

THE CONTRADICTIONS OF PAUL

Part 1

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART 1

	Page
Introduction.....	3
Paul and Obvious Discrepancies on His Damascus Road Experience.....	4
Was Paul Chosen, By Christ, To Be An Apostle?.....	15
Did Paul Proclaim The Same Gospel Message As Christ Jesus?.....	25
Paul and The Cross.....	31
Paul and Circumcision.....	35
Paul's Teachings on Things Sacrificed to Idols.....	38
Conclusion.....	40

INTRODUCTION

For a number of years I've raised an occasional eyebrow to some of Paul's teachings; but I never took the time to dig very deep. After all, it was the "Apostle" Paul. The man noted for writing the lion's share of the New Testament. The man quoted more often than Jesus, from the gospel accounts. But the more I read, the more I started to question. Then beginning in August of 2010, after I had prayed for truth and revelation, my eyes were opened.

The following is my attempt to gather all I have been shown into one location. Most of the information presented is taken from my journals and personal studies. I've included very little commentary. I prefer to allow the scriptures to speak for themselves.

I feel that I've been shown these things primarily to bring me back to Christ Jesus, the Word of God, who spoke the Words of God. It is on the Words of Christ Jesus that we will stand or fall, not on Paul's words or any one else's.

All scripture references are taken from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted.

PAUL AND OBVIOUS DISCREPANCIES IN HIS DAMASCUS ROAD EXPERIENCE

The 1st Account of Paul's road to Damascus experience, as recorded in the Book of Acts.

Acts 9:1-31

¹ Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ² 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.

³ 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."

⁷ And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one. ⁸ Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹ And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

¹⁰ Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, "Ananias."

And he said, "Here I am, Lord."

¹¹ So the Lord said to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. ¹² And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight."

¹³ Then Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name."

¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. ¹⁶ For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake."

¹⁷ And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." ¹⁸ Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.

¹⁹ So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus.

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

²¹ 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.

²³ Now after many days were past, the Jews plotted to kill him. ²⁴ But their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates day and night, to kill him. ²⁵ Then the disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall in a large basket.

²⁶ 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. ²⁹ And he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the Hellenists, but they attempted to kill him. ³⁰ When the brethren found out, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him out to Tarsus.

³¹ Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.

Note – Refer to verse 29 – 31 As soon as Paul leaves there is peace.

Note – this whole passage had to take place in a matter of days or maybe a month or two, because in verse 26 the Jerusalem disciples were still afraid of Paul. It was still fresh in their minds what his original intentions were.

The 1st of Paul's accounts of his road to Damascus experience

Galatians 1:11-23

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

¹³ For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. ¹⁴ And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

¹⁵ But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, ¹⁶ to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, 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.

¹⁸ Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days.

¹⁹ But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. ²⁰ (Now concerning the things which I write to you, indeed, before God, I do not lie.)

²¹ Afterward I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. ²² And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which were in Christ. ²³ But they were hearing only, "He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once tried to destroy." ²⁴ And they glorified God in me.

Confer (4323) προσανατιθημι, — *pros-an-at-ith'-ay-mee*; from (4314) (προς - pros) and (394) ανατιθεμαι - anatithemai); to *lay up in addition*, i.e. (middle and figurative) to *impart* or (by implication) to *consult*: — (Translated in King James version as) in conference add, confer.

There are numerous contradictions between the above verses and the Acts account.

- a. "I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood" – what about Ananias and the Damascus disciples. What about those he immediately preached Christ to in the synagogues "(Acts 9:10-20)
- b. "Nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus" and "Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter" Really! What about Barnabas taking him to Jerusalem to see the Apostles (Acts 9:27)
- c. "I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which were in Christ" – Yet Acts 9:26 says the Jerusalem disciples were still afraid of Paul. The Acts account had to take place in a matter of days or within a month or two because in verse 26 the Jerusalem disciples were still afraid of Paul. It was still fresh in their minds what his original intentions were.
- d. The Galatians 1:11-23 account says nothing about Ananias and Barnabas. This account gives the impression it was just Paul and the Lord.
- e. Why is there a need to include "Now concerning the things which I write to you, indeed, before God, I do not lie" (Galatians 1:20). Who is calling Paul a liar?

Which account should we believe? Is it possible to blend the two accounts or are the extremes to extreme?

On occasion I've thought Paul a braggart; but in the following verse he also appears jealous or maybe envious.

Galatians 2:1-9

Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me.

² And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain. ³ Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. ⁴ And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), ⁵ to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

⁶ But from those who seemed to be something-whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God shows personal favoritism to no man—for those who seemed to be something added nothing to me.

⁷ But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as the gospel for the circumcised was to Peter ⁸ (for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles), ⁹ and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

Regarding those who added nothing to Paul, it is recorded in John 17:12-20 that Jesus:

John 17:12-20

"While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. ¹³ But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. ¹⁴ I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. ¹⁸ As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

²⁰ "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;"

The 2nd of Paul's accounts of his road to Damascus experience

Acts 22:6-21

"Now it happened, as I journeyed and came near Damascus at about noon, suddenly a great light from heaven shone around me. ⁷ And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? ⁸ So I answered, Who are You, Lord? And He said to me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.

⁹ "And those who were with me indeed saw the light and were afraid, but they did not hear the voice of Him who spoke to me. ¹⁰ So I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said to me, Arise and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all things which are appointed for you to do. ¹¹ And since I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of those who were with me, I came into Damascus.

¹² "Then a certain Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good testimony with all the Jews who dwelt there, ¹³ came to me; and he stood and said to me, Brother Saul, receive your sight. And at that same hour I looked up at him. ¹⁴ Then he said, The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth. ¹⁵ For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. ¹⁶ And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

¹⁷ "Now it happened, when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I was in a trance ¹⁸ and saw Him saying to me, Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me. ¹⁹ So I said, Lord, they know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believe on You. ²⁰ And when the blood of Your martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by consenting to his death, and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him. ²¹ Then He said to me, Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles."

