

**Chapter 1 : Paul the Apostle and Judaism - Wikipedia**

*Since Aretas IV died in 39, the latest date for Paul's conversion is 36, if not earlier. After an initial confrontation with Jews in the synagogue in Damascus, it is possible that Paul traveled from Damascus to other major cities in the Nabatean kingdom.*

Saul of Tarsus "a witness for Jesus? But in itself this suggests Jesus of Nazareth had no great impact. After all, Saul was a contemporary of Jesus in time and place, raised in Jerusalem "at the feet of Gamaliel" Acts Would not Saul, a young religious hothead "exceedingly zealous of the traditions" Galatians 1. And where was Saul during "passion week", surely in Jerusalem with the other zealots celebrating the holiest of festivals? And yet he reports not a word of the crucifixion? Paul, another "witness for Jesus", saw and heard nothing! Two Pauls "One Illusion The trail-blazing Christian missionary and apostle, St Paul, appears nowhere in the secular histories of his age not in Tacitus, not in Pliny, not in Josephus, etc. Though Paul, we are told, mingled in the company of provincial governors and had audiences before kings and emperors, no scribe thought it worthwhile to record these events. The popular image of the saint is selectively crafted from two sources: Yet the two sources actually present two radically different individuals and two wildly divergent stories. Perish the thought that they might recognize the whole saga is a work of pious fiction. Acts The Paul of Acts is a team player. His conversion on the road to Damascus is so important that it is repeated three times son et lumiere. From a previous state of error as "Saul", the persecuting Jewish zealot he is brought into the loving embrace of the fledgling church. Now part of the brethren "with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem" - 9. Disciples "took him" from Damascus 9. They "brought him" to Caesarea and then they "sent him" to Tarsus. Barnabas "brought" Paul back to Antioch Eventually the brethren "send" Paul on his first missionary journey As a missionary, Paul is very much on the collective message: And so were the churches established. From Thessalonica, Paul is "sent away" to Berea by the brethren He is also "sent away" by sea and "brought" to Athens In Cenchrrea, Paul even takes a Jewish vow and shaves his head! Though his name is cited in Acts times, "Paul" is never coupled with the familiar honorific "apostle". The closest Acts comes to bestowing the title is In every other instance, Paul is an entity quite separate from, and implicitly subordinate to, the apostles. It is Paul who is doing the directing. Full of his own importance, in all his letters Paul hammers home the point that he is an apostle and that his appointment comes directly from the divine. His "proof" of this is his own success as a missionary e. Look at our success! We must be right! Paul makes no reference to a "Damascene road" conversion nor to an origin in Tarsus Jerome reported that Paul was from Galilee! He makes no reference to Cyprus and the battle with a rival magician, nor does he refer to the edict from James on food prohibitions and fornication. Paul, it seems, owes nothing to any man. A bad-tempered bully, he wastes little sympathy on those who do not accept his point of view. Thus when he loses the support of Peter and Barnabas over eating with Gentiles, Paul rebukes Peter publicly and writes that he has reneged out of "fear" and Barnabas has been naively "carried away" Galatians 2. The Implausible Paul It is curious that no Jewish rabbinic writings of the 1st or 2nd century so much as mention a renegade student of Gamaliel who, having studied under the master and vigorously enforced orthodoxy on behalf of the high priests, experienced a life-changing vision on an away mission. Surely such a renegade could not have completely escaped the attention of the scribes? How likely is it that Paul really studied under the Pharisaic grandee Acts Paul clearly had difficulty with the Hebrew language: How likely is it that, as a young man, Paul "supposedly a Roman citizen and from the Hellenised diaspora" even got the job as chief policeman of the ultra-orthodox of Jerusalem? And if Paul really had secured such a position, he surely would have had far bigger fish to fry than a miniscule "Jesus group" in Damascus. We are told in Acts that the apostles continued to preach in Jerusalem even after the death of Stephen "They all scattered abroad Hence, in opposition to what Luke says, he could not have used arrest, torture or imprisonment as a means of forcing Christians to recognize that they had been misled. Where DID they get their ideas from? Real earthquake "likely to do rather more than "loosen

shackles and open doors". A messenger had come to me from Silas, whom I had made governor of Tiberias Upon the receipt of this letter of Silas, I took two hundred men along with me, and traveled all night Having dismissed the guards I had about me, excepting one, and ten armed men that were with him, I attempted to make a speech to the multitude But before I had spoken And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas". If he truly was a precocious zealot of Judaism and was completely untouched by the perambulations and miraculous deeds of the godman himself "short of the supposed blinding "miracle" why would he, of all people, so readily embrace the heresy? The four Gospels neither mention nor even hint at a pioneering apostle called Paul. There is also a curious parallel between the alleged "persecution" speech spoken by the celestial Christ to the blinded Paul "Saul, Saul If Paul Saul really had apostatised to the extent of joining or establishing a radical new sect, how is it the rabbis did not anathematize his name? But that was in the 2nd century, long after any life and death of the apostle. The "persecution" of the early church seems an extraordinarily unlikely construct because once Saul, the "destroyer of the saints", transforms into Paul the apostle, and is whisked away by the brethren to safety in Caesarea and home to Tarsus, the persecution abruptly stops. The "persecution" is entirely a one man circus. Typically, baskets lowered by rope are used by tenement dwellers to buy bread from street vendors, first lowering the basket with payment then raising the basket with their loaf. And why could not Paul just climb down the rope like a normal person? And just who was Paul escaping from? Aretas IV was the Nabataean monarch who ruled a vast area from his capital of Petra, though Paul gives no explanation as to why Aretas was out to get him. But Acts, consistent with its hostility to "the Jews", tells us it was Jews of murderous intent Acts 9. Why were the Jews so murderous? Any reputation Paul had among the Jews of Damascus would have been as an enforcer of Judaism, not as a Christian heretic. The weak explanation offered by Acts is that the converted Saul had "confounded" the Jews in the synagogue with his Christ. Apparently, that was sufficient cause for them to organise the intended assassination and watch the city gates and there were at least seven of them "day and night" a considerable investment of manpower. Faced with such hostility from his erstwhile co-religionists, how plausible is it that Paul, having just experienced a life-changing conversion, instead of joining the earthly companions of his newly acquired Lord, instead goes off to "Arabia" for three years "Arabia" that has just chased him out of Damascus?! Surely he would seek safety with fellow Christians? Could it be that Paul does NOT do any of these things because virgin birth, miraculous deeds and earthly crucifixion have not yet been added to the story?!! Circumcision NOT necessary "says Josephus! And when the Jews would force them to be circumcised, if they would stay among them, I would not permit them to have any force put upon them, but said to them, "Every one ought to worship God according to his own inclinations, and not to be constrained by force; and that these men, who had fled to us for protection, ought not to be so treated as to repent of their coming hither. And after they had held their peace, James answered Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God. The brethren are alarmed and Paul and Barnabas are chosen to lead a delegation to Jerusalem to meet the apostles and elders. The meeting is the famed "Council of Jerusalem". Conventionally dated anywhere between the years 48 and 52, Acts reports a pretty harmonious get together, with the main issue readily resolved. Paul regales the brothers with tales of "miracles and wonders" among the gentiles Back in Antioch, the brethren "rejoiced" He goes to Jerusalem as a result of his own "revelation" Galatians 2. If there really was a "Council of Jerusalem" at which Paul won the argument that Gentiles did not need to be circumcised why did Paul so soon afterward personally circumcise Timothy, a disciple he found in Lystra? But even more curious is what Paul himself says. Paul specifically declares that, not Timothy, but his other Greek sidekick Titus, was not circumcised! This matter arose because some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we

