

Peter states that they did all these things out of ignorance and that **IF** they repented and turned to Christ (Acts 3:17-18), then God would send Christ the Messiah back to them and set up the Kingdom on earth (Acts 3:19-20).

However, the book of Acts records for us the sad story of how the Jews rejected this Kingdom offer (Acts 13:46, 18:6; 28:28), blasphemed the Holy Spirit's miraculous powers and did not turn to Christ (Hebrews 10:29). It is interesting to note that the ministry of the twelve apostles slowly diminished as they were persecuted and scattered.

Now Plan 2 comes into Operation. Christ from heaven, saves Paul and reveals to him his secret plan to *'call out of the Gentiles a people for his name'* (Acts 15:14). They will not inherit the earth, but will be given a home in heaven at His right hand (Philippians 3:20-21).

Now a huge change takes place. Think of it! If the twelve apostles were chosen and given the commission to take the gospel to the whole world, then **WHY PAUL?** Why does God save and call Paul to take the Gospel to the Gentiles? It's quite simple really! God, in his wonderful foreknowledge, knew that Israel would reject Christ as their King and the Kingdom offered by the twelve apostles. So God had **Plan 2** ready to introduce as Paul explains in Ephesians 3. (Cp. Eph. 1:1-5; 3:8-11).

It was a new dispensation in which God, in grace, offered salvation to all mankind without any preference to the Jewish nation and their earthly Kingdom hopes.

Paul goes to great length to explain this in Romans 9 - 11. The Jews, as a nation, rejected Christ and were temporarily set aside and God

started the Church, called the Body of Christ.

This is 'WHY PAUL'. God chose Paul to be 'the apostle' to the Gentiles (Rom. 11:13). Paul is given the revelation about this new plan and purpose of God, which completed the Biblical canon (Eph. 3, Col. 1:24-27). Note the words 'fill up' in (Col.1:25) which mean 'to complete the Bible'. If God had not given Paul the revelation about this church age, we would have a 2000 year gap of time missing in the Bible.

We are in the dispensation or age of 'grace' (Eph. 3:1-5), where all believers in Christ are members of this Heavenly Church. There are no Jewish restrictions on this group. Salvation is by grace through faith alone. All are sealed by the Spirit into Christ and given the promise that He will come and take them to heaven before the tribulation days begin on earth and before Christ comes to save his Jewish people and set up his Kingdom on earth.

Now we understand: 'Why Paul?'

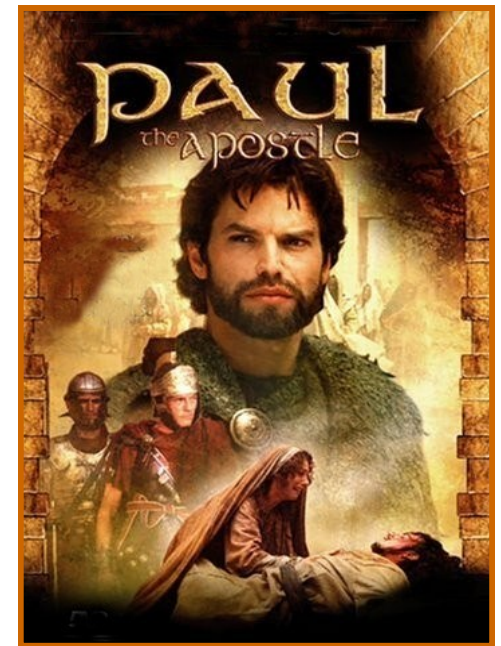
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- John 8:36
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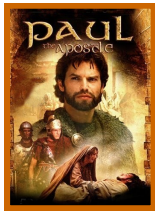
WHY PAUL ?
Part 1 of 2



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WHY PAUL?

Part One

Understanding Paul's Ministry

What I am about to share with you is nothing new. It may not be talked about very much these days, but is in the Bible and God expects us to know about it.

