

Did Paul claim to be a citizen of Rome?

By Brother Gregory at His Holy Church

In Roman law, the rights of a Roman citizen were called *jus Quiritium*¹. Roman history spanned centuries, and that once free citizenship under early Roman Law did not remain the same; it was known by several names and descriptions. Quiris, or the plural, Quirites, was the name of a Roman citizen with full civil citizenship and rights.

The term translated *Roman*, as used in Acts 22, is *Rhomaïos* and not Quiris. *Rhomaïos* was not a term exclusive to Romans. The word “*Rhomaïos*” was a denomination for the *inhabitants* of the Roman Empire and also for the Christians of Byzance until the collapse of the Empire.

A *Rhomaïos* was not specifically a Roman citizen² but was still a very exclusive status. There were different kinds of citizens then, just as there are now. *Rhomaïos* was really an “inhabitant” of the world in general. There may be a difference between an inhabitant, a subject citizen, and a resident. This was well understood in Roman law, and is still a part of law today.

This natural citizenship that belonged to all free men in the world, in or out of Rome, was called by the Greek term *Rhomaïos* meaning *strength*, from *rhoomai* – *to be whole*. Before the Imperial period, in 89 BC, a Roman law had recognized the status of *Rhomaïos* for an increasing number of people in different parts of the world. The steady march of imperialism attempted to redefine *Rhomaïos* along with the very idea of freedom itself. Eventually,³ the freedom bestowed by God became granted by the gods of the empire and was called *Rhomaïos*, but only through the sophistry of a declining empire. The term became, through usage, an “enfranchised⁴ citizen” as a member of a political body.

Citizenship in many nations, including early America, was dependent upon the ownership of land. Today, citizenship “in the United States ‘is a political obligation’ depending not on ownership of land, but on the enjoyment of the protection of government; and it ‘binds the citizen to the observance of all laws’ of his sovereign.”⁵

All citizens have what has been labeled “Civil Rights”. Those “Civil rights are such as belong to every citizen of the state or country, or, in a wider sense to all its inhabitants, and are not connected with the organization or the administration of government. They include the rights of property, marriage, protection by laws, freedom of contract, trial by jury, etc.”⁶

A person or member in a political society also has civil rights “pertaining or relating to the policy or

1 Quiris plural Quirites, a Roman citizen. In ancient Roman law it was the name by which a Roman called himself in a civil capacity, in contrast to the name Romanus, used in reference to his political and military capacity. The *jus Quiritium* in Roman law denoted the full body of rights for Roman citizenship. It was an early name, and was associated by ancient scholars with the Sabine element in Rome, ...". Encyclopædia Britannica.

“The *Jus Civitatis* and the *Jus Quiritium* were not synonymous, the latter, from which the *Jus Civitatis* obtained nearly all that rendered it desirable or advantageous, namely, the private rights which its enjoyment conferred, being embraced in it.”...“the term Quirites, applied to Roman citizens in their civil capacity...” The Civil Law, Translated and Edited by S. P. Scott.

2 Roman citizen was called *jus Quiritium* in Roman law, full civil citizenship. In 212,

3 Emperor Caracalla... See whole article.

4 Enfranchise (v. t.) To endow with a franchise; to incorporate into a body politic and thus to invest with civil and political privileges; to admit to the privileges of a freeman. Webster 1913

5 Wallace v. Harmstad, 44 Pa. 492; Black’s 3rd p. 95.

6 Black’s 3rd p. 1559.

administration of government..”⁷ So, “as otherwise defined, civil rights are rights appertaining to a person in virtue of his citizenship in a state or community. Rights capable of being enforced or redressed in civil action. Also a term applied to certain rights secured to citizens of the United States by the thirteenth and fourteenth amendments to the constitution, and by various acts of congress made in pursuance thereof.” Black’s 3rd p. 1559.

