

A Study of the Apostle Paul

Introduction:

The apostles of Jesus Christ were instructed by divine revelation to make known the mind of God to the world (Matt. 28:18; Eph. 3:1-5). The words they spoke were truths from God (Gal. 1:11-12). The apostles teaching and example was to thereby be followed (cf. I Cor. 11:1; Phil. 4:9ff). The New Testament speaks of several apostles; however, for the purpose of this study we would like to examine the life of Paul. A study of Paul's life will give us greater incite as to our duty to the lost and saved. Said study will help us understand what dedication to the Lord is all about. We learn what zeal, humility, and praying to God should be like in our lives. Paul was truly a man who loved God as this study shall bear out.

I. Saul of Tarsus:

- A. Tarsus of Cilicia was the hometown of the apostle Paul (cf. Acts 9:11).
- B. Saul was a Jewish Hebrew of the tribe of Benjamin (Phil. 3:5).
- C. Saul was a tentmaker by trade (cf. Acts 18:1-3).
- D. A Pharisee (Phil. 3:5) (i.e., a religious school or party among the Jews. The word Pharisee means "separate." The Pharisees believed and taught an oral portion of the Law of Moses that was a sort of commentary to the Law given to Moses. This law is termed the Mishna and is found in the first portion of the Talmud. Paul was schooled in the Mishna:
 - 1. Taught by Gamaliel (Acts 22:3).
 - 2. Saul was an exceptional student of the Law and the traditions (Mishna) (cf. Gal. 1:13-14).
- E. First introduced to Saul at Acts 7:58 as he consented to the death of Stephen.
- F. Saul zealously persecuted the church of Christ (Acts 9:1-2, 14; 22:3-5; 26:10-11; I Cor. 15:9; Phil. 3:4-8).

II. Saul's Conversion:

- A. Jesus appears to Saul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-6).
- B. Ananias baptizes Saul in Damascus for the remission of his sins (Acts 9:18; 22:16).

III. Saul's shame after his Conversion:

- A. Saul was ashamed of his past (cf. Eph. 3:7-8).
- B. Latter in life Paul reflects back on his work of persecuting the church and admits that he is not worthy to do the work of an apostle though Christ so designated him (I Cor. 15:9).

IV. Saul's Travels:

- A. Saul begins to preach Christ immediately after his conversion (Acts 26:19-20).
- B. Saul travels to Arabia, back to Damascus, to Jerusalem, Caesarea, and to Tarsus preaching in the regions of Syria and Cilicia (cf. Acts 9:20-30; 23-25; Gal. 1:18-21).
- C. Saul and Barnabas travel from Tarsus to Antioch of Syria:
 - 1. A worldwide famine gave way to Saul and Barnabas traveling throughout Judea to distribute relief funds collected by the brethren in Syria (Acts 11:27-30).
 - 2. Saul and Barnabas return to Antioch of Syria after distributing funds to needy saints (Acts 12:25).

V. Paul's Travels:

- A. First tour of preaching (Galatia / Acts 13:4 to 14:28 / ~ AD 45 to AD 48). Lessons learned from first tour:
 - 1. The work of the Christian is to preach the word (cf. Acts 13:5).

2. The work of the Christian is to defend truth (Acts 13:9-12).
3. The work of the Christian is to rid self of timidity and preach the word (Acts 13:15-16).
4. Churches were established due to the work of preaching (Antioch, Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe).
5. A plurality of Elders to be established in every church (Acts 14:23).
- B.** Second tour of preaching (Galatia, Mysia, Macedonia, and Achaia / Acts 15:36 – 18:23 / ~ AD 50 to AD 54). Lessons learned from second tour:
 1. We learn of Lydia and the Philippian jailor's conversions (Acts 16:14-15; 30ff).
 2. We learn that churches were established throughout Macedonia.
- C.** Third tour of preaching (Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia / Acts 18:23 – 21:17 / ~ AD 55 to AD 60). Lessons learned from third tour:
 1. Baptism into Christ for the remission of sins is the only baptism that saves (cf. Acts 19:1-5).
 2. Paul travels through Macedonia collecting funds for needy saints in Jerusalem (cf. Rom. 15:22-28).
 3. Paul preached for three years in Ephesus warning the brethren night and day about the work of false teachers (Acts 20:18-35).
- D.** Fourth tour to Rome (Mediterranean Sea, Sicily, and Italy / Acts 27:1 – 28:31 / AD 60 to AD 63). Lessons learned from fourth tour:
 1. Paul the encourager (Acts 27:20-26).
 2. Paul's determination to preach even in prison (Acts 28:30-31).