Note – The above version of the account is far more elaborate.

Verse 9 - is opposite of Acts 9:7. There they heard the voice but saw no one.

Verse 10 - differs from Act 9:6

Verse 12 - differs from Acts 9:10 that says Ananias was a disciple. Nothing about him being a devout Jew. Probably a devout Jewish Disciple of Jesus

Verse 13 - shows regular disciples were able to heal

Verse 18 – Who is Him. Why didn't Paul say the name Jesus or Christ?

Note – Verse 21 says, "Then He said to me, Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles."

On far more than one occasion in the Book of Acts it says Paul tried to reach the Jews first. It was only after they rejected him that Paul finally turned to the Gentiles. If he was specifically sent to the Gentiles would his actions be considered rebellion for disobeying his directive to go to the Gentiles?

3 Key examples of Paul's actions in the Book of Acts

Acts 13:1-5

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. ² As 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.

⁴ So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. ⁵ And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John as their assistant.

Note – According to Acts 13:9 Saul is Paul

Acts 17:1-2

Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. ² Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures,

Acts 13:13-48

¹³ Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down. ¹⁵ And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, "Men and brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on."

¹⁶ Then Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, "Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen:

¹⁷ The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He brought them out of it. ¹⁸ Now for a time of about forty years He put up with their ways in the wilderness. ¹⁹ And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land to them by allotment.

²⁰ "After that He gave them judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. ²¹ And afterward they asked for a king; so God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. ²² And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will. ²³ From this man's seed, according to the promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior-Jesus- ²⁴ after John had first preached, before His coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. ²⁵ And as John was finishing his course, he said, Who do you think I am? I am not He. But behold, there comes One after me, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to loose.

²⁶ "Men and brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to you the word of this salvation has been sent. ²⁷ For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled them in condemning Him. ²⁸ And though they found no cause for death in Him, they asked Pilate that He should be put to death. ²⁹ Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb. ³⁰ But God raised Him from the dead.

³¹ He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people. ³² And we declare to you glad tidings- that promise which was made to the fathers. ³³ God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm:

You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You.

³⁴ And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus:

I will give you the sure mercies of David.

³⁵ Therefore He also says in another Psalm:

You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

³⁶ "For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; ³⁷ but He whom God raised up saw no corruption. ³⁸ Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; ³⁹ and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. ⁴⁰ Beware therefore, lest what has been spoken in the prophets come upon you:

⁴¹ Behold, you despisers,
Marvel and perish!
For I work a work in your days,
A work which you will by no means believe,

Though one were to declare it to you. "

⁴² So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. ⁴³ Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

⁴⁴ On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. ⁴⁵ But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul. ⁴⁶ Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. ⁴⁷ For so the Lord has commanded us:

**I have set you as a light to the Gentiles,
That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth"**

⁴⁸ Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

Note – Isn't it recorded in Acts 22:21 that Paul said, "Then He said to me, Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles??" So why does it say that Paul said in Acts 13:46 that "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first [the Jews]; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles."

Note - Turning to is far different than being sent. Jesus said numerous times in the book of John that the Father sent Him and He performed exactly what the Father sent Him both to do and to speak. It appears not so with Paul.

Paul was indeed over-the-top bold to claim Isaiah 42:6 and Isaiah 49:6 pertained to him.

This is what Isaiah 42:1-8 says,

Isaiah 42:1-8

"Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. ² He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. ³ A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth. ⁴ He will not fail nor be discouraged, Till He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands shall wait for His law."

⁵ Thus says God the Lord, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, Who gives breath to the people on it, And spirit to those who walk on it: ⁶ "I, the Lord, have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the Gentiles,

⁷ To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the prison, Those who sit in darkness from the prison house. ⁸ I am the Lord, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images.

Isaiah 49:1-6

"Listen, O coastlands, to Me, And take heed, you peoples from afar! The Lord has called Me from the womb; From the matrix of My mother He has made mention of My name. ² And He has made My mouth like a sharp sword; In the shadow of His hand He has hidden Me, And made Me a polished shaft; In His quiver He has hidden Me."

³ "And He said to me, You are My servant, O Israel, In whom I will be glorified.

⁴ Then I said, I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain; Yet surely my just reward is with the Lord, And my work with my God. "

⁵ "And now the Lord says, Who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, To bring Jacob back to Him, So that Israel is gathered to Him (For I shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, And My God shall be My strength),

⁶ Indeed He says, It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth."

The above verses obviously do not pertain to Paul or Barnabas. These passages were fulfilled only by Jesus Christ. In fact, in Luke's gospel account it states regarding Jesus Christ

Luke 2:25-32

²⁵ And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶ And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. ²⁷ So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, ²⁸ he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said:

²⁹ "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word;

³⁰ For my eyes have seen Your salvation ³¹ Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, ³² A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel."

Note - For the record, Acts 10 states it was Peter who was first **sent** to the Gentiles

Acts 10:1-48

"There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, ² a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always. ³ About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, "Cornelius!"

⁴ And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, "What is it, lord?"

So he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God. ⁵ Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter. ⁶ He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do." ⁷ And when the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who waited on him continually. ⁸ So when he had explained all these things to them, he sent them to Joppa.

⁹ The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour. ¹⁰ Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance ¹¹ and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. ¹² In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. ¹³ And a voice came to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat."

¹⁴ But Peter said, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean."

¹⁵ And a voice spoke to him again the second time, "What God has cleansed you must not call common." ¹⁶ This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again.

¹⁷ Now while Peter wondered within himself what this vision which he had seen meant, behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate. ¹⁸ And they called and asked whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there.

¹⁹ While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are seeking you.

²⁰ Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them."

²¹ Then Peter went down to the men who had been sent to him from Cornelius, and said, "Yes, I am he whom you seek. For what reason have you come?"

