

# Why Paul?

## Introduction

This two-word question is the most important question in New Testament studies. It is not an overstatement to say that without a correct answer to this question little can be understood of Christianity. The whole doctrine of ecclesiology, God's creation of the Church, the body of Christ, rests in the balance of this question. In terms of Biblical revelation, it ranks in importance with God's call of Abraham and the giving of the Mosaic Law.

The vast majority of Christendom view Paul simply as an extension of the Twelve. Some have gone so far as to say that Peter and the other apostles were wrong to choose Matthias to replace Judas—they should have waited for Paul to fill the vacancy left by Judas. They view Paul as the legitimate 12th apostle. The problem with a view is that the Biblical record does not support it.

## Jesus' Earthly Ministry and the Twelve

The Lord Jesus Christ came to present Himself as the Messiah-King to Israel. The Scriptures reveal detailed information about the events surrounding His birth and these provide the meaning of His ministry. The angel declared to Mary:

<sup>30</sup>The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup>And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. <sup>32</sup>He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; <sup>33</sup>and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end" (Luke 1.30-33).

The angel's announcement fulfilled what the prophets had foretold for hundreds of years. The Jews longed for a righteous king to deliver them from the heel of Gentile domination and to give them a kingdom. This king and kingdom would fulfill Moses' prophecy and God's promise that Israel would be "the head and not the tail" (Deuteronomy 28.13). Mary responded to this glorious news in what is called the Magnificat:

<sup>46</sup> *And Mary said: "My soul exalts the Lord,*

<sup>47</sup> *And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.*

<sup>48</sup> *"For He has had regard for the humble state of His bondservant; For behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed.*

<sup>49</sup> *"For the Mighty One has done great things for me; And holy is His name.*

<sup>50</sup> *"And His mercy is upon generation after generation toward those who fear Him.*

<sup>51</sup> *"He has done mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their heart.*

<sup>52</sup> *"He has brought down rulers from their thrones, and has exalted those who were humble.*

<sup>53</sup> *"He has filled the hungry with good things; and sent away the rich empty-handed.*

<sup>54</sup> *"He has given help to Israel His servant, in remembrance of His mercy,*

<sup>55</sup> *As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his descendants forever" (Luke 1.46-55).*

Everything in Mary's exaltation recalled the covenant promises God had made with the nation of Israel since God had called Abraham. Zechariah, the father of John the Baptizer, made a similar declaration following the birth of his son:

<sup>67</sup> And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying:

<sup>68</sup> “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people,

<sup>69</sup> And has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David His servant—

<sup>70</sup> As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old—

<sup>71</sup> Salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us;

<sup>72</sup> To show mercy toward our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant,

<sup>73</sup> The oath which He swore to Abraham our father,

<sup>74</sup> To grant us that we, being rescued from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear,

<sup>75</sup> In holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.

<sup>76</sup> “And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; For you will go on before the Lord to prepare His ways;

<sup>77</sup> To give to His people the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins,

<sup>78</sup> Because of the tender mercy of our God, with which the Sunrise from on high will visit us,

<sup>79</sup> To shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace” (Luke 1.67-79).

The emphasis of these declarations was upon God’s covenant and prophetic promises to national ISRAEL. The long anticipated KING and KINGDOM were finally at hand. This was understood fully by the prophet John the Baptist in his message to the nation. Matthew recorded:

<sup>1</sup> Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the

wilderness of Judea, saying, <sup>2</sup> “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3.1-2).

The Lord Himself proclaimed this message:

<sup>12</sup> Now when Jesus heard that John had been taken into custody, He withdrew into Galilee; <sup>13</sup> and leaving Nazareth, He came and settled in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. <sup>14</sup> This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: <sup>15</sup> “The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles— <sup>16</sup> “The people who were sitting in darkness saw a great Light, And those who were sitting in the land and shadow of death, Upon them a Light dawned.” <sup>17</sup> From that time Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 4.12-17).

One thing worth notice in these passages is that little is mentioned in reference to salvation from sin. At first blush, this may be surprising. But upon reflection, it is not. While hundreds of passages in the Old Testament declared God’s establishment of His kingdom for Israel only one passage spoke of how He would deal with sin—and it was not understood. This was Isaiah 53:

<sup>4</sup> Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup> But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed. <sup>6</sup> All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him (Isaiah

53.4-6).

. . .

