***OliveTree* New Testament Survey**

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**The Apostle Paul: *Enslaved to Freedom*\***

**1. Introducing Saul / Paul**

'… **no human being has impacted the Christian church as forcefully as the apostle Paul**. His **missionary activity spread the gospel** across the world of his day. **His letters provided much of the theological base on which the church of Jesus Christ rests**. This man was carefully prepared by God for his role as the apostle to the Gentiles.' Benware, p.156

**His name – Saul / Paul**

**Many commentators hold to the idea that God changed Saul's name to Paul at the time of his conversion to Christianity.** While that is **possible – but there just is no Scriptural support for that idea.** We see *what* happens – but we don't see how, and when, and why.

**'Paul was his Latin name and Saul was his Hebrew name.** He always had these names and they are unrelated to his conversion … his name was not changed to Paul after his conversion.' Benware, p.159

We are introduced to Saul relatively early in the book of Acts … this man was present at the stoning of Stephen – the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul. (Acts 7:58)

**He continues to be called Saul** – not only immediately after his conversion, but **even after he had begun to truly serve the Lord**. About all we know is that the individual who had been known as *Saul*, **more and more came to be referred to as Paul** (Acts 13:9 – Saul, who was also known as Paul …). **For a man with a divine calling to the Gentiles, it only makes sense that the Jewish name would be set aside for the Roman name.**

**Paul had a Divine commissioning …**

Acts 9:15 "… **he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel**; for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake."

1Co 3:10 **'According to the grace of God which was given to me …**

Gal 1:15 '… but **when God, who had set me apart even from my mother's womb and called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles …**'

Gal 2:9 '… recognizing **the grace that had been given to me** …

Col 1:24-25 '… of this church **I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed upon me for your benefit**, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the Word of God …'

1 Timothy 1:12-14

:12 I thank **Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service**,

:13 even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief;

:14 and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus.

**Paul had several noteworthy titles …**

**Apostle** – From the Greek word, ***apostello*** – 'to send'

This word is used in two different ways …

‘In **the broadest sense** an apostle … is **anyone who is sent** or by whom a message is sent … **an ambassador, envoy, messenger** … in the NT the term takes on a distinctly religious sense … in its widest meaning it refers to **any gospel-messenger**, anyone who is sent on a spiritual mission …’ Hendriksen

In this wider sense, it would include such workers as …

Barnabus …

Acts 14:14 But when **the apostles Barnabas and Paul** heard of it, they tore their robes and rushed out into the crowd, crying out

James the Lord’s brother …

Galatians 1:19 But I did not see **any other of the apostles** except **James, the Lord’s brother**.

Andronicus and Junius …

Romans 16:7 Greet **Andronicus and Junias**, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are **outstanding among the apostles** …

and others …’ S&H

2 Corinthians 8:23 As for **Titus**, he is my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brethren, **they are messengers [postolos]** of the churches, a glory to Christ.

Philippians 2:25 But I thought it necessary to send to you **Epaphroditus**, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, **who is also your messenger [apostolos]** and minister to my need;

**There is a second sense in which the word *apostle* is used …**

'This word is used in **… a narrower sense** in which it was applied by our Lord Himself to **the twelve** …' S&H

'In the fullest, deepest sense a man is an apostle for life and wherever he goes. **He is clothed with the authority of the One who sent him**, and that authority concerns both doctrine and life.' Hendriksen

What are the qualifications for 'Apostleship'?

* chosen by the Lord for the role and sent
* eyewitnesses to Christ’s life and teaching
* gifted by the Holy Spirit for ministry
* a ministry blessed by God with great power and much fruit
* not restricted to any one localized place or Church

We know the Lord sought and named twelve such apostles (**Luke 6:12-16**). One, Judas, defected and committed suicide. The remaining eleven replaced Judas by naming Matthias. The question is – was the number of Apostles fixed at twelve?

