

Apostle Paul's Conversion and Appointment

Gal. 1:11-24; Acts 9:1-22

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I. Historical Background & Biblical Context

A. Historical Background

Apostle Paul was notably one of the most prominent leaders in the New Testament. From Acts to Hebrews, we see how God worked through Apostle Paul to expand the gospel of Jesus Christ - that *Jesus is the Son of God* and *is the only pathway to salvation* for all who believe in Him.

Apostle Paul's conversion and appointment came at a crucial time in biblical history. After the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, the disciples went forth as instructed and became witnesses – teaching, preaching, and spreading the good news. Many people accepted and believed, many received their salvation, many were baptized in the name of Jesus, and many were filled with the Holy Spirit. The church had then been formed as a body of believers who worshipped and fellowshiped in Christ; and the number of people who received their salvation grew daily. Still even after all that happened, many Jews opposed the gospel and operated in their same traditions and ways. In their unbelief, they attempted all they could to prevent the expansion of the church - imprisoned the disciples, told them not to preach about Jesus, persecuted the church, and caused discord and uprisings among the people (Acts Chapters 1-8).

Saul was initially working on the same side as these Jews, but he received a wake-up call from Jesus that changed his life and walk with God forever. It was a radical transformation that caused him to receive a new sight, walk in a new purpose, and allow God to use him in a new way.

B. Biblical Context

Throughout history, God called and appointed individuals to serve Him and do His Will for the advancement of His Kingdom and Plan of Salvation. Apostle Paul

was no exception but was exceptional. It was God who called Apostle Paul out of his old ways. It was God who appointed Him for service. It was God who revealed to him the knowledge, understanding, and wisdom he needed for his appointment (Gal 1:11-12). His story is a testament that God can get the attention of anyone by any means from any background and use them in a powerful way for ministry. God can even use the situations that we think should disqualify us as the very reason that he chooses us for His service.

II. The Lesson: Apostle Paul's Conversion and Appointment (Gal. 1:11-24; Acts 9:1-22)

This lesson dives into the conversion and appointment of Apostle Paul.

Conversion is defined as “the process of changing from one belief to another.” True conversion is a process that involves 1) **a realization between wrong and right**, 2) **a transformation of the heart and mind**, 3) **a turning of a person's faith, trust, belief, and values** and 4) **a change from unpleasant ways to those approved**.

Appointment is defined as the “assignment of a job or position to someone.” The Divine Appointment **comes from God** and it **sets the tasks, responsibilities, and accountabilities for those who are called to fulfill it**.

To fully understand both as they came to Apostle Paul, we must first understand his past as Saul, how he changed, the effects of the conversion, and how it led him into his divine appointment.

1. Apostle Paul's past as Saul (Galatians 1:13-14; Acts 9:1, 13-14)

Before the conversion, Saul was a Pharisee who believed in Judaism (Gal. 1:13). This belief rejected Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God and attributed salvation to the careful observance of the law. Saul had an advanced knowledge

of the law for his age and was fervent about keeping its customs and traditions (Gal. 1:14).

As the gospel of Jesus spread and because it was contrary to what he believed (Gal 1:14), he worked against it. He sought out and imprisoned anyone in Jerusalem who believed (Acts 8:1). He threatened death upon the disciples (Acts 9:1). He was granted arrest letters from the high priest to imprison believers in Damascus. He persecuted and attempted to destroy the church, while imprisoning anyone who believed contrary to the law. (Acts 9:13-14)

2. The Conversion (Acts 9:3-19, 21-22, Galatians 1:23-24)

Acts holds a detailed account of Saul's miraculous conversion. As Saul neared Damascus, a sudden flash of light came from Heaven that made Saul fall to the ground. The light was followed by the voice of Jesus. Up to this point, Saul believed he was effectively serving God and operating on the law by persecuting and imprisoning the believers. However, the words Jesus spoke convicted him and he realized his actions displeased and dishonored God. The people Saul persecuted belonged to God the same God he thought he was serving. The disciples were ambassadors for Jesus, therefore, to persecute them meant to persecute God Himself. The divine intervention left Saul physically blind and unable to eat/drink for three days. He needed help from others to lead him to the city where he obeyed God and waited for further instructions.

Saul's sight was restored, signifying the change from spiritual darkness to spiritual light. He immediately went to get baptized, accepted Jesus as his personal Savior and made a public declaration of his faith (Acts 9:18). Saul was converted from Judaism to Christianity. His heart and mind were impacted in a remarkable way and his actions followed. He quit his mission against the church and started his mission for the church. Paul stayed with the disciples in Damascus for many days and went into the synagogues.

Everyone who knew or had heard of his past now saw him in a new way and after a new purpose. His 180° conversion astonished and amazed the church but left the Jews angry and annoyed.

3. The Appointment (Galatians 1:20-24; Acts 9:15, 20-22)

God appointed Paul to be a representative for Him to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ to both the Gentiles and Jews (Acts 9:15-16). Paul would endure great trials at the cost of it. Paul received His Call and devoted his life to pursuing God's Will. Paul became an apostle divinely commissioned to spread the Gospel of the Jesus Christ to the Gentiles (Gal. 1:16). He traveled to different areas: Arabia, Damascus, Jerusalem, Syria, and Cilicia. Then he went on missionaries to teach and proclaim Jesus to the Gentiles, non-Jewish people. Many were saved by the gospel of Jesus Christ shared through Apostle Paul.

III. Conclusion

Apostle Paul's conversion was nothing short of miraculous, supernatural, and monumental. The result: a changed attitude, a changed message, a changed mission, and a changed walk in God.