

Some Sins Of Paul

Part 1

Introduction

1. One of the most remarkable men who has ever lived was the apostle Paul.
 - a. He was a man from “Tarsus of Cilicia,” and a devout Pharisee. (Acts 9:11; 21:39; 22:3; Phil 3:5).
 - 1) Tarsus was the capital of Cilicia.
 - 2) It was a Roman province in the southeast part of Asia Minor along the Mediterranean Sea.
 - 3) Paul was born there (Acts 22:3; 21:39), and learned the trade of tent making there. (Acts 18:2,3).
 - b. He was a “Hebrew of Hebrews” that is most often interpreted to mean that both of his parents were Hebrews. (Phil. 3:5).
 - 1) He was of the tribe of Benjamin that was distinguished for its faithfulness to the Lord. (Phil. 3:5).
 - 2) He was one who was not a proselyte and could speak both Hebrew (Aramaic) and Greek. (Acts 22:2).
 - 3) Acts 22:3 also sets forth the fact he had been trained “strictly according to the law of our fathers” that is a reference to the Law of Moses.
 - c. He had one of the best educations possible being “educated under Gamaliel.” (Acts 22:3).

ACT 22:3 "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, just as you all are today.

 - 1) Gamaliel was a Pharisee and a member of the Sanhedrin who counseled the Jewish leaders to let the apostles out of jail. (Acts 5:34-39).
 - 2) He was a renowned teacher of the Mosaic Law.
 - d. He was a Roman citizen. (Acts 22:28).
 - e. He did not purchase his citizenship, but was “born a citizen.” (Acts 22:28).
 - 1) Paul most likely inherited his citizenship from his father or some other ancestor.
 - 2) Citizenship was sometimes granted in turn for some meritorious deed or deeds done for the government.
 - f. This gave him some legal projection, but it did not provide protection if the authorities were determined to prosecute and condemn.
2. He became an apostle of Jesus after the Lord appeared to him on the road to Damascus. (Acts 9:1-6; 22:3-16).

- a. There is no indication that he had any personal contact with Jesus during Christ's ministry.
- b. He was alive during Christ's ministry, and must have had knowledge of it.
 - 1) His knowledge of Christ and Christianity led him to be a fierce persecutor of the church.
 - 2) He was called to be an apostle a few years after Pentecost.
 - 3) This was about A.D. 33 assuming Jesus was born 4 or 5 B.C..
 - 4) We do not know how old Paul was at the time he was called by the Lord or how old he was when he died.
 - 5) Before he called to be an apostle he was old enough to take the lead in the persecution of Christians. (Acts 8:3; 22:4).
 - 6) Acts 8:1 sets forth he agreed with Stephen's death and leaves the impression he was a leader in the persecution of Christian believers.
- c. The New Testament is completely silent about him until the time of Stephen's death and the persecution of the church Saul [Paul] was promoting and personally pursuing. (Acts 8:1-4).

ACT 8:1 And Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. And on that day a great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

ACT 8:2 And some devout men buried Stephen, and made loud lamentation over him.

ACT 8:3 But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house; and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison.

ACT 8:4 Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.

- d. He was originally known as "Saul," but later became known as "Paul." (Acts 13:9).

ACT 13:9 But Saul, who was also known as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fixed his gaze upon him,

3. Paul established many churches, and he strengthened many others by his example and preaching.
 - a. He was enthusiastic, courageous and dedicated in his life and ministry.
 - b. With the help of God and the Lord he had great success.
 - c. Other than the Lord he has had the greatest impact on Christianity.
4. He wrote 13 books of the New Testament - Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon. Some think he wrote the book of Hebrews, but the author of Hebrews was not an apostle. (Heb. 2:3,4).
 - a. His teaching was not his own, but came "through a revelation of Jesus Christ." (Gal. 1:12).
 - b. He spoke the commandments of the Lord. (1 Cor. 14:37).
 - c. He warned that the gospel message was not to be changed by himself or by anyone else. (Gal. 1:8-9). See also 1 Tim. 1:3.

GAL 1:8 But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed.