²² And they said, "Cornelius the centurion, a just man, one who fears God and has a good reputation among all the nation of the Jews, was divinely instructed by a holy angel to summon you to his house, and to hear words from you." ²³ Then he invited them in and lodged them.

On the next day Peter went away with them, and some brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

²⁴ And the following day they entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his relatives and close friends. ²⁵ As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. ²⁶ But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I myself am also a man."

²⁷ And as he talked with him, he went in and found many who had come together. ²⁸ Then he said to them, "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean. ²⁹ Therefore I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. I ask, then, for what reason have you sent for me?"

³⁰ So Cornelius said, "Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, ³¹ and said, Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your alms are remembered in the sight of God. ³² Send therefore to Joppa and call Simon here, whose surname is Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea. When he comes, he will speak to you. ³³ So I sent to you immediately, and you have done well to come. Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God."

³⁴ Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. ³⁵ But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. ³⁶ The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ- He is Lord of all- ³⁷ that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: ³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. ³⁹ And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree. ⁴⁰ Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, ⁴¹ not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. ⁴² And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins."

⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.

⁴⁵ And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. ⁴⁶ For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.

Then Peter answered, ⁴⁷ "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" ⁴⁸ And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days."

Now on to the 3rd account, by Paul, of his road to Damascus experience

Acts 26:12-21

""While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, ¹³ at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me. ¹⁴ And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads. ¹⁵ So I said, Who are You, Lord? And He said, I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ¹⁶ But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. ¹⁷ I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, ¹⁸ to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.

¹⁹ "Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, ²⁰ but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance. ²¹ For these reasons the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me.

Note – No mention of Ananias here, telling him what the Lord wanted of him.

The Apostles of Christ Jesus taught of Christ in Jerusalem and Judea. Besides, Christ taught the people in these regions directly during His 3 ½ year ministry. In which case Paul contradicts what he said in Romans 15:20.

Romans 15:18-20

¹⁸ For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient- ¹⁹ in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. ²⁰ And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation"

Oh really! Well what about this for an example.

Acts 1:1-8

The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, ² until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, ³ to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

⁴ And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; ⁵ for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

⁶ Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. ⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

And this

Acts 2:1-47

"When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

⁵ And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. ⁷ Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans?" ⁸ And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? ⁹ Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹ Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God." ¹² So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?"

¹³ Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine."

¹⁴ But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. ¹⁵ For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. ¹⁶ But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God,
That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh;
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
Your young men shall see visions,
Your old men shall dream dreams.

¹⁸ And on My menservants and on My maidservants
I will pour out My Spirit in those days;
And they shall prophesy.

¹⁹ I will show wonders in heaven above
And signs in the earth beneath:
Blood and fire and vapor of smoke.

²⁰ The sun shall be turned into darkness,
And the moon into blood,
Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.

²¹ And it shall come to pass
That whoever calls on the name of the Lord
Shall be saved.

²² "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—²³ Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; ²⁴ whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. ²⁵ For David says concerning Him:

I foresaw the Lord always before my face,
For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.

²⁶ Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad;
Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope.

²⁷ For You will not leave my soul in Hades,
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

²⁸ You have made known to me the ways of life;
You will make me full of joy in Your presence.

²⁹ "Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, ³¹ he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. ³² This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. ³³ Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.

³⁴ "For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself:

The Lord said to my Lord,

"Sit at My right hand,

³⁵ Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."

³⁶ "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

³⁷ Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

³⁸ Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

⁴⁰ And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." ⁴¹ Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. ⁴² And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. ⁴³ Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, ⁴⁵ and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

⁴⁶ So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

These things occurred long before Paul (Saul) came on the scene in Acts 8. And they occurred in Jerusalem and Judea.

1. "The Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2).
2. Disciples were multiplying (Acts 6).
3. Miracles were taking place, even by regular disciples like Stephen, and the chosen apostles of Christ faced great persecution and imprisonment (Acts 3-8).
4. The first deacons were selected and one of the seven chosen was a proselyte from Antioch (Acts 6)

This doesn't sound like the chosen Apostles were just sitting around doing nothing as some have alluded to.

WAS PAUL CHOSEN, BY CHRIST, TO BE AN APOSTLE?

According to Strong's Exhaustive concordance of the Bible, the Greek word and meaning of an "Apostle" is

Apostle (652) αποστολος, — *ap-os'-tol-os*; from (649) (αποστελλω - apostello); a *delegate*; specially an *ambassador* of the Gospel; officially a *commissioner* of Christ [*"apostle"*] (with miraculous powers): — (Translated in King James version as) – apostle, messenger, he that is sent.

These were the original twelve Apostles. The twelve Jesus Christ chose.

Luke 6:13-16

"And when it was day, He [Christ Jesus] called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles:

- 1 Simon, whom He also named Peter,
- 2 Andrew his brother;
- 3 James and
- 4 John;
- 5 Philip and
- 6 Bartholomew;
- 7 Matthew and
- 8 Thomas;
- 9 James the son of Alphaeus, and
- 10 Simon called the Zealot;
- 11 Judas the son of James,
- 12 and Judas Iscariot who also became a traitor.

Acts 1:2

"Until the day in which He was taken up, after He [Jesus Christ] through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He [Jesus] had chosen,

Regarding the replacement for Judas Iscariot

Acts 1:13-26

"And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas the son of James. ¹⁴ These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

¹⁵ And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty), and said, ¹⁶ "Men and brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus; ¹⁷ for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry."

¹⁸ (Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out. ¹⁹ And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem; so that field is called in their own language, Akel Dama, that is, Field of Blood.)

²⁰ "For it is written in the Book of Psalms: Let his dwelling place be desolate, And let no one live in it; and, Let another take his office.

²¹ "Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²² beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection."

²³ And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. ²⁴ And they prayed and said, "You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two you have chosen ²⁵ to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place." ²⁶ And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles."

Matthew 19:28

"So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

Luke 22:25-30

"And He [Jesus] said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called benefactors. ²⁶ But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. ²⁷ For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.

