

BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE FELLOWSHIP

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE



LESSON 7

Answer Key

DISPENSATIONAL CHANGE GOD PREPARES A NEW MESSENGER

Memory Verse: 1 TIMOTHY 1:15

Please memorize the above verse and be prepared to write it out at the end of this lesson.

In the last lesson we read about the stoning of Stephen. This incident was symbolic of Israel's rejection of the risen Messiah and demonstrated the need for a new dispensation. So long as the Kingdom was being offered to Israel the nation had the opportunity to respond, repent and receive. When it became clear that Israel had rejected Christ a second time, a transitional period began as God made preparation for a new dispensation, the "Dispensation of the Grace of God" (Ephesians 3:2).

Salvation was still offered to individual Israelites, but the Messianic Kingdom in which Christ will rule Israel, and through Israel the world, was temporarily set aside.

Just as He once raised up Moses and gave him special revelation concerning Israel under the Law, God now brought a new messenger into view. Saul of Tarsus, later called Paul, is the one through whom God established the Church, the Body of Christ. He is the revealer of truth for the age of grace.

In this lesson we begin to trace the life and ministry of the Apostle Paul.

SAUL'S BACKGROUND

In the following questions we will look at some of the scriptures which give background information on Saul of Tarsus who became the Apostle Paul.

1. (Philippians 3:4-6) Here Paul is describing his life before he received Christ in order to show that, even though a man or woman is successful by human standards that success does not make him right with God. In these verses Paul lists at least seven facts about his early life. Give any four of them.
circumcised // stock of Israel // tribe of Benjamin // Hebrew of the Hebrews // A Pharisee
concerning zeal persecuting the Church // Touching righteousness in the law, blameless
2. (Galatians 1:13,14) What did Paul do before he was converted to Christ? _____
Persecuted the church of God and wasted it

How does he describe his former life? **Profited in the Jews religion above many his equals // more zealous of the traditions of his fathers**

3. (Acts 22:3) List any two of the facts about Paul which are given here. **A Jew // Born in Tarsus // Brought up at the feet of Gamaliel // Taught according to perfect law of the fathers // zealous toward God**

Saul of Tarsus was a young man on the way up! He was a Jew born in Tarsus (Acts 22:3). He was also a Roman citizen with all the rights and privileges of the empire.

Saul had the best education available to a Jew of that day. He was brought up in Jerusalem (Acts 22:3), possibly living with his sister (Acts 23:16). He was educated under Gamaliel, one of the most prominent Jewish teachers of the day. He was also a devout man, a member of the Pharisees, and was respected as a religious leader.

Due to his zeal for the Jewish religion, Saul was a hearty persecutor of those who believed in Christ (Acts 22:4).

4. Please read Acts 7. _____ (Check) Here we find Saul during the time of his life when he is still an unbeliever.

(Acts 7:58) What did Saul do when Stephen was stoned to death? _____
Witnesses laid down their clothes at Saul's feet while he watched their clothes.

5. Please carefully read Acts 8:1-3. _____ (Check)

(vs. 1) What was Saul's attitude towards Stephen? **Saul consented to his death (approved)**

(vs. 1b) What happened at this time? **There was a great persecution against the church at Jerusalem. They were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria**

(vs. 3) Describe Saul's activities at this time. **He made havoc of the church, dragging men and women to prison**

6. (Acts 22:4) Here Paul is giving his testimony to a crowd of Jews and refers back to his early life. How does he describe his early actions? **I persecuted the followers of The Way unto the death**

7. Please carefully read 1 Timothy 1:12-17. _____ (Check)

(vs. 13) How does Paul describe himself? **A blasphemer, a persecutor and a violent man, who was shown mercy because he acted in ignorance and unbelief.**

8. (vs. 15) What had the Lord done for Paul? _____

Saved him // Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief.

(vs. 16) What does this verse teach? What lesson do you take from it? (Use your own words.)