GAL 1:9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed.

1TI 1:3 As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus, in order that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines,

5. He suffered great hardship for the Christ and Christianity. (2 Cor. 11:23-27).

2CO 11:23 Are they servants of Christ? (I speak as if insane) I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death.

2CO 11:24 Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes.

2CO 11:25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep.

2CO 11:26 I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren;

2CO 11:27 I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.

Before His Conversion

1. Before his conversion he was very zealous for the Law of Moses, and persecuted the church because he believed Christians were enemies of God and worthy of death. (1 Tim. 1:13).

a. He consented to the death of Stephen. (Acts 8:1).

1) Stephen was one of the seven chosen to help widows. (Acts 6:6).

2) He appears he was also an evangelist since he was doing the work of an evangelist.. (Acts 6:8-15; 7:1-60).

3) Philip, another one of the seven, is called an evangelist. (Acts 6:5; 21:8).

b. He had many Christian men and women dragged to prison. (Acts 8:4).

1) He was “zealous” and relentless in his persecution of Christians. (Gal. 1:13).

2) He viewed Christians as enemies of God, and honestly believe he was doing the will of God by persecuting Christians.

3) He voted to put Christians to death. (Acts 26:10).

4) Some believe Acts 26:10 means Paul was a member of the Sanhedrin. This is very questionable. If Paul had been a member of the supreme counsel of the Jews, it seem strange he did not list this as a grounds of boasting. (Phil. 3:4-7).

2. He did all of this in “good conscience.” (Acts 23:1).

ACT 23:1 And Paul, looking intently at the Council, said, "Brethren, I have lived my life with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day."

- a. One should not ignore his/her conscience, that is, one's inner sense of right and wrong.
 - b. Conscience is not, however, an infallible guide.
 - 1) Conscience can be changed by one's associates and custom and by ignoring conscience.
 - 2) It can be changed by the things one takes in from culture and by education and a host of other things.
 - 3) Many a person has done some horrendous things with a clear or good conscience.
 - c. Some things done in "good conscience," as with the case of Paul, can be sin.
3. After the Lord appeared to him on the road to Damascus, he recognized he had been very wrong and later called himself "the chief" of sinners. (1 Tim. 1:13, 15).

1TI 1:13 even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. And yet I was shown mercy, because I acted ignorantly in unbelief;

1TI 1:15 It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, **among whom I am foremost of all.**

After His Conversion

- 1. Most people believe that Paul was a great sinner before his conversion, but many have a totally different view of him after his conversion.
- 2. They have concluded or almost concluded that he was basically sinless after his conversion.
 - a. No one actually affirms this, but many become upset if someone points out a wrongdoing.
 - b. They are much more ready to agree Peter sinned than they are Paul. (Gal. 2:11-14).

GAL 2:11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

GAL 2:12 For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision.

GAL 2:13 And the rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.

GAL 2:14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

- 3. They have elevated Paul, the Christian, to be almost like the sinless Christ.
- 4. There is no doubt Paul was a great man and he was an apostle who had been called by Jesus and was directly taught by revelation of Jesus Christ. (Gal. 1:12).
- 5. As great as he was and one who could be imitated, he was not sinless after his conversion.
- 6. Writing by inspiration is not equated to sinlessness.
- 7. Both Moses and David were great men of God who wrote by inspiration, but they were not sinless and never made that preposterous claim.

8. Solomon was renowned for his great wisdom, but he was not sinless.
9. The conclusion Paul was not sinless is based on some general statements made in the scriptures and on an actual study of some events in his life.

General Statements.

1. Paul affirmed that none are righteous and without sin. (Rom. 3:10,23).
 - a. Paul did not indicate he was an exception to this rule, and never claimed sinlessness.
 - b. He confessed his sins against Christ and the church, and exclaimed he was the chief or foremost of sinners.
2. Paul spoke of the struggle he had with evil. (Rom. 7:13-25).

ROM 7:13 Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good, that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.

ROM 7:14 For we know that the Law is spiritual; but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.

ROM 7:15 For that which I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.

