



World Christian Fellowship

www.wcflondon.com
wcflondon@gmail.com

Romans 05 The Messenger- Conversion

Romans 1:1, *Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God*

Paul was born in Tarsus.

Paul was a Jew.

Paul held Roman Citizenship.

Paul studied under Gamaliel.

After his studies at Jerusalem, he went back to Tarsus.

While he was in hometown Jesus was crucified and resurrection took place.

Paul began to hear about the fact that Christians were filling the city of Jerusalem with teaching about this Jesus being the Messiah.

Paul felt it was a heresy and it made him very angry.
He was angry at this affront to traditional Judaism.

Paul returns to the city of Jerusalem early in the book of Acts. A persecution breaks out and he is right in the middle of it.

Paul conversion takes place in **Acts chapter 9**.

He shares his testimony twice in the book of Acts.

Acts 22 in his trial in the presence of Jews.

Acts 26 before King Agrippa.

Paul gave his testimony before Agrippa in chapter 26. He said to Agrippa,

Acts 26:1-11, *Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself." So Paul stretched out his hand and answered for himself:² "I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because today I shall answer for myself before you concerning all the things of which I am accused by the Jews,³ especially because you are expert in all customs and questions which have to do with the Jews. Therefore I beg you to hear me patiently.⁴ "My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know.⁵ They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.⁶ And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers.⁷ To this promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. For this hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews.⁸ Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?*

⁹ “Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰ This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. ¹¹ And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.

We find exactly that is what Paul did.

Acts 7:58, and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

Saul was consenting the death Stephen.

Saul was involved in the execution of Christians.

Acts 8:1-3, Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. ² And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. ³ As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.

He literally cleaned them out of Jerusalem.

He had an organized approach. The word "he made havoc" or "laid waste" is a Greek word describing a wild boar rampaging through a garden. It also is used to speak of an army devastating a city. The man was just as fanatical then as he became later, on behalf of Christ.

Acts 26:11, *"I even persecuted them to foreign cities."*

He got word that there was a big group of them in a city called Damascus.

Acts 9:1-2, *Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest² and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.*

An affidavit that would give him permission, to arrest these Christians in another city, letters to the Damascus synagogue so that they would give him permission to come in and bind these men and women and drag them back to Jerusalem.

So, he is not content with just cleaning Jerusalem, this has become a literal vendetta with the man. He is consumed with capturing and executing Christians. Like a war horse with the smell of battle in his nostrils, he is breathing out fury and

looking for new fields to conquer. His sin is like that of Haman the Agagite, who wanted all Jews to be exterminated.

So, he headed for Damascus. That is an incredible city. Maybe the oldest city in the world, it predates Abraham. There was there a population of about 150 thousand people, as best we can tell. It was 160 miles northeast of Jerusalem.

A caravan took six days to get there. So, he put together his entourage and for six days he went northeast. It was a more mountainous area. A large Jewish synagogue there.

“the way.”

That became a title for Christians.

They were a part of The Way.

Acts 9:3-6, *As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. ⁴ Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” ⁵ And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” Then the Lord said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.”*

⁶ *So he, trembling and astonished, said, “Lord, what do You want me to do?”*

Then the Lord said to him, “Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”

The Jesus who went about doing good, who went about healing, who took out the demons and delivered people from death. Jesus, who was crucified, rejected by Israel. Jesus, whom Stephen had called upon in his own death. Jesus, whom he hated. Jesus, whose followers he had mercilessly killed. Jesus was alive.

All the bloodshed drowned Saul in a sea of sorrow.

- He was shattered.
- He was penitent.
- He was broken.
- He was devastated.
- He was destroyed.

His sin was enormous. His total life was wrapped up in the annihilation of the church. Had his plan succeeded the church would have been smothered in its very birth. It would have been drowned in its own blood.

He never forgot the enormity of his sin. He never forgot it. When he looked back on all those Christians whose lives, he had taken that there was just a shuddering in his heart.

1 Timothy 1:12-15, *And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry,¹³ although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.¹⁴ And the grace of*

our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.¹⁵ This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

He never forgot that. He meant that.

