



# FEED MY SHEEP

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## Secrets of Transforming “Sauls”

Previously, we have seen how King Saul perished in his rebellion and disobedience to God. We are now comparing the Old Testament Saul with the New Testament Saul. The Saul-to-Paul conversion process is a type and shadow of the conversion of some believers into overcomers. (For newcomers to FMS, we have explained in detail in several issues early in this series how and why not all believers are overcomers—at least not in this lifetime.) We noted last month that just as blindness was a prominent factor in the conversion of Saul, likewise it is prominent both corporately (of the “Saul” church) and of all of us as individuals.

Saul of Tarsus was blind and did not eat or drink for three days. Recalling our Savior’s burial, we can see that Saul was undergoing a type of death and resurrection experience. To effect the “resurrection,” the ascended Jesus sent a man named Ananias. He was not a Levitical priest, nobody special, simply a disciple of the Lord.

**Acts 9:10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.**

**11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,**

**12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.**

**13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem:**

**14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.**

**15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:**

**16 For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.**

**17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.**

**18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.**

So after Saul of Tarsus has a figurative death and burial experience, he has a figurative resurrection experience by the laying on of hands by Ananias. Saul-Paul is suddenly transformed from a Passover era believer who was full of falsehood to a Pentecost era believer who was subsequently trained in truth. He was trained first by the Christian brethren and then directly by Christ Himself when he went to Mt. Sinai in Arabia for a period of three years.

As we apply this type and shadow to ourselves, we understand that the proper attitude towards the Sauls in our lives is to desire and pray that they be transformed into Pauls and do great things for the kingdom of God. In the Old Testament era, David never did see his Saul transformed. In the New Testament, Saul of Tarsus was one consenting to the ston-

ing of Stephen, and thus Stephen never saw his Saul transformed either. However, Ananias did witness this amazing metamorphosis.

And although Ananias himself was not a priest, we can conceive of a special company of saints, perhaps including yourself, an Ananias Company, who are called upon to help open the eyes of spiritually blind Sauls by sharing with them the great truths which we have been given: the truths of the feasts and their prophetic significance, especially Tabernacles; also, of the importance of the Law, of the restitution of all things, and certainly, we want to share with them the "Bible Players Roster," i.e., the Israel message, the who's who in the Scriptures.

Picture your own personal Sauls. Can you picture them being transformed? How difficult it is to envision, right? You mean to tell me that this person who has claimed to be a believer at one time, but who lies to me, lies about me, slanders me in a deliberate attempt to destroy my reputation or my business; this person who cheats and steals from me, who beats me, who abuses me, who is unfaithful to our marriage, who is vicious, unkind, "catty," a gossip, a slob and a sloth; that this person who is a drunk or drug abuser, who tried to kill me, who won't provide for his children, who denies any faults, who denies responsibility for his evil actions, who...(you fill in the blank for your own Saul situation)...that this person could be transformed into a loving, kind, gentle, humble, repentant, repaying (restitution), sober servant of the Most High God?! Yes!

Your Father and mine is in the business of changing stony hearts into soft hearts of flesh. By His grace great transformations occur. Will our own personal Saul be transformed? Only the Father knows. However, there appears to be a spiritual work on your part which can contribute to such a transformation. (This is not to say that you or I are "doing it," as though we are the cause and can claim credit. God is always the initiator, but oftentimes—almost always, in fact, He chooses to use His people to bring about change.) So what is this spiritual work which can possibly help bring about the transformation of my Saul into a Paul? "I will do anything," you say. Well, my friends, God asks us to do just about the hardest thing possible: to *unconditionally* forgive our Saul. ...Or at least, it f-e-e-e-e-ls like it will be almost impossible. We want to be overcomers, do we not? Then we must understand that is the reason why God sets the bar so

high, why the task seems nigh impossible.

We want to say: "Well, I will forgive him/her when he repents." That attitude falls short of the overcomer bar. Such an attitude is conditional forgiveness. My forgiveness conditioned upon his/her repentance. The apostle Peter's carnal nature seemed to be looking for a way of avoiding offering unconditional forgiveness also.