Those civil rights, secured by the thirteenth and fourteenth amendment(which are subject to the administration of government), are dependent upon a membership in that political society, which preceding those amendments and other acts of congress made in pursuance thereof, the average American was not a participant. This is because prior to the fourteenth amendment, “No private person has a right to complain, by suit in court, on the ground of a breach of Constitution. The constitution, it is true, is a compact, but *he is not a party to it*. The states are party to it.”⁸

As men applied, participated, and claimed a membership in such a political society, they received the administrative rights of their new citizenship, but also accrued new obligations. This is an age-old process that has ensured the apathy, appetite, and avidity of mankind from the dawn of civilization.

“The real destroyer of the liberties of the people is he who spreads among them bounties, donations and benefits.” But it should also be remembered that “No one is obliged to accept a benefit against his consent. But if he does not dissent, he will be considered as assenting.”⁹

The warnings are *per ponderous* throughout our History, but we continue to return to the scene of the original crime to eat the fruit of self indulgence at the expense of others - and eventually, ourselves.

2Pe 2:3 “And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.”

“When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what [is] before thee: And put a knife to thy throat, if thou [be] a man given to appetite. Be not desirous of his dainties: for they [are] deceitful meat.” (Proverbs 23:1, 3)

“And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?” ... 2Co 6:16

“Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods.” Ex 23:32

“But above all things, my brethren, swear not, ... lest ye fall into condemnation.” Jas 5:12

“But I say unto you, Swear not at all; ...” Mt 5:34

Being born in a particular country does not make you a citizen of that country subject to these administrative controls of that political society.¹⁰ There are numerous ways of becoming a member and few are more pervasive than placing the state in the role of the Father,¹¹ replacing the responsibilities – and, therefore, the rights of the natural Fathers. These practices in essence cut off the heads of the families established by the Great Domestic relationship called Husband and Wife¹² instituted by God.

So, was Paul saying that it was okay to become a member of the Roman system of Qurban with its

7 Black’s 3rd p. 1375.

8 Supreme Court of Ga, Padelford, Fay & Co. vs Mayor& Alderman, City of Savannah, 14 Ga. 438,520 (1854)

9 Plutarch.

10 “Merely being native born within the territorial boundaries of the United States of America does not make such an inhabitant a Citizen of the United States subject to the jurisdiction of the Fourteenth Amendment.” Elk v. Wilkins, Neb (1884), 5s.ct.41,112 U.S. 99, 28 L. Ed. 643.

11 Call no man on earth Father <http://www.hisholychurch.net/sermon/father.HTM>

12 Holy Matrimony vs. Marriage <http://www.hisholychurch.net/study/gods/mvm.html>

benefits paid for by the compelled offerings of an overtaxed population, its administrative courts and legislated commandments? That system was Nicolaitan¹³ in nature, which God clearly hated from the beginning.

Acts 21:39 “But Paul said, I am a man [which am] a Jew of Tarsus, [a city] in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people.”

The word for “Citizen” here is from ‘*polites*’ 1) a citizen 1a) the inhabitant of any city or country. See also Luke 15:15 & 19:14

The word “*means*” is from ‘*asemos*’, which only appears once in the Bible and is defined “unmarked or unstamped”. An unmarked city was a free city (or city-state) that was not subject to the exercising authority of Rome, the Empire. It was recognized as autonomous, and not under Roman authority, but was more of an ally.

Acts 22:25 “And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?”

The word *uncondemned* is from the Greek *akatakritos* meaning “uncondemned, punished without being tried.” This means without due process of law. There had grown up a dual system of courts within the system of Roman law. There were legal administrative courts, and there were original courts based on custom and the laws of freemen. As the people neglected the responsibilities of liberty, they became legal citizens with entitlements and privileges - but only privileges instead of rights. This same process has been repeated throughout history from Babylon to William the Conqueror, who saw himself as the *fountain head of Justice*. Great nations such as found in the Americas have been no exception.

Ac 22:26 “When the centurion heard [that], he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman.”

