

**Kirkwall Presbyterian Church**  
**'When Jesus Comes'**  
**August 16, 2026**  
**By Keith Marcy**

Why believe Paul?

What is special about this man?

a) Philippians 3:4b-6

*'If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: 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; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.'*

Paul was born a pure-bred Jew. He would have gone to school at the local synagogue and learned to read and write Hebrew. He would have studied and memorized long passages of the Torah (first 5 books of the Old Testament)

b) Acts 22:3-5

*'Then Paul said: "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today. I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, as also the high priest and all the council can testify. I even obtained letters from them to their brothers in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished."*

Gamaliel was a respected professor of Jewish law and writings. Under his teaching, Paul would have acquired an in-depth knowledge of Jewish history and religious beliefs. He learned to defend his faith through public debate and oratory (speeches). He became so zealous for the Jewish faith that he persecuted followers of Jesus, giving approval of their death.

c) Acts 22:6-11

*'About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, "Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?"*

*"Who are you, Lord?" I asked*

*"I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting," He replied. My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of Him who was speaking to me.*

*"What shall I do, Lord?" I asked.*

*"Get up," the Lord said, and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do."*

Jesus stopped Paul, knocked him from his horse, and spoke to him. A follower of Jesus, Ananias, was sent to pray for Paul. Then he relayed a message from Jesus that immediately changed Paul's life. He would be a proclaimer of the faith he once labored to destroy. Read Acts 22:14-16

d) Galatians 1:13-18

*"I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by*

*revelation from Jesus Christ. 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. But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus.”*

Paul, after Jesus changed him, went into Arabia for 3 years. There he was taught by God. He describes the experience in 2 Corinthians 12:4

e) 2 Corinthians 12:2-4

*“I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know – God knows. And I know that this man – whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows – was caught up to Paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell.”*

There in the desert, God taught Paul many things to equip him for the ministry Jesus called him to. He was shown a glimpse into Paradise similar to what John described in Revelation 7. During that 3-year period, Paul must have sifted through his previous training and realized how wrong he had been in denying Jesus was the Messiah.

He came back from those years in the desert boot camp equipped to proclaim Jesus, the Way, the Truth, the Resurrection and the Life, to whosoever would listen. His zeal could not be compromised though he was beaten, shipwrecked, and imprisoned. Through his letters to individuals and churches, we have a paper trail of wisdom to help us also to be profitable servants for God’s glory and man’s benefit.

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Today, we are looking at Jesus’ second coming from two of Paul’s letters.

Someone may be thinking, *‘If these books written by Paul are in the Bible, is that not good enough?’* Yes, it is. But when we are considering a topic that goes against scientific reason, I find it reassuring to know something about the person who wrote it so that it is included in the Bible. Our faith needs all the armor at our disposal for Satan loves to be the wolf in sheep’s clothing. It is a faith booster to know Paul was chosen by Christ, who quite unceremoniously introduced Himself to His enemy, gave him a job to do, and trained him for that job.

Last week our focus was on two verses where John quotes Jesus’ words to Martha, a sister to Lazarus who was dead, *“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live even though he dies, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.”* (John 11:25-26)

This verse only makes sense if we have a soul and a body. With the soul we believe; the soul does not die when the body dies. Further proof are Jesus’ words to the thief dying beside Him on the cross – the thief who voiced two statements of belief. To his partner in crime he said, *“We are getting what we deserve, but this Jesus has done nothing wrong.”* Then to

Jesus he said, “*Remember me when you come into your kingdom.*” In faith he believed this was not Jesus’ last day to be alive. Jesus would rule over a future kingdom. And Jesus said in reply, “*Today you will be with me in paradise.*” He was speaking of the thief’s soul that would not die when his body died.

One more example. In 2 Corinthians 5:8, Paul, speaking about our heavenly dwelling declares, “*to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.*” He is saying that our souls leave the body and immediately go into the presence of Christ because our heavenly passport has been sealed, stamped and paid for by Jesus. We need not be prayed over by relatives, nor do we need them to pay sums of money before we are accepted. No, the moment you believed that Jesus died for you, you were pardoned, you were sealed, you belonged to Jesus who is preparing a place for you.

But what happens when Christ returns?

Jesus told Paul, Paul wrote to the believers at Thessalonica and through the preservation of that letter, Jesus tells us.

Janice will read the words for us. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

Verse 14 – When Paul mentions those who ‘*fall asleep,*’ he means those who died believing in Him. If their souls departed, what of their bodies? They were buried and returned to the ground. But when Jesus comes back – when He appears in the clouds after the trumpet blast that will be heard across the universe, the dead in Christ will rise up. They will be resurrected. They will meet the Lord in the air to be with Him forever. Then, those who have not died will also be caught up with a changed body to be forever with the Lord.

What will the resurrected body be like?

Paul tells us in his letter to the believers in Corinth. He says the body that is buried or cremated, (it matters not), is a perishable body. We know that. We see the effect age and disease and improper care have on our bodies. The resurrected body will be imperishable. It will never grow old. Disease cannot touch it.

Read 1 Corinthians 15, verse 42 & 43 “*It is sown [buried] in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is buried in weakness; it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.*”

The word ‘*spiritual*’ here causes much confusion. Did Paul mean we become angels? No. The Bible is clear that the angels were never human beings like us.

In his letter to the church at Philippi, Paul gives us a picture of our resurrected body.

Philippians 3:21 says it will be like Jesus glorified body. What was it like?

1. His voice was like His pre-resurrection voice. Mary, in the garden, recognized Him when He spoke her name.
2. He ate food while the disciples watched. “*I am not a ghost,*” said Jesus.

3. He had a real body. *“Touch me,”* He said to doubting Thomas. *“See the scars. It is me; I am alive.”*
4. John recognized Jesus while He cooked breakfast on the shore of Lake Galilee.
5. Yet, He did not have to walk. He was spiritual in the sense that He just appeared on the road to Emmaus and disappeared when the two disciples recognized Him.
6. He appeared in a room though the door was bolted.

Paul said our resurrected body will be like that. It will be a body made to live eternally. It will be immune to sinning!

Job, the Old Testament figure, when he thought of his Redeemer's return, declares in Job 19:26, *“And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God. I, myself will see Him, with my own eyes – I and not another. O, how my heart yearns within me for that day.”*

Yes, we too will see God with our own eyes. It is then reasonable to say that we will see one another. Will we look the same? When John saw into Heaven, he saw a multitude from every race. How did he know? Because the Chinese looked Chinese; the Africans were black; the Columbians were brown. And the Canadians were any of the above!

And everything will be glorious. Encourage one another with these thoughts. Here below life is often hard. In some areas of the world Christians are physically abused. Here in southern Ontario Christians face exclusion and disappointment — disappointment that so few show any interest in the Gospel; heartache that a spouse won't come to church. Paul, who bore both physical abuse and the disappointment of men he considered brothers turning from the Faith, says to us, 'Cheer up! Christ will come back for you. Your weak and worn body will be made new, and you will be forever with the Lord. All will be glorious. Remind one another of these things!!'