**Paul clearly claims apostleship for himself …**

Romans 1:1 **'called as an apostle**, set apart for the gospel of God'

Galatians 1:1 **'an apostle (not sent from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father** …

2Co 1:1, Eph 1:1 and Col 1:1 **'an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God'**

1 Timothy 1:1

Paul, **an apostle of Christ Jesus**

**according to the commandment of God our Savior**,

and of Christ Jesus,

who is our hope;

'**Paul was an apostle in the richest sense of the term**. His apostleship was **the same as that of the Twelve** … yet Paul was **definitely not one of the Twelve**.' Hendriksen

**Paul often defended his apostleship …**

1 Corinthians 9:1-2

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

:2 If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for **you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.**

2 Corinthians 12:11-13

:11 I have become foolish; you yourselves compelled me. Actually I should have been commended by you, **for in no respect was I inferior to the most eminent apostles**, even though I am a nobody.

:12 **The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles**.

Galatians 1:1 Paul, **an apostle (not sent from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father** …

Galatians 1:15-17

:15 But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace, was pleased

:16 to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood,

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

**Paul also referred to himself as a *Bond-slave*, *bondservant*, *slave*** (Ro 1:1, Gal 1:10, Titus 1:1, Phil 1:1)

**This idea is developed by Paul in first letter to Corinth where he presents the idea that we are *servants* either of sin or Christ.** The first reference to himself as a servant, and a servant of Christ, is the second letter he wrote to Corinth.

2nd Corinthians 4:5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and **ourselves as your bond-servants** for Jesus' sake.

This *slave* theme and attitude sustained …

Galatians 1:10 For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? **If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ**.

Romans 1:1 **Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus** ...

Titus 1:1 **Paul, a bond-servant of God** ...

‘[The term ‘bond-servant’ is] **the most absolute term for service** …’ Cambridge, Romans

‘In the OT the language of slavery is frequently **used … of the relation of the subject … to a human ruler and of men to God … for Paul every Christian is a servant of Christ** … The term expresses **the total belongingness, total allegiance, related to the absolute ownership and authority [of the Lord]** …’ Cranfield, *Romans*

**‘It is not servitude but ownership that is indicated.** **Christians are free, but they are not their own, they are not independent; and in their dependence and service they find their true freedom**.’ Plummer

‘… the expression, servant of Christ, **implies implicit obedience and subjection, it supposes the Divine authority of the Redeemer** … [in this] we find the apostle denying that he was the servant of men, rejecting all human authority as it regards matters of faith and duty, and yet **professing the most absolute subjection to the authority of Jesus Christ**.’ Hodge, *Romans*

‘The bond-service of the heavenly Master is **not forced labor, against the will, but it is the labor of those who do not contract but belong**.’ Cambridge

‘It carries for him the thoughts of **cheerful and willing service**, which is **inseparable from true freedom**; of dependence upon Christ; of ownership by Christ (1co 3:23, 7:22); and of identification with Christ in his assuming the form of a bondservant (phil 2:7).’ Vincent

This attitude was exemplified in his behavior before the Ephesians …

Acts 20:18-19

:18 And when they had come to him, he said to them, "You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, :19 **serving the Lord [serving as a slave; slaving for Christ!] with all humility and with tears and with trials** which came upon me through the plots of the Jews …

**2. Paul's personal history**

Paul was born and raised in a city called Tarsus.

Acts 9:11 And the Lord said to him, “Get up and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for **a man from Tarsus named Saul**, for he is praying,

'… Tarsus, the capital of the province of Cilicia.' Moule, Romans

**'Tarsus was valuable in preparing Paul to be the apostle to the Gentiles.'** Benware, p.158

Paul's religious background …

'His father was a Jew, a Benjamite, one of the great orthodox-patriotic party of the Pharisees … a 'Hebrew' … a maintainer of Hebrew customs … and a Roman citizen.' Moule, Romans

'Paul clearly claimed to be a Roman citizen (Acts 21:39) … Paul's Roman citizenship proved valuable as he travelled the Roman world preaching the Gospel.' Benware, p.158

Paul's zeal in action …

In Acts 7:58 we learned that Saul was present – kind of a passive participant, a witness – to the stoning of Stephen. But from what follows - we know that there was probably much more to Saul's presence there than as a mere bystander. In chapter eight, Saul's fury literally explodes upon the church (Acts 8:1-3, 9:1-2).