I should show mercy and be longsuffering to them that should hereafter believe on Him

9. (Eph. 1:7) What has God given to us through the blood of Christ? Redemption through His blood,
the forgiveness of sins

Saul was a criminal, a murderer in God's eyes. Yet he was completely forgiven through Christ's blood. His life was turned around and God used him for great things.

Part of God's purpose in saving Saul was to show that God will accept anyone who comes to him through the blood of Christ. He will forgive, He will save and He will set them on a good path and use them for great things!

10. Have you been saved by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ? _____ (Yes) _____ (No)

SAUL IS CONVERTED

11. Please carefully read Acts 9 _____ (Check) for the story of Saul's conversion to Christ.
(Acts 9:1,2) What special project was Saul engaged in? He had letters from the high priest allowing him to find followers of the way, to bring them bound to Jerusalem
12. (Acts 9:3-9) Describe the events which took place as Saul was converted. (Use your own words.) Accept any part of to the following: A light from heaven shown around him // He fell and heard a voice saying, "Saul why do you persecute me?" // In answer Saul said, "Who are you Lord?" // The Lord said, "I am Jesus whom you persecute." Saul trembled and asked, "Lord what will you have me do?" The Lord told him to go into the city and it will be told to him. Paul was blinded. He was led to Damascus
13. Please read Acts 26:15-18. _____ (Check) Here Paul is retelling the story of his conversion before King Agrippa.
He adds some detail which was not included in Acts 9.
(Acts 26:16b) What would Paul be a witness to? These things which you have seen and those things in which I will appear unto you.
14. Please carefully read Acts 26:17,18. _____ (Check)

To whom would Paul be sent? **The Gentiles**

For what purpose was Paul to be sent? **To open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins.**

15. Now return to the original story in Acts 9. According to Acts 9:7-9, where was Saul taken after his experience on the Damascus Road? **To the city of Damascus**

16. Read Acts 9:10-19 for the following questions. _____ (Check)

Name the man whom God instructed to go to Saul. **Ananias**

Why was this man reluctant to go? **He had heard of the evil Saul had done to God's saints at Jerusalem**

17. (Acts 9:15) How does God describe Saul? **He is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name before Gentiles and kings and children of Israel.**

18. (Acts 9:18,19) What happened to Saul after Ananias had spoken to him? _____
 He was filled with the Holy Spirit and the scales fell from his eyes so that he could see and he was baptized

PAUL'S THREE-YEAR MINISTRY IN DAMASCUS

Immediately after his conversion Paul spent three years in the city of Damascus preaching to the Jews there. He declared that Christ was the Son of God and their Messiah. Paul also spent much time in the Arabian desert, which lay to the east of Damascus, in meditation and contemplation as he was being taught by God.

19. Read Acts 9:20-22 for the "Reader's Digest" version of Paul's time in Damascus.

(vs. 20) Where did Paul start to preach? **He preached in the Synagogues**

What did Paul preach? **Jesus is the Son of God**

(vs. 22) Describe in your own words how Paul's preaching affected the Jews in Damascus? _____

 Answers will vary Paul grew in strength and became powerful // He had the Jews confused with his message and proved that Jesus is the Christ (Do not accept copying of vs 22)

20. Please read Galatians 1:11-18. _____ (Check) Paul reflects back on the time he spent in Damascus.

(vs. 11,12) How did Paul receive his message? **By the revelation of Jesus Christ**

(vs. 13,14) Describe Saul before his conversion. **Violently persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it.**

(vs. 15) How long had God marked him out for service? **From his mothers womb**

(For other examples of God's knowledge of us before birth, see Jeremiah 1:5 and Psalm 139:13-16.)

(Gal. 1:17) Instead of consulting with others or seeking out Peter and the Jerusalem Apostles, what did Saul do after his conversion? **He went into Arabia then returned to Damascus**

(vs. 18) How long was it after his conversion before he went to Jerusalem and met with any of the other Apostles? **Three years**

21. (Acts 9:23-25) Describe the events which ended Paul's ministry in Damascus. _____

The Jews wanted to kill him. Their plan became known to Saul so the disciples let him down the wall at night in a basket.