have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. Such love, such Christian fellowship. Paul supposedly established the church at Ephesus Acts Yet it was the apostle John, settling in Ephesus after the crucifixion, who was ever after credited as founder of the Ephesian church. John was also said to have been the teacher of the venerable Bishop Polycarp, at nearby Smyrna. Thus the story has it that the apostle John was a long-term resident in the very city evangelised by Paul on his second journey, "popularly" supposed to have begun in the year Yet for all the overlap in time and place, Paul neither met Mary nor consulted with fellow apostle John. Curious, to say the least. Just what is going on here: Reality Check What we are dealing with are two distinct and rival traditions, one centred on the collective of the apostles and underscoring the leadership of Peter and hence Roman Catholicism ; the other starring the apostle Paul, the pioneering theological genius and founder of churches.

**Chapter 2 : Why did Paul go to Arabia? | Reading Acts**

*Paul's Life from His Conversion to the 1st Missionary Journey 4 21 And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. 22 Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in.*

It was a time in which God would release His wrath against the world for its evilâ€”for a world that will reject the true God and worship the Antichrist. References to the day include the following: Paul taught a different day, a day unrevealed by the prophets, by Jesus, or by the Twelve. Paul wrote the Corinthians about this in 1 Corinthians 3. How did Paul learn about it? The ascended Lord revealed the truth that the Church 1 Corinthians The Lord did not reveal this truth to Peter or the Twelve. Search the Scripturesâ€”one will find no word about the body of Christ from anyone but Paul. Paul wrote the Ephesians: Notice the points Paul made: Paul was the prisoner of Christ for the sake of Gentiles. As the passage above states, this secret was not known to other generations. But the secret became revealed to his holy apostles and prophets. Certainly not the Twelve. They never mention the body of Christ. Peter and the Twelve learned about the body of Christ from Paul after the Lord revealed this secret to him. What was this secret? The prophets revealed Gentiles would be blessed through Israel. But nothing indicated equality. Jesus, in his earthly ministry, commanded His disciples not to go to Gentiles. Could words be more plain? Jesus made two exceptions to His rule in His earthly ministry: He responded to them because of their exceptional faith. All this was new. We know about it from Paul alone. Pay particular attention to the verses below that Paul wrote quoted above in Ephesians 3. We see the same points again: The Church is the body of Christ. God bestowed this stewardship upon Paul not Peter, not the Twelve. The revelation of the Church as the body of Christ was previously hidden the Twelve knew nothing of it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. God gave Paul the gospel of the grace of God Acts This was wholly different from the gospel of the kingdom which had begun with John the Baptist. Like a wise master builder or chief architect, Paul built the Church on the foundation: The above passage teaches that Paul, not Peter, not the Twelve, was the architect of the Church. This was the church that existed on the day of Pentecost. Gentiles did not participate in this church. Paul illustrated the body of Christ with the human body. Becoming a member of the body of Christ, the Church, is through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This is not a sensory experience. It occurs when one believes the gospel 1 Corinthians Paul wrote that each part of the body is vital: If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? As the human body is a whole and each part is important, so too the body of Christ. Every believer is important and has a vital function in the body of Christ. Another illustration Paul used about the body of Christ was marriage. The Christian husband is head of the wife in the same manner as Christ is Head of the Church, the body of Christ. Husbands are to 1 love their wives as Christ loved the Church v. No one knew it or taught this before Paul. That is His title for Israel. A king has subjects. We have Christ as our Head, not our King. We are integral to Him. We are joint-heirs with Him Romans 8. A joint-heir is one who shares everything belonging to the heir. Peter and the Twelve looked forward to an earthly position, not a heavenly one. The Jew knew nothing of heavenly blessing. He looked forward to the kingdom on earth. Where will Jesus sit on His glorious throne? This made perfect sense to Peter. Had Jesus answered any other way, Peter would have found the reply incomprehensible and at odds with the teachings of the prophets. The psalmist wrote in Psalm 2. When the disciples asked the Lord how they should pray, he answered them: Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Is anything heavenly here? Jesus knew His Old Testament. Thus, Paul wrote the Ephesians: Paul wrote the Philippians: Speaking of our resurrection body, Paul wrote the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 5. Only Paul revealed this truth. Paul wrote the Ephesians in Ephesians 1. Paul began every letter with a grace salutation to remind believers of his gospel of this new relationship. Before his conversion, Paul exercised all his power to destroy those who were believing in Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. Yet God did not destroy him. They are the following: He alone revealed man is justified by faith alone apart from works Romans 3. No other writer of Scripture revealed these things. This was a metaphor for

God seeing us as having died with Christ and identified in his death. As Christ will never die again, we will never die. In terms of living the Christian life, this has immediate practical benefit. Since Christ died to sin and we are united to Him, Paul wrote we are to consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God. Writing the Galatians, Paul expressed identification with Christ: John wrote about this individual in Revelation as did Daniel, yet how he will be able to come to power and operate is unknown. The claim was that the persecution they were enduring was the Tribulation. Paul wrote to assure them this was not the case. He declared reminded them that believers will not experience the Tribulation 1 Thessalonians 1. When God removed His Church, His restraining power will be removed. Satan will be free to bring his man to power. Faith was never a secret. The teachings of Paul were. As we have noted in examining the doctrines above, none of these doctrines were known to the prophets, revealed by the Lord in His earthly ministry, or communicated by the Twelve. These were Pauline doctrinesâ€”secrets. Conclusion The risen, ascended, glorified Lord revealed a vast amount of new information to Paul. Jesus had not revealed these truths in His earthly ministry or to the Twelve. From Paul alone do we learn the truths of Christianity: Holding to Pauline truths has always been a hard-fought battle. Satan knows when these truths are taught and believed the Church is strong, He therefore constantly fights to keep them hidden and to keep believers occupied with tradition and false-teaching. This was a tragic statement.