<sup>12</sup> *Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, and He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors (Isaiah 53.12).*

The focus of Jesus' ministry was the nation of Israel (Romans 15.8). He commanded His disciples *not* to go to Gentiles (Matthew 10.5-7). He Himself had no dealings with them except for His encounter with the Canaanite woman (Matthew 15.21-28; Mark 7.24-30) and the Roman centurion (Matthew 8.5-13; Luke 7.1-10).<sup>1</sup>

### God's Prophetic Plan

A reasonable question to raise is why Jesus did not minister to Gentiles and ordered His disciples to avoid them. For 2,000 years God dealt with the human race as a whole. However, in 2,000 B.C., following the Flood and the Tower of Babel, God began a new plan. God created a new race of people through whom He determined to reveal Himself: the Jews. God initiated this plan with His call of Abram. Abraham became the progenitor of the Jewish people and God established covenants with the new race. The first and foundational covenant was the Abrahamic Covenant. In this covenant, God promised Abram (Abraham) a land, that he would become a great nation, and blessings. Through this new people (the Jews) God declared "all the families of the earth will be blessed" (Genesis 12.3 cf. Genesis 15).

As time progressed, God gave Israel more covenant promises communicated through His prophets. God's prophetic plan to Israel was simple in concept. What they understood was the

following: 1) the Messiah would come, 2) the Messiah would suffer, 3) God would pour His wrath upon the earth and judge the nations, 4) the Messiah would reign as King in a kingdom. God's kingdom would be worldwide but centered in Jerusalem, ruled by the Messiah. God would fulfill all His promises to Israel during this kingdom period. Israel would be preeminent among the nations of the world (Deuteronomy 28.1, 13) and Gentile nations would look to Israel for guidance and be blessed through them (Isaiah 2.2, 42.1, 6, 49.6, 60.3, 61.6, 62.2; Zechariah 8.22-23). Psalm 2 provided the earliest and most succinct summary of God's prophetic plan for Israel.<sup>2</sup>

A major point of note is that God had NO revealed plan to bless Gentiles apart from Israel's acceptance of their Messiah and the establishment of His kingdom. Also, God revealed nothing of a Church in which Jew and Gentile would be equal.

### The 12th Apostle

The Eleven apostles recognized the horrific disaster the nation had perpetrated with the crucifixion of Jesus. They recognized He was the Messiah, the Son of God (Matthew 16.16). Miraculously, however, He had arisen from the dead. Hope for the nation remained—if they would repent. If they did, the Messiah would return and establish His kingdom. This was the message Peter preached in his sermons in Acts 2-3.

Foremost in the minds of the Eleven was the kingdom (Acts 1.6). The Lord had promised the Twelve that they would rule the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19.28). Replacement of the 12th apostle (as a result of Judas' treachery and subsequent suicide) was therefore critical. If the kingdom was to come, the nation must have 12 apostles. Luke recorded the selection process:

<sup>21</sup> *Therefore it is necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and*

*out among us—<sup>22</sup> beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us—one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.”<sup>23</sup> So they put forward two men, Joseph called Barsabbas (who was also called Justus), and Matthias.<sup>24</sup> And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all men, show which one of these two You have chosen<sup>25</sup> to occupy this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.”<sup>26</sup> And they drew lots for them, and the lot fell to Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles (Acts 1.21-26).*

We read that “all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with *the* women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers” (Acts 1.14). The selection criteria were that candidates had to be men who had accompanied them all the time during the Lord’s ministry beginning with the baptism of John until His ascension and be a witness to His resurrection. Did Saul of Tarsus meet these qualifications? Hardly. Notice they prayed and asked the Lord to make the choice. The matter of casting lots was well established in Israel’s history with the Urim and Thummim (1 Samuel 28.6) and in other instances to determine God’s will (cf. Leviticus 16.8; Joshua 18.6, 8, 10; 1 Chronicles 24.31; Proverbs 16.33). Therefore, the apostles were correct in doing what they did. They prayed about their decision and left the results to God.<sup>3</sup> This resulted in the choice of Matthias as the legitimate successor to Judas.

## Peter’s Sermons

On the day of Pentecost, following the advent of the Holy Spirit, which the Lord Jesus had instructed them to await (Acts 1.5, 8), Peter preached his first sermon. Whom did Peter address? He addressed Jews only (Acts 2.14, 22, 29, 36, 39). Peter laid the blame for the Messiah’s crucifixion squarely on

them (Acts 2.23, 36) and demanded they repent from their sin (Acts 2.38). Peter preached the crucifixion—not as good news but as bad news—something that required Israel’s repentance. Furthermore, for the prophesied kingdom to come, *every single Jew had to repent*. Peter made this point quite clear: “let all the house of Israel know” (Acts 2.36) and “Repent and every one of you be baptized . . .” (Acts 2.38).

