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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