ROM 7:16 But if I do the very thing I do not wish to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that it is good.

ROM 7:17 So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which indwells me.

ROM 7:18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.

ROM 7:19 For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish.

ROM 7:20 But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

ROM 7:21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good.

ROM 7:22 For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,

ROM 7:23 but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.

ROM 7:24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?

ROM 7:25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

- a. His struggle was true under the law of Moses, but it did not totally cease as a Christian.
 - b. Even the Lord was constantly tempted by the devil. (Matt. 4:1-11; Lk. 4:13; Heb. 4:15).
 - c. All Christians, including Paul, are daily tempted by the devil and sometimes yield to those temptations.
 - d. All Christians, including Paul, must resist the devil and draw near to God. (Jas. 4:7, 8).
 - e. All Christians, including Paul, are strongly tempted, but both God and His Son help us overcome temptation. (1 Cor. 10:13; Phil. 4:13).
 - f. God is ever ready to help the ones who call upon Him for help. (Rom. 8:31,32).
 - g. Jesus is ready to “aid” [help] those tempted. (Heb. 2:18).
3. Paul taught his readers to imitate him insofar as he imitated Christ. (1 Cor. 11:1).

1CO 11:1 Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ. “kathos” [kah **thohs**] means “as, even as, in as much as.” It is used here with the meaning “inasmuch as, insofar.”

- a. Note Paul did not tell them to imitate him in everything.
- b. They were to imitate him only “insofar” as he imitated Christ.
- c. There is no implication Paul was claiming sinlessness, and claiming he never needed to confess sin after his conversion.
- d. Paul knew he could fall and he kept himself in subjection. (1 Cor. 9:27).

1CO 9:27 but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.

- e. Paul included himself in the warning he gave to the Corinthians. (1 Cor. 10:12).
 - f. He was a man who fully trusted in God’s grace rather than in sinlessness. (Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:5, 8-9; Tit. 2:11; Heb. 11:6).
4. John made these statements about a Christian who claims sinlessness. (1 Jn. 1:8, 10).

1JO 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

1JO 1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

- a. Paul needed to confess sin like all other Christians.
- b. Only Jesus was sinless. (Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:22; 1 Jn. 3:5).
- c. Only Jesus could not pray the petition He taught His disciples to pray. (Matt. 6:9, 12).

MAT 6:9 "Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name.

MAT 6:12 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Note:

1. Uninspired writers often seek to ignore or rationalize the sins and defects of their heroes, but the inspired writers of the Bible did not seek to do this. They report the good and the bad.
2. Here are some examples of the inspired writers recording the transgressions of some Bible heroes of faith.
 - a. Noah was a great man of faith (Gen. 6:9), but Moses did not seek to hide Noah’s drunkenness after he and his family were saved from the destruction of the flood. (Gen. 9:20-21).

GEN 9:20 Then Noah began farming and planted a vineyard.

GEN 9:21 And he drank of the wine and became drunk, and uncovered himself inside his tent.

- b. Abraham is called the father of the faithful (Gal. 3:9, 29), but Moses did not try to hide his lies to Pharaoh. (Gen. 12:10-20; 20:1-13).
- c. As great a man as was Moses (Num. 12:3), he rebelled against God at the waters of Meribah. This sin was not excused by God and it kept him out of the promised land. (Num. 20:12, 24)

- d. The adultery and murder by David is not covered up by the inspired writer. (2 Samuel 12:9). David later confessed this sin. (Psa. 51:1-4).

PSA 51:1 Be gracious to me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Thy compassion blot out my transgressions.

PSA 51:2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin.

PSA 51:3 For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me.

PSA 51:4 Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned, And done what is evil in Thy sight, So that Thou art justified when Thou dost speak, And blameless when Thou dost judge.

- e. Peter was a great man of faith (Matt. 16:16, 17; Jn. 6:68, 69), but Jesus rebuked him and Peter denied the Lord some three times. (Matt. 16:22,23; 26:75).
- f. Paul records the hypocrisy of Peter and Barnabas, who were being influenced by James the Lord's brother. (Gal. 1:19).