**But consider how badly Paul felt about his behavior in his later years – 1Ti 1:13-15).**

1 Timothy 1:13–15

:13 … **I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief**;

:14 and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus.

:15 It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that **Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all**.

**3. Paul's conversion and discipleship**

Acts 9:3-19

**Paul recounts his *testimony* – of his salvation and of his discipleship – in his letter to the Galatians.** [Students: in your reading through Galatians, pay special attention to the section – 1:11-2:21]

Paul's development, his training in Arabia and Damascus …

Acts 9:19b-30

**4. Paul's *Great* Missionary Journeys**

1. **13:1-15:35 Paul's 1st Missionary Journey – *Establishing* ministry**

**'… they began to proclaim the word of God …' (13:5)**

*Antioch and Selucia,* Syria(13:1, 4)

*Salamis and Paphos,* Cyprus (13:4-12)

*Perga,* Pamphilia(13:13)

*Antioch,* Pisidian(13:14-50)

*Iconium*, Lycoania (13:51-14:6)

*Lystra and Derbe,* Lycoania (13:8-20)

*Derbe, Lystra, Iconium,* Lycoania(13:6, 20-21)

*Antioch*, Pisidian(13:24)

*Perga and Attalia*, Pamphilia(13:24-25)

*Antioch*, Syria(13:26)

1. **15:36-18:22 Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey – *Expanding* ministry**

**'… immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God has called us to preach the gospel to them.' (16:10)**

Syria and Cilicia(15:41)

*Derbe and Lystra*, Lycoania (16:1)

Prygian and Galatian (16:6)

Mysia (16:7)

*Troas*, Mysia (16:8)

*Samothrace*, Thrace (16:11)

*Neapolis and Philippi*, Macedonia (16:12-40)

*Amphipolis, Appolonia and Thessalonica*, Macedonia (17:1-9)

*Berea*, Macedonia (17:10-15)

*Athens*, Greece (17:15-34)

*Corinth*, Greece (18:1-17)

*Cenchraea*, Greece (18:18)

Ephesus, Asia (18:19-21)

1. **18:23-21:16 Paul's 3rd Missionary Journey – *Encouraging* ministry**

**'… strengthening all the disciples.' (18:23)**

*Caesarea and Antioch*, Syria (18:22)

*Galatian*, Phrygia (18:23)

Ephesus (19:1-20:1)

Macedonia, Greece, Macedonia (20:2-3)

*Troas*, Mysia (20:6-12)

*Assos, Mitylene,* *Miletus* (20:13-38)

*Cos,* Mysia (21:1)

*Patara*, Lycia (21:1-3)

*Tyre, Ptolemais*, Syria (21:3, 7)

1. **21:17-26:32 Paul's "4th Missionary Journey" – *Examination* ministry**

**'Brethren and fathers, hear my defense which I now offer to you.' (22:1)**

Paul's witness in detention and trials

*Jerusalem*, Judea

1. **27:1-28:31 Paul's "5th Missionary Journey" – *Excursion* ministry**

**'… it was decided that we should sail for Italy …' (27:1)**

Paul's Mediterranean Cruise

*Sidon*, Syria(27:3)

*Myra*, Lycia(27:5)

*Malta* (28:1)

*Syracuse*, Sicily (28:12)

*Rhegium, Puteoli, Rome*, Italy (28:13-14)

1. **Acts 28:30-31** **Paul's Final "Missionary Journey" – *Execution ministry***

**I believe that there is ample Biblical support which shows that Paul enjoyed a brief release, additional ministry travels, re-arrest, and finally martyrdom.**

Near the end of Paul's 3rd Missionary Journey, Paul forecasted to his friends in Ephesus that he *may* never see them again …

Acts 20:25

And now, behold, I know that all of you,

among whom I went about preaching the kingdom,

will no longer see my face.