**Matthew 18: 21 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?**

**22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.**

Can't you just hear Peter's response? "Ugh!" This wasn't what Peter wanted to hear. He was thinking that maybe, if he were lucky, just maybe he could forgive his brother *seven* times. That was a tough enough goal, but *seventy times seven*? Are you kidding', Lord? No, He wasn't. Jesus was, in effect, saying that true forgiveness, unconditional forgiveness, knows no end. But more than that, Jesus was also pointing to the laws of jubilee in the Old Testament. Seventy times seven is 490 which is a ten-fold multiple of the national jubilee every 49 years. (See FMS issues #31 through 37, and our audiotapes #271 & 272: *Jubilee: The Moral Law* and #275 & 276: *Jubilee: The Prophetic Law*. \$18 ppd. and we will include the aforesaid issues of FMS. Also, Stephen Jones has brilliantly illuminated the laws of jubilee and the 490 year factor in terms of "Blessed Time" in his *Secrets of Time*, #B-118, \$22 ppd.)

Consider again the case history of Saul-to-Paul. Who performed that spiritual work on Saul's behalf? It was the victim, the overcomer, Stephen.

**Acts 7:58 And cast *him* out of the city, and stoned *him*: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.**

**59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.**

**60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.**

**8:1 And Saul was consenting unto his death.**

(There is so much more to achieving true forgiveness than we can discuss in FMS, so we strongly

encourage our readers to consider the new addition to our book list this month, B-150, *Choosing Forgiveness*, which deals with the very real and difficult practicalities of practicing forgiveness. Also, we continue to offer free *Could You Forgive God? My Personal Testimony on Forgiveness*, tapes #257 & 258.) Now let us return to the Old Testament and consider David's attitude towards the death of his tormentor Saul.

**2 Samuel 1:17 And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son:**

**18 (Also he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow: behold, it is written in the book of Jasher.)**

A few weeks ago, America mourned the passing of former President Ronald Reagan. I watched and listened to part of the services at the Washington national cathedral. All the eulogies (by former Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, former President Bush, President Bush and former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher) were very emotionally gripping and well done. But in my view, the one delivered by Lady Thatcher was especially soul-stirring. I was profoundly moved. It was one of the most eloquent tributes I have ever heard. Yet, excellent as it was, I doubt that it will be considered a classic even a century from now. But the Holy Spirit inspired David to utter language which has been preserved for us for three thousand years.

The following lamentation by David is considered one of the most eloquent eulogies and one of the most expressive odes in all of literature. It is separated into three sections by the refrain: "how are the mighty fallen" ...a phrase still heard frequently today. I wonder how many of those who exclaim those words realize they are quoting the Bible. David leads the nation in tribute to the fallen King Saul.

**2 Samuel 1:19 The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen!**

**20 Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.**

**21 Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain, upon you, nor fields of offerings: for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil.**

**22 From the blood of the slain, from the fat of**

**the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty.**

**23 Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided: they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions.**

**24 Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights, who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel.**

**25 How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places.**

**26 I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.**

**27 How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!**

There is not one word in this lamentation about David's persecutions and his own troubles at the hand of Saul. He chose Saul's good qualities—few though they were—and focuses on them. He refers to Saul's bravery, his handsomeness, his swiftness as an eagle, his strength as a lion, his generosity to the women of Israel in bringing them scarlet and ornaments from the spoils of battle in times past.

This is revealing of David's character...that he spoke not one word of rancor or bitterness. But was he just holding it in, as it were? Secretly gloating? No, I believe that in all his trials and persecutions before and during his wilderness wanderings, David had long ago learned to avoid bitterness *by thanking God for all his trials*. When Saul became Paul, this is the same advice he gave to all Christians:

**Ephesians 5:20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;**

**1 Thessalonians 5:18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.**

This means that when we learn to do that, we too will be able to avoid the bitterness that keeps a Christian from advancing to overcomership. So...let me ask you, do you have serious illness? Thank God for it, and ask Him what He wants you to learn from it. Do you have severe financial problems? Praise God and ask Him to show you what He is teaching you by

this trial? Do you have marital problems? Thank God, for how else can you learn certain important lessons? And how about your spouse? You provide God's object lesson for him or her training as well.