1) James was the half brother of Jesus and later became an apostle. (Mk. 6:3; Gal. 1:19).

MAR 6:3 "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?" And they took offense at Him.

GAL 1:19 But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

2) He was a "pillar" in the Jerusalem church along with Peter and John. (Gal. 2:9).

GAL 2:9 and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were **reputed to be pillars**, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we might go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised.

3) Paul had to rebuke these two great men because of their hypocrisy. (Gal. 2:11-14).

GAL 2:11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

GAL 2:12 For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision.

GAL 2:13 And the rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.

GAL 2:14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

- a) Paul gave a strong rebuke to Peter because of his sin. It was Peter who had first preached the gospel to the Gentiles and had declared that "God is not respecter of persons." (Acts 10:34,35).
- b) He also had to rebuke "Barnabas" because he had been "carried away by their hypocrisy."
- c) Barnabas was one who had worked with Paul and had been instrumental in converting many Gentiles to Christ.
- d) These were both outstanding servants of the Lord, but this did not immune them from sin and the need for repentance and forgiveness.

Some Sins of Paul Part 2

Three Sins Of Paul Recorded After His Conversion

1. One sin was his mistreatment of John Mark.

- a. Paul was disappointed that the missionary zeal of John Mark weakened in a foreign country.
- b. He walked out on Paul and Barnabas, “and returned to Jerusalem” (Acts 13:13).

ACT 13:13 Now Paul and his companions put out to sea from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John left them and returned to Jerusalem.

1) Luke simply records here that “John left them and returned to Jerusalem.”

2) No reason is given at this point, but later more information is later given by Luke. (Acts 15:37, 38).

ACT 15:37 And Barnabas was desirous of taking John, called Mark, along with them also.

ACT 15:38 But Paul kept insisting that they should not take him along **who had deserted them** in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work.

3) Paul did not want take another chance on a quitter, and parted company with his close friend Barnabas who was willing to give John Mark a second chance.

4) John Mark had been a great disappointment to Paul who had counted on him for help.

c. It is believed this incident occurred in about 46 A.D., but we cannot be absolutely sure about the exact date.

1) The Bible does not give the age of John Mark, but it is generally believed he was a younger man.

2) Some believe John Mark refers to himself in his gospel. (Mk. 14:51,52).

MAR 14:51 And a certain young man was following Him, wearing nothing but a linen sheet over his naked body; and they seized him.

MAR 14:52 But he left the linen sheet behind, and escaped naked.

3) It is speculated that this was John Mark the son of Mary. (Acts 12:12).

a) It is possible they had observed the Passover meal in her home, and John Mark had followed Jesus and the apostles to the Garden.

b) Here after the arrest of Jesus he was following Jesus when this incident occurred. There does not seem to be a reason why Mark recorded it unless perhaps he is referring to himself. This may be true, but we cannot know for sure the identity of the young man.

4) Peter refers to him in 1 Peter 5:13 and says “my son, Mark.” There is no evidence John Mark was his literal son, but he may have been converted by Peter and for sure had been strongly influenced by him.

5) John’s mother was Mary, and he was also given the name of Mark. (Acts 12:12, 25).

ACT 12:12 And when he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John who was also called Mark,

where many were gathered together and were praying.

ACT 12:25 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their mission, taking along with them John, who was also called Mark.