Take heed is from ‘*horao*’ which is translated ‘*see*’ 51 times but *take heed* only a few. The guard most certainly knew what being *Rhomaïos* meant. This Paul could not be tried in an *administrative court* but only at law. By this time, because the Roman economy was in decline, the purchase of such a position or status was common to raise funds. You could literally be redeemed by such a purchase in gold.

“Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, 'Yes.' - And the chief captain answered. With a great sum I obtained this freedom. And Paul said. But I was free born. Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.” Acts 22:28 29

The word *afraid* is translated "reverence" in another verse. It *can* mean *afraid* but if it meant *really afraid* he could have used *ekphobos* or *emphobos* or even *tremo*. The word *freedom* here is from ‘*politeia*’ which means “the administration of civil affairs ... a state or commonwealth ... citizenship, the rights of a citizen.” Paul is using governmental terms because ultimately, he is preaching a kingdom with another king *and* another form of administration.

That Kingdom was the kingdom of heaven, which was not so much a place as a *status*. That freedom and liberty which Christ, Moses, and Abraham preached was not totally foreign to people in the world, but a thorough understanding how it was maintained was not clear after so many years of decline into being a subject citizenry.

13 Who are the Nicolaitians? [Http://www.hisholychurch.net/news/nicolaitans.PDF](http://www.hisholychurch.net/news/nicolaitans.PDF)

In Ephesians 2:12 we see:

“That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth [politeia=freedom] of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.”

To understand these words like *polis* and *politeia* we need to look at some of the opinions of the Greek as to what citizenship in a free society really consisted of. Like Israel at one time, the citizens gathered in common ways of charity and mutual concern, but not under social compacts or centralized governments of power which were exercising authority. They instead gathered under the perfect law of liberty as equals who managed the affairs of government with the common purpose of maintaining individual liberty and freedom. Their freedom was their commonwealth.

“... the State, that is an agency which monopolizes the use of violence, as an instrument by which sovereignty is constituted. Yet, the polis was not a State but rather what the anthropologists call a stateless community. The latter is characterized by the absence of ‘government’, that is of an agency which has separated itself from the rest of social life and which monopolizes the use of violence. In stateless societies the ability to use force is more or less evenly distributed among armed or potentially armed members of the community. Being stateless, then, in what sense can we say that the polis was sovereign? On the practical level the Greek polis had a very limited ability to control and direct legislation. The decentralized nature of Greek society and the absence of coercive apparatuses meant that the laws had to be identical with the customs of the community, or else those decisions had to be shared by a wide consensus, which imposed a severe limitation on the ability of the poleis to change their laws or initiate changes in the community. On the theoretical level, the absence of a State was complementary to the absence of the notion of sovereign, whether it is a person or an institution or a body (including the citizen body or the community itself) which was both above the law and a source of the law. Thus Greek ‘republicanism’¹⁴ was different from the modern one inasmuch as it did not have the notion of ‘the people’ as a constituting element, and Greek ‘rule of law’ lacked the modern notion of a positive open legislation.¹⁵

When most people think of terms like “State” or “government,” they think of an agency which monopolizes the use of violence or force as an instrument by which sovereignty is instituted, whether through prime ministers or presidents, judges or legislatures, or the democratic will of the mob. Abraham, Moses, and Jesus preached a different kind of government based on the perfect law of liberty, both for its inhabitants and for the strangers in its midst. That government was first called Israel, *where God prevailed*, rather than where men exercised authority over your free choices as if they were gods or lawmakers.

Ex 23:9 “Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

Rome was originally a republic, which, in the Roman view, is from the words *Libera Res Publica*, “free from things public”. But to manage such a government requires constant diligence, sacrifice, and charity on the part of the people. They, like Israel, centralized the power of their nation into a centralized senate; then after civil war, into the *commander in chief* called the Emperor. That power, which they called the *potestas*, originally was maintained in each individual family or patriarchy, but was soon vested in the Patronus or Father of the state, the *Principas Civitas*, who was often also the

14 Republic vs. Democracy <http://www.hisholychurch.net/study/gods/rvd.htm>

15 Polis: The Journal of the Society for Greek Political Thought, Volume 17, Numbers 1-2, 2000, pp. 2-34(33) Berent M.

Emperor.