VI. Paul's Trials:

- A.** Had to prove his apostleship over and over:
 1. Brethren in Corinth spread rumors that Paul was not really an apostle because he did not take wages from churches as other apostles and preachers did (II Cor. 11:7-9; 12:11).
 2. Paul spends the first two chapters of Galatians proving his apostleship to brethren whose minds had been polluted by false teachers and men who discounted the apostleship of Paul (cf. Gal. 1:1, 6; 2:14).
- B.** Suffered great tribulation for the message of truth preached:
 1. At Lystra of Galatia (Acts 14:19).
 2. Paul relates his trials to the Corinthians (I Cor. 4:9-13; II Cor. 11).
- C.** Endured physical pain due to sickness (or disease) (Gal. 4:12-15; II Cor. 12:7-10).
- D.** Paul endured various ill treatment from brethren:
 1. Some were jealous of him and sought to afflict him with emotional pain (Phil. 1:15-17).
 2. Some brethren became his enemy simply because he exposed their sin (Gal. 4:16).
 3. Paul was brought to tears due to the work of false teachers (Phil. 3:17-19).
 4. Some brethren accused Paul of being inconsistent with his teachings and thereby untrustworthy (cf. II Cor. 1:17).
 5. Some brethren said that Paul was preaching his own ideas as opposed to divine revelation (II Cor. 3:1; 4:5; 5:12; 10:12; 13:3).
 6. Some brethren accused Paul of being deranged or mad (II Cor. 5:13).
 7. Some brethren accused Paul of lacking courage when in person (II Cor. 10:1, 10).
 8. Some brethren called Paul an idiot (II Cor. 11:5).
 9. Some brethren accused Paul of trying to scam the brotherhood by collecting funds from the Macedonian brethren for the needy saints in Jerusalem (II Cor. 12:16-18).

VII. Paul's Character:

- A.** Faithfully fulfilled his commission (cf. Acts 26:16-18).
- B.** Hard worker (I Cor. 15:10)

- C. Unashamed of the gospel message (Rom. 1:16)
- D. Preached to the lost (Rom. 1:14-15).
- E. Edified the saints (Acts 14:22).
- F. Prayed often for the saints (Eph. 1:15-16; 3:14-14; Phil. 1:3-11; Col. 9 etc.).
- G. Willing to stop doing things that offended others though he knew he could lawfully participate (a disposition of love) (I Cor. 8:13; 9:22).
- H. Exposed and named sinners (I Tim. 1:20; II Tim. 2:16-17).
- I. Aggressively contended for the truth (cf. Acts 13:6-12).
- J. A man of courage. Without fear Paul called the false teachers in Corinth “ministers of Satan,” “false apostles” and “deceitful workers” (II Cor. 11:13-15).
- K. A man who feared for the spiritual well being of brethren due to the work of false teachers (II Cor. 11:1-4; 12:20).
- L. Deeply loved other saints in fellowship with God (II Cor. 12:15).
- M. Paul was humble (considered himself the chief of sinners) (I Tim. 1:15) (and the least of all the saints [Eph. 3:8]).
- N. He was willing to suffer persecution for the spiritual wellbeing of others (Eph. 3:13; Phil. 1:12ff).
- O. Paul cried (Acts 20:31; Phil. 3:18) and rejoiced (Phil. 4:4) with brethren knowing that there was a true eternal heavenly home awaiting the faithful.

Conclusion:

What do we learn from the life of the apostle Paul? We learn that whatever state of life we find ourselves in we can be content because we have heaven to look forward to (Phil. 4:11-13). I can learn to look to men such as Paul and not allow myself to get discouraged or disheartened when life gets hard (Phil. 1:12ff). Let us, as Paul did, continue to press on through life (Phil. 3:12). May we all bring glory to God in this life by bearing fruit unto righteousness (Jn. 15:7ff).