- 6) John Mark went with Barnabas and Saul [Paul] from Jerusalem and was a part of the first missionary journey. (Acts 12:25).
- 7) This is not explicitly stated when the church of Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas out on this first missionary journey, but Acts 13:13 reveals John Mark was traveling and working with them.
 - a) ACT 13:13 Now Paul and his companions put out to sea from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John left them and returned to Jerusalem.
 - b) This first journey missionary is to be dated about 45 to 49 A.D..
- 8) Not long after the 1st journey, approximately 50 A.D., Paul and Barnabas were ready to make their second missionary trip. The second missionary journey is dated about 50-52 A.D..
- 9) Barnabas wanted to take John Mark with them, but Paul did not want to give him a second chance. (Acts 15:37, 38).
- 10) “A sharp disagreement” arose between Paul and Barnabas over this matter, and this argument was so great that Paul separated from Barnabas [his close friend] and chose a new partner Silas to travel with him. (Acts 15:40).
 - a) One assumes that Barnabas, a great and effective servant of the Lord, saw changes in John Mark, and was convinced he would be an asset to them.
 - b) This experienced worker saw great potential in John Mark, and believed he was ready to be a part of their missionary team.
- 11) Barnabas took Mark on his second missionary trip, “and sailed away to Cyprus.” (Acts 15:39-40).
- 12) The Bible is silent about the work of John Mark and Barnabas, but the fact John Mark is always spoken of in a favorable light after this suggests John Mark proved to be a faithful worker for the Lord.

c. Paul’s memory of his past life was short at this point.

- 1) His former life was full of sin and bad judgments and decisions. (1Tim. 1:13).
- 2) **He had refused to obey the Lord, and persecuted those who did.**
- 3) He was converted by the Lord Himself, but found the church did not want any part of him.
- 4) They were afraid and very skeptical of this man who had been such a persecutor of Christians a short time earlier. (Acts 9:26).

ACT 9:26 And when he had come to Jerusalem, he was trying to associate with the disciples; and they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple.

- 5) It was Barnabas who came to his rescue, and recommended him to the apostles and Jerusalem Christians. (Acts

9:27).

ACT 9:27 But Barnabas took hold of him and brought him to the apostles and described to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had talked to him, and how at Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus.

- d. Barnabas assured the apostles and Jerusalem Christians that Paul was no longer a threat to them, and told them of Paul's conversion. (Acts 9:27).
- 1) Had it not been for Barnabas, Paul would have been rejected by the apostles and Jerusalem Christians and most likely Christians at large.
- 2) We do not know what would have become of Paul if it had not been for Barnabas, but most likely his influence would have been greatly diminished at best.

Luke's Personal Interest In John Mark

- e. Luke reports that Barnabas took a personal interest in Mark, and later events show by implication that Mark had repented of deserting Paul and Barnabas, and that he was now a mature and zealous Christian and missionary.
- 1) It is conjectured that perhaps Peter laid his hands on Mark making him a prophet. This is conjectured because of the gospel of Mark.
- 2) The apostles had the power to impart spiritual gifts to others through the laying on of hands. (Acts 6:6; 8:17-20; 19:6).
- 3) John Mark became a great servant of the Lord, and he wrote the Gospel of Mark sometime before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.. Many date Mark in the early 60's, and believe it is the oldest gospel.
- 4) It is commendable that John Mark showed no sign of resentment against Paul. It would have been easy for him to have strong resentment against Paul because Paul would not take him on the second missionary Journey.
- 5) We also learn from the scriptures that Paul and John settled their differences, and when Paul was in prison in Rome about A.D. 60 to 62 Mark is described as Paul's fellow worker. (Phile. 24).

PHM 1:24 as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow workers.

- 6) Paul now had great confidence in John Mark, and urged the church at Colossae to "welcome him." (Col. 4:10).

COL 4:10 Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, sends you his greetings; and also Barnabas' cousin Mark (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him);

- 7) When Paul was on death row in Rome, he wrote to Timothy at Ephesus to bring Mark with him and added "for he is useful to me for service." (2 Tim. 4:11).

2TI 4:11 Only Luke is with me. Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service.

- 8) Though Paul was honest in his earlier condemnation of Mark, he was wrong in refusing Mark a second chance.

- a) He refused to forgive John and forgot his own teaching that had come from the Lord. (Eph. 4:32;

Col. 3:13).

EPH 4:32 And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.
COL 3:13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

b) True forgiveness ceases to hold a sin against a person.

c) True forgiveness is preceded by repentance.

LUK 17:4 "And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him."

9) **On this occasion Barnabas was a better Christian than Paul.** He was more tolerant and understanding and forgiving, and believed people deserve a second chance.

10) Barnabas was instrumental in seeing both Paul and John Mark received a second chance. He deserved his name meaning "son of encouragement." (Acts 4:36).