²⁸ "But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. ²⁹ And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, ³⁰ that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

Note – Revelation 21:14 speaks of ONLY 12 Apostles – Paul is nowhere to be found

Revelation 21:14

"Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." [Jesus Christ]

Note - NOT 13 apostles

Acts 14:14

"But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude"

Note – Paul could have been anointed an 'apostle' sometime before Act 14:14 was written; but I don't find a record of it.

In Acts 15 it would appear Paul and Barnabas weren't called apostles when they were with the Apostles

Acts 15:2, 4, 22

"Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles [not to the other apostles] and elders, about this question."

"⁴ And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders; and they reported all things that God had done with them."

"²² Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, namely, Judas who was also named Barsabas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren."

Not saying that the following applies to Paul and Barnabas but...

Revelation 2:2

[Jesus said] ""I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those **who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars**"

Note – Interesting, Jesus is speaking to the angel of the church of Ephesus - one of Paul's churches.

Note – What occurred in Acts 13:1-3 is not what occurred in Acts 1:13-20 (see page 15)

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. ² As 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."**

According to **Matthew 18:16** Jesus said,

"..by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established."

And again in John 8:17 it is recorded that Jesus said,

"It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true."

Can we find documented evidence from at least two men in the Bible, excluding Paul, that Paul was indeed an Apostle? No. Only Luke, one of Paul's friends and traveling companions, in the book of Acts writes that Paul and Barnabas were apostles.

Here is a list of all references to apostles in the New Testament.

APOSTLE, APOSTLES, APOSTLESHIP (courtesy of Biblegateway.com)

1. Matthew 10:2

Now the names of the twelve **apostles** are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;

2. Mark 6:30

Then the **apostles** gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught.

3. Luke 6:13

And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named **apostles**:

4. Luke 9:10

And the **apostles**, when they had returned, told Him all that they had done. Then He took them and went aside privately into a deserted place belonging to the city called Bethsaida.

5. **Luke 11:49**
Therefore the wisdom of God also said, 'I will send them prophets and **apostles**, and some of them they will kill and persecute,'
6. **Luke 17:5**
And the **apostles** said to the Lord, "Increase our faith."
7. **Luke 22:14**
When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve **apostles** with Him.
8. **Luke 24:10**
It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, who told these things to the **apostles**.
9. **Acts 1:2**
until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the **apostles** whom He had chosen,
10. **Acts 1:25**
to take part in this ministry and **apostleship** from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place."
11. **Acts 1:26**
And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven **apostles**.
12. **Acts 2:37**
Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the **apostles**, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"
13. **Acts 2:42**
And they continued steadfastly in the **apostles'** doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.
14. **Acts 2:43**
Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the **apostles**.
15. **Acts 4:33**
And with great power the **apostles** gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.
16. **Acts 4:35**
and laid them at the **apostles'** feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.
17. **Acts 4:36**
And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the **apostles** (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus,
18. **Acts 4:37**
having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the **apostles'** feet.

19. **Acts 5:2**
And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the **apostles'** feet.
20. **Acts 5:12**
And through the hands of the **apostles** many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch.
21. **Acts 5:18**
and laid their hands on the **apostles** and put them in the common prison.
22. **Acts 5:29**
But Peter and the other **apostles** answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men.
23. **Acts 5:34**
Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the **apostles** outside for a little while.
24. **Acts 5:40**
And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the **apostles** and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.
25. **Acts 6:6**
whom they set before the **apostles**; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.
26. **Acts 8:1**
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**.
27. **Acts 8:14**
Now when the **apostles** who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them,
28. **Acts 8:18**
And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the **apostles'** hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money,
29. **Acts 9:27**
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.
30. **Acts 11:1**
Now the **apostles** and brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.
31. **Acts 14:4**
But the multitude of the city was divided: part sided with the Jews, and part with the **apostles**.
32. **Acts 14:14**
But when *the* **apostles** *Barnabas and Paul* heard this, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude, crying out

33. **Acts 15:2**

Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the **apostles** and elders, about this question.

34. **Acts 15:4**

And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the **apostles** and the elders; and they reported all things that God had done with them.

35. **Acts 15:6**

Now the **apostles** and elders came together to consider this matter.

36. **Acts 15:22**

Then it pleased the **apostles** and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, namely, Judas who was also named Barsabas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren.

37. **Acts 15:23**

They wrote this, letter by them: The **apostles**, the elders, and the brethren, to the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: greetings.

38. **Acts 15:33**

And after they had stayed there for a time, they were sent back with greetings from the brethren to the **apostles**.

39. **Acts 16:4**

And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the **apostles** and elders at Jerusalem.

40. **Romans 1:1**

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

41. **Romans 1:5**

Through Him we have received grace and **apostleship** for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name,

42. **Romans 11:13**

For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as *I am an **apostle** to the Gentiles*, I magnify my ministry,

43. **Romans 16:7**

Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the **apostles**, who also were in Christ before me.

44. **1 Corinthians 1:1**

*Paul, called to be an **apostle** of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,*

45. **1 Corinthians 4:9**

*For I think that God has displayed us, the **apostles**, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.*

46. **1 Corinthians 9:1**

*Am I not an **apostle**? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?*

47. **1 Corinthians 9:2**

*If I am not an **apostle** to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my **apostleship** in the Lord.*

48. **1 Corinthians 9:5**

Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other **apostles**, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?

49. **1 Corinthians 12:28**

And God has appointed these in the church: first **apostles**, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.

50. **1 Corinthians 12:29**

Are all **apostles**? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles?

51. **1 Corinthians 15:7**

After that He was seen by James, then by all the **apostles**.

