



FEED MY SHEEP

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From a “Saul” to a “Paul”

Our last FMS focused on the suicide and cremation of King Saul, and so from this point forward we will be focusing on the life of David. Along with the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, David is one of the paramount figures in Bible history. He is also a pre-eminent type of Christ Himself. In this issue, we will examine David’s reaction to the death of his tormentor and persecutor, King Saul. The last we heard of David was when he and his men had pursued and slaughtered many Amalekites who had destroyed the town of Ziklag, kidnapped the women and children and stolen all the property. David has now been back at Ziklag for two days and then...

2 Samuel 1:2 It came even to pass on the third day, that, behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head: and so it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the earth, and did obeisance.

This messenger recounts to David the battle of Saul and Israel against the Philistines and concludes by claiming that Saul asked him (the Amalekite) to assist him in committing suicide.

10 So I stood upon him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen: and I took the crown that was upon his head, and the bracelet that was on his arm, and have brought them hither unto my lord.

The messenger no doubt believed that he would be handsomely rewarded for bringing the royal emblems to David, the new king-apparent.

11 Then David took hold on his clothes, and rent them; and likewise all the men that *were* with him:

12 And they mourned, and wept, and fasted until even, for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of YHWH, and for the house of Israel; because they were fallen by the sword.

13 And David said unto the young man that told him, Whence art thou? And he answered, I am the son of a stranger, an Amalekite.

14 And David said unto him, How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy YHWH’s anointed?

15 And David called one of the young men, and said, Go near, and fall upon him. And he smote him that he died.

16 And David said unto him, Thy blood *be* upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain YHWH’s anointed.

For his claim to have assisted in the death of Saul, this Amalekite was executed by the command of David. I am sure it was the last thing this Amalekite expected! He simply could not conceive of anyone not celebrating over the death of his foe. He expected David would be exultant. Certainly, there are examples in Scripture of godly people rejoicing over the death of their foes, but Saul was a special foe. David did not rejoice for a moment over the death of Saul.

Nevertheless, why did David order the Amalekite executed? Remember, David had just come from slaying a multitude of Amalekites a couple days ago. Furthermore, we recall that David had had at least two opportunities himself to assassinate King Saul and

was even encouraged to do so by his troops. But David restrained himself, knowing that even though Saul was wicked and corrupted, that he had still been anointed by God as king of Israel. Therefore, David correctly decided that if God had placed Saul on the throne, then God would remove him in His time.

It was thus a test of David's character that God put David in circumstances where he *could* have killed Saul. God even provided tempters in the form of his loyal troops. This is applicable to each of us as we encounter the Sauls in our own lives. We are not suggesting in any way, of course, about us literally killing our Sauls, but in other opportunities which may arise for us to do them harm, the question is: how do we react at such opportunities? It is a test along our road to overcomership.

I have had several opportunities to figuratively slay one or more of my Sauls by exposing their faults for the world to see. That exposure would have effectively destroyed their reputations and brought them to ruin. God even provided me tempters in the form of friends of mine who encouraged me to do so. (If some of you friends read this, and if you recall the situation to which I refer; rest assured, I still love you and am proud to have you as my friends. But now you understand why I did not take your advice on those occasions.)

Certainly, the Saul in me, the Philistine in me, the flesh, the carnal nature in me said "yeah, get revenge; use this information to destroy this persecutor." But by the grace of God, He had caused me to understand how we are to treat and react to our Sauls, *if* we want to be overcomers. The key pattern? Be like David. Thus, my Sauls are still Sauls, but I am praying for them to be spared an ignominious end like King Saul suffered.

Instead, I pray that my Sauls will be allowed to follow the pattern of Saul in the New Testament. The New Testament pattern is for Saul to become Paul. Let us explore this concept in depth now. On one level, King Saul represents the church in the age of Pentecost. Corporately, this Saul must die in order to give way for the church under the Tabernacles anointing, which is the kingdom under the rulership of the overcomers, who are under Christ as Head.