**Chapter 3 : CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA: St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles**

*St. Paul, the Apostle: Saint Paul, the Apostle, one of the early Christian leaders, often considered to be the most important person after Jesus in the history of Christianity. Of the 27 books of the New Testament, 13 are traditionally attributed to St. Paul, though several may have been written by his disciples.*

See Article History Alternative Titles: Peter the Apostle, original name Simeon or Simon, died 64 ce, Rome [Italy] , disciple of Jesus Christ , recognized in the early Christian church as the leader of the 12 disciples and by the Roman Catholic Church as the first of its unbroken succession of popes. The man and his position among the disciples The sources of information concerning the life of Peter are limited to the New Testament: He probably was known originally by the Hebrew name Simeon or the Greek form of that name, Simon. The former appears only twice in the New Testament, the latter 49 times. At solemn moments Gospel According to John His family originally came from Bethsaida in Galilee John 1: Andrew were in partnership as fishermen with St. John , the sons of Zebedee Gospel According to Luke 5: Much can be learned about Peter from the New Testament either explicitly from the statements made by and about Peter or indirectly from his actions and reactions as revealed in a number of episodes in which he figures prominently. He was at times vacillating and unsure, as in his relations with the church of Antioch when he at first ate with the Gentiles and later refused to do so Letter of Paul to the Galatians 2: He could also be resolute Acts of the Apostles 4: Occasionally he is depicted as rash and hasty Luke Often he is pictured as gentle but firm and, as in his professions of love to Jesus, capable of great loyalty and love John He apparently learned slowly and erred time and time again, but later, when entrusted with responsibility, he demonstrated that he was mature and capable. The Gospels agree that Peter was called to be a disciple of Jesus at the beginning of his ministry, but when and where the event took place is recorded differently in the several Gospels. The Gospel According to John places the call in Judaea 1: John the Baptist 1: The Synoptic Gospels Matthew, Mark, and Luke are probably correct in recording that the call to Peter was extended in Galilee when Jesus first began his work in that area. The Synoptic Gospels largely agree in the amount of emphasis each gives to the leadership of Peter among the Twelve Apostles , but there are differences also. For example, in one case Matthew and Luke note that Peter was the speaker in questioning Jesus about a parable, but Mark attributes these words to the group of disciples Matthew With differing degrees of emphasis, the Synoptic Gospels agree that Peter served as spokesman, the outstanding member of the group, and enjoyed a certain precedence over the other disciples. Whenever the disciples are listed, Peter is invariably mentioned first Matthew Those not belonging to the immediate followers of Jesus also recognized the authority of Peter, such as when the collectors of the temple tax approached him for information Matthew Again, with characteristic quickness he sought a clarification from Jesus on behalf of the disciples concerning the meaning of a parable Matthew As both an individual and a representative of the Twelve Apostles, he made a plea for personal preference in the kingdom of heaven as a reward for faithful service Matthew On several occasions, Peter alone is mentioned by name and others are indicated as merely accompanying him Mark 1: It was Peter who possessed remarkable insight and displayed his depth of faith in the confession of Christ as the Son of God Matthew It was also Peter who manifested the momentary weakness of even the strongest when he denied his Lord Matthew Later, however, with greater maturity, Peter discovered strength and, as he was charged by Jesus Luke Finally, Peter, who survived his denial, is permitted to be the first of the Apostles to see Jesus after the Resurrection Luke The Gospel According to John attempts to show the close relationship between John and Jesus while still reserving to Peter the role of representative and spokesman. Among the purposes of chapter 21 in emphasizing Peter may well be an attempt to restore the disciple who denied his Lord to the position he enjoyed in the Synoptic Gospels. Incidents important in interpretations of Peter Out of the many incidents in which Peter figures prominently in the Gospels, three should be separately considered, for each is important, contains problems of interpretation, and is controversial. In the Matthean version In John the title was granted at what may have

been the first meeting between Jesus and Simon 1: Thus, when the name was given is open to question, but that the name was given by Jesus to Simon seems fairly certain. Matthew goes on to state that upon this rock—that is, upon Peter—the church will be built. The authenticity of the uniquely Matthean material Matthew Though these and other arguments against authenticity are given most careful consideration, the general consensus is that at some time—and more likely at the end of his career—these words were spoken by Jesus. As the drama unfolded, Peter fled when Jesus was arrested but did find his way to the palace of the high priest where Jesus had been taken. When confronted in the courtyard with the danger of admitting association with Jesus, he chose to deny Matthew The degree of his shame and the depth of his love were revealed when he later realized that the prophecy had been fulfilled, and he wept bitterly Matthew Among the Apostles, it was to Peter—who had confessed the sonship of Jesus Matthew An initial appearance to Peter in Galilee may have been included in the original ending of Mark The silence concerning this important matter of priority in Matthew and John is remarkable. It may be, however, that Matthew Whether or not Jesus appeared first to Peter after the Resurrection, he was a witness, which Peter declared to be a criterion of apostleship Acts 1: For approximately 15 years after the Resurrection, the figure of Peter dominated the community. He presided over the appointment of St. Matthias as an apostle Acts 1: It was Peter who served as an advocate for the Apostles before the Jewish religious court in Jerusalem Acts 4: And it was he who exercised the role of judge in the disciplining of those who erred within the church Acts 5: He went first to the Samaritans Acts 8: Then he went to Lydda , in the Plain of Sharon Acts 9: Then, at the Mediterranean coastal town of Joppa Acts 9: He went farther north on the Mediterranean coast to Caesarea Acts According to Jewish requirements, a Gentile convert must first become a Jew through the rite of circumcision and be acceptable as a proselyte. In accepting Cornelius and the others—who may have had some informal connection with the synagogue Acts James the brother of John and in the arrest of Peter Acts At this point the unchallenged leadership of Peter in Jerusalem came to an end. The later work of Peter is not covered in Acts, perhaps because the author of Luke-Acts had planned a third book that would have included such a discussion, but the book was never written or was written and later lost. Perhaps the events would have included unedifying material, such as the internal jealousy within the church referred to in the First Letter of Clement 4:6, or perhaps the author died before completion of his work. Whatever momentary glimpses into the period of the later ministry of Peter remain can only be noted in a discussion of his relationship with the two other outstanding apostles of the time, St. Peter was the most prominent figure in the Jerusalem church up to the time of his departure from Jerusalem after his imprisonment by King Herod and his subsequent release in the New Testament account Acts For example, Paul went up to Jerusalem to consult with Peter three years after he was converted, and he remained with Peter for two weeks Galatians 1: Paul first met with Peter at Jerusalem three years after his conversion. In the record of this meeting the name of Cephas Peter precedes that of James, although Galatians notes that in another meeting 14 years later the name of James precedes that of Cephas Galatians 2: Paul also emphasizes an incident involving himself and Peter at Antioch. Apparently, Paul had achieved some success in the difficult matter of welding the Jewish and Gentile Christians of Antioch into one congregation. The Jewish Christians saw the sharing of food with Gentiles as quite alien to their tradition. In the absence of Paul, Peter, perhaps in his capacity as missionary, visited Antioch and ate with the united group. The unity of the group had been destroyed. In passing, Paul refers to a party of Cephas Peter in 1 Corinthians 1: Tradition of Peter in Rome The problems surrounding the residence, martyrdom , and burial of Peter are among the most complicated of all those encountered in the study of the New Testament and the early church. The absence of any reference in Acts or Romans to a residence of Peter in Rome gives pause but is not conclusive. If Peter was not the author of the first epistle that bears his name, the presence of this cryptic reference witnesses at least to a tradition of the late 1st or early 2nd century. It may be said that by the end of the 1st century there existed a tradition that Peter had lived in Rome. Further early evidence for the tradition is found in the Letter to the Romans by St. Ignatius , the early 2nd-century bishop of Antioch. It is probable that the tradition of a year episcopate of Peter in Rome is not earlier than the beginning or the middle

