

The Ministry of Apostle Paul

Part 1.

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

April 28, 2019

Saul of Tarsus / Jewish / Roman Citizen / Student of Old Testament Law Under Rabbi [Gamaliel](#) had a profound effect on the early church, a [Pharisee](#), leader in the Jewish Sanhedrin.

Scripture Text: Acts 9:1-6 NKJV 1. *Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 2. and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. 3. As he journeyed, he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. 4. Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” 5. And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” Then the Lord said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.” 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.”*

VERSE 1 *Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest*

Strong willed people are sometimes the hardest to reach. When their minds are set, it's very challenging to get them to change, especially when they believe their right.

Saul was so committed to Rome that he was willing to lay down his life to appease the existing religious establishment in power. He was a crusader for Rome in abolishing any other religious group that threatened the church's influence and power over its people.

VERSE 2 *and Saul asked letters from him (The High Priest) to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.*

Saul wanted to operate with full authority in expediting those who were committed to The Way. The Way is what they called the followers of Jesus during those days. You could say that he operated like our current day ICE Agents who are relentless in apprehending illegal aliens. It is clear that the High Priest had jurisdiction over outlining territories such as Damascus. If Saul found any believers, they would be extradited to Jerusalem to receive extreme punishment.

He had a real hatred for people being *transformed* by following Jesus Christ. The Old Testament Law was his guiding light in the way Jews should follow and practice their faith and there was no room for grace.

Saul was wholeheartedly committed to the death to defend the Law and the Faith. He was someone to depend upon to get the job done in ridding the world of this religious sect (The Way).



VERSE 3 *As he journeyed, he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven.*

Saul embarked upon a journey to Damascus with bad intentions to capture and bind any who had confessed Jesus of Nazareth. He went with the focal point of capturing or killing those individuals who resisted.

It didn't matter their station in life whether politically connected, wealthy, poor, young or old. They were destined to be returned to Jerusalem for punishment for following after that dead Jesus. People confessed that they had seen Him after His burial and that He was alive.

Unknown to Saul, this would become a defining moment that forever changed his life. God would turn him around 180 degrees in the pursuit of making disciples for Christ as an Apostle.

If there is a lesson to be learned in life, it is that God has a divine purpose in a person's life. *We should never judge a person by their deeds but seek to discover how to see them in Christ.* Never underestimate the power of God at work in a person's life.

God brings light into the darkest heart with a convicting Soul Search Light that captures our hearts.

VERSE 4 *Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"*

God has the perfect method to knock us down without breaking a bone. Hebrews 12:6 NKJV *"For whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives."* NLT *"For the LORD disciplines those he loves, and He punishes each one he accepts as his child."*

We may not hear others who are speaking into our lives or we may discount the convicting presence of the Holy Spirit. Yet without *skepticism*, we should yield to the voice of God because He speaks to our souls.

Saul believed that He was following the will of God in defending the church by pursuing those whom he felt turned away from following Yahweh and the Laws of Moses.

When God calls your name twice, it's time to give Him your undivided attention. In most cases a person will automatically focus their attention when they hear their name. When the volume is turned up on the second call, you will respond with an acknowledgment.

Every day people repress the church unwittingly by sowing seeds of unbelief. Just because a person lives in unbelief, it never eradicates the Truth.

Jesus said in Matthew 7:8 NKJV *For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.*

VERSE 5 *And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads."*

Jesus told him that it was He whom he was persecuting and that it was hard to kick against Goads. *A Goad is a type of long stick with a pointed end, also known as the cattle prod which is used to direct the animal.* Saul's immediate response to the Lord after he fell from his horse was, *"Who are you Lord?"* The voice of the Lord speaks directly to the *Soul of Man*.



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God had a higher purpose in life for Saul and He has a higher purpose for you. Sometimes, God may prod you to go in the right direction and you fight against His prodding. Well, a great way to get your attention is to knock you off your horse whose name is Pride. Proverbs NKJV 16:18 *“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”*

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.”*

When ever God extends His grace and mercy to us, our response should also be: *Lord, what do You want me to do?”* After the Lord humbled this great advocate and leader for the Church in Jerusalem, He made him dependent on a believer (Ananias). When he rose blind to his feet, HE HAD TO BE LED to the city. God sent him into the city as Saul the persecutor of the church and finally sent him out as an Apostle for the Church.

APPLICATIONS:

Never Under Estimate What God Can Do with Your Opposition.

Only God Can Make a Wrong... Turn Out Right.