You may have noticed on page one that I underlined the words "on the third day" when I quoted 2

Samuel 1:2. Under the principle of a thousand years as a day, we are now near the very commencement of the third day. True to prophetic type, it is on this day that the David Company gets word that Saul is dead. That is to say, the age of Pentecost, when the "Saul church" reigned, is over. (For the eye-popping, jaw-dropping details, see the book *The Secrets of Time* by Dr. Stephen Jones; #B-118 on our SKM Order Form. \$22 ppd.) That is viewing it on a corporate level.

On an individual level, we are all unbelievers to begin with. Then, by the grace of God, we become believers. But as baby Christians we are very much Sauls. At that point, our character is usually a long way removed from being in the image of Christ. As observation shows, some baby Christians remain just that, Saul-type believers, all their lives. Others have been called to go on and they undergo a process of transformation from a Saul to a Paul.

Our Father has provided various paths. We do not all experience the exact same thing as Saul of Tarsus. Some of us are changed gradually without any great traumatic events or bone-jarring experiences. But for some individuals, the treatment is rather jolting. Like Saul of Tarsus, some of us are going to have to be knocked to the ground before we are changed. This speaks of severe humbling and chastisement.

Saul in the Old Testament was a big man, head and shoulders above everybody else (1 Samuel 9:2). In the New Testament, Saul was a man of small stature and so his name was changed to Paul, from the Latin *paulus* for *small* or *little*.

These references to physical size are, of course, figurative in application. Obviously, short men do not necessarily have better character than tall men. I do not wish to identify any of my Sauls by name or even by gender, because I wish them no harm. But God gave me to see such incredibly clear and numerous signs for one of my Sauls. One was that this person was head and shoulders above everyone else in certain ways. Even though I have witnessed many tragic events in this person's life, I still do not know if Father is going to remove this person in a tragedy like Saul, or if these are part of the road-to-Damascus experiences as he/she becomes a Paul. I pray it is the latter.

Let's look at the New Testament account and see what else we can learn about the Saul-to-Paul

process. First of all, we note that just like King Saul, Saul of Tarsus was a believer. In a broad sense, as a Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus believed in what he *thought* was, and what he had been *taught* was, the God of the Scriptures. Just as in a very broad sense, when I was raised in Catholicism, I was a believer in what I had been taught about the God of all creation.

Saul of Tarsus, in his zeal for what he thought was “*the truth*,” went about persecuting other believers who had been led into a more advanced stage in their understanding of God through their knowledge of Jesus the Christ and His good news. They were beyond Saul in their spiritual growth and understanding.

But from Saul’s perspective, these people, this sect called “Christians,” were *not* believers; they were *heretics*. One proof of it in Saul’s eyes was that they refused to submit any longer to the authority of the Sanhedrin. Just so, on a corporate level, the Saul church in the Dark Ages persecuted certain believers because they refused to submit to the authority of the Roman church. They, too, were heretics in the Saul-Church-of-Rome’s eyes.

Those in the book of Acts who believed in Jesus were those who were called to progress at that time, out of the Passover age and into Pentecost. Hence, they were persecuted and harassed and spoken evil of by those who could not see beyond the Old Testament age of Passover, men such as Saul before he became Paul.

The parallel is obvious here in our day in that those of us who have a vision of the age of Tabernacles are spoken evil of and called heretics by those who cannot see beyond the age of Pentecost. Someone told me they had the opportunity to share the vision of Tabernacles with another believer, and the other person’s response was something like “Well, I don’t care anything about that tabernacles stuff; I’m content to just stay here in Pentecost, if that’s what you call it.”

For such a person, there is no point in trying to persuade him any further. His response was a clear indication that the Lord has not called him to go any further *at this time*, and we should not be concerned about it. For all we know, though, the Lord might lead some total stranger to come up to that person next week and present the same message and the person will respond with great joy and gladness. But up until that time, the Lord has blinders on their eyes, doesn’t

He? Christians use that term frequently, don’t we? Whatever truth one group has that another does not see, they will say “Well, those other people are just blinded to the truth.” The fact is, though, that “the truth” is too big for any one person or denomination to have a monopoly on it. Certainly, there are many portions of “the truth” to which Father has blinded me at the present time.