of the 3rd century. The claims that the church of Rome was founded by Peter or that he served as its first bishop are in dispute and rest on evidence that is not earlier than the middle or late 2nd century. Words of John

The author of this chapter is aware of a tradition concerning the martyrdom of Peter when the apostle was an old man. And there is a possible reference here to crucifixion as the manner of his death. But as to when or where the death took place, there is not so much as a hint. The strongest evidence to support the thesis that Peter was martyred in Rome is to be found in the Letter to the Corinthians c. Peter, who by reason of wicked jealousy, not only once or twice but frequently endured suffering and thus, bearing his witness, went to the glorious place which he merited 5: These sources, plus the suggestions and implications of later works, combine to lead many scholars to accept Rome as the location of the martyrdom and the reign of Nero as the time. There is not the slightest hint at a solution in the New Testament. The earliest evidence c. Gaius or Caius witnessing to a tradition at least a generation earlier c. Damasus I pope, " , composed in such ambiguous terms that it was certain to foster such misinterpretations as are found in the letter of St. Gregory the Great to the empress Constantina and in the notice of Pope St. Cornelius in the Liber pontificalis. Apart from the aforementioned, later literary tradition is unanimous in indicating the Vatican Hill as the place of burial. See Peristephanon 12, of Prudentius , various notices in the Liber pontificalis, and the Salzburg Itinerary. Liturgical sources such as the Depositio martyrum and the Martyrologium Hieronymianum, though interesting, add nothing to the literary evidence. Excavations were begun in the late 19th century in order to substantiate the theory that the burial of Peter and Paul was ad catacumbas.

**Chapter 4 : Saul's Conversion as Evidence for Jesus' Resurrection from the Dead**

*"The Conversion of Paul, and Its Influence on His Understanding of Salvation by Faith," W. Ward Gasque & Ralph P. Martin, eds., Apostolic History and the Gospel. Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F.F. Bruce.*

In the Pauline epistles, the description of the conversion experience is brief. The First Epistle to the Corinthians [9: For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born. I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preached is not of human origin. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. The Book of Acts says that Paul was on his way from Jerusalem to Syrian Damascus with a mandate issued by the High Priest to seek out and arrest followers of Jesus, with the intention of returning them to Jerusalem as prisoners for questioning and possible execution. Acts 9 tells the story as a third-person narrative: As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything. The account continues with a description of Ananias of Damascus receiving a divine revelation instructing him to visit Saul at the house of Judas on the Street Called Straight and there lay hands on him to restore his sight the house of Judas is traditionally believed to have been near the west end of the street. Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lordâ€”Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming hereâ€”has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit. He got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength. For example, Acts 9: This speech was most likely originally in Aramaic [6] see also Aramaic of Jesus , with the passage here being a Greek translation and summary. The speech is clearly tailored for its Jewish audience, with stress being placed in Acts The speech here is again tailored for its audience, emphasizing what a Roman ruler would understand: Biblical translations of Acts 9: And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. It often takes a noun in the genitive case for a person is being heard, with a noun in the accusative for the thing being heard. However, there has been debate about which rule Luke was following here. Wallace finds this argument based on case inconclusive. The conversion of Paul, in spite of his attempts to completely eradicate Christianity, is seen as evidence of the power of Divine Grace , with "no fall so deep that grace cannot descend to it" [25] and "no height so lofty that grace cannot lift the sinner to it. Alternative explanations have been proposed, including sun stroke and seizure. The blindness which followed may have been post-ictal. Hartmann [31] [32] who argues that the three accounts in the book of Acts describe exactly the sequence of events that occur when a fireball , like the Chelyabinsk meteor of , passes through the sky.

**Chapter 5 : Paul vs Apostles**

*What key teaching of St. Paul goes back to his first encounter with Christ? One of St. Paul's major themes in his letters is the idea of the Church as the mystical Body of Christ. This theme is a.*

