

Why is Paul in the Bible?

Introduction:

1. One of the most significant events in the Word of God is the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, later known as the apostle Paul. **Acts 9:1-9**
2. The conversion of Paul marked the beginning of the unfolding of the mystery of God's purpose and grace for the past 2,000 years.
3. Paul wrote more books of the New Testament than any other author. He wrote thirteen books (Romans through Philemon).
4. In addition to this, most of the book of Acts chronicles Paul's salvation and ministry (**Acts 9, 13-28**). Paul was the first church planter in this present age of grace (**Acts 13**).
5. God raised up Paul and gave him a distinct message and ministry for the body of Christ today.
6. Why Paul? Why is he in the Bible? If Christ already had twelve apostles that he had trained for over three years, why was there a need for another apostle? Why would the twelve fade into relative obscurity in the book of Acts, and this "new apostle" dominate the scene?
7. These questions go unasked and unanswered in most churches today. There is a satanic-induced "turning away" from Paul that began in Paul's own day.
2 Timothy 1:15
8. Do you know what is sad about this? Until people understand the distinct message and ministry of Paul, they will never be able to rightly divide God's Word.
9. In this lesson, we will seek to answer the question from God's Word, "Why Paul?"

Paul was given divine truth that had previously been kept secret.

1. The twelve had been well-schooled in God's prophetic plan.
 - Israel would be converted and born again.
 - Christ would return to earth and rule as Israel's King.
 - Israel's kingdom would be restored.
 - Israel would be the vehicle through which the Gentile nations would have the knowledge of God and of Christ, as Messiah and King.
2. The twelve knew this plan and were anxiously awaiting its fulfillment. **Acts 1:6**
 - They knew that the prophetic plan had to begin with the conversion of Israel. **Matthew 10:23; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8**
 - Therefore, they worked diligently toward the conversion of Jerusalem, preaching the gospel of the kingdom and the risen Messiah to Israel. **Acts 3:19-26** is a key passage which reveals the twelve's understanding of God's prophetic plan.
3. When persecution arose in Jerusalem, and the believing Jews were scattered, the twelve bravely remained in Jerusalem, firmly committed to God's prophetic plan. **Acts 8:1**
 - I've heard preachers rip the twelve for this and claim that they lacked faith, and they were prejudiced and didn't want to take the good news of Christ to the nations, etc.
 - This is so unfair and ridiculous. Would you want to remain in a hostile environment where your life was in constant jeopardy? They were all beaten

(**Acts 5:40**), James was martyred (**Acts 12:1-2**), and Peter imprisoned (**Acts 12:3-4**) for remaining in Jerusalem.

- Jerusalem was **not** their hometown (**Acts 1:11**). They remained there for one reason: they knew the prophetic plan. The kingdom could not come and the blessing of God could not go to the Gentiles until Israel was converted, beginning at Jerusalem.
4. But hidden in God was a mystery time period that God did not reveal to anybody, including the twelve. Paul called it “...*the dispensation of the grace of God*...”
Ephesians 3:2
5. This body of truth concerning God’s grace was kept secret. It was a mystery in previous time, but revealed in due time to the apostle Paul by direct revelation of Jesus Christ. **Ephesians 3:1-10; Colossians 1:25-27**
6. Peter and the twelve certainly had good news that they proclaimed.
- They proclaimed to Israel that Jesus Christ was risen from the dead and that He was, in fact, Israel’s Messiah.
 - Their sins could be blotted out and their promised kingdom would still come if they would simply repent and be converted to Christ.
7. To Paul was given a different gospel. Paul was sent out to the Gentiles with the good news that God’s grace was available to them, too. **Ephesians 3:8**
- The Gentiles, who had been cut off from God, could now be reconciled to God, apart from the nation of Israel.
 - It was revealed that Christ’s death was, in fact, a **blessing** and the source of God’s grace. Christ made a full atonement for the sins of all mankind on the cross.
8. The twelve had never explained the cross in this light before. Why is this? Simply because it was not revealed yet. This was the good news that God revealed to Paul.
- Paul made it clear that his gospel of grace did not come from the twelve or any other man, but by direct revelation of Jesus Christ. **Galatians 1:11-12**
 - Paul had to explain His gospel to the twelve and they recognized it as coming from God. **Galatians 2:2, 6-9**
 - Paul preached that through the cross work of Jesus Christ, God was now offering grace, peace, and reconciliation to individuals everywhere.
 - This grace could be directly appropriated by faith alone in the shed blood and finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Gentiles did not have to come through Israel, the law of Moses, or the rite of circumcision.
9. All of this was new revelation that you will not find Peter or the twelve preaching until after the salvation of Paul in Acts 9.
- Peter understood that the prophets had foretold Christ’s death, but they did **not** preach or understand the atonement for sin on the cross. They did **not** understand the redemption, reconciliation, or forgiveness that was to be extended to mankind through the death of Christ on the cross.
 - You will not find them preaching the cross in this light in the early part of Acts. They preached to repent of crucifying Christ, believe the message that He is raised from the dead, and identify with Him through water baptism.

- Examine carefully the following sermons and see if you can find any explanation of the blessedness of the cross work of Christ. **Acts 2:23-24, 37-38, 3:13-20, 4:2, 10-12, 33, 5:29-32, 7:52-53, 8:12, 35-37, 10:39-43**
 - There is a simple reason for this. **It wasn't revealed yet!** Peter and the twelve could only preach what had been revealed up until that time. **Acts 4:20**
10. Do you see now why God raised up Paul? God saved His chief enemy and extended to him grace. To this man God would make known the fact that God was now going to give to all of His enemies in the world a time of unprecedented grace.
 11. The prophetic plan for Israel in which the twelve had been schooled would be temporarily postponed, and God would send His grace **directly** to the world through the work of atonement that Christ made for sin on the cross.