52. **1 Corinthians 15:9**

*For I am the least of the **apostles**, who am not worthy to be called an **apostle**, because I persecuted the church of God.*

53. **2 Corinthians 1:1**

*Paul, an **apostle** of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in all Achaia:*

54. **2 Corinthians 11:5**

*For I consider that I am not at all inferior to the most eminent **apostles**.*

55. **2 Corinthians 11:13**

For such are false **apostles**, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into **apostles** of Christ.

56. **2 Corinthians 12:11**

I have become a fool in boasting; you have compelled me. For I ought to have been commended by you; *for in nothing was I behind the most eminent **apostles***, though I am nothing.

57. **2 Corinthians 12:12**

*Truly the signs of an **apostle** were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.*

58. **Galatians 1:1**

*Paul, an **apostle** (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead),*

59. **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.

60. **Galatians 1:19**

But I saw none of the other **apostles** except James, the Lord's brother.

61. **Galatians 2:8**

(for He who worked effectively in Peter for the **apostleship** to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles),

62. **Ephesians 1:1**

*Paul, an **apostle** of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:*

63. **Ephesians 2:20**

having been built on the foundation of the **apostles** and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,

64. **Ephesians 3:5**

which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy **apostles** and prophets:

65. **Ephesians 4:11**

And He Himself gave some to be **apostles**, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

66. **Colossians 1:1**

*Paul, an **apostle** of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,*

67. **1 Thessalonians 2:6**

Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as **apostles** of Christ.

68. **1 Timothy 1:1**

*Paul, an **apostle** of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope,*

69. **1 Timothy 2:7**

for which *I was appointed a preacher and an **apostle***—I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

70. **2 Timothy 1:1**

*Paul, an **apostle** of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,*

71. **2 Timothy 1:11**

*to which I was appointed a preacher, an **apostle**, and a teacher of the Gentiles.*

72. **Titus 1:1**

*Paul, a bondservant of God and an **apostle** of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness,*

73. **Hebrews 3:1**

Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the **Apostle** and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus,

74. **1 Peter 1:1**

Peter, an **apostle** of Jesus Christ, to the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

75. **2 Peter 1:1**

Simon Peter, a bondservant and **apostle** of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

76. **2 Peter 3:2**

that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the **apostles** of the Lord and Savior,

77. **Jude 1:17**

But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the **apostles** of our Lord Jesus Christ:

78. **Revelation 2:2**

"I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are **apostles** and are not, and have found them liars;

79. **Revelation 18:20**

"Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy **apostles** and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!"

80. **Revelation 21:14**

Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve **apostles** of the Lamb.

From the look of things it appears Paul and Jesus Christ differ on the criteria for an Apostle to Christ

1 Corinthians 9:2

If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

2 Corinthians 12:12

Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.

Titus 1:1

Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness,

1 Timothy 1:1

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope,

Romans 1:1

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

Disciples Project

disciplesproject.com

Colossians 1:1

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

There is no written record of either God the Father or Jesus Christ confirming Paul's apostleship – only the word of Paul and a claim written by Luke in the book of Acts.

DID PAUL PROCLAIM THE SAME GOSPEL MESSAGE AS CHRIST JESUS?

First of all, what does “gospel” mean?

Gospel (2098) εὐαγγελιον, — *yoo-ang-ghel'-ee-on*; from the same as **(2097)** (εὐαγγελίζω - euaggelizo); a *good message*, i.e. the *gospel*: — (Translated in King James version as) gospel.

(2097) εὐαγγελίζω, — *yoo-ang-ghel-id'-zo*; from **(2095)** (εὐ - eu) and **(32)** (αγγελος - aggelos); to *announce good news* (“evangelize”) especially the gospel: — (Translated in King James version as) declare, bring (declare, show) glad (good) tidings, reach (the gospel).

(2095) εὖ, — *yoo*; neuter of a primary eus (*good*); (adverb) *well*: — (Translated in King James version as) good, well (done).

(32) αγγελος, — *ang'-el-os*; from aggelos (to *bring tidings*); a *messenger*; especially an “*angel*”; by implication a *pastor*: — (Translated in King James version as) angel, messenger.

JESUS CHRIST PREACHED THE GOSPEL (Good News) OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Matthew 4:23

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, *preaching the gospel of the kingdom*, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.

Matthew 4:17

“From that time *Jesus began to preach and to say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*”

Matthew 9:35

“Then *Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom*, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.”

Matthew 11:1-6, 11-12

“Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples, that He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities. ² And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples ³ and said to Him, “Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?”

⁴ Jesus answered and said to them, “Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: ⁵ The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. ⁶ And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.”

¹¹ “Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. ¹² And from the days of John the Baptist until now *the kingdom of heaven* suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.

Matthew 24:1-14

"Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. ² And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

³ Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" ⁴ And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in My name, saying, I am the Christ, and will deceive many. ⁶ And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. ⁷ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are the beginning of sorrows.

⁹ "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. ¹⁰ And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. ¹¹ Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. ¹² And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³ But he who endures to the end shall be saved. ¹⁴ And *this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*

Mark 1:1, 14-15

"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God."

¹⁴ Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, *preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,* ¹⁵ and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

Luke 7:20-28

"When the men had come to Him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?" ²¹ And that very hour He cured many of infirmities, afflictions, and evil spirits; and to many blind He gave sight.

²² Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them. ²³ And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."

²⁴ When the messengers of John had departed, He began to speak to the multitudes concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? ²⁵ But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed those who are gorgeously appareled and live in luxury are in kings' courts. ²⁶ But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. ²⁷ This is he of whom it is written:

Behold, I send My messenger before Your face,
Who will prepare Your way before You.

²⁸ For I say to you, among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

Luke 9:1-6, 10-11

"Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. ² *He sent them to preach the kingdom of God* and to heal the sick. ³ And He said to them, "Take nothing for the journey, neither staffs nor bag nor bread nor money; and do not have two tunics apiece.

⁴ "Whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart. ⁵ And whoever will not receive you, when you go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet as a testimony against them."

⁶ So *they departed and went through the towns, preaching the gospel* and healing everywhere.