Peter’s second sermon reiterated the above message. He declared,

*<sup>17</sup> “And now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also. <sup>18</sup> But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. <sup>19</sup> Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; <sup>20</sup> and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, <sup>21</sup> whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time (Acts 3.17-21).*

In commanding the nation to repent, Peter made it clear that if they did, God would establish His kingdom, i.e., “the times of refreshing” and the “restoration of all things.” Peter appealed to the nation on the basis of the prophets and the covenants, especially reminding them of the Abrahamic covenant, “and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Acts 3.25). Again, Peter knew but one plan—God’s prophetic plan for Israel. And in this plan, the **ONLY** basis for Gentile blessing was through Israel. The nation **MUST** repent for the kingdom to come and for the covenants to be fulfilled.

National Failure



We know from Acts that the nation refused to repent. Most regard Acts as the record of the birth of the Church. But that is to miss Luke's purpose. Luke's primary purpose was not to record the birth of the Church but to document the failure of national Israel. Acts is a bridge from the kingdom program revealed in the Old Testament and Gospels to Paul. Acts began with great promise for Israel. They had crucified their Messiah. But He had risen from the dead. Hope was revived! If the nation repented, God would establish His kingdom and fulfill his covenants. The advent of the Holy Spirit was God's evidence of this possibility. But Acts ends in great disappointment. Luke recorded:

*<sup>23</sup> When they had set a day for Paul, they came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening. <sup>24</sup> Some were being persuaded by the things spoken, but others would not believe. <sup>25</sup> And when they did not agree with one another, they began leaving after Paul had spoken one parting word, "The Holy Spirit rightly spoke through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers, <sup>26</sup> saying, 'Go to this people and say, "You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; and you will keep on seeing, but will not perceive; <sup>27</sup> For the heart of this people has become dull, and with their ears they scarcely hear, and they have closed their eyes; Otherwise they might see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and return, and I would heal them."' <sup>28</sup> Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will also listen" (Acts 28.23-28).*

Paul's statement to the Jews in Rome was the third time he had warned them about turning from them to the Gentiles (Acts

13.46, 18.6; cf. Romans 1.16-17). This is the last time we hear such language from him. After this, he made no further overtures to national Israel.

The Lord had revealed to Paul that the Jews would not listen to him. But Paul had such a love for his people that he desperately wished to convince them Jesus was the Messiah (Romans 9.1-5). After all, he had been the leader of the opposition! Surely, if he had reversed his course, they could. But the nation's fate had been sealed in Acts 7 at the trial of Stephen. No real chance for national repentance existed after the Sanhedrin murdered Stephen. Paul addressed the Jews:

*<sup>17</sup> "It happened when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I fell into a trance, <sup>18</sup> and I saw Him saying to me, 'Make haste, and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about Me.' <sup>19</sup> And I said, 'Lord, they themselves understand that in one synagogue after another I used to imprison and beat those who believed in You. <sup>20</sup> And when the blood of Your witness Stephen was being shed, I also was standing by approving, and watching out for the coats of those who were slaying him.' <sup>21</sup> And He said to me, 'Go! For I will send you far away to the Gentiles'" (Acts 22.17-21).*

## God and Saul of Tarsus

Jesus had chosen twelve apostles in His earthly ministry. Why did He need another? As stated above, this question is the most important question of New Testament studies. If one understands the answer to this question the Bible will make sense. Without an understanding of this, the Bible is contradictory and confusing.

As we have seen, God had NO revealed plan to bless Gentiles apart from Israel. But blessing Gentiles was a key component

of God's prophetic plan which He initiated with Abraham (cf. Isaiah 42.1, 49.6, 60.1-3; Zechariah 8.22-23). How could Gentiles be blessed if the Jews refused to repent and accept their Messiah? How could the Great Commission of Matthew 28.16-20, given by the Lord Jesus Christ, be fulfilled apart from Israel? The answer is—it could not.