We often talk about the conversion of Saul – later known as the apostle Paul – because of the important lessons to be found in it about how one becomes a Christian. There are important lessons here as well. Let us look at what Saul did following his conversion. Most of the time, one eating a meal is more mundane and common than it is noteworthy. But the Holy Spirit had it mentioned here for a reason. Saul was in Damascus after seeing the Lord on his way to the city. He was also spending this time in prayer Acts 9: This was a sign of godly sorrow. He understood what he had done – he had persecuted the Lord Acts 9: He was overcome with guilt and regret and wanted to be forgiven by the Lord. Hence, the praying and fasting. Immediately after his baptism, his fast ended. In baptism his sins had been washed away Acts Therefore, he was able to have a clear conscience cf. We ought to have that same certainty today – the full belief that our sins are completely forgiven by God when we meet His conditions of grace – so that we can put our past sins behind us and get to work serving the Lord. This would have seemed strange to those that knew Saul. He went from persecuting Christ to proclaiming Christ immediately after his conversion. Luke recorded the reaction of those who heard him speak: Since he was one who maintained a good conscience Acts Belief is, of course, a necessary prerequisite to baptism and salvation Acts 8: Yet some can be converted without being firmly grounded in their faith cf. Saul showed conviction in speaking openly about Christ. His proclaiming of Christ also showed a fervent desire to save others. If Saul needed to be saved, so did all the other Jews who had not yet come to Christ. In his letter to the Romans, we can see how much he desired his fellow countrymen to obey the gospel: Therefore, he taught others from the beginning of his life in Christ. Once we obey the gospel, we must also start proclaiming Jesus. This does not mean that we immediately begin preaching sermons before a congregation or going on preaching trips to various places cf. We will probably not have the same ability and effectiveness that Saul had at first. After all, he was specifically chosen by Christ to be an apostle and, therefore, received divine revelation directly Acts 9: But that does not mean that we are incapable of teaching others immediately following our conversion. We already noticed that belief is necessary before conversion. Therefore, we ought to be able immediately to tell others what we believe – who Jesus is, what He has done, why His sacrifice was necessary, what one needs to do to be saved – and why we made the choice to follow Christ. He Suffered Consequences Becoming a Christian does not guarantee an easy life. Saul began to suffer consequences for his conversion as immediately as he started proclaiming Jesus. First, Saul faced persecution from his former brethren – the Jews. Those who opposed Christ could not handle the arguments Saul was making in defense of the truth. Therefore, he was persecuted for it. Peter warned that we can expect some degree of persecution for being different from the world 1 Peter 4: But Saul did not allow this persecution from his former brethren to cause him to forsake Christ. In the same way, we also must remain faithful to the Lord, no matter what opposition we face from those in the world. Secondly, Saul also faced skepticism from his new brethren – the Christians. The skepticism of these brethren was only natural. Initially, the Christians in Jerusalem had no good reason to believe that Saul was now one of them. This skepticism was the result of his life prior to his conversion. Even though his sins were washed away in baptism Acts We may have many different consequences to face for our past sins. A common one is what Saul faced among the Christians in Jerusalem – a lack of trust and a skepticism about his faith. We cannot change our past, but we can work to rebuild trust so that others will see us as faithful Christians and not as enemies of Christ. Empty claims of faith will not repair our reputation. Dealing with skepticism can be difficult, but we can gain the trust of our brethren if we prove to be not just claim to be faithful servants of Christ. While in Damascus, he met with the disciples there Acts 9: When he arrived in a different place, he sought to meet with join, KJV the disciples again. The reason Saul tried to join the local church in Jerusalem is because being a member of a local church

is important. Many people today try to minimize the importance of local church membership. Yet this is the first thing we read of Saul doing when he arrived in Jerusalem – he tried to join the local church that met in that city. Saul was already a member of the universal church. When he was baptized in Damascus Acts 9: But simply arriving in Jerusalem did not make him a member of the local church in that place. Saul, just as we must do today, set out to associate with and join a local congregation. This is important because the local church has been designed by God to produce spiritual growth, both individually and collectively. In describing the local church the body that would have pastors and teachers – Ephesians 4: Christians are to be joined together in a functioning body that works together collectively. In the assembly we encourage one another Hebrews As a body, the local church puts forth a collective effort in the proclamation of the gospel 1 Thessalonians 1: Conclusion It is good for us to be reminded of the example of Saul – one who went from persecuting Christ to faithfully following Him. As we strive to follow Christ, we must be like Saul. Start telling the good news to others that they might receive the same forgiveness. Patiently endure whatever hardships you may face for your faith. And finally, find a sound congregation with which you can work, worship, encourage, and be encouraged; just as God intended.

**Chapter 6 : Saint Peter the Apostle | History, Facts, & Feast Day | calendrierdelascience.com**

*After his conversion, Saul changed his name to Paul. Life Lessons Paul's conversion showed that Jesus himself wanted the gospel message to go to the Gentiles, quashing any argument from the early Jewish Christians that the gospel was only for the Jews.*

The dramatic change in his life demands some explanation. How could such a fanatical opponent of the followers of Christ become such a devoted preacher of the gospel of Christ? Twice he refers to his past as his life in Judaism. Although he never ceased to identify himself as a Jew "I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin"--Rom In other words, the distinctive Jewish beliefs and customs which established the boundaries between the Jewish people and the rest of the Hellenistic world were of supreme importance to Paul before his conversion, but they were of no importance after his conversion. As he declares at the end of his letter: The contrast between Paul and the Galatian believers stands out in bold relief here. As a Jew, he had turned from his preoccupation with the distinctive Jewish way of life to serve the risen Christ; as Gentiles, they were turning from their focus on Christ to a preoccupation with the distinctive Jewish way of life. No wonder Paul calls them "foolish Galatians" 3: Paul draws attention to two characteristics of his previous way of life in Judaism: The two are connected. The message of the church, that a crucified Messiah provides salvation for all, contradicted the traditions of Judaism. And Jews believed that salvation was to be found only in the law-observant Jewish nation. This description of his former life has direct application in the development of his argument. And his point that the gospel he received was not from human beings but by revelation from Jesus Christ is confirmed by this picture of a fanatic who was so opposed to the gospel that no one could have changed his mind except God himself. In his description of his former life, Paul himself is the subject of all the verbs: God is the subject of all the verbs: God, who set me apart. God works in unique ways with each individual. Like the prophets, Paul sees himself as set apart by God from his birth for his prophetic role see Is The two parallel phrases set me apart. Before Paul was born, God chose him. While Paul was trying to destroy the people of God, God called him. That is the meaning of grace: God was pleased to reveal his Son in me. Paul strongly affirmed the external, objective nature of his encounter with Christ on the Damascus Road. But in that encounter, Paul says, God "made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ" 2 Cor 4: His lengthy arguments lead to this point: His severe warnings alert them to this danger: Fourth, Paul says that revelation was given so that I might preach him among the Gentiles 1: He did not have a two-stage experience: His mission to the Gentiles was given to him in the initial experience of conversion. Christ met him on the road to Damascus in order to send him on his mission to the world. As a result Paul interpreted the gospel itself in the light of his mission to the Gentiles. He called his gospel "the gospel to the Gentiles" 2: The purpose of revelation is evangelism. The fruit of true conversion is mission. Evangelism is not some optional extra, an elective course that may or may not be taken. It is the inevitable result of real conversion. Too often in testimonies the only results of conversion we hear about are the personal benefits: The phrase any man in the NIV is a paraphrase for "flesh and blood. Now Paul claims that the same thing is true for his revelation from God. We can catch the flow of his argument so far by summarizing it this way. The thesis that I did not receive the gospel from any human being but by revelation from Jesus Christ 1: I was opposed to the church before my conversion vv. His authority is derived from the gospel that had been revealed to him by God. Therefore when the Galatians turn away from the gospel preached by Paul, they are turning away from God. Paul is especially concerned to prove that he was not dependent on the original apostles in Jerusalem. He denies that he visited them immediately after his conversion v. Perhaps Paul is responding here to an accusation that his failure to require circumcision was a departure from the true gospel that he had been commissioned to preach by the original apostles in Jerusalem. But we can be sure that whether Paul is on the defensive or on the offensive, he is determined to prove that his gospel was given by divine revelation, not human tradition, and that his

