

The Ministry of Apostle Paul

Part 2.

“From Saul the Devout Jew to Paul the Devout Apostle”

May 5, 2019

Scripture Text: Acts 9:6-12 NKJV 6. *So, he, trembling and astonished, said, “Lord, what do You want me to do?” Then the Lord said to him, “Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”* 7. *And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one.* 8. *Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened, he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus.* 9. *And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.* 10. *Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.”* 11. *So, the Lord said to him, “Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying.* 12. *And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight.”*

VERSE 6 *So, he, trembling and astonished, said, “Lord, what do You want me to do?” Then the Lord said to him, “Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”*

Whenever God extends His grace and mercy to us, our response should also be: *Lord, what do You want me to do?* In asking the question, “what will you have me to do?” makes you vulnerable and opens the door to many possibilities that you may not want to do. Usually, a person will gladly agree, if it’s not an inconvenience that challenges them to depend upon God. If it happens to be a great challenge, we may need to pray for courage and increased faith like Mike shared in his testimony last Sunday.

After the Lord humbled this great advocate and leader for the Church in Jerusalem, He made him dependent on one of the very persons he came to persecute. When he rose to his feet blind, HE HAD TO BE LED to the city. Today, you may be large and in charge but tomorrow you may be led by another. God sent him into the city as Saul the persecutor of the church and finally sent him out as an Apostle for the Church.

VERSE 7 *And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one.*

Sometimes God speaks in the middle of a crowd and only can you hear Him, while others hear noise. The voice of God invades our private thoughts to bring us closer to Him. John 10:27-28 NKJV *My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. ²⁸ And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.* The voice of God is identifiable to all His sheep who are in the fold and those who have strayed. God knew the heart of Saul regardless of his actions and God knows your heart in spite of your willfulness to disobey. Someone said, “You can run but you can’t hide.” I believe that a person is only fulfilled in Christ. Hebrews 4:13 NKJV *And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.*

VERSE 8 *Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened, he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus.*

Saul was not only physically blind but he was also spiritually blind to the will of God. Saul having consented to the death of Stephen could not recognize the true work of God. He thought that Christ was an impostor and those of the Way were deceived.

He was determined to crusade in the Name of God against those whom he believed were in rebellion against the church. Saul knew about God but Saul did not know God who desires an intimate relationship with His sheep.

John 12:39-41 NKJV *39 Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, 40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.*

41 These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spoke of him.

Saul's fall and blindness put him in position to hear from God and be led by the hand as a child. He was determined to go to Damascus but not the way that God had chosen.

God will allow any of us to run our life rather than depend on His leading us by His Spirit. Anytime you and I are determined to do it our way without consulting the Lord, we are headed for a collision. "There is a way that seems right for a man but its end is the way of death." Proverbs 14:12 NKJV We can't afford to have it our way!

VERSE 9 *And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.*

In Saul's blindness, he had three days of soul searching as did Jonah in the belly of the fish. (Jonah *was an Israelite whom God had called to be a prophet but who refused to accept his divine mission and left on a sea voyage instead. ... The sailors, realizing that Jonah's disobedience had caused the storm, threw him overboard in an attempt to save their ship*). Fasting three days without food or drink breaks down the muscles but it also can bring a great degree of clarity of mind.

As a young Christian, I decided to go on a three day fast while working on a job in the Tin Mill in Indiana. The first day my thoughts were on not eating and drinking. When the third day arrived, my bones had begun to aack but I had moments of clarity of mind and spirit. This was very encouraging to my faith.

There is special significance in the number of three in the Bible. The number 3 biblically represents divine wholeness, completeness and perfection. Just to name a few of many examples: On the third day God created light. There are three persons in the trinity of God — the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ) and the Holy Spirit. There were three main patriarchs in the Old Testament — Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Jesus' ministry on earth lasted three years. The apostle Peter denied knowing Jesus three times following the evening of his arrest. Jesus was resurrected from the grave three days after his death and burial.

VERSE 10 *Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord."*

The name Ananias means: *Yah Has Been Gracious, Graciously Given of Yah.*



God speaks to us in many different ways and He chose to speak to Ananias in a vision. A vision can occur when we are in prayer or in a state of meditation.

Behind the scenes, God was ordering the steps that Saul would take in life. His ministry would be a ministry of transformation beginning with himself. On the other hand, God was preparing Ananias' heart to be the buffer in presenting Saul of Tarsus to his new family in the faith.

We don't choose the assignment when we answer the call of God. We make ourselves available and answer "Here I am or What will you have me to do?"

VERSE 11 *So, the Lord said to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying."*

When our minds are cleared from the clutter and our hearts tenderized by the Holy Spirit and the Lord's words. Afterwards, we are then prepared to walk by faith into uncharted waters.

Straight is the Street where Saul prayed.

Straight is the Street where Saul was converted.

Straight is the Street where Saul discovered God's will.

Straight is the Street where Saul was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Straight is the Street where Saul came to love God's people.

Straight is the Street where Saul became a witness for the Lord.

APPLICATIONS:

To Fall does not mean that you are a Failure, it only proves that you are human. The quickest way to recover from a Fall is to get up and begin moving Forward.