



*He Is Savior (Acts 4:12)

February 2nd, 2026

HIS MINISTRIES February 2026 Newsletter, covering January 2026

What do we know about Saul, a Pharisee, who became Paul, the Apostle to Gentiles?

Apostle Paul was born as a citizen of Rome at Tarsus, the chief city Cilicia, but he was brought up in Jerusalem, “at the feet of Gamaliel, the most honored, illustrious, and distinguished rabbi of his day, who was also a highly honored teacher of the Law, and a member of SANHEDRIN, the Highest Ruling Body of the Court of Justice in Israel.”

Saul’s Roman name was Paul in addition to his Hebrew name Saul, which was given to him after Israel’s first King, Saul, who also was a member of *the tribe of Benjamin* to which Paul’s family also belonged. Paul’s parents wanted their son to be well-grounded in the best Jewish tradition, and his father had obtained Gamaliel (also a Pharisee) to be his teacher of the Jewish law, and of the Scriptures. Saul had a zeal for the law, and he was eager to debate with the leaders of the *followers of the Jesus-movement* in Jerusalem, for he considered them to be rebellious against Judaism and the law, and even deserving death. (Deut. 21:22-23.) In Saul’s mind, the survival of Israel demanded that followers of Jesus be stopped or totally wiped out.

This *new movement* had already chosen from among themselves seven “good and worthy men” to provide help, direction and relief to these poor, oppressed and needy people of faith, who were mostly new Greek converts, who also believed that *Jesus is the Promised Redeemer and Messiah of Israel*.

One of their seven helpers and defenders was Stephen, who was also known as a preacher, full of faith and the Holy Spirit. (Acts 6:7-8.)

This new movement was noticed by many wealthy, leading Pharisees who were stirring opposition against not only Jesus, but also against John the Baptist, a forerunner of Jesus Christ, a moral reformer, and a preacher of Messianic Hope.

Stephen had claimed that Old Testament laws had lost their effectiveness, because Jesus Christ has fulfilled the law. They also had accused Stephen of being hostile towards Judaism and rejecting Moses and God.

Saul continued to strongly oppose this *Jesus-movement*, but he had been noticed participating in debates among these new believers in Jesus’, and even with Stephen, who had skillfully argued with the powerful Jewish leaders. Stephen’s work was so effective that renewed persecution broke out against this new movement because of him.

Stephen was then arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin, the Jewish High Council.

[SANHEDRIN, *The Highest Ruling Body and Court of Justice in Israel* arrested Stephen, one of the seven leaders of the new Christian movement in Jerusalem, who became the First Christian martyr.] [High Court of Sanhedrin had 71 members, many of them, as **Nicodemus** (John 3:1) and **Jospeh of Arimathea** (Mark 15:43) are mentioned in the New Testament in connection of Jesus' trials, death and crucifixion, and they were also known by Saul who was also said to have been a member of Sanhedrin, as was Saul's teacher, **Gamaliel** (Acts 5:34), and High Priests, **Annas and Caiaphas** (Luke 3:2) and others. **The High Priest was always the President of Sanhedrin.**]

After Stephen was arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin, false witnesses were called and they testified against him. But Stephen was not dismayed. (Acts 6:15.) "The High Priest then asked Stephen if these things were true. **Stephen made a lengthy speech in his own defense, summarizing the Old Testament teachings, showing how God had guided Israel toward a specific goal. He reviewed Israel's history in such a way that he replied to all charges made against him without actually denying anything.** This amounted to criticism of the Sanhedrin itself. Stephen denounced the council as **'stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart, and ears'** and accused them of resisting the Holy Spirit, and that they had killed Christ, just as their ancestors had killed the prophets, and accused them of failing to keep the law." (Acts 7:51-54.) ... "At this moment Stephen had a vision of God in heaven, with Jesus on His right hand. Stephen's fate was sealed when he reported this vision to his enemies. The crowd rushed upon him and dragged him out of the city and stoned him to death". Acts 7:55-48.) "Among the people consenting to Stephen's death that day was Saul, who later became the Apostle Paul, the great Christian missionary to the Gentiles... **As Stephen was being stoned, he asked God not to charge his executioners with the sin of his death.**" (Acts 7:59-60.)