This is not a firm prophecy, but Paul's own sentiment at the moment …

'**We cannot be sure that the Apostle never again came to Ephesus**. For we learn … that, toward the close of his imprisonment at Rome, **he had hopes and the intention of visiting … Colossae**, and we can hardly think that, if he went to Colossae, he would fail on the way to stay at Ephesus …' Cambridge, Acts

Acts 28 ends with this open-ended but informative statement …

Acts 28:30–31

:30 And he stayed **two full years** in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him,

:31 preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ **with all openness, unhindered**.

But this summary does not square with statements made in 2nd Timothy.

'**The Roman residence closed in the course of A.D. 62**, probably in the summer. The question of how it closed – whether with condemnation to death, or acquittal – is a famous one.… **the result was Paul's acquittal; that he was set free, and once more undertook missionary labors; that he visited Western and Eastern Europe, and Asia Minor; and that, late in this last stage of his life, he wrote the Pastoral Epistles – in the order 1st Timothy, Titus, 2nd Timothy. This last and most affecting letter is dated once more from a prison, and from Rome.** It is our only [artifact] of Paul's **second Roman captivity, which ended in his martyrdom – probably A.D. 66** …' Cambridge, Romans

**'Paul was a prisoner in Rome when he wrote 2nd Timothy** [1:8, 16, 2:9' … **But 2nd Timothy cannot be grouped with the 'Prison Epistles**, which were written during Paul's imprisonment mentioned in Acts 28 … **The situation reflected in 2nd Timothy … points to a second Roman imprisonment** …' Hiebert, p.7

'… **the imprisonment recorded at the close of Acts is not the same as that indicated in the 2nd Epistle to Timothy** … Paul must have been set free from that earlier captivity … and engaged in a fresh series of missionary tours …' Lilley, p.10

Consider the chart comparing the two imprisonments …

**1st Imprisonment 2nd Imprisonment**

**kind treatment suffering as a criminal**

Acts 28:30 2 Ti. 1:16, 2:9

**surrounded by friends alone and abandoned**

Acts 28:17, Col. 4:10-14, Phil. 1:13-14 2 Ti. 1:15, 4:11

**expected to be released expecting to die**

Phil 1:25-26, 2:24 2 Ti. 4:6-8

'It seems plainly impossible to refuse assent to the ancient tradition that **Paul was *twice* imprisoned at Rome** … and further and that the First Epistle to Timothy and the other two Epistles which stand thus closely associated with it are to be assigned to the period between these two imprisonments.' Ellicott, p.xix

'It is as clear …

that he did revisit Asia …

2 Tim. 1:15 … all who are in Asia turned away from me …

and that visit included …

Troas – 2 Timothy 4:13 When you come bring the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments.

Miletus – 2 Timothy 4:20 Erastus remained at Corinth, but Trophimus I left sick at Miletus.

and in all probability Ephesus also ….' (Ellicott)

1 Timothy 1:3 As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines …

'**At the end of the two years [imprisonment at Rome]** **it is the general opinion that Paul was granted a trial before Nero which resulted in his acquittal and liberation. He then probably fulfilled his intention … of travelling** eastward through Macedonia and on to Ephesus, and thence to Colossae and Laodicea. From Asia Minor he went to Spain … where he remained two years. Returning to Asia Minor and Macedonia, he wrote the 1st Epistle to Timothy; to Crete, Epistle to Titus; winters at Nicopolis; **arrested there and forwarded to Rome for trial** (C&H's 'scheme' in Unger's) … **This [second] imprisonment was evidently more severe than the first one had been**. Now he is not only chained but treated 'as a malefactor' (2nd Tim. 2:9).

2 Timothy 2:8-9

:8 Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel, :9 for which **I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal**; but the word of God is not imprisoned.

Most of his friends left him … So perilous was it to show any public sympathy with him that **no Christian ventured to stand by him in the court of justice**. As the final stage of his trial approaches he looks forward to death as his final sentence (2nd Tim. 4:6-8).' Unger's

2 Timothy 4:6–8

**:6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. :7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; :8 in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.**

**5. His Writing Ministry**

See: ***'Chronological Order of the Writing of Paul's Epistles''***