

# Additional Thoughts

## A Rule for Correct Interpretation of Scripture

There is perfect & unbroken unity from Genesis to Revelation. When interpreting a portion of Scripture, we must study its context. Not only the verses before and after it, but Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. My interpretation of that portion of Scripture must not disturb this perfect unity and harmony of Scripture. Let Scripture be its own interpreter. Remember: We are fully dependant on the Spirit of God to understand His Word (John 16:13 / I Cor. 2:6-14). Ask God to show you His truth (James 1:5).

When establishing one doctrine from a passage, you must never displace any other doctrine of Scripture.

II Peter 1:20 - Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

Private idios, id'-ee-os =

Pertaining to self, i.e. one's own; by implication, private or separate:--apart, aside, his own, their own.

I John 2:27 - But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

American Tract Society Dictionary:

PAUL

The distinguished "apostle of the Gentiles;" also called SAUL, a Hebrew name. He is first called Paul in Ac 13:12; and as some think, assumed this Roman name according to a common custom of Jews in foreign lands, or in honor of Sergius Paulus, Ac 13:7, his friend and an early convert. Both names however may have belonged to him in childhood. He was born at Tarsus in Cilicia, and inherited from his father the privileges of a Roman citizen. His parents belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, and brought up their son as "a Hebrew of the Hebrews," Php 3: Tarsus was highly distinguished for learning and culture, and the opportunities for improvement it afforded were no doubt diligently improved by Paul. At a suitable age he was sent to Jerusalem to complete his education in the school of Gamaliel, the most distinguished and right-minded of the Rabbis of that age. It does not appear that he was in Jerusalem during the ministry of Christ; and it was perhaps after his return to Tarsus that he learned the art of tent-making, in accordance with a general practice among the Jews, and their maxim, "He that does not teach his son a useful handicraft, teaches him to steal," Ac 18:3; 20:34; 2Th 3:8.

We next find him at Jerusalem, apparently about thirty years of age, high in the confidence of the leading men of the nation. He had profited by the instructions of Gamaliel, and became learned in the law; yielding himself to the strictest discipline of the sect of the Pharisees, he had become a fierce defender of Judaism and a bitter enemy of Christianity, Ac 8:3; 26:9-1 After his miraculous conversion, of which we have three accounts, Acts chapters 9, 22 & 26, Christ was all in all to him. It was Christ who revealed himself to his soul at Damascus, Acts 26:15; I Co 15:8; to Christ he gave his whole heart, and soul, mind, might, and strength; and thenceforth, living or dying, he was "the servant of Jesus Christ." He devoted all the powers of his ardent and energetic mind to the defense and propagation of the gospel of Christ, more particularly among the Gentiles. His views of the pure and lofty spirit of Christianity, in its worship and in its practical influence, appear to have been peculiarly clear and strong; and the opposition which he was thus led to make to the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish worship, exposed him everywhere to the hatred and malice of his countrymen. On their accusation, he was at length put in confinement by the Roman officers and after being detained for two years or more at Caesarea, he was sent to Rome for trial, having himself appealed to the emperor. There is less certainty in respect to the accounts, which are given of Paul afterwards by the early ecclesiastical writers. Still it was a very generally received opinion in the earlier centuries, that the apostle was acquitted and discharged from his imprisonment at the end of two years; and that he afterwards returned to Rome, where he was again imprisoned and put to death by Nero.

Paul appears to have possessed all the learning which was then current among the Jews, and also to have been acquainted with Greek literature; as appears from his mastery of the Greek language, his frequent discussions with their philosophers, and his quotations from their poets-Aratus, Acts 17:28; Meander, I Co 15:33; and Epimenides, Titus 1:1 Probably, however a learned Greek education cannot with propriety be ascribed to him. But the most striking trait in his character is his enlarged view of the universal design and the spiritual nature of the religion of Christ, and of its purifying and ennobling influence upon the heart and character of those who sincerely profess it. From the Savior himself he had caught the flame of universal love, and the idea of salvation for all mankind, Gal 1:1 Most of the other apostles and teachers appear to have clung to Judaism, to the rites, ceremonies, and dogmas of the religion in which they had been educated, and to have regarded Christianity as intended to be engrafted upon the ancient stock, which was yet to remain as the trunk to support the new branches.