Saul (Paul) was confused about what he had learned from Stephen's speech before Sanhedrin, but he still continued his campaign of repression of the new Jesus-movement. On his road to Damascus to persecute Christians, Saul was suddenly confronted by the Risen Christ.

[Saul (Paul) had listened to Stephen's long speech for his defense (Acts 7:2-53) and it perhaps brought to his memory what he had learned during his many years under Gamaliel's teaching, and though his teachings had been historically true, his conclusions of God's purposes for sending His Son had not been understood by the Jews, but now Saul's heart was "woken up" to hear the Holy Spirit, and see how much had been falsified by the *pharisee-leadership* for them to accept Jesus as their Messiah... **Now Paul understood who Jesus is and that He had come to fulfil the law and die for our sins and bring grace and forgiveness to all who receive Him. In an instant Paul's life was changed.** The Jewish law that had been his central theme to stand on, was now replaced by the *knowledge of Jesus Christ, the Jewish Messiah*. Paul became the leading champion of the cause he had tried to overthrow! The realization that Jesus, whom he had been persecuting, was alive and exalted as the Son of God, exposed the weakness of the law for he saw that obedience to the law does not bring salvation to anyone and that persecuting the believers in Jesus had been sinful in the sight of God. Paul also came to realize that perhaps he had been advancing among the leaders of Judaism beyond his contemporaries because he, as a Pharisee himself, had been exceedingly zealous of the law and traditions of his fathers.

[Please read here about Paul's conversion to Jesus and his baptism, recorded in Acts 9:1-13.]

And now Saul, having also heard *the arguments of some of the members of this new Jesus-movement, caused him to wonder if the law that he had exalted, had lost its validity when considering that maybe keeping the law was not how a person is justified in God's sight, but rather only by the faith in Christ. He was questioning in his mind that if Gentiles come to faith in Jesus, they might receive acceptance of God just the same as the law-trusting Jews had?* That realization opened his heart to understand that if he would become part of this new *freeing movement*, he could be saved as these new believers were, by only trusting Jesus Christ.

Therefor he did not plan go to Jerusalem to be taught by them who were apostles before him, but instead he went to Arabia for three years to be taught by the Lord Jesus the same as He had taught the other apostles also for three years before His crucifixion and death. (See Galatians 1:1-24.)

[Paul now, as a new believer, wanted to make sure that the Gentiles he would be teaching about the God of Israel, will come to see that God of the Old Testament *is a Triune God*, all three Persons of the Godhead working together to reveal that the Scriptures teach what had taken place in the past, what God is doing in the present, and what will take place in the future. ***“Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God”*** (Rom. 10:17), and ***“whatever were written before were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”*** (Rom. 15:4.)

All of Paul's and other apostles' letters were and still are the most important doctrinal studies for new Christians. He emphasized that all New Testament scriptures are based on *what was written before (in the Old Testament)*, and thus the OT is and will prove correctness of their teaching and what is now written in the New Testament.

As Christianity began to grow fast after Pentecost, and what the apostles were teaching, was indeed ***“according to the Scriptures”*** (OT). [When saying that they meant what they taught from ***the Septuagint*** (the word meaning “seventy”) and that it was their Hebrew Scripture from 281 B.C. onward.

Alexandria, Egypt, by *seventy Hebrew speaking Greek scholars, translating from the Hebrew Scriptures.* [A Greek-speaking Jewish community had existed in Alexandria for over 300 years, from the time of Alexander the Great, and they needed Hebrew Scriptures in the language they knew –i.e. Greek.]

The Septuagint was the only authorized version of the Scriptures used by the early Gentile churches, and the Septuagint was also the Bible used for preaching the Gospel. [To this day, the Septuagint is the *Official Version of the Old Testament used in the Greek Orthodox Church.*]

After the New Testament books were written and accepted by the early church, they were added to the *Old Testament Septuagint* to form the complete version of the Bible.

