

Walking with Paul through the New Testament by his life and pen

Introduction

Some of the common questions people ask about Jesus are: "Who is Jesus Christ?", "Why should I know about him?" and "Is it worthy to follow him?" You also may have similar questions in your mind. Saul was a staunch enemy against the early Church. However, when he first encountered Jesus, he asked the same question, "Who are you?" This question led him to have a great change and transformation in his life. He became a new man and later became one of the great apostles of Jesus Christ.

Jesus' teaching about this new "Supernatural" Birth.

John 3:3-3-8 Jesus answered and said to him, "**Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.**" Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

The Beginning: Paul's [Saul of Tarsus] "new birth" Experience. Saul of Tarsus is supernaturally "born again" and became a "new creation" on this day.

- 2 Corinthians 5:16-18 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, **he is a new creation**; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.
- Acts 9:3-6 As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" 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." 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."
- "Therefore whoever **confesses Me before men**, him **I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven**. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 10:32-33)

The Middle Years: The “heat of the day, walking heavenward, one step at a time.

- Matthew 16:24 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. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.
- Matthew 5:11-12 **Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you**, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. **Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven**, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.
- John 15:19-21 If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but **I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you**. Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ **If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you**. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me.

Paul’s life shows us how to live in a world that hates Jesus:

- 2 Corinthians 11:24-29 From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness— besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation?
- Acts 17:12 Therefore **many of them believed**, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men.
- Acts 18:8-10 Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And **many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized**. Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, “Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city.”

- Acts 19:17-19 This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver.

The Sweet End: How did Paul end his life? A joint-heir with Christ Jesus over all the Universe!

- 2 Timothy 4:8 Finally, **there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness**, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and **not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing**.
- Romans 8:14-17 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that **we are children of God**, and if children, then heirs—**heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ**, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.
- Romans 8:18-19 For I consider that the **sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory** which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.
- Romans 8:31-39 What then shall we say to these things? **If God is for us, who can be against us?** He who did not spare His own Son, but **delivered Him up for us all**, how shall He not with Him also **freely give us all things**? Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: “For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” Yet in all these things **we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us**. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, **shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord**

Here, in Paul's life, we see an illustration of how he followed Jesus closely and lived as a faithful disciple of Jesus by obeying his teaching. This journey through life as one who loves Jesus Christ looks the same for all people in every generation until Jesus returns to take His followers to heaven. The Holy Spirit through Paul the Apostle left on record for all to see what a follower / disciple of Jesus Christ looks like in a world that hates God.

So, you think you would like to know Jesus and follow Him? Well, what will that look like in your day by day life? If you are willing, we have written a few lesson / essays from the Life of Paul which clearly illustrates what the life of one who loves Jesus Christ looks like.

We can assure you along with Paul that your decision to love and follow Jesus Christ will be the most fulfilling, rewarding, encouraging and thrilling experience any human being can ever have. We have lived many years and have grown old. In all of our years we have NEVER once heard anyone declare: "I am sorry and regret that I gave my life to follow and love Jesus Christ." At the end of natural life of a Christ follower is marked by this great truth: "The more that I love Jesus, the sweeter He became to me."

We all MUST answer these questions while we are alive: Who is Jesus Christ? Is He worthy of ALL my love and can I trust Him with ALL my life?

Apostle John says, "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God [Jesus Christ], that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God (1 John 5:13). Writing these lessons about Paul for you is our small attempt to join you on your "road to heaven" and a way for us to wish you, "Godspeed!"

Dear child of God, as you read this book, with an open heart and mind be ready to hear the Holy Spirit's "gentle whisper or small voice in your heart" and write it down what the Holy Spirit tells you about Jesus. An exciting and inspiring journey awaits for you.

All our love to All

Your fellow-travelers in Christ

Jon+Phillis