Paul seems to have been among the first to rise above this narrow view, and to regard Christianity in its light, as a universal religion. While others were for Judaizing all those who embraced the new religion by imposing on them the yoke of Mosaic observances, it was Paul's endeavor to break down the middle wall of separation between Jews and Gentiles, and show them that they were all "one in Christ." To this end all his labors tended; and, ardent in the pursuit of this great object, he did not hesitate to censure the time-serving Peter, and to expose his own life in resisting the prejudices of his countrymen. Indeed, his five years' imprisonment at Jerusalem, Caesarea, and Rome arose chiefly from this cause.

These various journeys of St. Paul, many of them made on foot, should be studied through on a map; in connection with the inspired narrative, in Acts, and with his own pathetic description of his labors, II Co 11:23-29, wherein nevertheless the half is not told. When we review the many regions he traversed and evangelized, the converts he gathered, and the churches he founded, the toils, perils, and trials he endured, the miracles he wrought, and the revelations he received, the discourses, orations, and letters in which he so ably defends and unfolds Christianity, the immeasurable good which God by him accomplished, his heroic life, and his martyr death, he appears to us the most extraordinary of men.

The character of Paul is most fully portrayed in his epistles, by which, as Chrysostom says he, "still lives in the mouths of men throughout the whole world. By them, not only his own converts, but all the faithful even unto this day, yea, and all the saints who are yet to be born until Christ's coming again, both have been and shall be blessed." In them we observe the transforming and elevating power of grace in one originally turbulent and passionate-making him a model of many and Christian excellence; fearless and firm, yet considerate, courteous, and gentle; magnanimous, patriotic, and self-sacrificing; rich in all noble sentiments and affections.

EPISTLES OF PAUL-There are fourteen epistles in the New Testament usually ascribed to Paul, beginning with that to the Romans, and ending with that to the Hebrews. Of these the first thirteen have never been contested; as to the latter, many good men have doubted whether Paul was the author, although the current of criticism is in favor of this opinion. These epistles, in which the principles of Christianity are developed for all periods, characters, and circumstances, are among the most important of the primitive documents of the Christian religion, even apart from their inspired character; and although they seem to have been written without special premeditation, and have reference mostly to transient circumstances and temporary relations, yet they everywhere bear the stamp of the great and original mind of the apostle, as purified, elevated, and sustained by the influences of the Holy Spirit.

It is worthy of mention here, that an expression of Peter respecting "our beloved brother Paul" is often a little misunderstood. The words "in which" in II Peter 3:16, are erroneously applied to the "epistles" of Paul; and not to "these things" immediately preceding, that is, the subjects of which Peter was writing, as the Greek shows they should be. Peter finds no fault, either with Paul, or with the doctrines of revelation.

The arrangement of Hug is somewhat different; and some critics who find evidence that Paul was released from his first imprisonment and lived until the spring of 68, assign the epistles Hebrews, 1Timothy, Titus, and 2Timothy to the last year of his life. See TIMOTHY.

---American Tract Society Dictionary

Paul's Conversion and Call

Paul's Conversion Acts 9:1-6 / 26:9-18

Paul encountered the Lord on his way to Damascus. In this encounter, the Lord identified Himself to Paul, placed His call on his life, (Acts 26:16-18) and instructed him to go into the city where he would be told what to do (Acts 9:6). Having been blinded in his encounter with the Lord, he was led by the hand into the city of Damascus (v.10) and stayed at the house of a man named Judas (v.11). He was blind for three days during which time he fasted (v.12) and prayed (v.11). During this time, the Lord showed him a vision of a man named Ananias coming and praying for him that his sight might be restored (v.12). The Lord sent Ananias, one of the disciples of Damascus, to Paul having instructed him to pray for him that he might receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost (v.17). Paul's sight was restored, he was baptized in the Holy Ghost (v.18) and broke his fast (v.19).

Paul's time of learning the doctrine of the Gospel of Jesus Christ

In the middle of verse 19, there appears to be space of time not mentioned in Acts. The latter half of Galatians 1:16 seems to pick up where the first half of Acts 9:19 left off. Paul says in Gal. 1:16b,17;"immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus." After his conversion, he did not consult with the disciples at Damascus or the Apostles that were at Jerusalem, but "immediately" went into Arabia. It is believed that he dwelt in the northern part of the Arabian Desert, the el-Badieh or "Great Wilderness" of the Arabs, which lays adjacent to the territories of Damascus. (American Tract Society Dictionary under "Arabia Deserta" & Easton's Bible Dictionary under "Arabia".) While there, he received the doctrine of the Gospel of Jesus Christ by revelation from the Lord (Gal. 1:11-12 / Acts 26:16b / II Co 12:2-4). After his stay in Arabia, he "returned again unto Damascus" (v.17b) where he spent "certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus" (Acts 9:19b). This was his first meeting with the disciples since his conversion and it was here that he began his public ministry preaching in the synagogues of that city (Acts 9:20,22/ 26:20). He preached in Damascus for "many days" (Acts 9:23), "three years" (Gal. 1:18), but when the Jews determined to kill him and laid in wait for him at the city gates, the disciples let him down from the wall in a basket by night and he went on to Jerusalem (Acts 9:23-27 / 26:20 / Gal. 1:18).