¹⁰ And the apostles, when they had returned, told Him all that they had done. Then He took them and went aside privately into a deserted place belonging to the city called Bethsaida. ¹¹ But when the multitudes knew it, they followed Him; and *He received them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God*, and healed those who had need of healing."

Luke 4:16-21

¹⁶ So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. ¹⁷ And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

¹⁸ *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,
Because He has anointed Me
To preach the gospel to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty those who are oppressed;*

¹⁹ *To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."*

²⁰ Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. ²¹ And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

Note – It would appear Jesus was not only sent to preach the Kingdom but to show various attributes of the Kingdom like:

1. Healing the brokenhearted
2. Proclaiming liberty to the captives
3. Recovery of sight to the blind
4. Liberty to those who are oppressed
5. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

The first thing Jesus preached about was the Kingdom of God

Matthew 4:17

"From that time *Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

The last thing Jesus spoke about, before He was taken up, was the Kingdom of God

Acts 1:1-3

"The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that *Jesus began both to do and teach*, ² until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, ³ to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and *speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."*

MORE VERSES FROM JESUS ON THE KINGDOM
(These show Jesus' focus was on the Kingdom of God)

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Acts
5:3, 10, 19-20 6:10, 13, 33 7:21 8:11-12 10:7 12:25-26, 28 13:11, 19, 24, 31, 33, 38, 41, 43, 44, 46-47, 52 16:19, 28 18:1, 3-4, 23 19:12, 14, 23-24 20:1, 21 21:31, 43 22:2 23:1-3 24:7, 14 25:1, 14, 34 26:29	3:24 4:11, 26, 30 9:1, 47 10:14-15, 23-25 12:34 13:8 14:25 15:23	4:43 6:20 7:28 8:1, 10 9:27, 60, 62 10:9, 11 11: 2, 17, 18, 20 12:31, 32 13:18, 20, 28-29 14:15 16:16 17:20-21 18:16-17, 24-25, 29 19:11-12, 15 21:31 22:16, 18, 29-30 23:42, 51	3:3, 5 18:36	1:3

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PAUL

According to Strong's Concordance Paul mentions the Kingdom of God only 14 times in all his epistles (letters). Following is a list of the fourteen.

Romans 14:17

"for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

1 Corinthians 4:20

"For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power."

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

"Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God."

1 Corinthians 15:24

"Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power."

1 Corinthians 15:50

"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption."

Galatians 5:21

"...envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."

Ephesians 5:5

"For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God."

Colossians 1:13

"He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,"

Colossians 4:11

"These are my only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are of the circumcision; they have proved to be a comfort to me."

1 Thessalonians 2:12

"That you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory."

2 Thessalonians 1:5

"which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer;"

2 Timothy 4:1

"I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom."

2 Timothy 4:18

"And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!"

Note – Not knocking what Paul had to say about the kingdom of God. It's just that the kingdom of God did not appear paramount in Paul's gospel account. Aspects of the kingdom and the original message are alluded to; but Paul's gospel message is not quite the same.

According to Strong's Dictionary Paul uses the word "gospel" over 70 times; but never uses the word "gospel" directly in relation to The Kingdom of God.

In relation to the "gospel" Paul talks about:

1. The gospel concerning Jesus
2. His gospel [as he proclaimed it]
3. Gospel of peace
4. Obey the gospel
5. Ministering the Gospel of God
6. Gospel – cross of Christ
7. That he, Paul, had begotten them through the gospel
8. Those who preach the gospel should live by the gospel
9. The grace of Christ to a different gospel
10. The gospel came to him through the revealing of Jesus Christ
11. Gospel preached by him [Paul] is not according to man [or apostle, John 17:20 "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their [the apostles] word]
12. The gospel of the circumcision
13. The gospel of the uncircumcision
14. Gospel to Abraham

15. Gospel of our Salvation
16. Gentiles fellow heirs in Christ through the gospel
17. Mystery of the gospel
18. Fellowship in the gospel
19. The faith of the gospel
20. Labored in the gospel
21. According to Paul the gospel was preached to every creature under heaven
(Colossians 1:23)

What gospel? Apparently Paul must have thought he'd preached to every creature. However, Christ Jesus said in Matthew 24:14, "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come." If the true gospel had been preached to everyone, the end should have come long ago.

VERSES ON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PAUL

Romans	1 Corinthians	2 Corinthians	Galatians	Ephesians
1:1, 9, 15-16 2:16 10:15-16 11:28 15:16, 19-20, 29 16:25	1:17 4:15 9:12, 14, 16-18 15:1	2:12 4:3-4 8:18 9:13 10:14, 16 11:4, 7	1:6-9, 11 2:2, 5, 7, 14 3:8 4:13	1:13 3:6 6:15, 19
Philippians	Colossians	1 Thess.	2 Thess.	1 Timothy
1:5, 7, 12, 17, 27 2:22 4:3, 15	1;5, 23	1;5 2;2, 4, 8-9 3:2	1:8 2:14	1:11
2 Timothy	Philemon			
1:8, 10 2:8	13			

PAUL AND THE CROSS

Only Paul glorifies the cross. In fact, the writings of Paul appear to point more to the cross than to Christ Jesus who was crucified on it.

Many try to change this fact by inserting that Paul was referring to the sacrifice of Christ, the congregations, having already been taught by Paul, knew what Paul was referring too, and the cross is merely a symbol. If this were true, Paul could have simplified matters by just being direct concerning the sacrifice of Christ.

Here's what Paul's writings have to say,

1 Corinthians 1:17-18

"For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. ¹⁸ For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Galatians 5:11

"And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased.

Galatians 6:12-15

As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. ¹³ For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. ¹⁴ But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. ¹⁵ For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.

Ephesians 2:14-16

"For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, ¹⁵ having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.