But on that road, he was marvelously transformed. He was blind. He was speechless. He was utterly devastated.

Acts 9:9, *And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.*

He committed his life to Christ.

The only way you could get to this guy was God had to do it alone. Even when he became converted and tried to have an audience with the apostles. The apostles were too afraid to let him in. Nobody could get to him. He was a brand plucked from the burning. God had to do it. He was marvelously transformed.

Acts 9:20, *Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.*

He did everything that way. He was utterly and totally committed to whatever it was. As soon as he was transformed,

he was wholeheartedly committed to preaching Christ in the synagogue and he was preaching that He is the Son of God.

So, he began the work of evangelizing Damascus.

Acts 9:21-22, *Then all who heard were amazed, and said, "Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?"* ²² *But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ.*

Where did he get all that information so fast?

Divine inspiration!

Acts 9:23, *Now after many days were past, the Jews plotted to kill him.*

What Paul did?

He got out of town.

He spent three years in Arabia.

Galatians 1:12-13, *But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. ¹²For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ*

Galatians 1:17, *nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.*

Probably that he spent nearly three years there. Those were the years, when he got his seminary training directly from the Lord.

Direct revelation from God!

What qualified him to be an apostle?

First, he had seen the resurrected Lord.

Second, he was given the Word of God personally from the Lord Himself.

After those years what he did?

He decided to go back to Damascus and preach some more.

What happened?

They tried to get him again.

2 Corinthians 11:32-33, *In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me;³³ but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.*

Finally, Paul went to Jerusalem.

When he got to Jerusalem, he tried to join the other apostles. But they were all afraid of him and they did not believe he was a disciple.

Acts 9:26-28, *And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple. ²⁷ But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. And he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. ²⁸ So he was with them at Jerusalem, coming in and going out.*

Barnabas became his escort. They took him.

But he would not keep quiet or stay out of trouble.

Acts 9:29, *And he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the Hellenists, but they attempted to kill him.*

They had about all they could handle, and he created so many problems. So, they sent him back to Tarsus.

Acts 9:30, *When the brethren found out, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him out to Tarsus.*

From **Galatians 1:18**, we can conclude that he only spent 15 days with Peter.

According to **Acts 15:41**, most likely in Tarsus he founded a church, and probably founded several churches. He really was always founding churches and evangelizing and being busy.

Acts 15:41, *And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.*

This is the only time he was there in Cilicia when he went back there after being in Jerusalem. So, the churches must have founded by him while he was there.

After his marvelous ministry of founding churches in Cilicia, Tarsus, Barnabas decided that it would be well to bring him to Antioch. Seven years after the Jerusalem church had really been formed, they sent to establish a church in Antioch, which was far north of there, in Syria.

Barnabas felt that Paul would make an excellent pastor for the Antioch church. He went to Antioch.

Paul and Barnabas became coworkers.

Acts 11:30, *This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.*

So, they ministered together from Antioch. Now after the relief they returned to Antioch and Paul maintained his ministry there.

Acts 13:1-3, *Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. ²As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."³ Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.*

Began the ministry to which the man was called, to be the apostle to the Gentiles.

From **Acts chapter 13 to 21**, Paul takes three great missionary journeys. Finally, in the third journey, he goes all the way to Ephesus, stays there for several years.

He leaves Ephesus and he goes to Macedonia and finally to Corinth, for the third time.

There in Corinth he writes the epistle to the Romans.

What made Paul great?

1. Scripturally saturated
2. Commitment to God
3. Loving heart

1. Scripturally saturated.

Paul had a mind filled with the word of God.

Paul a great intellect was deeply knowledgeable in the Old Testament.

He knew the Word of God.

In the book of Romans, he quotes 57 times directly the Old Testament.

Paul talks with great advantage about Abraham.

He talks with great capacity about Adam.

He understands law and grace.

He understands flesh and spirit.

Paul quotes,

- ✓ Moses,
- ✓ Genesis,
- ✓ Exodus,
- ✓ Leviticus,
- ✓ Deuteronomy,
- ✓ David,
- ✓ Psalms,
- ✓ Isaiah,
- ✓ Jeremiah,
- ✓ Hosea, and
- ✓ Malachi.