Rome was not always free. It actually began about 700 BC, although it did not become a republic until nearer 509 BC, when it threw out the Tarquinian rulers in a revolution against unwarranted usurpation. It took a tremendous unselfish effort on the part of a large number of people and neighbors to accomplish that feat. They established, at first, a government much like early Israel, based on a system of patriarchal representation and local voluntarism.

Rome's decline began as it altered this system of self governance as a republic by means of a steady centralization of power, along with growing affluence and decadence which fueled the apathy and sloth of the people.

The first revolt took place in 494 BC, which again centralized only some additional power in the hands of the Senate and the Assembly (or congress) and attempted to limit their power, leaving the people both free and responsible for their own welfare.

Tribune C. Terentilius Arsa and others allowed some of the “imperium” of the individual free people to be centralized within the jurisdiction of the State or governmental offices. Men attempted to limit the power of the central government with the “Twelve laws,” and other constitutional limitations. With this act, they set precedent for both Jus Publicum and the Jus Privatum. The Jus Publicum opened the door for the people to steadily depend upon the State, rather than their private rights and responsibilities. More and more of the personal “imperium of the people” was transferred to the “potestas” or power of the Imperial State, which became the Empire.

Those 12 Tablets - and the constitution of Rome - fixed, in a written form, a large body of customary law - but it also set the patricians (or Senate) as some sort of source of law, or “law maker” who steadily turned rights into privileges. The power to codify, and the power to define the law, made those who were chosen by the *voice of the people* into a ruling class who stood in the place of a sovereign or “law maker”. Although government power was relatively minor at first, and a citizen was considered to be free from administrative law, this situation steadily reversed. The people became apathetic and debilitated, succumbing to a series of entitlements and benefits offered by the growing power of that central government.

In order to centralize the control of private rights into the hands of pivotal public government, a series of processes were defined and established over the centuries where rights could be waived in exchange for privileges within the state. This required form of consent by the people, through presumptions or constructions of law, was done by application, registration, and participation in the form of civil membership of the Roman civitas.

This was a subject citizenship “connected to the organization of government” as distinguished from that natural citizenship with certain inalienable rights granted by the creator. The former free citizen status was known as Rhomaios.

We often imagine that things aren't declining until we feel the sting, but it is the departure from principles that marks the downward trend.

In the third century B.C., the Hellenistic world, such as Greece and Egypt, deprived the people of the liberty to pursue personal profit [the pursuit of happiness] in production as well as trade, and oppressed them under progressive taxation schemes,¹⁶ much as had been done in ancient Egypt and Babylon. Along with constant wars and economic stagnation, a weakness appeared in almost all the

¹⁶ Excise tax on “legal” title or status... Incom, property and sales tax.

states of the Mediterranean.

Rome, operating closer to Biblical precepts, prospered. They also began steady expansions due to the corruption and decrepitude of the other systems. The accompanying prosperity, with a vast influx of immigrants and affluence who came under this subjective citizenship, brought a new danger.

Most historians would mark this as prosperity, but almost immediately there was a decline in morals. The world wanted to work in and for the Romans, where prosperity was everywhere and money was plentiful. But they did so under a system of two types of citizenship and therefore two types of civil rights.