Philippians 2:8

"And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Philippians 3:17-18

"Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. ¹⁸ For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:

Colossians 1:19-20

"For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, ²⁰ and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

Colossians 2:13-14

"And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, ¹⁴ having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

WHAT DID JESUS SAY ABOUT THE CROSS

Matthew 10:37-39

"He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. ³⁸ And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. ³⁹ He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

Matthew 16:24-26

"Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone **desires** to come after Me, let him **deny** himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. ²⁵ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. ²⁶ For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

Desires (2309) θελω, — *thel'-o*; or ethelo, *eth-el'-o*; in certain tenses theleo, *thel-eh'-o*; and etheleo, *eth-el-eh'-o*, *choose* or *prefer* (literal or figurative); by implication to *wish*, i.e. *be inclined* to (sometimes adverbially *gladly*); impersonally for the future tense, to *be about to*; by Hebrew to *delight in*: — (Translated in King James version as) – desire, be disposed (forward), intend, list, love, mean, please, have rather, (be) will (have, -ling, -ling [ly]).

Deny (533) απαρνεομαι, — *ap-ar-neh'-om-ahee*; from (575) (απο - apo) and (720) (αρνεομαι - arneomai); to *deny utterly*, i.e. *disown*, *abstain*: — (Translated in King James version as) – deny.

Mark 8:34-38

"When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. ³⁵ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. ³⁶ For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? ³⁷ Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? ³⁸ For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

Mark 10:21

"Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me."

Luke 9:23

"Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. ²⁴ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. ²⁵ For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? ²⁶ For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels.

Luke 14:25-33

²⁵ Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, ²⁶ "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. ²⁷ And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. ²⁸ For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it- ²⁹ lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, ³⁰ saying, This man began to build and was not able to finish. ³¹ Or

what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³² Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. ³³ So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.

Note – These are the only recorded verses we have in the Bible regarding what Jesus actually said about the “cross”. This message was so important that it is recorded in three of the four gospel accounts. Note that Jesus told both the multitudes and His disciples to take up their crosses and follow Him long before He was crucified.

Jesus never directly spoke of His cross. However, it is alluded to in John chapters 3, 8 and 12, when He spoke of Himself being **lifted** up.

Lifted (5312) υψοω, — *hoop-so’-o*; from **(5311)** (υψος - hupsos); to *elevate* (literal or figurative): — (Translated in King James version as) – exalt, lift up.

John 3:14-15

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

John 8:28

“Then Jesus said to them, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things.

John 12:30-34

“Jesus answered and said, “This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake. ³¹ Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. ³² And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will **draw** all peoples to Myself.” ³³ This He said, signifying by what death He would die. ³⁴ The people answered Him, “We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever; and how can You say, The Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?”

Draw (1670) ελκυω, — *hel-koo’-o*; or helko, hel’-ko; probably akin to **(138)** (αιρεομαι - haireomai); to *drag* (literal or figurative): — (Translated in King James version as) – draw.

Referring back to **John 3:14-15**, what did Moses' serpent in the desert represent?

Numbers 21:5-9

"And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread." ⁶ So the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.

⁷ Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord that He take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people.

⁸ Then the Lord said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live." ⁹ So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

NOTE – 1) The Lord didn't remove the fiery serpents (their circumstances)
2) The people were to look at the bronze serpent, not the pole [cross]
3) Jesus was saying in John 3 that He represents the bronze serpent. If we look to Him we will live – eternal life.

PAUL AND CIRCUMCISION

Acts 15:1-34

"And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." ² Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, *they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question.*

³ So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, describing the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy to all the brethren. ⁴ And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders; and they reported all things that God had done with them. ⁵ But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses."

⁶ Now *the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter.* ⁷ And when there had been much dispute, *Peter rose up and said to them: "Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe.* ⁸ So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, ⁹ and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. ¹⁰ Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? ¹¹ But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they."

¹² Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles. ¹³ And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, "Men and brethren, listen to me: ¹⁴ Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. ¹⁵ And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:

¹⁶ After this I will return

And will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down;
I will rebuild its ruins,
And I will set it up;

¹⁷ So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord,
Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name,
Says the Lord who does all these things.

¹⁸ "Known to God from eternity are all His works. ¹⁹ *Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God,* ²⁰ *but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood.* ²¹ For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath."

²² *Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, namely, Judas who was also named Barsabas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren.*

²³ *They wrote this letter by them:*

*The apostles, the elders, and the brethren,
To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia:
Greetings.*

²⁴ *Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, "You must be circumcised and keep the law"-to whom we gave no such commandment-* ²⁵ *it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,[not apostles]* ²⁶ *men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord*

Jesus Christ. ²⁷ We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who will also report the same things by word of mouth. ²⁸ *For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things:* ²⁹ *that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well.*

Farewell.

³⁰ So when they were sent off, they came to Antioch; and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the letter. ³¹ When they had read it, they rejoiced over its encouragement. ³² Now Judas and Silas, themselves being prophets also, exhorted and strengthened the brethren with many words. ³³ And after they had stayed there for a time, *they were sent back with greetings from the brethren to the apostles.*

³⁴ However, it seemed good to Silas to remain there. ³⁵ Paul and Barnabas also remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

In **1 Corinthians 7:18-20** it is recorded that Paul said,

"Was anyone called while circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised. ¹⁹ Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters. ²⁰ Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called."

In **Galatians 2:3-13** Paul writes

"Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. ⁴ And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), ⁵ to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

⁶ But from those who seemed to be something-whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God shows personal favoritism to no man—for those who seemed to be something added nothing to me.

⁷ But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as the gospel for the circumcised was to Peter ⁸ (for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles), ⁹ and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. ¹⁰ They desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.

¹¹ Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed;

¹² for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. ¹³ And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.

Note – In verse 7, is Paul saying there are two gospels (good news)? One for the Jews and another for everyone else? Jesus Christ made no distinctions. The true gospel of the Kingdom of God is for everyone? Truly I can understand when Peter says of Paul letters "some things hard to understand" (2 Peter 3:16).