commission to preach this gospel to the Gentiles was part of that divine revelation. He did not receive his commission from the original apostles. Instead of visiting the original apostles in Jerusalem after his conversion, Paul went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus v. It seems clear from the context that Paul is setting up a contrast between going to Jerusalem to receive teaching from the apostles and going to Arabia. Does this contrast imply that during his time in Arabia he received teaching from the Lord? Many commentators have thought so, and it seems a reasonable inference to draw from the context. But we must admit that Paul does not disclose what happened during the time in Arabia. Those were hidden years, at least hidden from any public, historical record. In our day, when celebrities are converted, the religious media rush to publicize their conversions for the widest possible audience. Put them on TV; feature them in prime-time talk shows. But this immediate publicity can be dangerous to the spiritual health of new converts. Under the harsh, glaring lights of the media they have no space to think through the implications of their new faith, to work through their inconsistencies and to listen to the Lord. They sometimes feel used and abused. They need time, as we all do, to be hidden from the public eye in order to grow and deepen in their faith.

**Chapter 7 : A Chronological Study of Paul's Ministry | Xenos Christian Fellowship**

*Paul did not stay in Damascus long after his conversion - cf. Ga 2. He went to Arabia, the desert area east and south of Damascus a. He went to Arabia, the desert area east and south of Damascus a.*

What proof shows that Jesus Christ really arose from the dead? Is the resurrection a fact confirmed by historic testimony of witnesses? One of the primary proofs of the gospel is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The gospel repeatedly claims that Jesus did rise from the dead and that this proves His claims to be valid. It then claims to give historical evidence for the resurrection based on the testimony of witnesses. See also Matthew On the basis of this principle, the gospel offers eyewitness testimony from numerous sources that He really died and He really was alive again later. No other major religion in the world claims that its founder arose from the dead, let alone does it offer historical evidence to validate the claim. If the evidence for the resurrection is valid, the result must establish the gospel of Christ as the one true religion. There are numerous appearances we could consider, but several aspects make this appearance especially useful and important. Of special significance is the fact that Saul was an enemy and persecutor of the gospel. Sometimes people wonder why Jesus appearances after His resurrection occurred in the presence of His friends - people who had known and followed Him during His lifetime. The answer is that they were the people who would be sure to recognize Him and would be willing to testify for Him regardless of the sacrifices involved. But people may ask: Why did Jesus never appear to anyone who had not been a disciple? The answer is that He did! If such a person saw Jesus, surely his testimony would be especially significant. Saul had no motive whatever to claim to see Jesus alive and every reason to deny the resurrection. But we have significant testimony to consider that demonstrates that He really did see Jesus alive. After his conversion, Saul became the apostle Paul who wrote many New Testament books. In harmony with the principle of the testimony of witnesses, consider the following evidence that Saul really did see Jesus on the Damascus road. The Testimony of Paul Himself Saul was an enemy of the gospel and a persecutor of the church. Based on his background, he had no possible motives to accept the gospel and every possible motive to continue to reject it. His testimony has every evidence of truth and sincerity, for he had no reason to be untruthful. See 1 Timothy 1: He was to preach to people how they could receive forgiveness of sins - This occurred to qualify Paul as an eyewitness, which was an essential requirement in order for one to be an apostle Acts 1: This means that Saul was a "witness" in the same sense as the other apostles: In each case, he says that Jesus was "seen" by these people: Peter, the apostles, etc. At the end of the list he claims that Jesus was "seen" last of all by Paul himself. So Paul physically saw Jesus alive after His resurrection as surely as did these other witnesses. Note vv 14,15 - If Christ has not been raised, then Paul and the other apostles would be false witnesses, because they testified that he did arise. Again, Paul places himself alongside other eyewitnesses of the resurrection and specifically denied that they were false witnesses. He repeatedly claimed, in nearly every letter he wrote, that he had been chosen by the Lord to be an apostle. He further claimed that he was not in any way inferior to the other apostles. Since apostles had to be eyewitnesses of Christ after His resurrection, every time Paul claimed to be an apostle, he was necessarily claiming to be an eyewitness of the resurrection. There can be no doubt that Paul claimed to be an eyewitness that Christ was alive again after He died. Luke wrote his books Luke and Acts from the perspective of an historian so people could know the historical facts that would convince them regarding the events of the Life of Christ and the work of the apostles Luke 1: His reputation as an accurate historian is well established. Two of these are speeches in which Paul told others about his conversion, which we have already considered. Luke does not here directly state that Saul saw Jesus though he does record this in other accounts. But he does state that a light from heaven shown around Saul, that Jesus spoke to Saul and Saul spoke to Jesus, that Saul was struck blind, and that Ananias was sent to restore his sight and to baptize and further teach him. The Testimony of Accompanying Miracles: Each of these events must be accounted for in some way. Consider the following miracles: The Light Acts Note the following facts: How could any light