Israel was prophesied to be God's agent to bless Gentiles. When it became clear the Jewish nation would not repent (Acts 7), God did something completely unexpected. He saved Saul of Tarsus. As a result, Saul (Paul) assumed the role as the agent of blessing Gentiles in lieu of national Israel (1 Corinthians 15.8). The Lord chose the Twelve during His ministry on earth. He chose Saul from heaven. As such, Paul was an apostle of an entirely different order than the Twelve. The Lord commissioned Paul to minister to Gentiles entirely apart from Israel and the ministry of the Twelve (Acts 9.15, 22.21; Romans 11.13; Ephesians 3.1).

God's salvation of Saul of Tarsus is the single most important event of the book of Acts. God the Holy Spirit gave us more information about this event than any other. We have three accounts of it: Acts 9.1-19, 22.1-21, 26.1-23. God repeats for a reason: we are to take notice—it is important. When God chose Paul He created a whole new plan—something He had not done for 2,000 years. Through Paul, Gentiles would be blessed *apart from* national Israel. This was not possible under the covenanted, prophetic program God had begun with Abraham. Paul explained national Israel's present status in Romans 9-11. Paul wrote:

*<sup>25</sup> For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; <sup>26</sup> and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, “The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob.”*

<sup>27</sup> *"This is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins."* <sup>28</sup> *From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers;* <sup>29</sup> *for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.* <sup>30</sup> *For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience,* <sup>31</sup> *so these also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy.* <sup>32</sup> *For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all (Romans 11.25-32).*

Paul declared Israel's hardening or blindness was a secret (μυστήριον) God had kept hidden. God had revealed nothing in the Old Testament about Israel rejecting her Messiah with the result that He would make a new creation (the Church, the body of Christ) in which Jew and Gentile were equal. The idea of Jew and Gentile being equal was totally and completely *alien* to Jewish thinking. While Israel was to be the agent of blessing to Gentiles nothing in the Old Testament, nothing in the Gospels, nothing spoken by Peter or any other of the Twelve indicated *equality*. That truth was revealed only by Paul.

Paul revealed a "partial" hardening had happened to Israel *until* the "fullness of the Gentiles" was complete. That "fullness" is the completion of the Church, the body of Christ. After this, God will again deal with national Israel. The result will be "all Israel will be saved." The observant student should recall Peter's words to the nation in his sermons. How many had to repent? All of them. The entire nation. It did not happen. But it will. Every single Jew living on earth (at the end of the Tribulation) will repent and recognize Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God. In the passage above, Paul reminded the Jews that God would fulfill

His promise to remove their ungodliness and take away their sins. God is sovereign and keeps His promises. Paul expressed this truth by declaring that the “gifts and calling of God are irrevocable.” While that generation of Jews contemporary with Jesus failed, a future generation will not. When they say, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord” (Matthew 23.37-39 cf. Zechariah 12.10) the Lord will return and be their Savior.

### Paul's Special Mission

God commissioned Paul as “the apostle of the Gentiles” (Romans 11.13). As we have seen, the Twelve never had a ministry to Gentiles. Following the Council of Jerusalem, Paul and the Twelve formalized an agreement that they would go to the Jew and Paul would go to the Gentiles (Galatians 2.7-9). Time and again Paul declared his divine authority as the Apostle to the Gentiles to preach the “gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20.24). Let the reader consider these verses: Acts 9.15, 13.46-47, 14.27, 15.3, 12, 18.6, 21.19, 22.21, 26.16-18; Romans 1.13, 11.13, 15.16; Galatians 2.2, 7-8; Ephesians 3.1, 8; 1 Timothy 2.7; 2 Timothy 1.10-11, 4.17. Did any of the other apostles ever say anything like this? Never.

The outcome of the Council of Jerusalem in 51 A.D. is greatly revealing. The reason it was required was to decide the issue of whether Gentiles could be saved apart from circumcision and the keeping of the Mosaic Law (Acts 15.1, 5). The members of the Council were going behind Paul and teaching his converts that they were not really saved by believing Paul's gospel: that Christ died for them and arose from the dead (1 Corinthians 15.1-4). They taught that to be saved one must become circumcised and keep the Mosaic Law. Paul argued that according to the gospel he had received from the risen Lord one was saved by believing his gospel (1 Corinthians 15.1-4) and nothing else, that is, by faith alone. On several occasions Paul called this gospel *his* gospel (Romans 2.16, 16.25; Galatians 2.2; 2 Timothy 2.8). He called it this

because it was. The Twelve knew *nothing* of it until Paul revealed it to them. This is clear from the account in Acts 15. The gospel the Twelve and those who came out of the Jerusalem church preached required keeping the Mosaic Law. They knew *nothing* of salvation by faith alone. This may be shocking but is what the text says. After much argument, Peter, (who had lost much of his authority to James), finally spoke and recounted how he had gone to the Roman centurion Cornelius' house by divine revelation. He recalled that Cornelius and his family, Gentiles, had been saved apart from circumcision and Law-keeping. In conclusion, Peter made a startling declaration. Luke recorded:

*<sup>7</sup> After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe. <sup>8</sup> And God, who knows the heart, testified to them giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us; <sup>9</sup> and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. <sup>10</sup> Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? <sup>11</sup> But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are" (Acts 15.7-11).*

Most people do not know these verses are in their Bibles. Peter had declared, "But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are." Do you grasp Peter's words? He was saying, "Paul is right; we are wrong." But more than this, he declared that the gospel they (the Twelve) had been preaching was *over*. It was Paul's gospel from then on. Imagine! What a change! According to the gospel of the kingdom, salvation required faith and works. Now, Peter declared Jews had to be saved like

Gentiles—according to Paul's gospel. This was almost incomprehensible for a Jew. Jews had to be saved like Gentiles? Gentiles didn't had to be save like Jews? Revolutionary! This explains why Paul wrote what he did to the Galatians following the Jerusalem Council (circa 55-57 A.D):

*<sup>6</sup> I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; <sup>7</sup> which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. <sup>8</sup> But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! <sup>9</sup> As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed! (Galatians 1.6-9).*

These are strong words. Paul could not have written such words prior to the Council of Jerusalem. His statement declared that the gospel the Twelve preached was over. Now there was but one gospel—HIS gospel (Romans 2.16; 16.25; Galatians 1.11-12, 2.2, 7; 2 Timothy 2.8; Titus 1.3). Paul declared if anyone preached a different gospel than his, he was accursed. In plain language, Paul meant they were doomed to hell.

## Conclusion

Jesus commissioned twelve perfectly good apostles. Why did He need a thirteenth? While most of Christendom believes Paul was merely an extension of the Twelve, the Scriptures reveal a different story. Paul's contact with the Twelve was extremely limited (Galatians 1.1, 11-12, 15-19). If he was merely an extension, logically, the first thing God would have done was send him to the Twelve for instruction. But God sent him to the desert. The Scriptures provide a vast amount of evidence that Paul was an apostle of a different order who taught doctrines unknown by the Twelve. Paul called these doctrines

“secrets” (μυστήριον).

God’s program with Israel reached an impasse with their refusal to repent and accept Jesus as the Messiah. This became evident in Acts 7, with the Sanhedrin’s stoning of Stephen. God had two choices: 1) to pour out His wrath (the Day of the Lord) which was part of the Old Testament prophetic program or 2) something else. He chose door number 2. That “something else” was the salvation of Paul and the establishment of the age of grace.

When God commissioned Paul as “the apostle to the Gentiles” He gave him the “gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20.24). God revealed doctrines to Paul that He had given no one else. Paul referred to these revelations as “secrets.”<sup>4</sup> As a result, Paul is *our* apostle, the apostle of the Church, the body of Christ. The Twelve knew *nothing* of the Church, the body of Christ, in which Jew and Gentile are equal in Christ. Why? Because God did not reveal it to them. What they came to learn about the Church, they learned from Paul, who received it from the risen, glorified Lord. You can read your whole Bible and find no mention of the body of Christ by anyone but Paul. Even at the end of his life, Peter found Paul’s doctrines difficult to grasp (2 Peter 3.14-16). God commanded us to follow Paul not Peter, not James, not John, etc. (1 Corinthians 4.6, 11.1; Philippians 3.7; 1 Thessalonians 1.6; 2 Thessalonians 3.7, 9). Paul is our apostle, the apostle of the Gentiles. To grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, in this age of grace, it is essential to understand that Paul’s apostleship to Gentiles was unique, that he is our apostle, and that it is he who reveals God’s doctrines for us.

<sup>1</sup> Luke’s account revealed Jesus did not have direct contact with the centurion but spoke with Jewish proxies from the centurion.

<sup>2</sup> See the author’s study on [Messiah’s Advent and the Church](#).



<sup>3</sup> We should note the Biblical record gives no hint of sin among the apostles in the early chapters of Acts.

<sup>4</sup> See the author's study, [Paul's Mystery](#) for an explanation of these revelations.

©2012 Don Samdahl. Anyone is free to reproduce this material and distribute it, but it may not be sold.