ACT 4:36 And Joseph, a Levite of Cyprian birth, who was also called Barnabas by the apostles (which translated means, Son of Encouragement),

11) It is implied in the scriptures that John Mark was sorry he had abandoned Paul and Barnabas.

12) It is clear that he had changed and matured and had become a great servant of the Lord.

13) It is clear that Paul later forgave John Mark, and these two men became united in the greatest cause in the world -the cause of Christ.

14) Without Barnabas the church might have missed the blessing of both Paul and John Mark.

15) This would be tragic!

16) Though Paul used bad judgment and sinned in the way he treated John Mark, Paul later changed his mind and forgave him.

17) John Mark became a great servant of the Lord. This is because Barnabas first gave him a second chance and later Paul did the same thing. This forgiveness is not recorded, but it is certainly implied by his later relationship with John Mark.

18) How many others could become great servants today if we would only forgive them and give them a second chance.

19) This does not mean we put them on probation or treat them as inferior.

20) Failure to forgive frequently destroys others and may cause them to lose their souls.

21) The one refusing to forgive will lose his soul. (Matt. 6:14, 15; Jas. 2:13).

MAT 6:14 "For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

MAT 6:15 "But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

JAM 2:13 For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

Some Sins Of Paul

Part 3

2. A second sin of Paul was the offering sacrifices of animal blood.

- a. Paul was wrong to offer animal blood in a temple sacrifice in 58 A.D., about 29 years after they were out of date (Acts 21:26).

ACT 21:26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day, purifying himself along with them, went into the temple, giving notice of the completion of the days of purification, until the sacrifice was offered for each one of them.

- 1) Pentecost was in about A.D. 29 based on the assumption that Jesus was born in about 4 B.C..
- 2) Luke records Paul offered a sacrifice for each one of them referring to the 4 men “who were under a vow.” (Acts 21:23).

ACT 21:23 "Therefore do this that we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow;

- b. Paul agreed to do so in order to make some Jewish Christians think that he was keeping “the law” (Acts 21:24).
- c. But when “the veil of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom” in A.D. 29, “the law” requiring “the blood of goats and calves” was “set aside” (Matt. 27:51; Heb. 9:12; Eph. 2:15).
- d. Animal blood offerings made “the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified” “as unclean.” (Heb. 10:29).
 - 1) It insults “the Spirit of grace.” (Heb. 10:29).

HEB 10:29 How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?

- 2) It was and it is a return to “the weak and beggarly elements” of the law of Moses (Gal. 4:9).

- e. Paul’s intentions were good seeking to gain those under the Law. (1 Cor. 9:20).

1CO 9:20 And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law, though not being myself under the Law, that I might win those who are under the Law;

- f. He violated what he himself had written in Galatians 1:10.

GAL 1:10 For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.

- g. J. W. McGarvey has written:

If disciples, whether Jewish or Gentile, should now assemble in Jerusalem, construct an altar, appoint a priesthood, and offer sin-offerings, they could but be regarded as apostates from Christ. But why should it be regarded as a crime now, if it was innocent then? (Commentary of Acts of Apostles, p. 260.)

- h. “Then Paul took the men, and the next day, purifying himself along with them.” (Acts 21:26).
- i. He was told to “pay their expenses” (Acts 21:24).

ACT 21:24 take them and purify yourself along with them, and pay their expenses in order that they may shave their heads; and all will know that there is nothing to the things which they have been told about you, but that you yourself also walk orderly, keeping the Law.

1) This was no small amount.

2) For himself and for four other men was it required: 15 sheep, 5 grain offerings, 5 drink offerings, and 5 baskets of bread (Num. 6:13-20).

j. James was an apostle and “a pillar” in the Jerusalem church (Gal. 1:19; 2:9), but this did not mean he was sinless or infallible.

1) He had led both Peter and Barnabas into hypocrisy (Gal. 2:9,11-13).

GAL 2:9 and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we might go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised.

GAL 2:11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

GAL 2:12 For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision.

GAL 2:13 And the rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.