at noon along a public road be brighter than the sun? How could any such light be faked in such a way as to fool Saul and his traveling companions, especially with the kind of lights available in the first century such as candles, etc. The only explanation for such a light must be a miracle that occurred by Divine, supernatural power. The Voice Acts 9: Note what is specifically stated: And they surely heard Saul speak to the voice. This removes the idea of any contradiction. The former indicates a hearing of the sound, the latter indicates the meaning or message of the voice this they did not hear. Remember that the voice not only spoke to Saul but heard when he spoke and responded to his questions. How could that be faked, especially in the first century? The only explanation for such a voice is that it was a miracle that occurred by Divine supernatural power. The Blindness and the Healing Acts This is mentioned in two of the accounts. Note specifically what happened: Note that this was actually two miracles. First, Saul was miraculously struck blind, then he was miraculously and immediately healed at the very time Ananias said he would be. How could such events be faked? What explanation could such events have except that they were miracles accomplished by Divine supernatural power? What possible purpose could the blindness and healing have? The only sensible explanation is that they served to confirm to Saul and to others that he had really seen the vision and that Ananias was the one who would tell Saul what he needed to do to be saved. If anyone doubted that Saul saw Jesus as he claimed, there was the blindness as a continuing proof. Finally, note the inherent connection between these three miracles: Saul was struck blind by the light when he heard the voice. Any one of these events would be miraculous of itself, but how could all three happen together by any human power? The only sensible explanation for these events is that they occurred by the power of God to confirm the evidence that Saul really did see Jesus. As an historian, Luke records the evidence given by these other people. If Saul had lied about the event, others could have been consulted regarding what happened. These men did not actually see Jesus 9: But note what these men did witness: They saw the light What was there to fear unless they witnessed something overwhelmingly unusual? So they all fell to the ground. Why would the other men fall to the ground unless they had witnessed something fearful? They heard the communication between Saul and Jesus Acts 9: They also doubtless could hear what Saul said in response to the voice. The vision was primarily for the benefit of Saul, since he was the only one to become an apostle and eyewitness. But since those who were with him saw the light, heard the voice, and witnessed his blindness, this confirmed that the event occurred and specifically confirmed all the accompanying miracles. Ananias When Jesus appeared to him, Saul had asked what the Lord wanted him to do. Jesus said to go into the city and he would be told what was appointed for him to do In the city he saw a vision of a man named Ananias coming to restore his sight 9: Besides Saul and Luke, Ananias was one of the most important witnesses to these events. Paul said he was a devout man having a good testimony of the Jews He was not a man of poor or even doubtful character. He was known and respected. What reason would such a man have to give a false report? The Lord appeared to Ananias and told him to go to Saul, who was waiting for a man named Ananias to come to him to restore his sight 9: Ananias objected because he knew how Saul had persecuted and harmed many Christians and had come to Damascus to do the same 9: The Lord told Ananias to go anyway, because Jesus had chosen Saul to carry His name to many and to suffer for His cause 9: Only a direct revelation from God that Saul had been converted would have motivated him to go visit such a dangerous person. The very fact Ananias went confirms that he really did receive a revelation that Saul had been converted. He confirmed that Jesus had appeared to Saul on the road and had sent Ananias so Saul could receive his sight again and be filled with the Holy Spirit 9:

*It is important to note that the end of Saul's fast - which came after his conscience had been settled upon being forgiven of his sins - came after baptism. Many people believe that conversion to Christ happens by praying a "sinner's prayer."*

A good introduction will accomplish several important tasks. It will arouse the interest and attention of the audience. Also it can build a relationship between the speaker and his audience. This is especially important if the speaker is not well-known by his audience. If, in that five minutes, the speaker had not begun to expound the Scripture text, I knew he would never get there. And so I would mentally turn the speaker off and read from my Bible for the rest of the sermon. As my five minutes are passing quickly, let us turn our attention to our text in Romans 1: The church in Rome was not founded by Paul. The Roman saints had not been brought to faith through the preaching of Paul. He did not seem to be well-known in Rome. If our ministries were motivated by those things which inspired Paul in his ministry, our ministries would take a different form and would have a much greater impact on others. You and I should not need to be convinced that this epistle is worthy of our diligent study or that its message is desperately needed today. We will find, however, that we are drawn to Paul as a person as we read his words of introduction. Here is a man with a heart toward God, toward the saints, toward Israel, and toward the lost. Even though this man lived centuries ago, we shall find ourselves drawn to him as a person and his proclamation of the gospel. Let us listen well to these inspired and heart-warming words.

**Structure of the Text** Our text is composed of three segments. The first segment 1: The second segment 1: They are unusual, and they catch our attention. It is the longest greeting of any of his epistles. Here is a sampling of his more typical greetings: Grace to you and peace 1 Thessalonians 1: Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, who is our hope; to Timothy, my true child in the faith: Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, to the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours: Why such a long greeting here? Let me suggest an explanation. What is unique in this greeting in Romans 1: Why would Paul give a synopsis of the gospel here, in the introduction? The reason seems to be clear when you consider the uniqueness of this situation. Paul had never been in Rome. He had never previously taught these saints, as he had those in all the other churches to which he wrote epistles. And until now he had never written to them. In his other epistles, Paul was writing to those who knew him, those whom he had led to Christ and whom he had taught. Here, Paul was writing to those whom he had never met, who did not know him and did not know his doctrine. Because the purity of the gospel is vitally important, Paul immediately sought to demonstrate that his gospel was the same as that which the saints in Rome had believed, resulting in their salvation. In very few words, Paul highlights several of the fundamental elements of his gospel: Paul was a trinitarian. In verses , Paul refers to all three members of the Godhead: It was the same gospel which the other apostles preached and which the Roman saints had believed. Since Paul professed and preached the same gospel, the Roman saints could welcome him as a fellow-believer, and they could welcome his ministry in person or by letter. Christians today, I fear, are too quick to accept those whom they do not really know to be fellow-saints. Paul urged the saints to be on guard for such false apostles, and he gladly articulated the gospel which he preached. We should be as careful as Paul. We should know what gospel men preach, before we heed their teaching. When we began to meet as a church, one of my fellow-elders and I met with a man who had just come to our city. He had the reputation of being a Christian and following Christian principles. Nevertheless, my fellow-elder asked this man to share his testimony with us. He was right to do so. We should be very careful to check out the doctrine of those who would have us welcome them as fellow-believers. The church would be spared much grief and error if it were more careful in this regard. The first and most fundamental bond which Paul had with the Roman saints was the bond of a common faith. There was yet another link between Paul and the Roman saints which he wanted to set out at