11 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

13 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:

14 And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,

16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. ?

## II Corinthians 12

2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.

And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)

4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

5 Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.

6 For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me.

7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

Paul received further understanding and knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ by revelation from God in the wilderness of Arabia before beginning his public ministry.

When the Lord first appeared to Paul at the time of his conversion, the Lord said to him:

Acts 26:16 - I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee.

Here, at the time Paul was converted, the Lord said that he was to be a witness of the things He had just revealed to him, but He also speaks of appearing to him in the future and that he is to be a witness of the things He would reveal to him then as well.

Paul said that (Acts 9:1-6 / 26:9-1) after he was converted, healed and filled with the Holy Ghost; (Gal. 1:16b, 17) "immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto

Damascus." It is evident that following his conversion, healing and baptism in the Holy Ghost; Paul, I believe by God's direction and leading, avoided meeting with any of the believers around him, but immediately left Damascus and headed into the wilderness of Arabia where God revealed to him more fully the doctrines concerning the gospel of Jesus Christ before he "returned again unto Damascus," met with the disciples there and began his ministry (Acts 9:19-20).

## Digging Deep

Luke 6:48—He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep

This wise builder struck the rock before he laid the foundation. God is not to be found on the surface. [Shifting Standards - Shifting sand]

## Diligently digging (search) to know Him.

1 Cor. 11:3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

That we might have more Light. Prov. 4:18

That we might have more Truth. John. 8:31-32; 17:17

That we might have more Life Rom. 5:1-5; Titus 3:4-8, 14

Php 3:10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

All Fleshly desires being put to death!

Luke 16:3 Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved...(DIG, DIG, DIG, DIG)

While the foolish build on thoughts that are deviating from the Truth,

The wise seek only the truth.

There must not be any change from the foundation.

There must not be any variation from the foundation or the blueprint.

Every change and variation is a violation of God's Word.

Every violation of God's Word is a sin.

The Word of God is Truth. John 17:17

## Digging Deeper to grow more like Him.

A person must be saved I Cor. 1:6,9,18,30; 2:12; II Cor. 5:17

A person must be full of the Holy Ghost ! Cor. 6:19; 12:3

A person must be a faithful witness I Cor. 4:2,17; 7:25

A person must grow to be more like Him I Cor. 1:5,7,9,30

A person must study more of His Word I Cor. 2:7,13

A person must fully obey His Word I Cor.1:8

II Tim. 2:15; Hebrews 4:11; II Peter 1:5, 6, 7

A man's words expose his true nature: what he is really like beneath the surface.

Don't just dig it up, but dig it out

?A man's words expose what he is down deep within his heart: his motives, desires, ambitions, or the lack of initiative.

?A man's words expose his true character: good or bad, kind or cruel.

?A man's words expose his mind, what he thinks: pure or impure thoughts, dirty or clean thoughts, negative or positive.

?A man's words expose his spirit, what he believes and pursues: the legitimate or illegitimate, the intelligent or ignorant, the true or false, the good or evil, beneficial or wasteful, Spiritual or carnal.

## Dig Deep in prayer that others will know Him

I Cor.11:4,13; 14:15

John 8:43; Jer. 7:28; Mt 13:15; Mat. 12:34; Luke 6:45

Faith sees the invisible, Believes - the incredible, Receives - the impossible. Read and meditate - hear and meditate Read and believe - hear and believe Read and ponder - hear and ponder Read and obey - hear and obey

KEY VERSES:

3:6 "God giveth the increase"

3:9 "For we are laborers together with God"

3:10 "A wise master builder"

3:11 Jesus Christ is the foundation

3:16 "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God" (6:15, 19, 20)

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Revision #2  
Created 15 September 2021 00:08:30 by Stephen Reynolds Jr  
Updated 15 September 2021 00:10:45 by Stephen Reynolds Jr