Do you have problems with other relatives? Do you have problems at work? Do you have problems in school? Do you have problems with—you fill in the blank. No matter what your problems, God wants us to turn to Him and to thank Him and praise Him for these "negative blessings," as I call them, for these opportunities for learning and for overcoming.

After all, when we learn to thank and praise Him for all our trials and the persecutions at the hand of our Sauls, then it becomes so much easier for us to forgive that person. Do you think David forgave Saul for everything? I do. Thus we find David's eulogy here is a stellar example of his sterling character.

Notice verse 21. David is so distraught at the deaths of Saul and his sons and for Israel's shameful defeat that he curses the very ground where the mighty were fallen. Although previously this area had produced firstfruits offerings and abundant harvests, a commentary tells us that the land of the Gilboa range is now barren and fruitless. Now let me comment on the mention of the *Book of Jasher* back up in verse 18. It says:

**18 (Also he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow: behold, it is written in the book of Jasher.)**

Over three years ago, we devoted two issues of *Feed My Sheep* to the topic "Is There a Genuine Book of Jasher?" For several decades I had had in my possession a copy of *The Book of Jasher*, a sizable book of some 250 pages or so. I had read it several times and was thrilled with each reading. (Available from us: \$14 ppd.)

About four years ago, I saw that one of my book suppliers—and good friends, they are—carried a title called *The Book of Jasher*, but it was much less expensive than the one I had, so I ordered a copy to see if it were the same thing. It wasn't. It was very boring reading and a much shorter version of the events from Adam to Joshua, the same period covered by the longer *Jasher*. This shorter one, I designated by its modern publication date of 1829 and the longer version by its modern publication date of 1840.

I concluded that the 1829 version was a fraud and a fake, a total piece of fiction. The one I had possessed and enjoyed for over two decades—the 1840 version—may very well be the ancient *Book of Jasher*, or at least a good portion of it. I say it might be a good portion of the original writing because the verse in question here indicates that David's lamentation was included in an anthology of ancient Hebrew poetry and yet the poems are not found in the 1840 *Jasher*. We still have those back issues of *Feed My Sheep* available for the asking. (Request October & November, 2000 FMS #23 & 24.)

Looking again at verse 18, we find the words "the use of" in italics indicating they were inserted by the translator. When we consider that the title of this ode might have been simply "The Bow," then it makes perfect sense without the inserted words. David ordered that this poem—and it was probably made into a song as well—that it be memorized and passed on to succeeding generations of his Judahite kinsman.

On the other hand, there is the very real possibility that the words in italics were a proper insertion. One could argue that having just heard of Israel's disastrous defeat by the Philistines, David ordered that all the children of Judah be taught the use of the bow. We know that the tribe of Benjamin was noted for their marksmanship, but evidently the rest of the tribes of Israel's archery skills, including the tribe of Judah, left much to be desired, given their resounding defeat by the Philistines. And since David was nominally in charge of only Judah at this time, he gave the order only to the children of Judah.

If David were indeed ordering bow training, it would be like the young men of Switzerland who to this day are required to own and take training in firearms. Switzerland promotes the use of firearms and their country was not invaded in either of the great world wars. Do you think it might be a good idea in America, if instead of trying to stop crime by disarming the populace, that all young men in America be required to learn the use of the rifle, the modern equivalent of the bow?

*Feed My Sheep is a part of the teaching ministry of James W. Bruggeman and is sent out freely upon request. The tithes and gifts of those who are fed by it make it possible for us to continue in ministry. Gifts may be sent to P.O. Box 6388, Asheville, NC 28816.*