According to law, “Civil rights are such as belong to every citizen of the state or country, or, in a wider sense, to all its inhabitants, and are not connected with the organization or the administration of government. They include the rights of property, marriage, protection by laws, freedom of contract, trial by jury, etc.”¹⁷ An individual who becomes a member - or *person* - in a political society - or *civitas* - also has civil rights. But the origin of those rights, being political, are rights “pertaining or relating to the policy or administration of government.”¹⁸ So “as otherwise defined, civil rights are rights appertaining to a person in virtue of his citizenship in a state or community. Rights capable of being enforced or redressed in civil action. Also a term applied to certain rights secured to citizens of the United States by the thirteenth and fourteenth amendments to the constitution, and by various acts of congress made in pursuance thereof.”¹⁹

In this simple modern definition, we see the distinction between a Citizen of all pure republics, and citizenship as a member of a political body *within* a republic where rights are privileges subject to the administration of other men. The essential difference would seem to be that the former “are not connected with the organization or the administration of government” while the latter are “subject”.

“It is immaterial whether a man gives his assent by words or by acts and deeds.”²⁰

If the benefit of the latter citizenship includes the duty of subjection, then the assent must require a voluntary consent or else such citizenship would be nothing more than involuntary servitude outlined world wide. There are internationally accepted ways of demonstrating the consummation of a voluntary consent, e.g. through application and participation.

The voluntary servitude and the commercial or military oppression of neighbors -or the strangers in their midst - as well as those abroad, supplied an addictive affluence which became a drug to the people of Rome. When Rome valued prosperity and benefits more than loving their neighbor, they began the moral decline that would spell the end.

Eventually, all the citizens of Rome were enfranchised, rights became privileges, and Rome became an Imperial power asserting its commercial and military power wherever it was profitable. During this period, it considered itself the greatest nation on earth, and its citizenry, while becoming less free generation by generation, their vanity rested on their laurels of the past.

In 212, Emperor Caracalla declared all free persons in the Empire to be Roman citizens, entitled to call themselves Roman, not merely subject of Rome. As "Imperium Romanorum" this false freedom was still subject in many ways.

17 Black's 3rd p. 1559.

18 Black's 3rd p. 1375.

19 Black's 3rd p. 1559.

20 Non refert an quis assensum suum præfert verbis, an rebus ipsis et factis. 10 Coke, 52.

“The real destroyers of the liberties of the people is he who spreads among them bounties, donations and Benefits.”²¹

The original Rhomaios was a term used by those who did not seek the free bread offered by Rome to its subject citizenry. This was why the Byzantium Christians, for centuries, chose to be called *Rhomaïos*, or “whole.”

In Philippians 3:20 we see, “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:”

But the word ‘conversation’ is from *politeuma* meaning “1) the administration of civil affairs or of a commonwealth 2) the constitution of a commonwealth, form of government and the laws by which it is administered 3) a state, commonwealth 3a) the commonwealth of citizens”

We see a similar word in Philippians 1:27, “Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;”

Normally the word “conversation” is from the Greek *tropos* or *anastrophe* and does mean “a manner, way, as, conduct”. But in the above text, the Greek term *politeuomai* is specifically used, and means “a citizen; to be a citizen 2) to administer civil affairs, manage the state 3) to make or create a citizen 3a) to be a citizen.”

Why does he say “citizenship” instead of *tropos* or *anastrophe*? Christ preached a kingdom, not a religion. The people hailed him as king and God, the Magi, shepherds, angels, the people of Jerusalem and even Pilate proclaimed Him as king. As king, He told us who to apply to - and we know that we should not follow the ways of the Nicolaitans who apply at the altars of force and power and eat of that civil sacrifice. “But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.” Rev. 2:6. Those who follow those ancient ways of Cain and Egypt become unequally yoked with unbelievers who are more desirous of their neighbor’s goods than preserving their neighbor’s God-given rights, and, like the slothful, go under tribute.

“Good men hate to sin through love of virtue; bad men through fear of punishment.”²²

“Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. :Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” (Matthew 4:8, 10)

Paul's Rhomaios status was not Roman citizenship as *Jus Quiritis*, a member of the Political body of Rome. He had no right to go to their Nicolaitian altars [The unrighteous Mammon²³] or to obtain those benefits, and regularly spoke against the *agreements* necessary to obtain them. He and Jesus recognized that some could not leave that bondage,²⁴ but encouraged men to honor it by making their yes, yes, such that they would be worthy of more righteous habitations when that unrighteous mammon failed, which it did - and will do again.