Paul alludes to Daniel.
He quotes from Joel chapter 2,
Nahum chapter 1.

He refers to 1 Samuel, 1 Kings, and builds on Ezekiel 37.

His thoughts just constantly intersect with the Old Testament, most dominantly with Isaiah, which indicates to me that he probably had mastered Isaiah's prophecies.

What made him great was a biblical mind. His mind was saturated with the Word of God. It just comes out all the time as you go through Romans.

I wish we had time to just develop it but it is just everywhere, this biblical mind.

Romans 9:33, *As it is written: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."*

He just freely speaks from Isaiah.

Paul says *"it is written"*

Romans 10:11,

Romans 10:15,

Romans 10:17,

Romans 10:20,

Romans 10:21,
Romans 11:2,
Romans 11:8,
Romans 11:26,
Romans 12:19,
Romans 14:11,
Romans 15:3,
Romans 15:4,

Everything was based on the Scripture, had a biblical mind.

2. Commitment to God

Paul had a resolute will. He had a determined will.

You could throw him in prison, and it did not even phase him. He just started an evangelistic meeting in the prison.

You could stone him, as they did in the book of Acts, and throw him on the dump and God would raise him from the dead and he would go right back in town and finish his sermon.

He would be preaching in the middle of the night, a guy fell out of the window and died, fell all the way down to the bottom, broke his neck and died. Just went down and raised him from the dead, brought him back up and made him listen to the rest of the sermon.

A determined will!

Paul was committed to the task. He went everywhere from Jerusalem to the eastern shore of the Adriatic, opposite Italy, and he preached over and back, time and again.

He was always a foundation builder. 15 years of labour, planting seeds, and working so faithful.

Acts 20:23, *except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me.*

What do I care about that?

I just want to finish my course with joy and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify of the gospel of the grace of God.

1 Corinthians 9:16, *For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!*

They tried to do everything to stop him.

2 Corinthians 11:23-28, *Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I am more: in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. ²⁴From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. ²⁵Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in*

the deep;²⁶ in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;²⁷ in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—²⁸ besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.

Paul experienced all that before he wrote Romans. He never deviated from his conviction.

2 Timothy 4:2, *Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.*

2 Timothy 4:6, *For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand.*

Timothy you got to do it because the time of my departure is at hand. I am ready to be offered. I need somebody to take the mantle.

What resolute determination?

In the midst of all he was gentle, he was humble, he was meek, incredible.

3. Loving heart

We cannot say anything about Paul unless you say that.
How he loved. He had a great sense of God's love.

Romans 5:5, *Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*

Romans 8:35, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

He had a great sense of God's love.
He also had a great love for God.

Romans 15:30, *Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me,*

Paul says it to the Corinthians, "The love of Christ constrains me."

He understood God's love and he loved God in return.
He also had a great love for Israel.

Romans 9:2-3, *that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. ³For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh,*

What love!

He had a great love for the church.

Romans 16th Chapter he lists all those dear people that helped him in the ministry and that chapter just oozes with his love for the saints.

Paul had a great desire to see others love, too.

Romans 13th Chapter he says that the one commandment God wants you to keep is to love one another.

He is filled with love.

Conclusion:

Now you show me a man with a biblical mind and a determined will to obey God's plan at all cost and a man filled with love and I will show you a man that will turn the world upside down.

Over everything else the thing, Paul lived for was to glorify God. Isn't that the greatest thing of all?

He lived to glorify God.

Romans 11:36, *For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.*

Romans 15:6, *that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*

Romans 15:9, *and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written:*

Romans 16:27, *to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.*

He lived for glorifying God!

1 Corinthians 11:1, *Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.*

1 Corinthians 4:16, *Therefore I urge you, imitate me.*

Philippians 3:17, *Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.*

2 Thessalonians 3:7, *For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you;*

What does Paul say?

Be like me.

What is Paul like?

- ✓ Mind saturated with word of God.
- ✓ A determined will, and
- ✓ A loving heart

Whose highest goal was to glorify God.