

**Originally**, the Apostle Paul was called Saul. After encountering the risen Lord Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus, his life was radically transformed (Acts 9:1-19 ). He then took the name Paul and became a key figure in spreading the Gospel.

Paul was born in **Tarsus**, a significant city in **Cilicia** (modern-day Turkey), and was a Roman citizen by birth (Acts 22:3-28). He was Jewish, from the tribe of **Benjamin**, and identified as a Pharisee—a group devoted to strict observance of the Mosaic Law (Philippians 3:5):

“circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee.”

## **Paul’s Singleness and Its Purpose**

Paul chose to remain unmarried (1 Corinthians 7:7-8) to dedicate himself fully to the work of the Gospel without divided interests or distractions. He explains his reasoning in 1 Corinthians 7:32-33

“I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord’s affairs—how he can please the Lord. But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife.”

This teaching reflects a theological understanding that singleness can allow greater devotion to God’s service. Paul’s choice mirrors that of other key biblical figures like **John the Baptist** (Luke 1:15) and the prophet **Elijah** (1 Kings 19:10,13), who also remained unmarried and were wholly devoted to God’s mission.

## Paul’s Ministry and Legacy

The Bible emphasizes that John the Baptist was the greatest prophet before Christ (Matthew 11:11):

“Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist.”

Elijah is noted for being taken to heaven without experiencing death (2 Kings 2:11), a sign of his special prophetic role.

**Similarly**, Paul is recognized as the apostle who labored more extensively than any before him, carrying the Gospel to Gentiles and establishing many churches (1 Corinthians 15:10):

“But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect.”

Paul’s singleness was a deliberate, Spirit-led choice that enabled him to serve God’s mission with undivided devotion and impact the early church profoundly.

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