



## Paul, The Apostle

### Paul's Preparation

God's plan for the Apostle Paul existed in eternity past. Paul's preparation for his ministry began on earth at the point of his acceptance of Jesus Christ as his Savior. Paul's preparation for his ministry included him being equipped with a spiritual gift of Apostleship for function. Paul's preparation then centered on content of the Word of God communicated to him directly from God.

Paul's background helped to prepare him for future problems in the ministry. Paul's preparation did not take him to consult with many other men. Paul's preparation did not include consulting with approved ecclesiastical authorities for vindication and authentication. Paul's preparation covered at least three years, most of which he was isolated and had very little ministry. His preparation enabled him to understand all the major doctrines of the Word. Following Paul's preparation, he ministered for some time before having his spiritual gift confirmed by his peers.

### Religious to Regenerate

#### The Racial Jew

Saul was a very prominent name for anyone from the tribe of Benjamin. Rom. 11:1; Phil. 3:5-9.

*"I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin." (Romans 11:1, NASB)*

*"circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless. But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith," (Philippians 3:5-9, NASB)*

#### The Religious Jew

Paul was one of the outstanding men in Judaism in his time. Before Saul became a believer, he was one of the outstanding personalities of his day. His human abilities were tremendous. However, human IQ, human ability, and accomplishments count for nothing as far as Christianity is concerned. Phil. 3; Acts 9; Acts 26:1-16.

He was a Pharisee, a brilliant young man, already a ruler. He has a perfect balance of Jewish and Greek background academically. He had a tremendous vocabulary and a tremendous concept of the ancient world. He was the worst sinner who ever lived because he was the most religious and self-righteous man who ever lived. He was also the most legalistic person in the world. 1 Tim. 1:12-15.

*"I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service, even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus. It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am*



*foremost of all. " (1 Timothy 1:12-15, NASB)*

### The Regenerate Jew

God did not use Paul's success. God did not save Paul on the basis of his own merit. God saved Paul on the basis of God's own character by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Paul changed his name from Saul to Paul. Paul means "little" or "nothingness." The word "little" is an emphasis on the grace of God. Because He recognized himself for what he really was - little, he also realized that before his salvation he was the chief of sinners - the worst actually. Acts 9:1-16.

*"As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"" (Acts 9:3-4, NASB)*

*"And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, but get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do." The men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank." (Acts 9:5-9, NASB)*

*"But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake." (Acts 9:15-16, NASB)*

Because of his spiritual gift and spiritual growth, he became the chief of apostles, the twelfth apostle. Only God's grace could accomplish such a thing. As a believer, grace made a great deal of difference and Paul became a great believer. The secret to his greatness was orientation to grace.

Paul, now oriented to grace, realized that the only thing that counted is the power of God and the grace resources provided by God. Paul explored the grace resources and their utilization more than anyone on record and became one of the outstanding writers of the Word of God from the human standpoint.

Probably more than any scholar of the ancient world, the Apostle Paul had the best background for writing Bible doctrine and reducing theology to concrete categorical information. In the presentation of Bible doctrine, he has no peer both in language concept and conciseness in the original languages of Scripture.

However, his spiritual accomplishments were not dependent upon his human IQ, his human ability, or his human accomplishments. They were dependent on the grace of God and he had acquired a spiritual IQ. See category on [Spiritual IQ](#).

### **Paul as a Pattern**

Paul was established as the perfect pattern for the Jew under the fifth cycle of discipline because of the double curse. He was born Saul, spiritually dead as an unbeliever as are all except our Lord Jesus Christ. Saul was moral, self-righteous, religious, and the worst sinner. Israel at that time was under the fifth cycle of discipline due to their degradation and rejection of Jesus Christ as their Messiah. 1 Tim. 1:12-13.

*"I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service, even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief;" (1 Timothy 1:12-13, NASB)*



Saul's cursing was turned to blessing when he accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior. Now as Paul, he was spiritually alive as a believer and no longer a Jew of Israel under the fifth cycle of discipline, but was now a member of the Church, the Body of Christ and therefore out from under the fifth cycle of discipline.

### **Ministries of Paul**

Paul had three ministries. His first ministry was primarily the three missionary journeys - Jerusalem to Dalmatia (Illyricum). His second ministry involved his first and second Roman imprisonments and was a ministry in Rome. His third ministry involved his fourth missionary journey that covered Spain and the area west of Rome. See category on [Paul, Missionary Journeys](#).