2) This great man and apostle also seduced Paul into sin.

k. Paul committed this sin of offering sacrifices in the temple in about 58 A.D..

1) Some 4 years later he made it clear, by implication, that he had earlier done wrong.

2) He wrote these words in Colossians 2:14.

COL 2:14 having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

3. A third sin of Paul involved him losing his temper and sinning with his tongue.

a. Prior to committing a sin with his tongue, he did what appeared to be a sin but was not sinful.

1) He sharply denounced “a sorcerer and false prophet” name “Barjesus.” (Acts 13:6-11).

Paul Rebukes And Blinds Bar-Jesus

ACT 13:6 And when they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they found a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet whose name was Bar-Jesus,

ACT 13:7 who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence. This man summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God.

ACT 13:8 But Elymas the magician (for thus his name is translated) was opposing them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.

ACT 13:9 But Saul, who was also known as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fixed his gaze upon him,

ACT 13:10 and said, "You who are full of all deceit and fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to make crooked the straight ways of the Lord?"

ACT 13:11 "And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and not see the sun for a time."

And immediately a mist and a darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking those who would lead him by the hand.

- 2) He called him a “son of the devil.” (Acts 13:10).
 - 3) He also temporarily blinded Bar-Jesus. (Acts 13:11).
 - 4) The Bible tells us on this occasion Paul “was filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 13:9).
 - 5) This is proof his action was not sin.
 - 6) The Holy Spirit never leads one to sin.
- b. Later in the book of Acts Paul was not led by the Holy Spirit when he called Ananias, the high priest, “a whitewashed wall.” (Acts 23:3).

ACT 23:3 Then Paul said to him, "God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall! And do you sit to try me according to the Law, and in violation of the Law order me to be struck?"

- “Whitewashed wall” was a tottering wall that had an external coat of whitewash. It was doomed to collapse.
- Jesus also used “whitewashed” in Matthew 23:21 to refer to a tomb that looked good on the outside, but was full of dead mens bones.

- 1) Paul’s rebuke was done in response to the high priest who rudely interrupted Paul’s speech and commanded Paul to be struck on the mouth in violation of his rights. (Acts 23:2).

ACT 23:2 And the high priest Ananias commanded those standing beside him to strike him on the mouth.

- 2) His action seems justified, but it was certainly short of the way Jesus responded to the high priest. (Jn. 18:19-23).

JOH 18:19 The high priest therefore questioned Jesus about His disciples, and about His teaching.

JOH 18:20 Jesus answered him, "I have spoken openly to the world; I always taught in synagogues, and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and I spoke nothing in secret.

JOH 18:21 "Why do you question Me? Question those who have heard what I spoke to them; behold, these know what I said."

JOH 18:22 And when He had said this, one of the officers standing by gave Jesus a blow, saying, "Is that the way You answer the high priest?"

JOH 18:23 Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken wrongly, bear witness of the wrong; but if rightly, why do you strike Me?"

- a) Jesus was not completely silent, and asked why He was being questioned.
 - b) The language of Jesus was nothing like the harsh speech of Paul. (Acts 23:3).
 - c) It is interesting to point out that Ananias died at the hands of assassins about A.D. 66.
- 3) Peter contends when Jesus was reviled that He did not revile again. (1 Pet. 2:23).

1PE 2:23 and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting

Himself to Him who judges righteously;

- 4) Luke reports “the bystanders” informed Paul he had sinned. Luke may have been a bystander, but he would not be among those who rebuked Paul.

ACT 23:4 But the bystanders said, "Do you revile God's high priest?"

- 5) Paul immediately apologized saying, "I was not aware, brethren, that he was high priest; for it is written, 'You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.'" (Acts 23:5; Exod. 22:28).

ACT 23:5 And Paul said, "I was not aware, brethren, that he was high priest; for it is written, 'You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.'"

EXO 22:28 "You shall not curse God, nor curse a ruler of your people.

- 6) It is not known why Paul did not know he was rebuking who was Ananias the high priest at that time.

