

# Plain Path

Weekly newsletter of the Fry Road church of Christ

Sunday, December 21, 2014

Volume 19, Number 51

“Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path... Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart” (Psalm 27:11-14)

## PAUL’S CONVERSION DECLARES ...

by Bob Pulliam

*“For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure, and tried to destroy it; 14 and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.”*

(Galatians 1:13f)

**T**HE CONVERSION and life of Saul (the apostle Paul) has a great deal to say to unbeliever and believer alike. His conversion and life speaks volumes regarding the truth of Christ's resurrection and validity of His church.

To begin with, the conversion itself offers testimony of a very significant nature. That Paul was converted says something. Why did he even make this change to begin with? Everyone does what they do for reasons that may be weighed. We call it motives.

This week we will examine possible motives for Paul’s conversion from one life to another.

The subsequent life of Paul also offers important testimony. Next week we will examine what the life of Paul has to say about the truth of Jesus’ resurrection.

### The Conversion of Paul...

Paul was a successful man before he became a Christian. His success was due partly to the fact that he was an unbeliever. And that certainly isn’t unusual. Suc-

cess is often due to unbelief, and Paul thought that any Christian was a blasphemer worthy of death (Acts 26:9f). He was so successful that he even described himself as advancing in Judaism “beyond many of my contemporaries” (Gal 1:14). He was thoroughly content with this life of persecuting Christians, having a good conscience in the things he did (Acts 23:1). If the course he was following in Judaism was so prosperous and comforting, why did he change?

### Possible Motives...

There had to be a motive for Paul's conversion. The person who changes jobs has a motive. People who move from one place to another have motives. Criminals have motives for robbing stores and banks; and for killing people. Motives make the world go ‘round. Motives are the reasons for what we do... But if Paul had such a great position in Judaism, what was his motive?

(Declares, continued on pg 2...)

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### Money?...

One of the strongest motives around is money. People covet it, steal it, kill for it, launder it, go to jail for it, and die for it. It would be the perfect motive for the apostle Paul. So where is all of the money that must have changed him over to Christianity? This is a popular motive proposed for his change, and yet Paul's case shows that money had nothing to do with it. Just a casual look at his sacrifices emphasizes that (Acts; II Cor 11:27).

### Love?...

The love of a good (or bad) woman has caused many a man to

change course in life. Just think about the effect of Delilah on Samson. Could it be that the apostle Paul converted to Christianity for the throes of love? It might make for a great paperback romance novel; but has no basis in truth. Read Acts 13 - 28, and Galatians 1; then ask yourself: "When did Paul have any time for a woman he may have fallen in love with?"

### Power?...

It is true that Paul assumed a great amount of power when he became a Christian, simply because he was also an apostle. Could this be the motive for Paul's conversion? Hardly possible. First of all, he would have had no power over getting that office. Just because he converted didn't make him an automatic candidate. And then think for a moment about situations where power is a motive for a person's actions. Is it not true that those individuals covet power that they might use it for their own benefit? When we look at the exercise of Paul's power, we find a man who meekly dispensed the powers of his office only as required for the furtherance of Christ's gospel. If Paul had a lust for power, and that was the reason for his conversion, you can be sure that he would have used it for his own advancement. Paul exercised his power as an apostle only to further the gospel of Jesus Christ!

### Notoriety?...

Was Paul after the spotlight of fame? He is now a character known the world over. This is, perhaps the most likely motive at

first glance. However, when one considers the position of Paul when he was converted, the possibility fades into obscurity.

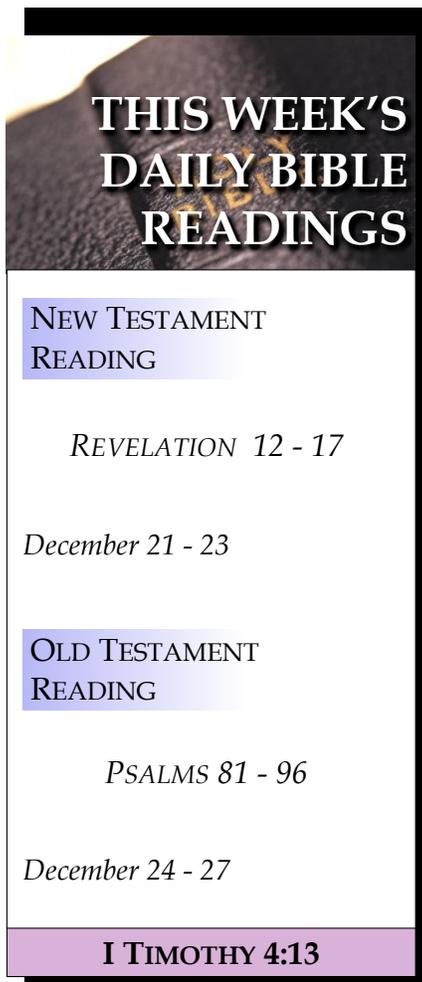
When Paul was converted to Christianity, he was already a very noteworthy figure. He was advancing in Judaism beyond many of his contemporaries (Gal 1:14). And why would he think that a conversion would bring him fame, when doing so would take him back to "square one". In fact, further back than "square one", because now he would be trying to gain positive notoriety among those who knew him to previously persecute them! There would have been no reason to believe that fame would belong to him by a conversion.

