy the Christian community there. He left Jerusalem with officers of the temple for the 150-mile walk to this city.

Saul, the Pharisee or “separated one,” walked alone during the seven-day journey, allowing time for contemplation and meditation. Over the miles he must have thought of Stephen. Why had his face lit up so brightly when he was killed? Why did he ask his Lord to forgive his executioners for taking his life? As he walked, he began to entertain the questions: “Could it be that Stephen was right? Could it be that Jesus is the Messiah?”

Saul would soon discover the answer to this question, as we shall see in the next episode.

Personal Application

Where was Jesus in Stephen’s greatest time of need? _____
**Standing at the right hand of the father
 and watching what was happening.**

Stephen died without knowing of Saul’s subsequent conversion. Why should this bring us hope and encouragement to remain faithful in our witness? _____

What comfort does this story bring about praying for others? _____
We never know the power of our influence on others.

Each study guide in this series, will provide an opportunity for you to explore in Scripture one or more themes presented in the episode. Exploring the Word On Your Own is found on page 8 of this study guide and is designed to enrich your study experience.

Seven days would be a very fast trip.

Application Notes

1. Where was Jesus?

Jesus was standing at the right hand of the Father, watching what was happening.

And Jesus is just as close today when we go through problems and difficulties.

From our modern perspective we can see how Jesus supported Stephen at his death. But remember, this opened a wave of persecution that caused the believers living in Jerusalem to flee from their homes.

This was very unpleasant - but Jesus was present, and the Good News is that He is present with all believers even when we go through difficult times!

“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed” (Daniel 7:13, 14).

Although the Sanhedrin had rendered its decision against Jesus as Messiah, Stephen looked to a higher heavenly court when the Son of Man would receive universal authority from the Father.

Daniel 12:1 is also of interest; Michael stands at a great time of judgment and deliverance. “At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until them. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered.”

2. Stephen died without knowing....

This is incredible! Can you imagine when Stephen meets Paul in heaven? “What are you doing here?”

And Paul says, “Stephen, let’s go for a long walk. I have a lot to tell you about.” Stephen never knew the powerful impact of his witness upon Saul. The last time he saw Saul, the persecutor was holding the garments of the men taking his life. We can’t monitor the effectiveness of our witness by the way people react to us.

3. What comfort does this story bring about praying for others?

We never know the impact of our witness upon our children or grandchildren, the people we work with, or....

Our call is to be faithful, as Stephen was. I want to be faithful, as he was—don’t you?

1. This was not a humble title as many believe. It was a high and exalted Messianic title.

2. Jesus supports His claim to be the Messiah by stating that in the future He will come with the clouds of heaven.

4. The high priest recognized that Jesus was applying Messianic language to Himself.

5. This phrase describes the Son of Man coming before the Father to receive His kingdom in heaven.

6. John had not seen Jesus for nearly 70 years. Now he sees Him not as the Galilean prophet but as the exalted eternal Christ--dressed as a priest in the heavenly temple (note the garments He is wearing).

7. Walking among seven lamps or light stands corresponds to the seven-branched candlestick in the Jerusalem temple.

As he was dying in the Kidron Valley, Stephen saw the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God. In this study you will explore the Word to understand why he used this unusual title to refer to Jesus.

1. How did Jesus identify Himself in Matthew 8:20? Son of Man

Over 80 times in the New Testament, Jesus referred to Himself this way. What is unusual about this title?

2. In Matthew 26:63, while on trial before the Sanhedrin, Jesus remained silent until the high priest asked if He was the Christ (Messiah), the Son of God. How did Jesus answer in verse 64? Yes How did He identify Himself? Son of Man

4. How did the high priest react in verse 65? tore garments - called it blasphemy

5. Jesus actually quoted the great Messianic prophecy of Daniel 7:13, applying it to Himself. How did the prophet describe His coming in this passage? Son of Man

6. While in vision on the island of Patmos, John saw a vision of Jesus. How did the prophet describe Him in Revelation 1:12-16? Son of Man

7. What is Jesus doing in this passage? walking among lamp stands

The Son of Man was not a humble statement, but a high and exalted Messianic title! In our next episode Saul encounters this Messiah on the Damascus road and his life is changed.