- Ananias was made high priest by Herod, king of Chalcis, who for this purpose removed Joseph, the son of Camyduus (Josephus {Ant.} 20.5.2).
- When Paul appeared before Ananias and the Sanhedrin he made the declaration "I have lived my life with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day" (Acts 23:1). See Acts 24:16; Phil. 3:6; 1 Cor. 4:4.
- Ananias then ordered the apostle to be struck in the face. (Acts 23:2).
- Paul, angered by this unprovoked assault, replied, "God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall." (Acts 23:3).
- King Agrippa deposed him in about A.D. 59.

- 7) It is significant that at a regular meeting of the Sanhedrin the high priest presided, and therefore would be easily identifiable.

- 8) Here are some possible explanations why Paul did not know he had rebuked the high priest.

- a) The high priest may not have had on his official dress at the meeting called hurriedly by Claudius Lysias the “commander” of the Romans troop in Jerusalem.

1)) He was the one who rescued Paul from the fury of the Jews. (Acts 22:24-30).

2)) See “Claudius Lysias” (Acts 23:26; 24:7).

- b) Paul had been away from Jerusalem so long that he may not have known Ananias on sight.

1)) His conversion had occurred some 25 years earlier.

2)) Furthermore, Ananias was only high priest for about 11 or 12 years beginning about A.D. 47. This was then long after Paul’s conversion.

- c) And then Paul may have had poor eyesight or the high priest may not have been sitting in the official seat.

- d) Paul may not have been looking in the direction from which the words were spoken.

e) This was not a regular meeting of the Sanhedrin, but a meeting convened by the tribune.

f) Ananias may not have been in his usual position when he commanded Paul to be struck.

c. **Paul had lost his temper, but we rejoice he gracefully accepted correction by “the bystanders.”** (Acts 23:4). They asked, “Do you revile God’s high priest?”

d. James, who caused others to sin by his actions, helps us all with these edifying and sobering words found in James 3:2.

JAM 3:2 For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well.

e. The best of men cannot avoid sinning with the tongue.

f. Earlier James wrote these words about the tongue. (Jas. 1:19, 20).

JAM 1:19 This you know, my beloved brethren. But let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger;
JAM 1:20 for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.

g. The best of men need to frequently pray this prayer of David. (Psa. 19:14).

PSA 19:14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my rock and my Redeemer.

h. We need to make this resolution each day. (Psa. 39:1).

PSA 39:1 I said, "I will guard my ways, That I may not sin with my tongue; I will guard my mouth as with a muzzle, While the wicked are in my presence."

Conclusion

1. It is clear from the scriptures that the greatest men and women of the Bible were not without sin.

2. Neither Paul or any of the others we briefly studied in this lesson claimed to be sinless.

3. Paul is to be greatly admired and imitated insofar as he imitated Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 11:1).

4. We should esteem him with lofty respect and obey the things he wrote in his letters.

a. He was inspired being guided by the Holy Spirit in his preaching and writings.

b. He proclaimed “the whole purpose of God” and “did not shrink from declaring... “anything that was profitable.” (Acts 20:27, 20).

ACT 20:20 how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house,

ACT 20:27 "For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.

c. What he wrote were the commandments of God except when he clearly pointed out what he was writing was a matter of opinion. (1 Cor. 14:37).

1CO 14:37 If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment.

5. We must not, however, seek to whitewash his sins or the sins of any other.

6. Sin must be confessed to be forgiven by God's grace. (1 Jn. 1:7, 9).

1JO 1:7 but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

1JO 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

7. Paul, like all Christians, needed to pray for forgiveness. (Matt. 6:12; Lk. 11:4).

MAT 6:12 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

LUK 11:4 'And forgive us our sins, For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.' "

8. Knowing the kind of man Paul was we can be confident that he prayed daily for forgiveness.

9. Private sin should be confessed to God, and other sins should be confessed to those we have sinned against.

10. It is not scriptural to sin against a person or persons and then confess our sins to someone else and think this substitutes for confessing to the person or persons we have sinned against.

11. All sin must be confessed to God since all sin is against God.

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