Again in **Galatians 5:1-6** Paul says,

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. ² Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. ³ And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. ⁴ You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. ⁵ For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. ⁶ For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love."

Also in **Galatians 6:12-15**

"As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. ¹³ For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. ¹⁴ But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. ¹⁵ For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation."

Note - Why after all this and after the letter, in Acts 15, from the Apostles and elders was sent out to the gentiles by Paul, Barnabas, Judas (Barsabas) and Silas, is it recorded in Acts 16

Acts 16:1-3

"Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father was Greek. ² He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. ³ Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek."

Note – This act not only blatantly went against the letter from the Apostles and elders stated in Acts 15; but also against Paul's own teachings. What am I missing here? Either Paul played the hypocrite himself and caused young Timothy to do the same, or this is another Paul.

PAUL'S TEACHINGS ON THINGS SACRIFICED TO IDOLS

In **Revelation 2:14** it says,

"But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put **a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols**, and to commit sexual immorality.

In **Revelation 2:18**, to the Church in Thyatira, again we see,

"And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write,

These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass: ¹⁹ "I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first. ²⁰ Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to **teach and seduce My servants to** commit sexual immorality and **eat things sacrificed to idols**.

NOTE – This stands out against what Paul had to say about sacrifices to idols. The words attributed to Paul are a gross contradiction to what Revelation 2 has to say about it.

If 1 Corinthians was written by Paul and the text is correct, then Paul had this to say concerning eating things sacrificed to idols.

1 Corinthians 8:4-13

"Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one. ⁵ For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), ⁶ yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.

⁷ However, there is not in everyone that knowledge; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. ⁸ But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.

⁹ But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become **a stumbling block** to those who are weak.

¹⁰ For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? ¹¹ And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? ¹² But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. ¹³ Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

Note – Paul says it is okay to eat things sacrificed to idols; but don't be a "stumbling block" to others when you do so. Jesus Christ, in Revelations 2, say someone is teaching, seducing and putting a stumbling block before His servants saying it is okay to eat things sacrificed to idols. Hmmm...

It is interesting that Revelation 2:14 and 1 Corinthians 8:9 refer to "a stumbling block." However, these two usages are from different Greek words.

The Greek word and meaning for "stumbling block" in 1 Corinthians 8:9 is

Stumbling block (4348) προσκομμα, — *pros'-kom-mah*; from (4350) (προσκοπτω - proskopto); a *stub*, i.e. (figurative) *occasion of apostasy*: — (Translated in King James version as) offence, stumbling (-block, [-stone]).

Whereas, in Revelation 2:14, the Greek word and meaning for “stumbling block” is

Stumbling block (4625) σκανδαλον, — *skan'-dal-on*; (“scandal”); probably from a derivative of (2578) (καμπω - kampto); a *trap-stick* (*bent* sapling), i.e. *snare* (figurative *cause* of displeasure or sin): — (Translated in King James version as) occasion to fall (of stumbling), offence, thing that offends, stumblingblock.

Paul goes on in **1 Corinthians 10:19-31**

“What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? ²⁹ Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. ²¹ You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. ²² Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?

²³ All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify. ²⁴ Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being.

²⁵ Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience sake; ²⁶ for "the earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness."

²⁷ If any of those who do not believe invites you to dinner, and you desire to go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no question for conscience sake. ²⁸ But if anyone says to you, "This was offered to idols," do not eat it for the sake of the one who told you, and for conscience sake; for "the earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness." ²⁹ "Conscience," I say, not your own, but that of the other. For why is my liberty judged by another man's conscience? ³⁹ But if I partake with thanks, why am I evil spoken of for the food over which I give thanks?

³¹ Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

This appears to be a direct contradiction to what Christ said in Revelation.

CONCLUSION

I cannot say what Paul saw or heard on the road to Damascus. I wasn't there. I cannot refute his claims that he was beaten with rods, stoned, shipwrecked, beaten five times with thirty-nine stripes and constantly in perils of various kinds (2 Corinthians 11:24-26); all in the name of faith and his belief in Jesus Christ. Neither will I dismiss his sincerity. I don't know his heart.

Paul was a contemporary of the disciples and the Apostles; yet, from the Biblical account Paul never met Jesus Christ, the Son of Man. He never sat up under the teachings of Jesus. In all the verses that describe the various Pharisees and scribes who spoke to Jesus and heard Him speak, Paul's (Saul's) name doesn't come up once.

If Jesus wanted to get Paul's attention couldn't He have just asked to speak to him? In fact Jesus could have simply had an encounter with Paul as He did with Matthew the tax Collector or Nathanael (Matthew 9:9; John 1:46-51).

In His John 17 prayer to the Heavenly Father, when speaking of the Apostles, Jesus said, "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word." Should we assume Jesus changed His mind or decided later to include Paul as the Apostle to the gentiles because the twelve weren't up for the job?

The bottom line for me, in key areas, Paul's teachings do not line up with the words, teachings and doctrines of Jesus Christ. The words of Jesus Christ are the words of God (Luke 5:1; John 3:34; 8:47; 14:10; 17:5-17). It's the words spoken by Christ Jesus that have life (John 6:63) and truth (John 17:17). It's by His words, faith and obedience to His words, that lead us to eternal life (John 5:24; 6:63, 68).

Until most recently, I loved the teachings of Paul. In my Christian walk, I am sure I have quoted the words of Paul far more often than the words of Jesus. But now a plumb line has been drawn – Jesus or Paul. I choose to follow the Word of life – Jesus Christ.

While in the process of completing this lesson, more is being revealed on key doctrines, such as faith verse works. As a result, new sections will be added as this study progresses.

**** UPDATE ****

In regards to Paul's contradictions on the question of "faith verse works"; please refer to Disciples Project's Bible Study "[Saved to...](#)"

The Contradictions of Paul Part 2 is also available.

10/12/2022 – change in background highlights only