the beginning of his epistle. His ministry was the result of a divine call and of divine enablement. He was called and set apart as an apostle, to proclaim the gospel of God verse 1. Many of the saints at Rome were Gentiles 1: Paul saw his specific calling and ministry as obligating him to minister to the church at Rome. His calling as an apostle to the Gentiles and their condition as Gentiles was a link Paul could not and would not overlook. He was obliged to minister to them in some way. Before we move on to the next segment to see how Paul did minister to the saints at Rome, let me point out three observations from verses Paul manifests a boldness and authority which comes not from himself, but which is the result of his calling as an apostle. Paul is greatly humbled by his calling and authority. Paul ties together the gospel which he proclaims and the promises of God made through the Old Testament prophets. He joins together both the Jews and the Gentiles. Paul will not allow a misguided polarization taking of sides between the Jews and the Gentiles. He stresses that the gospel unites all believers. He emphasizes the continuity between the Old Testament and the New. Finally, Paul emphasizes what he possesses in common with the saints at Rome, while at the same time recognizing his unique calling and ministry. But Paul also has a specific calling. Paul will call upon all the saints to live up to their common calling. And he will in Romans But Paul will not urge the saints at Rome to do all that he does as a part of his unique calling. Paul hopes to go by way of Rome to Spain, but he will not urge the Roman saints to accompany him, only to accommodate him while he is in Rome, and to pray for him as he takes the gospel to unreached places and peoples see Romans How often I hear saints urging other saints to imitate their ministry and calling. We dare not ignore our individual calling, nor dare we impose it on others who have their own gifts and calling from God 1 Corinthians 7: What Paul will say here, in verses , will warm the hearts of the Romans, so that they will be eager to hear what Paul has to say to them. Paul had been a believer and an apostle for a number of years. He had never before visited or written the saints at Rome. Why should the Roman saints give him a hearing now? Granted, he was orthodox, and he had apostolic authority. But what did Paul know about them? And what evidence was there that he cared about them? Much indeed, as Paul is about to inform them. Paul knows a great deal about this body of believers, even though he has not yet been to Rome. Paul has kept track of this church, of its witness, and of its progress. He was thankful to God because their faith was being proclaimed throughout the whole world verse 8. These saints not only had come to faith in Jesus Christ, their faith was being practiced and proclaimed. The gospel which had come to this church was now going forth from it. This very positive statement from Paul must have been an encouragement to the Roman saints. It would have been an encouragement to hear that their faith was evident and was being shed abroad. It would also be an encouragement to hear from Paul that his letter not to mention his appearance, in days to come was not occasioned by problems in the church, but with a view to their progress. When Paul was able to come to them, he expected also to be encouraged by their faith 1: He had, for some time, 56 been eager to visit Rome and to spend some time with them. While he persisted in trying to get to Rome, he was consistently prevented from doing so 1: He looked forward to his visit as an occasion for mutual ministry, one to another. For a long time Paul had been praying for this church. Included in his prayers was his petition to visit Rome. If he could have visited Rome before this, he would have. The first was to pray for these saints, as he prayed for all the churches see, for example, Ephesians 1:

**Chapter 9 : Paul's "Mystery" " calendrierdelascience.com**

*The conversion of Paul the Apostle, was, according to the New Testament, an event in the life of Paul the Apostle that led him to cease persecuting early Christians and to become a follower of Jesus. It is normally dated to AD*

By Wayne Jackson In his popular volume, Paul: Paul is a pivotal character of history. From a relative first-century obscurity, to a modern international figure, no one, aside from Jesus Christ himself, has been so influential. The Persecutor Exactly when Paul began his bloody mission of savagery against the church of Christ is unknown with any degree of precision. Pursuing the saints even unto foreign cities The horrible memories of these vicious attacks would linger with the sensitive apostle for the balance of his earthly days cf. That frenzied ambition to exterminate Christianity from the face of the earth was to radically change, however. And the record of how that occurred is as amazing as it is inspiring. As he drew near that city, a light brighter than the noonday sun suddenly engulfed him. The voice was identified as Jesus of Nazareth! For three agonizing days he fasted and prayed. Finally, Ananias, a messenger selected by God, arrived. It requires some reasonable explanation. Lord George Lyttelton was an Oxford educated scholar who also served with great distinction in the British Parliament. Initially he was highly skeptical of Christianity. There was no reasonable explanation for the radical turnaround, other than the fact that Paul actually had seen the resurrected Christ on the Damascus road. The Christian movement was founded, he therefore concluded, upon the truth that Jesus of Nazareth in fact was raised bodily from the dead. In Lyttelton published his book, Observations of the Conversion of St. Paul, in which he argued for the truth of the Christian system. This book, incidentally, is still in print after years" a rare phenomenon in publishing. The apostle was not an imposter who deliberately advocated that which he knew to be false; indeed, why would he suffer so much persecution for what he knew to be a lie? He was not deceived by the fraud of others for he claimed his revelation to be independent of the other apostles. Even his critics acknowledged his rugged independence. Thus, for honest people, the apostle Paul stands as an imperishable monument to the inherent power of the good news regarding Christ. Some have criticized the book of Acts for containing three accounts of the conversion of Paul. It has been alleged that this makes the New Testament record unnecessarily redundant. Further, it is charged, the varying narratives conflict with one another in the details presented. The allegations are both superficial and false. First, there is the initial historical narrative as recorded by Luke in Acts 9. It hardly needs to be mentioned that long ago Luke passed the test of being a superb historian. The narrative is designed to show that there is a connection between his Jewish background and his present religious posture. He wanted his Israelite brethren to realize that there was no conflict between Judaism and Christianity, as divinely designed. Rather, the former was intended to be preparatory to the latter cf. Agrippa was very familiar with Jewish affairs, hence was an ideal source of information for Festus. First of all, we must insist that the accounts must be viewed as harmonious documents. To do otherwise would be a great disservice to the biblical concept of inspiration. The Bible, being the word of God, must harmonize. The Lord is not the author of confusion 1 Corinthians Additionally, this fundamental principle of interpretation must be borne in mind: With these thoughts in view, three common errors must be addressed. There is not a scintilla of evidence for that theory. Saul saw Christ on the road and was convinced that he was the risen Jesus. The persecutor asked what he should do There is nothing in any of the three records that would indicate that he received pardon on the Damascus road. In fact, we find him still in his sins at the time Ananias arrived For three days he neither ate nor drank, and he prayed vigorously 9: The preacher sent by Jesus commanded: Some, appealing to 9: There are a couple of serious problems with that view. First, it assumes what the text does not say. McGarvey , ; Coffman , As a non-apostle, the Damascus disciple did not have such power; that acquisition was to be provided directly by the Lord Himself Matthew 3: The New Testament does not cite the precise time when Saul was filled with the power of the Spirit. These things aside, this theory likewise contradicts An Analysis of Acts Paul recounts that at the conclusion of his instruction, Ananias commanded him: Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins,

calling on his name. It is a noteworthy observation that if baptism could be administered by the sprinkling of water, there would have been no need for Saul to arise prior to submitting to the rite. Of course the verb baptizo to immerse excludes sprinkling regardless. It is a middle voice form, literally therefore: This language is consistent with the concept that baptism is a personal decision. The instruction here given is not in accord with a practice such as infant baptism, wherein the subject is wholly passive, having nothing at all to say regarding the time or manner of his baptism. Consider this bit of confusion. It answers [corresponds] to eis aphasis hamartion [for forgiveness of sins] in 2: Stein of Bethel Theological Seminary, in addressing the question: For the sinner is unclean, polluted as it were by the filth of his sins. Remission is [represented as] obtained by undergoing baptism; hence those who have gone down into the baptismal bath [ The water of baptism contains no magical essence. Immersion is, however, the divinely appointed means of accessing the blood of Christ Romans 6: Conclusion The New Testament record of the conversion of the apostle Paul is a tremendously important element of Christian history.