

“Paul and the Resurrection of Jesus”

Acts 9:1-22







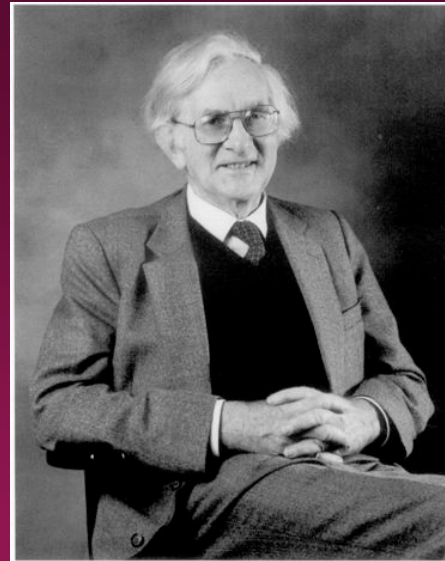
Denial of Christ







1. Gilbert West



2. Lord Lyttleton

3. Lyttleton quote: ***“The conversion and apostleship of Saint Paul alone, duly considered, was of itself a demonstration sufficient to prove Christianity to be a divine revelation.”***

Josh McDowell summarizes Lyttleton's conclusions in these words:

Quote: *“He concludes that if Paul’s twenty-five years of suffering and service for Christ were a reality, then his conversion was true, for everything he did began with that sudden change. And if his conversion was true, Jesus Christ rose from the dead, for everything Paul was and did he attributed to the sight of the risen Christ.”*



What Paul [i.e. Saul of Tarsus] was like before his conversion

- Paul [Saul] was a 'hellenistic' Jew
- However, Paul's education was strongly Jewish and took place under the doctrine of the Pharisees (the strictest sect).



- **Gal. 1:14 Paul said, “*For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers.*”**

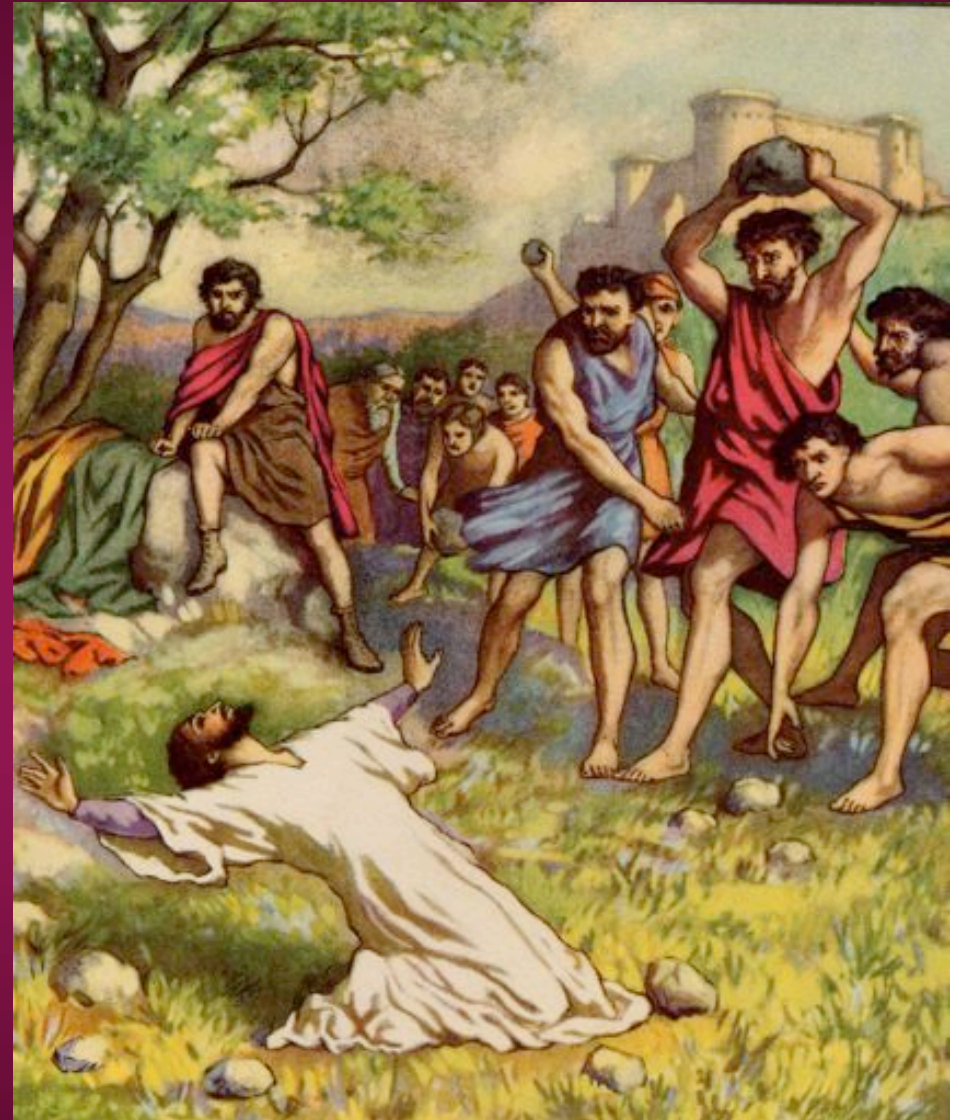
Two central aspects of Christianity which were especially offensive to Paul and many other Jews

- **The whole idea of a “Suffering Messiah” was a completely foreign concept to the Jews of Paul’s day! [Especially, the idea of a crucified Messiah was a contradiction of terms! - cf. Gal. 3:13]**
- **As the Jews saw it, the whole idea of attributing a saving role to Jesus was to rob the law of all its value in the purpose of salvation!**

For these reasons, Saul was bound and determined to exterminate this sect

- ***“Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead? I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the saints in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. In my obsession against them, I even went to foreign cities to persecute them. ...” Acts 26:8-11***

- **Acts 7:58b** - When Stephen was stoned to death for preaching the Gospel, we are told that, “... *the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.*”
- **Acts 8:1** says, “*And Saul was there, giving approval to his death.*”



- **Acts 8:3** says, “... *Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison.*”
- **Acts 9:1-2** “*Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord’s disciples. He went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.*”

What Was Paul's Conversion Experience Like?



The Results of Paul's Conversion

- **Paul's character was drastically transformed!**
- **Paul's relationship with the followers of Jesus was radically altered**
- **Paul's message was greatly changed!**
- **Paul's mission was totally changed!**

Summary of important facts:

Fact #1 - It is very difficult [actually impossible] for critics of Christianity to refute the testimony of the Apostle Paul! - His was a radically changed and transformed life!

Fact #2 - By Paul's own admission, the basis of his radical transformation was the fact that he [like the other apostles] had actually seen the risen Christ!

Fact #3 - The heart of the message of Paul is concerned with the fact that this resurrection of Christ's is the very basis for the hope of resurrection and eternal life for all men!