Until the entire New Testament was published and became available, Paul's and the other apostles' letters and teachings were passed around between believers, and the Old Testament continues even now to be the proof that disciples of Christ were then and are now teaching the true gospel, and about God and Christ correctly.

The Gospel written in 1 Cor. 15:1-4 is the Gospel declared by Paul after he had met the Risen Lord Jesus on his way to Damascus, and was there converted, and it is the same gospel what we also have been declaring after our conversion to the Christ of the Bible from a false and legalistic “gospel of works of the Mormon Church”. (LDS Articles of faith, #3.)

The Paul's 1st letter to Corinthians, 15:1-4, began: ***"1. Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, 2. by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you – unless you believed in vain. 3. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4. and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."***

We are often asked: What does the word "gospel" mean in addition to commonly used explanation: GOOD NEWS! (Good news of what?) Answer: Paul explained what "the good news" he declared in those 4 verses, 1 Cor. 15:1-4, really mean! He answered and said that when we come to know Jesus and that He died for our sins, and He opened our way to heaven! Could there be any better news than that! Paul declared the gospel, and the 4 gospels reveal who Jesus is, of His Virgin Birth, and that He is "God with us". (John 1:1-3, 14.) Jesus told us what we MUST do now. (John 3:7; Eph. 2:8-9.) Salvation is the gift of God, not to be earned by obedience to "the laws and ordinances" but only received by the grace of God. "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone that continued not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in sight of God is evident, for 'the just shall live by faith'. Yet, the law is not of faith, but 'the man who does them shall live by them'. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.'" (Gal. 3:10-13.)

Luke, "the beloved physician and companion of Apostle Paul", is also the Author of the Book of Acts, and he summarizes the growth of the Church, and he recorded what Jesus began to do and teach until He was taken up to heaven. After His ascension the Lord Jesus continued to give instructions through the Holy Spirit unto the apostles He had chosen. Luke himself was present during a large portion of Paul's travels. He reports of changes that took place soon after Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit. The Book of Acts is a book of history and as well as a book of missions and evangelism. Luke names various cities they worked in the first century Roman world, reporting their customs and even who their officials at various levels were, giving dates and the archeological evidence of the research done by Sir. William Ramsay and others, thus providing historical accuracy of Luke's report. The Book of Acts tells of many miracles, confirming that God would, by these remarkable signs, prove His presence from the beginning of this new dispensation, from the Lord's resurrection, ascension, coming of the Holy Spirit, and throughout many actions of the Holy Spirit.

I hope that this helped you to see what made Saul, a legalistic pharisee, to become the Spirit filled, Apostle Paul – changing him from a legalistic Jew to a born-again Christian, who fearlessly taught that the true Christianity is not a matter of rules and regulations for God accepts people freely when they respond and share Christ's love with others. When the Christian faith has been in danger of legalism or tradition, Paul's message has set people free, for Christ is the one who died for their sins and freely forgives. It was Paul's letters to various groups of people, together with the Gospel, that became the foundation of true Christianity.

We want to once again thank all of you for your kind support and prayers for our ministry. We deeply appreciate it. We will continue working as long as the Lord directs. We covet your prayers for our stamina to do that which we love to do...share the Lord and inform others of the errors of Mormonism. Please send us your questions by email or by phone, and we will answer.

We again ask you to please pray with us for Judy, Connie, Marlene, Aira, Greg, Heber, Sandy, Al, Emily and her children, Eddie, Jackie, Helen, Bruce, Roy, Suzi, Lisa, Heber, Michael, Vladimir and Natalia. We ask this in Jesus' name and for His sake.

We have confidence that as we mention their names in prayer, He knows exactly what they need and He answers them, and in His time makes everything possible. (1 John 5:14-15.)

[We hope that you received tax receipts we mailed about 3 weeks ago, if not, please let us know and we will send them again.]

In the Love of Jesus,

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