At his hearing considering the accusations of those Jews who did not follow Christ he(Paul) was claiming that they were a recognized, separate government with a long and rich history, and that they

21 Plutarch, 2000 years ago.

22 Oderant peccare boni, virtutis anore; oderunt peccare nali, formidine poenae. Black’s 3rd p. 1282.

23 “Mammon, an aramaic word mamon meaning ‘wealth’ ... It is probably derived from Ma’amon, something entrusted to safe keeping.” Encyclopedia Britannica

24 1Co 7:21 Art thou called [being] a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use [it] rather.

were operating according to the law, since Jesus was a recognized king, still alive, and they were His appointed ministers and ambassadors. His appeal to Rome was as one nation appealing to another to admit what had already been established between them by the Procurator of Rome and the King of God's kingdom on earth.

Paul was not under the authority of Rome as a member of their administrative courts, or Festus would not have asked, “Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?” Paul agreed to go, not to some local judiciary, but to the world court as to affirm what Christ had secured.

“Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, “Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar shalt thou go.”

The story of Paul's claim that King Jesus was alive, intrigued Agrippa, who was another king and who asked to hear this story.

Paul had already been found to be innocent and the case was already dismissed which we know from the words, “But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him.”

The controversy remained with Jews plotting his assassination, both there and in Rome. Paul could perform a service, and undoubtedly did, based on the tolerance some Emperors afforded the Christian society and what some notable historians called a *viable republic in the heart of the Roman Empire, an ever increasing state*.

There was no charge against Paul anymore and quotes such as Acts 25:27²⁵ lead one to believe that he was still being charged with a crime but the word *crime* there actually means "cause, reason " and is only translated *crime* once in the entire Bible. Even the word *against* is far more often translated *according*.

So, what was he appealing and why? If not a crime, what and why did King Agrippa come to hear, why did Festus only ask Paul if he would be judged, and why all the way to Rome?

This was a matter between kingdoms, not some administrative court. King Agrippa understood, and was almost persuaded to become a Christian.

The Emperor was not the Supreme court in Rome. The Vestal Virgins had more power to acquit than the Emperor. They had their court system, just like the federal government has the one it has. The Emperor was the *Apo Theos*, which is the *appointer* of judges, also translated appointer of gods, which was an office to which Augustus was first elected.²⁶

Paul was sent as “a servant of Jesus Christ, called [to be] an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,”²⁷ The word *Apostle* as used here being an *ambassador*, and *separated* being *aphorizo* meaning:

1) to mark off from others by boundaries, to limit, to separate

1a) in a bad sense: to exclude as disreputable

1b) in a good sense: to appoint, set apart for some purpose

Paul was counted as both senses (depending on who you talked to) but the fact is, he was bringing the cause of Christ to Caesar, just as he had done with King Agrippa. As that Ambassador of Christ's

25 For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes [laid] against him. Ac 25:27

26 The Apotheosis of Washington <http://www.hisholychurch.net/sermon/apotheos.HTM>

27 Romans 1:1

Kingdom at hand in Rome, he saw many people who came to him and received the testimony of the kingdom. Some rejected that kingdom, but some, like King Agrippa, likely treated Christians with respect and benevolence, giving them refuge from time to time during the difficult days ahead.

Paul was chosen for a mission to take the Cause of Christ and His kingdom before Kings and principalities of the world. Because his status was already Rhomaios, a whole man, and not a member of the Quarban of the Jus Quirites of Rome, he was able to bring this Gospel of the Kingdom of God at hand before the world of Rome and other nations.

“If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” (Jn 15:19)

The affairs of the kingdom of God are administered by the individual inhabitant of that kingdom according to the perfect law of liberty by faith, hope, and charity. He not only takes on the responsibility of his God-given rights, but the idea of oppressing his neighbor or strangers in order to obtain benefits is completely foreign to both his King and his fellow citizens.