

The Apostle Paul – Lesson 2: The Sinner Becomes Saint

1 Timothy 1:15 This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

Did we learn our lesson? Study Questions from lesson 1 (The Man Named Saul)

1. According to Acts 21:39, where was Saul (Paul) born?
Answer: Tarsus, a city in Cilicia.
2. According to Acts 22:3, who was a great influence to Saul?
Answer: Gamaliel
3. According to Acts 22:4, what type of punishment did Saul administer? Under whose authority?
Answer: The punishment of death, under the authority of the High Priest.
4. According to Acts 5:34, who was Gamaliel?
Answer: A Pharisee, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people.
5. Complete the following scripture:
John 8:7 He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

True / False

False Saul is of the tribe of Judah (PHIL 3:5)

True Saul was a Pharisee (PHIL 3:5)

True Saul was present when Stephen was martyred (ACTS 7:57)

True Saul considered himself blameless before God (PHIL 3:6)

Lesson 2: The Sinner Becomes Saint

Can someone change truly who they are? We all know someone who has always been abrasive, angry, inconsiderate, or upset, they usually dampen the mood, we may even avoid them. It is rare that one you've known for years is suddenly different, suddenly someone else, with a new outlook, even new life habits.

In this lesson, a look at Paul's transformation from sinner to saint.

First – What is meant by 'sinner' and 'saint'

False belief - The world wants humanity to believe 'sainthood' is to the standards of perfection in this world, to each other.

- Popular definition: A very virtuous, kind or patient person.

This is false because it is without reference to God.

1 Peter 1:16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

- Humanity is called to seek holiness, to become saints.

Sinner - Romans 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

- Being 'sinful' is with regard to being in the perfection of God.

Romans 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

- All humanity is the flesh of Adam – All of Adam’s flesh is under the curse (for all have sinned).

Saint – 2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

- Being a ‘saint’ is also with regard to being in the perfection of God.

Romans 5:19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

- All believers are perfected by the Spirit of God (Holy Spirit), which is now part of them.
- All believers are saints (blameless before God) because they carry the righteousness of Christ.

Saul’s transformation

Acts 9:1-2 – The reputation of Saul

(1) And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,

(2) And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

- Saul was consumed with anger – The followers of Jesus have proclaimed Him the Christ: This was a challenge to how Saul believed God would work in the lives of men, it challenged his very holiness.

Some background on Saul and his religion

- Saul as a Pharisee believed in the resurrection. However, this is more of a tradition than scripturally supported. This has resulted in a significant conflict within the Jewish faith resulting in another sect called the Sadducees.

ACTS 23:8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.

- Pharisee – Tolerant of the Christians
ACTS 5:34 and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space;
 - Gamaliel cited as directing patience to the disciples.
- Sadducees – In conflict with the Pharisees:

Some differences in doctrine:

Pharisees	Sadducees
Law	Temple
Interpretation of the Torah	Torah alone
Middle Class	Upper Class
Resurrection of the dead	No Resurrection
Belief in Afterlife	No Afterlife
Rejected the Jewish Leaders	Supported Jewish Leaders

- Saul's actions were not consistent with the philosophy of the Pharisees, but they were in alignment with the High Priest.
- - o A theory of the motive of Saul's anger is with the Jewish people 'converting' to this new religion:
 - Separating themselves from the laws and tradition of the Jewish faith.
 - Aligning with Gentiles (possibly polluting themselves with idolatry).
 - Crucifixion and resurrection of the Messiah – Not that Saul doubted resurrection, but that Saul could not accept that God chose to favor Jesus by raising him before the time of the Judgment of the world.

Saul's anger is intense.

- Straight to the top – Appealing to the high priest directly (Saul had access to the most powerful men in the Jewish religion).
- Seeking endorsed authority to persecute the believers of Christ – Literally going out of his way (from Jerusalem to Damascus) to look for trouble.

1 Timothy 1:15 This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

- Saul later confesses that not only is he a sinner, but he is the worst, as he rebelled against the will of God in his zeal against the church.

Acts 9:3-6 – The change of Saul

(3) And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:

(4) And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, **Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?**

(5) And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, **I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.**

(6) And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord *said* unto him, **Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.**

- Jesus identifies Himself to Saul

Galatians 1:15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by his grace,

- o Saul's selection was not due to his qualification or perfection, but by the grace of God.

- Saul acknowledges Jesus as Lord

Romans 10:13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

- o In Acts 9:6, Saul submits to Christ, in obedience to His authority, and begins his journey to sainthood.

The truth is that we are all sinners (being short of the glory of God), but through Christ, we can have sainthood in the righteousness of Jesus (this means that we, as new creatures, are both sinners and saints at the same time).

Next Lesson: The Introduction of Paul

Lesson 2: The Sinner Becomes Saint

Study Questions

1. According to Romans 3:23, are you a sinner?

2. In Romans 5:19, who are the two men the scripture is referring to?

1. _____ 2. _____

3. According to Acts 9:1, who did Saul appeal to for authority to carry out persecution?

4. According to Acts 9:6, how do we know Saul is on the path to 'sainthood'?

5. Complete the following scripture:

1 Peter 1:16 Because it is written, Be ye _____; for I am _____.

True / False

T F All humanity is condemned because of the sin of Adam.

T F A saint is simply a good person.

T F A sinner is only someone who does bad things.

T F The Pharisees and Sadducees often worked together, because they were similar.