

# Paul's Great Commission

## Introduction

- Did Paul receive a great commission from Christ? Indeed he did.
- In this lesson we will explore the commission of Christ to the apostle Paul and seek to understand how it applies to us today.

## First, Paul's commission involved an unlikely ambassador, \_\_\_\_\_ of Tarsus.

1. When the time came for Christ to give a special commission in Acts 9, He chose a most unlikely ambassador. A man known as Saul of Tarsus (Paul).
  - Saul was a devout religious \_\_\_\_\_, a Pharisee. Galatians 1:14
  - Saul was zealous to keep the Old Testament \_\_\_\_\_. Philipians 3:6
  - Saul was the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ. Acts 26:9
  - Saul was the enemy of believers in Christ. Acts 9:1-2, 22:4, 26:10-11
2. What an unlikely candidate to take the message of God's grace!
3. But, in another way, it makes perfect sense. Paul was the enemy of God who deserved God's wrath and judgment, but received the undeserved \_\_\_\_\_ of God.
4. Who does this sound like? This sounds like all of us who have placed our faith and trust in Jesus Christ. Ephesians 2:11-13

## Second, Paul's commission involved a different focus, \_\_\_\_\_.

1. The kingdom program of Israel called for the conversion of \_\_\_\_\_ first. Isaiah 60:1-3
2. This is why Christ's commissions to the \_\_\_\_\_ required that they begin executing their commissions at Jerusalem.
  - *"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."* **Luke 24:47**
3. As soon as Paul was converted to Christ on the road to Damascus, Christ made it clear that His commission to Paul would be different. Acts 26:14-18

- In fact, when Paul went to Jerusalem, Christ commanded him to get \_\_\_\_\_ of Jerusalem quickly because Christ would send Paul far hence to the \_\_\_\_\_. Acts 22:17-21

**Third, Paul's commission involved a new \_\_\_\_\_, the gospel of Christ.**

1. In 1 Corinthians 9:17, Paul stated that "...a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me."
2. Between Acts 9 and 13, Paul spent \_\_\_\_\_ years in Arabia and Damascus. What was he doing? He was receiving the special gospel message that the Lord would have him preach to the Gentiles. Galatians 1:11-12
3. We see Paul preaching it for the first time in Acts 13:38-39. It was the message that sinners could be totally forgiven and justified before God \_\_\_\_\_ from the Law of Moses.
4. This was a new message and Paul calls it "*the gospel of Christ.*"
  - "*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*" **Romans 1:16**
  - "*Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.*" **Galatians 1:7**
  - "*For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me. What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.*" **1 Corinthians 9:17-18**
5. This is the gospel that \_\_\_\_\_ is desperately trying to blind people from seeing. 2 Corinthians 4:4
6. Can you see why Satan would want to shift people's focus away from the commission of Paul? Paul's commission is our commission today.
7. As the former enemies of Christ, we are to take the gospel of Christ to people \_\_\_\_\_, without discrimination.

# Comparing Paul's Commission with the Twelve's – Part 1

## Introduction

- A commission has to do with the authority to \_\_\_\_\_ on behalf of another.
- *"Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests."* **Acts 26:12**
- Nowhere in the Bible does God label a set of instructions as "the great commission."
- As we study, we find that God's Word is a \_\_\_\_\_ of "great commissions."
- Many Bible teachers assume that Christ's words to the eleven after His resurrection and before His ascension were the \_\_\_\_\_ commissions He gave until now.
- As we learned last week, Christ spoke, yet again (this time from heaven), and gave a great commission to a different person, the apostle Paul.
- Was Paul's commission simply a reiteration of the commissions that Christ gave to the twelve? Is Paul's commission identical to the twelve's?
- When one takes the time to truly examine the words of these commissions, they will find that they differ in many ways. Let's explore these commissions and seek to rightly divide the differences.

## The Twelve

\_\_\_\_\_ at Jerusalem

## Paul

\_\_\_\_\_ Jerusalem

- When Christ commissioned the twelve, God made it very clear where they were to begin their work, Jerusalem. Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8
- How does this compare with Paul's commission? When Paul went to Jerusalem, Christ told him to \_\_\_\_\_ out quickly. Acts 22:18, 21

## The Twelve

Received their commission on

\_\_\_\_\_

## Paul

Received his commission from

\_\_\_\_\_

- The twelve were given the promise that as Christ left the earth and went to heaven, He would one day \_\_\_\_\_ from the heavens to the earth. Acts 1:9-11
- Paul received His commission from Christ in the heavens (Acts 9:3). Paul called his commission "*the heavenly vision*" (Acts 26:19).
- Paul's commission involved making known a new heavenly organism called the body of Christ, whose blessings are not \_\_\_\_\_, but heavenly. Ephesians 1:3, 2:6-7