But that does not hinder those of us of like mind as we speak of other believers who cannot see the Israel message or those who cannot see the complete sovereignty of God and the restitution of all things. Blindness is a prominent—yet little taught—Bible theme. Blindness was an important factor in Saul’s conversion. Let’s read about it.

Acts 9:1 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.

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.

7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

What we are reading here is Luke’s account of the facts of the event. Later, in Acts 22 and Acts 26, Luke tells the story with the words of Paul himself. By combining all the testimony of the Bible concerning Paul’s conversion, we know that while the men saw a bright light surrounding Paul, Paul himself saw more than that. He saw a vision of the glorified Jesus. And while the men heard a voice, they could not make out the words. But Paul heard more; he clearly heard the words of the risen Savior.

There is a little lesson for us in this as well. It is this: Sometimes *you have to go it alone* and follow what the Lord is showing you, even if those about you do not understand and see or hear what you have seen and heard. I would guess that most of us have had this experience at least once or twice, haven't we? (Chuckle, chuckle.)

By the same token, this principle can be blatantly abused as in the case of when someone *thinks* he has heard from God, whereas it is actually an idol in their heart, where they are deceived into thinking that they have had some great revelation or guidance. Beware when someone claims they heard from God and that you are supposed to do such-and such!

The pages of history are full of tragic leaders like the "Reverend" Jim Jones. His 900 followers believed his deception all the way to the point of drinking poisoned Kool-Aid in Jonestown, Guyana back in 1979, if memory serves correctly. More recently, there was the "Heaven's Gate" cult whose members committed mass suicide in California at the appearance of the Hale-Bopp comet in the 1990's.

Paul was like Nathanael, one in whom is no guile (John 1:47). As Saul, he was honestly and zealously pursuing the truth as he saw it. But when he came face to face with the risen Christ, he realized that the truth was just the *opposite* of what he had been taught. Thus now he was filled with regret, remorse and the great burden of the law which told him that he was guilty of shedding the innocent blood of many people. He realized his soul was black with sin and when he arose from the ground and opened his eyes, he saw only blackness. He was blind.

9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

Three days without sight and without food and drink can be likened to death and burial. Just as the Savior was dead three days in the tomb, so was Paul feeling the weight of death during this period. But then comes the resurrection. For this purpose the Lord sent a man named Ananias.

There are three men named Ananias in the New Testament. One is in Acts 5, and he was a believer, too. But money was his idol and so he and his wife perished in their idolatry. The second Ananias is in Acts 23. He is a priest. In fact, he is the high priest.

Acts 23:1 And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.

2 And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth.

3 Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?

4 And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest?

5 Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.

This passage does not relate directly to the conversion of Saul, but it might be an appropriate place to admonish us all of this particular area of our behavior. I am aware that many patriotic Christians need reminding that we are not to speak evil of our rulers. I am not picking on anyone individually because I myself have been guilty of it many times. At this point, I can hear someone saying: "But you don't understand, President Bush is just pretending to be a conservative and a Christian. Why, good heavens, we know that his family history from several generations back shows that the Bush family is up to their eyeballs in the international drug trade and therefore he is really a wicked man."

But look at Paul. Clearly, this priest Ananias was a wicked man (who held a position in Israel somewhat comparable to the presidency), and yet it is obvious that had Paul known he was a chief ruler, he would not have spoken ill of him. Paul was a master of the law and he quotes it here from Exodus 22:28. We note that it does *not* say: Thou shalt not speak evil of a ruler only if he is a good guy. Point taken? Then let us live it by praying blessings on our leaders—and that Father will convert them!

The third Ananias is God's instrument sent to cure Paul's blindness. We will pick up the story there next month.

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