### Madness?...

Could Paul have gone mad? He just couldn't take binding and killing Christians anymore! Now one might conclude this, if we didn't have so much information from Paul himself. In all of the letters that Paul writes, he gives no evidence of madness. If such were the case, psychologists the world over would be giving us their "well founded" views. And while a few ardent atheists try to make the claim, most agree that Paul shows no signs of madness. We simply do not have a psychological profile of Paul that would even suggest a madman. Instead we have a man with a well rounded focus testifying of something to which he was a witness (Jesus alive after the crucifixion).

### Conclusion...

When we study the possible motives behind the conversion of  
(Declares, *continued on pg 3...*)



**THIS WEEK'S  
DAILY BIBLE  
READINGS**

**NEW TESTAMENT  
READING**

*REVELATION 12 - 17*

*December 21 - 23*

**OLD TESTAMENT  
READING**

*PSALMS 81 - 96*

*December 24 - 27*

**I TIMOTHY 4:13**

# FAMILY NEWS & NOTES

*News and Notes of Interest  
to Fry Road Members*

Because of the large number of visitors to our services, we would ask those wishing to identify with the congregation to do so by expressing this interest directly to the elders.

## *Upcoming Meetings & Events:*

**Gospel Meeting (Dee Bowman)**  
January 11 - 14, 2015

**V.B.S.**  
June 21 - 25, 2015

**Gospel Meeting (Jim Deason)**  
September 13 - 16, 2015

**Gospel Meeting (Carl McMurray)**  
April 12 - 15, 2015

**Annual Singing**  
September 12, 2015

## *Sick and Shut-Ins*

*Sections have been removed to preserve members' privacy*

## *Bereaved*

## **Sermons:**

### **Next Sunday:**

Samuel's Summary  
of Service

### **Tonight:**

Moses: Man of Reaction

## **Order of Services:**

Announcements and Reading  
Singing & Prayer  
Sermon  
Invitation & Song  
Lord's Supper  
Song & Contribution  
Closing Song

## *Note to Teachers*

END-OF-CLASS BELLS will change beginning this morning. The first bell will ring at ten after, and the second at a quarter after. Classes upstairs should quietly come downstairs when the first bell rings, and downstairs classes will dismiss on the second bell.

(Declares, *continued from pg 2...*)

Paul, we find a powerful fact: He had no reason to make any change, unless he really did discover that he was wrong. Everything we know about Paul indicates that he was a conscientious man. But what would convince a man who believed so strongly that Jesus was a fraud? What could make him believe that Jesus really was raised from the dead? Nothing could have effected such a change, other than seeing Jesus on the road to Damascus.

Next week we must continue this study by asking what would make a man give his life so fully to what he had previously tried to destroy?

*SPD*

## **The End Is Near!**

**By Bob Pulliam**

**S**OUNDS RATHER OMINOUS, doesn't it? Peter did say that in First Peter 4:7, but I'm talking about the end of 2014. And I want to ask you: "Have you even considered your service to God in 2015?" Are the meetings and singing on your calendar? Have you picked up the new class material from the table? Started to look it over? Checked for teaching opportunities in the coming year? The end is near, and possibly another end too!

*SPD*

# FOR THE RECORD

## WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS

## MONTHLY ASSIGNMENTS

*Sections have been removed to preserve members' privacy*

IN KEEPING WITH OUR LONG STANDING AGREEMENT, THOSE SERVING PUBLICLY ARE REMINDED TO PLEASE DRESS IN A MANNER RESPECTFUL OF THE GOD WHOM WE SERVE.

### ELDERS:

Ruben Amador  
Matthew Heaton  
Donnie Mangrum  
Steven Martin  
Steve Voss



### DEACONS:

John Coleman	Ken Dunsmore
David Ellison	Ray Farrell
Aubrey Garner	Steve Geraci
Steve LaGrasta	John Light
Mike McMurray	Jason Mock
David Stevenson	Glenn Tomblin

### TIMES OF SERVICES

Sunday Bible Classes	9:30 AM
Sunday Morning Assembly	10:30 AM
Sunday Evening Assembly	6:00 PM
Wednesday Bible Classes	7:30 PM

### EVANGELIST & EDITOR:

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