Recently, someone asked me some very important questions. "Since the Lord Jesus chose his disciples to take the gospel to the whole world, (Matthew 28:19-20) then WHY PAUL? Why was Paul chosen to take the gospel to the Gentile world? (Acts 26:17-18) Did the twelve apostles fail?"

In order to answer questions like these, it is necessary to apply the Biblical principle of 'rightly dividing' the word of truth (2Timothy 2:15). In other words it is important to recognise the different plans and purposes of God down through the epochs of time. God has revealed his will progressively to mankind in differing stages of time, (Hebrews 1:1-3) with detailed instruction. The Bible calls at least one of these a 'dispensation' (Ephesians 3:2 - KJV).

We are familiar with the division of the O.T. and N.T. books in our Bible. We know things changed drastically before and after the flood of Noah's day.

We have heard about Moses dispensing God's Law to Israel (Exodus 19 -20) and that the NT informs us that mankind is now God's new Grace dispensation (John 1:17, Romans 6:14-15).

Recognising God's Plans For the sake of simplicity, it may help if we think of a set of plans. We can call them God's blueprints or

plans for mankind. The Bible says that "*Every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything*" (Hebrews 3:4).

The Bible clearly reveals God's purposes and plans as something He decided upon "*before the creation of the world*" (Romans 16:25; 1Corinthians 2:7; Ephesians 1:4; 2Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2; 1Peter 1:19-20).

God's overall will has always been to have a redeemed people who would praise and glorify his name (Psalms 71:22-23; 96-97; 100). The unfolding of this plan revealed that God spoke of two specific plans for two different groups.

Plan 1 - This involves the redeemed who will inherit earth (Psalm 69:35-36) and live under the reign of King Jesus in his Kingdom on earth (Matthew 5:5, 6:10; 19:27-28; 25:34).

This plan includes God choosing the Nation of Israel as His servants (Deut. 6-8; Ex. 19) through whom King Jesus, the Messiah will rule the world for 1,000 years. The twelve disciples were selected to be administrators in that future Kingdom on earth (Matt. 19:27-28).

Plan 2 involves a redeemed group who will inherit a home in the Heavenly places, where God sits on His throne (Eph. 2:6-7; Col. 3:1-5; Phil. 3:19-20). They will be taken out of this world before the 7 year Tribulation time and before Christ returns to earth to set up his Kingdom on earth.

The Two Plans Explain - 'Why Paul?'

When we understand these two distinct purposes of God, then we realise the reason for Paul and then the Bible makes sense.

The Old Testament teaches us that God chose Israel as his special nation through whom the world would be blessed (Gen. 12:1-3; Rom. 9:4-5). The OT is full of prophecies that Messiah would come to Israel and establish His kingdom among them (Psa. 2, Isa. 2, 11).

The King and Kingdom was Offered To Israel When Jesus came and chose his disciples, he sent them out to proclaim to Israel that the King and his Kingdom were at hand. This gospel of the promised Kingdom to Israel was to be shared with Jews first (Matt. 10: 6) and was authenticated by signs, miracles and wonders (Matt. 10: 7-10).

Though Jesus proclaimed this plan of God through the ministry of the twelve (Matt. 10:23; 16:27-28), the Jews responded by rejecting their Messiah and having him crucified.

The King and Kingdom Re-Offered After the resurrection of Jesus, he met with his disciples and gave them the commission to take the gospel of the Kingdom into all the world (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16: 15-18; Luke 24:46-48), beginning first at Jerusalem (Acts 1:8).

Then Jesus ascended to heaven and the Holy Spirit came upon them and empowered them to witness to the resurrected Christ. In Acts 3:13 -15, Peter charges the Jews with their wicked crime of crucifying Jesus. He points out their guilt in clear and precise detail: "*You handed Jesus over to be killed*" (v.13). "*You disowned the Holy and Righteous One*" (v.13,14). "*You killed the author of life*" (v. 15). Then he said, "*God raised him from the dead and we are witnesses of this*" (v.16).