## The Twelve

Go to \_\_\_\_\_ only after witnessing  
throughout the land of Israel

## Paul

Go directly to the \_\_\_\_\_

- Christ made it very clear to the twelve that their message must go to the land area of Israel \_\_\_\_\_. Acts 1:8
- They would eventually get to the \_\_\_\_\_ with their message, but not until the land area of Israel received it first. Matthew 28:19 must be viewed in light of Matthew 10:23, Luke 24:7, and Acts 1:8.
- Paul began his ministry by going into \_\_\_\_\_ and then Damascus. Galatians 1:17
- Paul's first recorded \_\_\_\_\_ was not in Israel at all, but in Antioch of Syria. Acts 11:25
- Christ made it very clear that the focus of Paul's commission was not the conversion of Israel, but rather, to reach \_\_\_\_\_ with the gospel of Christ. Acts 22:21, 26:17-18

**Next week we will continue this study, comparing Paul's commission with the twelve's commission.**

# Comparing Paul's Commission with the Twelve's – Part 2

## Introduction

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## The Twelve

Preach the gospel of the \_\_\_\_\_  
and the gospel of God

## Paul

Preach the gospel of \_\_\_\_\_  
and the gospel of grace

- Paul received a gospel by direct revelation of Jesus Christ from heaven. Galatians 1:11-12
  - This revelation had previously been kept a \_\_\_\_\_. It was a mystery. Ephesians 3:1-9
  - This is why Paul refers to it as "*my gospel*." Romans 2:16, 16:25; 2 Timothy 2:8
- Paul calls this gospel "*the gospel of Christ*."
  - This gospel simply proclaims that a Gentile can be saved by faith \_\_\_\_\_ in the finished work of Jesus Christ. Romans 3:21-22
- When Christ commissioned the twelve in Matthew 28:18-20 and told them to go and teach all nations, what gospel were they to proclaim? It could not have been Paul's gospel because it hadn't been revealed yet.
  - Matthew 24:14 identifies it as "*the gospel of the \_\_\_\_\_*."
  - In context, this was the good news that Christ is \_\_\_\_\_ to earth and will establish a literal, physical, visible kingdom on earth.

## The Twelve

Teach the commandments Christ gave them while on \_\_\_\_\_

## Paul

Teach truth revealed by Christ from \_\_\_\_\_

- What did Christ commission the twelve to teach? They were to teach people to \_\_\_\_\_ the commandments that Christ had given them. Matthew 28:20
- This would include the commandments of the \_\_\_\_\_ (Matthew 5:17-19), as well as other righteous commands that Christ gave them in view of His coming kingdom to earth. For an example, read Matthew 5:39-44, 6:19-34, and Luke 12:32-34.

- When Paul was converted, Christ made it clear that Paul was to preach according to what Christ had shown him from heaven and the special revelations that Christ would give him in the \_\_\_\_\_. Acts 26:16
- Christ would give to Paul special revelation that had previously been kept \_\_\_\_\_. Colossians 1:25-26

# Comparing Paul's Commission with the Twelve's – Part 3

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### The Twelve

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### The Twelve

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### The Twelve

Go to \_\_\_\_\_ only after witnessing throughout the land of Israel

### Paul

Go directly to the \_\_\_\_\_

### The Twelve

Preach the gospel of the \_\_\_\_\_ and the gospel of God

### Paul

Preach the gospel of \_\_\_\_\_ and the gospel of grace

### The Twelve

Teach the commandments Christ gave them while on \_\_\_\_\_

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Teach truth revealed by Christ from \_\_\_\_\_

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### **The Twelve**

\_\_\_\_\_ baptism was a crucial part of their commission and message

### **Paul**

The emphasis is on Spirit baptism, not \_\_\_\_\_ baptism

- Water baptism was a \_\_\_\_\_ part of the message that Christ commissioned the twelve to proclaim. Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38
- But water baptism is never mentioned in Christ's commission to Paul (Acts 26:16-18). In fact, Paul said that "*Christ sent me \_\_\_\_\_ to baptize, but to preach the gospel.*" 1 Corinthians 1:17
- Paul revealed that every person that believes on Christ is immediately baptized by the Holy Spirit into the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:26-27; Ephesians 4:4-6

### **In Conclusion:**

- You may ask, "Why are Christ's commissions to the twelve and to Paul so different?"
- It is very simple. With the rejection of the twelve's message by Israel, God would now usher in a time period that had been kept secret. A time of \_\_\_\_\_ unrevealed previously.
- The unfolding of this mystery and its truths would require a new apostle, with a new \_\_\_\_\_, and a new commission.
- The commission to the twelve has simply been interrupted, but will \_\_\_\_\_ in the future after the body of Christ has been taken up to heaven.

# GOD'S PROPHETIC PROGRAM

