

Welcome to the Worship Celebration of



SIMPLY BIBLICAL | FAMILY INTEGRATED

Church – The Beginnings, Part 24
The Salvation of Saul of Tarsus - Part 2
Acts 9:1-31



Acts

The Damascus Road: Saul Converted

Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest² 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.

Chapter 9

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?"

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- 1. Saul of Tarsus – He was one of the main young Jewish leaders, young & up and coming leaders of the Persecution against the church (see Acts 8)**
- 2. He had “authority” from the Chief Priests (the Priestly family – Annas, Caiaphas, etc. – the very folks who conspired to kill Jesus).**
- 3. He had a HIT LIST of Jews who converted to follow Jesus as the Messiah in many towns – including as far as Damascus (Syria) They were going to go to Prison, some even to death ... BUT**
- 4. Then out of nowhere, out of the blue – Jesus BARGED into His LIFE on the Road to Damascus – in a very UNIQUE Way – out of the ordinary ... Jesus CHOSE Him ...**
If you persecute the Church you are persecuting Jesus, personally

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Saul of Tarsus – years later when he recounted his years of following Christ to Timothy - 1 Timothy 1:12-17 – he never forgot what he was Before Christ Changed His Life:

“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, (13) although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. (14) And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. (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. (16) However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. (17) Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.”

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- 1. PRAYER – If you remember at the end of Acts 7 in which Stephen PRAYED for his Persecutors (something we all should do) ... One of those Persecutors was Saul of Tarsus – the Ringleader of this outbreak of Persecution. He heard Stephen. It was this – that PRAYER and the PRAYER of the local church – that was KEY for GOD saving Saul.**
- 2. Although, Saul had “authority” from the Chief Priests in Jerusalem, the church HAS and ALL Authority – in Christ – the Keys of the Kingdom – when we pray for the Persecutors – God is Glorified.**
- 3. Jesus said, “But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and PRAY for those who SPITEFULLY USE you and PERSECUTE you” – Matt 5:44**

Paul the Apostles said, “Bless those who PERSECUTE you; bless and do not curse” (Rom. 12:14) – what better way to Bless → PRAY?

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4. **JESUS Christ CHOSE all of His capital “A” Apostles (John 15). So, in this case – Saul of Tarsus would become #12 – The Apostle Paul replaced the “office” of Judas Iscariot (not Matthias → Acts 1:15-26).**
Thus, Jesus **CHOSE** Saul – who was also known as Paul, as the 12th Apostle ... Again, this is a **UNIQUE** Choosing ... not replicated.
No Apostle was to search for a replacement for Judas, Jesus handled it. Jesus went out of his way to do this – and it was **NOT** a private matter. Those who were with Saul witnessed this, although they did not understand it all ... they all knew something happened.
5. This brings up the question → When, exactly, was Saul Saved ...
 - a. On the Road?
 - b. While waiting those 3 days?
 - c. When The Holy Spirit came into him when Ananias shared the Gospel with Saul and laid his hands on him, etc.?

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6. This Question relates to the Nature and Reality of Salvation, in the New Covenant / New Testament sense.

As we've discussed this in past sermons ... New Covenant Salvation or Being Born Again, or Born of the Spirit or Born from Above ...

It is the Spiritual Work of Christ, via His Holy Spirit ... (ref. Eph. 1:13-14)

- a. The Sinner hears the Gospel of Christ (the Word of Truth, Word of God)
- b. The Holy Spirit convicts the Sinner of his/her sinfulness
- c. The Sinner Repents and Trusts in Christ for his/her Salvation
- d. The Holy Spirit comes into that person and he/she is Born Again in Christ.

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17 And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” 18 Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.

19 So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus.

Salvation came to Saul – he went and was Water Baptized, AFTER He was Genuinely Born Again in Christ.

Then he joined the local church family there and stayed with them for many days ... Saul needed this ... A baby Christian needs nurture. But he grew up very quickly

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20 Immediately he PREACHED the Messiah in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.

21 Then all who heard were amazed, and said, “Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?”

22 But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, PROVING that this Jesus is the Messiah.

So, while Saul was a member of that local church fellowship, he ventured out and wanted others to be Saved, like he was. Folks knew who he was and he was undeterred and continued to share the Gospel with Reasons, Facts, Proofs, and Evidences → Jesus is the Messiah.

Evangelism right from the start – something we can learn from

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23 Now after many days were past, the Jews plotted to kill him. **24** But their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates day and night, to kill him. **25** Then the disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall in a large basket.



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Saul was Rescued by the local church that he, originally, intended to destroy. They saw genuine transformation, in Christ. That local church loved Saul (Paul) enough to plan a way to rescue them. It was awesome that they all learned about this plot well in advance to put together a rescue plan. It might be a Good Idea to Pray for the modern Persecuted Church in this way – that fellow brethren in harms way might be rescued or be able to escape before Persecution breaks out. The Religious “Mafia” Saul used to lead, was now out to kill him.

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The Apostle Paul, years later, would recount this event of rescue as a very humbling experience ... 2 Corinthians 11:30-33

“If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity (*weaknesses*). ³¹ The God and Father of our LORD Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. ³² In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me; ³³ but I was let down in a **BASKET** through a **window** in the **wall**, and escaped from his hands.”

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Saul, I think, knew the risks of spreading the Gospel of Christ, as he was once a Persecutor of folks like himself, now. He also knew that he publicly Betrayed His Jewish Persecution Team, so they were not happy about this Public Betrayal and Public Humiliation, either. They were not going to stand around idly, and they didn't. The Persecutor became the one who would be persecuted. But, understand something here – no persecution would've happened if he just laid low, never said a word, and never preached the Gospel, etc. The same goes with us. We are only Persecuted when we Spread God's Word and His Gospel.

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2 Timothy 3:12

“Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”

Jesus said, “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” Matthew 5:10-12

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What can we learn from this passage

- 1. We should always Pray for those who are Persecuting us, for their Salvation – who know how many “Sauls” are out there ready to be used of God when they are saved – but currently they are persecuting the church. So, Pray for the Persecutors ...**
- 2. Newborns in Christ need the Nurture of a local church family, even someone like Saul who became The Apostle Paul.**
- 3. Persecution will come when we Spread the Gospel, when we Defend the Word of God, when we Explain Jesus Christ, and all the proofs, evidences and facts ... folks may not like the implications that they are sinners under the wrath of God.**
- 4. No matter our Past or the Risks involved we must Share the Gospel**

**Let's Worship God ... Because of Who He is,
For What He has done, and What He is Yet
to do → He is the GREAT GOD, ALMIGHTY
WHO HAS ALL CONTROL OVER THE
WHOLE UNIVERSE and TIME...**

**ALL POWERFUL ALMIGHTY GOD
The GOD of ISRAEL**



See y'all Next Time we Gather...

@ LIFE Group and/or Here Next Week



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