PAUL VISITS JERUSALEM

22. (Acts 9:26) Describe what happened when Paul came to Jerusalem. **The disciples were afraid of him and did not believe that he was a disciple.**

In your opinion, how do you think Paul felt at this time? _____

Answers will vary. Do not accept copying verses

23. (vs. 27) How was Paul's problem finally resolved? **Barnabas brought him to the Apostles and told them how he had seen the Lord and had preached boldly in the name of Jesus.**

24. (Acts 9:28,29) Describe Paul's activities in Jerusalem. **He spoke boldly in the name of the Lord and disputed against the Grecians**

25. (Galatians 1:18,19). Name the two Jewish leaders whom Paul met at this time. **Peter and James**

26. (Galatians 1:21) Where did Paul go after this visit to Jerusalem? **Syria and Cilicia**

27. (Acts 9:29) Here we see why Paul left Jerusalem. Who was attempting to put Paul to death? _____

The Grecians

Note: It was the Greek speaking Jews who had earlier argued with Stephen and falsely accused him (Acts 6:9-15). Back in Acts 6 and 7, Paul was one of them. It is quite possible that back then he had held the robes of some of the very people who now sought his death.

This is an ironic turn of events and it offers a spiritual lesson. Very often when we come to Christ and our lives are changed, our old friends and associates no longer accept us because our values have changed. In some cases they will try to harm us and, at times, we may find it necessary to separate from them.

28. (Acts 9:30) Where was Paul now sent? **Tarsus**

Tarsus, which was the city of Paul's birth, was also an important city in the Roman province of Cilicia. Syria was the province directly to the east. At that time both provinces were administered together. The combined "regions of Syria and Cilicia" (Gal. 1:21), formed the district of which Tarsus was a major city.

PAUL'S MINISTRY IN TARSUS

29. (Gal. 1:23) Very little is recorded of Paul's ministry in Tarsus and the regions of Syria and Cilicia. How is his activity described? **He preached the faith which he once destroyed**

The exact length of Paul's time in Tarsus is not known, although it is a fairly extended period. A number of writers feel that a time of 9 or 10 years is accurate, from approx. 35 AD to 44 AD.

We know from the Galatians reference above that Paul was preaching Christ. It is probable that some of his sufferings, recorded in passages like 2 Cor. 11:23-28, took place during this time. God was also teaching Paul and preparing him for further ministries.

30. The book of 2 Corinthians was written in approx. 56 or 57 AD. The events of 2 Cor. 12 took place 14 years before the writing (2 Cor. 12:2) in about the middle of the Tarsus period. Read 2 Corinthians 12:2-4.

Describe what had happened to Paul? He had a vision or experience of being caught up to the third heaven and heard unspeakable words which it was not lawful to utter.

31. Review question: In Acts 26:16b, Christ said that Paul would be a witness to the things which he had seen and Those things in which I (Christ) will show you.

32. Review question: According to Galatians 1:11,12, from where and how did Paul receive the gospel which he preached? By revelation of Jesus Christ

33. Please read carefully Ephesians 3:1-3. _____ (Check)
(vs. 2) What was given to Paul. The dispensation of the Grace of God

(vs. 3) What was made known to Paul? The Mystery

(vs. 3) And how? By Revelation

34. (Ephesians 3:6) What was this mystery? The Gentiles should be fellowheirs and of the same body and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel

35. (Ephesians 3:8,9) What special purpose had God prepared Paul for? _____
To Preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ // To make all men see what is the fellowship of the Mystery.

All the Bible is for our learning and understanding. The Apostle Paul is of special concern for us because he is the man whom God raised up and prepared to preach and reveal the truth for the Body of Christ of which we are a part.

The next lesson is the last in this series. In it we will consider further passages regarding Paul and some of the most important teachings from his epistles.

36. Memory verse.(1Timothy 1:15) Please write out the memory verse from this lesson in the space below.

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

Use the space below for any questions or comments:

I would like to be contacted by a minister in my area that can help me better understand God's Word. If checked please include a telephone number _____

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