

PURIFICATION OF PAUL'S EARTHLY AMBITION

At the beginning of the last days (Heb 1:2), the Lord Jesus Himself (Gal 2:11-12) met with Paul, giving him the most complete revelation/explanation of God's plan & the scriptures ever given to mankind. The divine revelation from Jesus Himself & Paul's trip to heaven became the Pauline paradigm of God's plan in 13 New Testament books.

His writings are essential to understand how all the scriptures fit together & how they all point to Christ.

1. Knowledge of God's plan understood/believed is the essential starting point of God's plan for mankind.

- Salvation & Security – Spiritual baby → spiritual adult Believer
- Spiritual growth – inhale of Categorical Bible Doctrine forming the big picture of God's plan and the Angelic Conflict
- Transformation – Renewing the mind/belief systems – Baby → Adult → Maturity → Super Grace
 - Construct New Man belief system – determined hunger for grace & Categorical Bible Doctrine fed in bible class
 - Awareness of Old Man belief system – purification of Old Man beliefs & behaviors
- Spiritual Alertness & Awareness - remove habituated Old Man beliefs, replace with & habituate New Man beliefs

2. Despite Paul's superior knowledge of God's plan, he remained vulnerable to his Old Man motives, his desire for recognition from his peers. Act 21 – Phil 3

- Paul's writings before and after his Acts 21 Jerusalem experience handle the issue differently
- Rom 6, 12 – no mention of taking off Old Man beliefs; Eph 4; Col 3 – take off Old Man beliefs/behaviors

3. Paul's ambition, his desire for recognition from the other apostles (Old Man dream) caused him to reject God's warning and attempt a compromise with believing Jews still under the Mosaic Law.

- Act 21:10-14 – Agabus warns him that he will be imprisoned
- Act 21:21-26 – Paul assists Jewish believers to make a vow in the temple

Profile – Paul

Saul of Tarsus, named after the first king of Israel, a man of great physical stature cp Paul's small figure of a man, renamed Paul meaning "Little One" supposedly indicating his humility as he compared himself with Christ;

Tarsus – an educational center of Roman empire cp with Athens; Act 22:28 Roman citizen giving him position & prominence anywhere in the Roman world; Act 23:6 Pharisee, son of a Pharisee – family strict adherence to the rituals of the Law, circumcised 8th day blameless under the law Phil 3:5-6; Act 22:3 – age 13 sent to Jerusalem to study under the great Gamaliel, whose warning in Act 5:34-39 Paul rejected; Act 7:9

Member of Synagogue of Freedmen, Sanhedrin who debated with Stephen; Act 8: 1-3 fully agreed with execution of Stephen, 26:10-11 caused torture and execution of many men & women (3x), trying make them abandon their faith; 9:13 – he was famous for his cruelty and torture of Christians.

1Cor 9:2 am I not an apostle? If not to others, then at least to you.

2Cor 12:11 resentment because the Corinthians failed to give him proper credit? – he writes this about AD 56, 1 year before he is arrested in Jerusalem AD 57.

4. Saul of Tarsus was highly intelligent, deeply educated and very ambitious for success & recognition

- He made himself very visible in all his endeavors – persecuting the church or preaching Christ
- He appears to be hurt or upset that the churches didn't readily identify him as an apostle
- He compromised revelation given to him by Jesus to get along with legalists in Jerusalem church

5. Judgmental, rule keeper personality – keep life orderly & care for the boundaries.

Everything not acceptable must be judged & condemned; easily become cruel and inflexible. Rejected the counsel of his teacher Gamaliel to wait on the Lord to judge the new faith.

6. His ambition to be recognized was a strategy of his Old Man belief system – needed to be discarded

- The desire for approbation and recognition is a normal and appropriate desire for praise.
- OSN hijacks our normal desire for recognition turning it into a method for gaining happiness
- We form a belief – form an image of success and we use inner dialogue to guide us toward it.

Paul's Image: being received and accepted into the fellowship by the Jewish apostles; praised for his understanding & hard work spreading the gospel and the church among the gentiles. He wanted his people the Jews to accept Jesus as the Messiah, seeing their acceptance as his fulfillment.

Act 21:4-14 Paul ignores the word of the Spirit through bel's in Tyre & the prophet Agabus
Vs 4 Warning – don't set foot in Jerusalem
Vs 10-11 Agabus – used Paul's belt to bind his own hands and feet

7. Paul rejected the Spirit's warnings by justifying himself as willing to suffer for Christ

Act 21:13-14 – I am willing to be bound or even die – refused to be persuaded they went silent
He was willing to suffer any adversity, telling himself that his motive was to serve the Lord.
Underneath his desire to further the gospel was his desire to be recognized for his genius

- In reversionism, we replace listening/submitting to God with our own justifications
- We come up with our own

Act 21:20-24 – Jerusalem church still teaching new believer's that they must believe and then keep the law
Paul taught correctly that the Law was ended, legalistic believers were confused by false teaching
James: compromise the truth so that you can appeal to these legalistic bel's, keep unity

8. Paul's desire for Jewish approval and perhaps fear of disapproval motivated his compromise of truth

- Paul knew better than anyone that the Nazarite vow of these new bel's was worthless – wrong
- His desire for acceptance by his own people rather than who he was in Christ drove his actions
- Image of acceptance & inner dialogue had silenced the image/inner voice of the Spirit

9. It was through this experience of failing victim to his own earthly ambition that Paul learned that despite his superior knowledge that he still had to be purified of his Old Man beliefs & habits.

AD 54-56 – wrote 1-2 Corinthians & Romans

Romans 6:6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin;

- Old Man – old system before salvation – crucified – positional breaking of its hold on us
- Body of sin – residual beliefs & behaviors - might be done away with – Aor Pass Subj
- Aor Subj = future potential – Old Man crucified enables us to do away with old beliefs/behaviors
- Notice that the mechanics that he will include later in the prison epistles is missing