Study Guide One, *In The Footsteps Of Paul*
Photographs and text by Tony Moore

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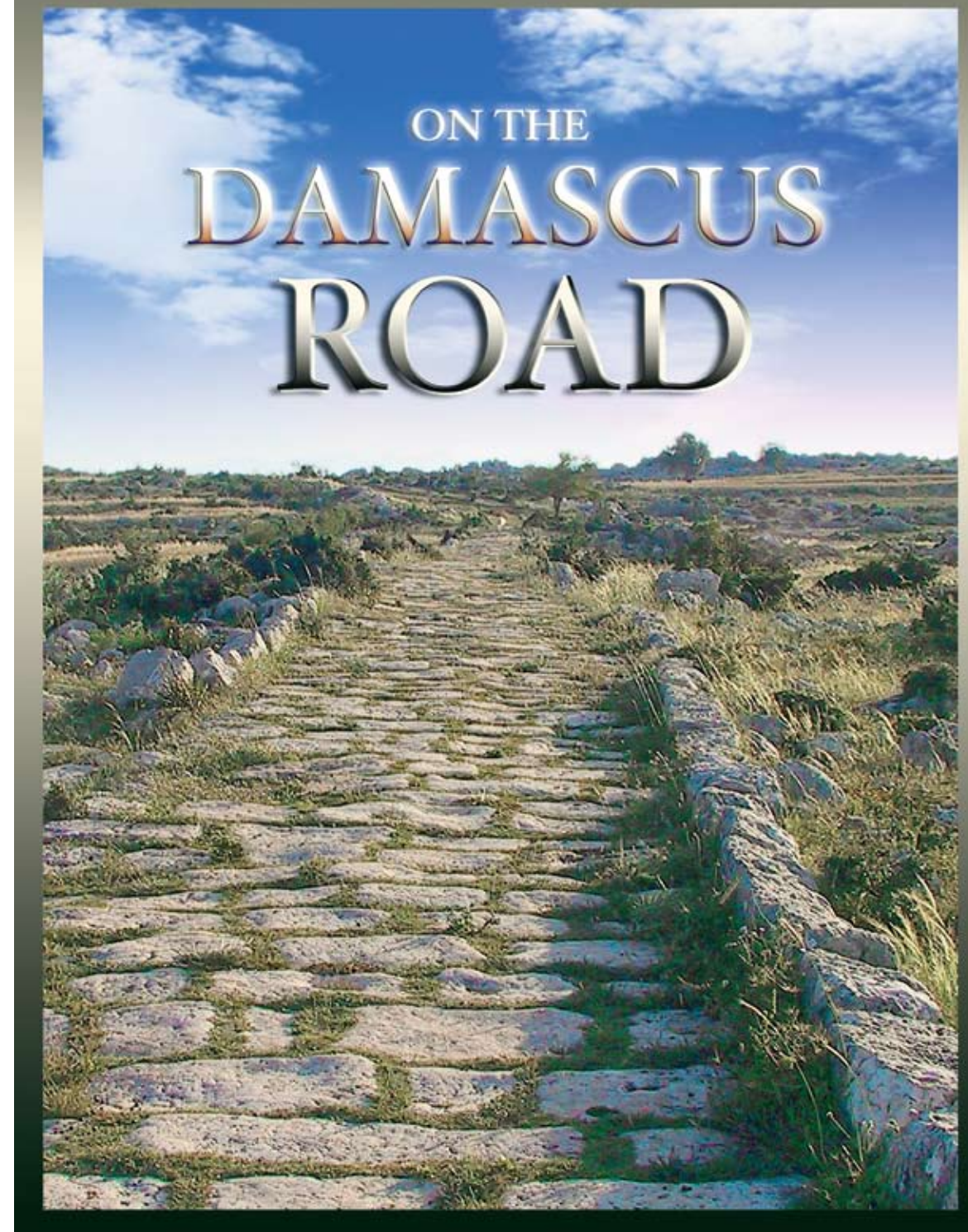
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Note on how to use “Exploring The Word On Your Own” with small groups or classes.

Encourage participants to take the study guide home, explore it on their own and return 15 minutes before the next class to discuss what they discovered in their personal study. For example, if your group or class meets at 7:30 PM, invite them to return at 7:15 PM. **Important:** This places a 15-minute cap on your discussion. This will allow those who want to participate in the Bible study review to do so without forcing the entire group to do so. Be respectful of your group. It is my observation that about 80 percent of the group will attend the optional Bible study review.

Start the DVD promptly at your planned start time. This will avoid wearying those not interested in the discussions and will prevent the meeting from dragging on to long.

Be sure to allow the participants to discuss what they discovered--don't preach to them!



Episode Two - The Damascus Road

Theme: How the Holy Spirit brought Paul to conversion on the Damascus Road

Based upon: Acts 8:1-3 & 9:1-10

**Exploring The Word On Your Own:
The Biblical meaning of conversion
Cover Illustration - Roman road near Tarsus**