

1.7 A Man Named Saul, Renamed Paul



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Acts 9: 1 - 22

As he [Saul] neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, **"Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"**

Have you heard about this man in the New Testament named Saul? In Acts 8:1, at the stoning of Stephen, Saul was there giving complete agreement with Stephen's death. Here is the lifestyle of Saul, a man dedicated to seizing Christians and condemning them to death. Given his start in life, would you have thought Saul would be a good candidate for an important role of evangelism in the early church??

In Acts 9, the Lord met with Saul and had a few words with him about Saul's lifestyle and a few changes that God had planned for him. Here is the rest of Saul's story from Acts 9: 1-22.

"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 in 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. As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

"Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. For three days he was blind and did not eat or drink anything.

In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!"

"Yes, Lord," he answered.

The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight."

"Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name."

But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”

Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. All those who heard him were astonished and asked, “Isn’t he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn’t he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?” Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Messiah.

After the conversion of Saul, he became known as Paul. Paul was not only extremely successful in arguing in favor of the message of Christ in the synagogues of Jerusalem, but he established and supported churches in Asia Minor and Europe, especially in the world of Gentiles. His letters to these churches with his insights and spiritual experiences, including a visit to the third heaven, established him as the Apostle Paul, and his letters as canonized scripture. His life was filled with persecution, imprisonment, and even death for his convictions and faith in Jesus Christ. It’s amazing that so much of our faith, doctrine, and encouragement came to us through ONE man, renamed Paul! Here are a few favorite scriptures from Paul:

”For I [Paul] am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: ‘The righteous will live by faith.’ ”
Romans 1: 16-17

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." Romans 8: 28

If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is LORD," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame." For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same LORD is LORD of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved." Romans 10: 9-13

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Romans 12: 2

"For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit!" Romans 10: 14

"For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames." 1 Corinthians 3: 10-15

"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize . . . Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. . . . I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize." 1 Corinthians 9: 24-27

"Now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love." 1 Corinthians 13

For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed. 1 Corinthians 15: 9-11

**“If anyone is in Christ, he is a NEW creation; the old has gone, the new has come.”
2 Corin 5:17**

“God has said: ‘I will live with them and walk with them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people. Therefore come out from them and be separate.’” 2 Corinthians 6: 16-17

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.” Galatians 5:22-26

“Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man [or woman] reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers” Galatians 6:7-10

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross.” Philippians 2: 3-8

“Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Philippians 2:9-11

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever

is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.” Philippians 4: 6- 8

“I can do ALL things through Christ who strengthens me.” Philippians 4: 13

“God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4: 19

“We do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep [die], or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.” 1 Thessalonians 4: 13

“For God did not give us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” 2 Timothy 1: 7

“For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.”

2 Timothy 4: 6 - 8

What are YOUR favorite Pauline scriptures?? This was an incredible hero of our faith, one who acted as if he didn't even know it!

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