



WEEKLY
CHRISTIAN
FOCUS



WHEN GOD CALLS PEOPLE PART II

Paul the Apostle

Warm greetings again!

We continue with this interesting and last edition on 'When God calls people!' In our first edition a couple of weeks ago, we wrote about Isaiah, Jeremiah, Samson, 'The man at Death's door' and Lester Sumrall. Today we are finishing up with How God called Paul,



1. **Paul the Apostle, (previously known as Saul of Tarsus).** In almost 250 editions of the WCF, we have never actually written more than a paragraph about the great Apostle! We all know the story, don't we, that he was converted by Jesus Himself on the Road to Damascus. Multitudes of books and studies have been done about him, as one of the most significant trailblazing apostles immediately after Jesus. Before we get into the Damascus Road business, I want to share some thoughts I believe God showed me this morning, some of this may be newish or at least give us food for thought.

The word that is often used to describe Paul is that he was zealous++. He was zealous for the Jewish Law, and as we all know

about this too, that the 'Law' of the Jewish people often had strict punishments. So Saul, as he was then when he was zealous for the Law, had been trained under great Jewish teachers, was passionate about...well, a lot of things! He eventually became passionate about arresting and killing Christians.

If you were a Christian in the new church possibly underground in Jerusalem, or Damascus, Saul would be the last person you would want to meet down a dark alley in one of these places! Because if you did unfortunately happen to meet him and his entourage of fellow scumbags, you would have been hauled off to jail, and your fate decided by other undesirable magistrates or executioners, including your wife and children.

All was going very well indeed for Paul and the Sanhedrin and others in Jerusalem. They looked to be succeeding in stamping out these awful creatures called believers in Jesus, the false prophet. We can say quite accurately that Saul seemed to relish this new job; how he got the job, the Bible doesn't tell us, but hey, show yourself indispensable, and people will sit up and take notice!

Perhaps he was like a 'bounty hunter' in the Wild West of American history? Perhaps he got paid or rewarded for the capture of such people, we don't know, but I think it is 'not unlikely', to use a double negative!

This beginning portion of Acts chapter 8 explains the situation quite well:

8 And Saul was [not only] consenting to [Stephen's] death [he was pleased and entirely approving]. On that day a great *and* severe persecution broke out against the church which was in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles (special messengers).

² [A party of] devout men with others helped to carry out *and* bury Stephen and made great lamentation over him.

³ **But Saul shamefully treated *and* laid waste the church continuously [with cruelty and violence]; and entering house after house, he dragged out men and women and committed them to prison.**

⁴ Now those who were scattered abroad went about [through the land from place to place] preaching the glad tidings, the Word [the doctrine concerning the attainment through Christ of salvation in the kingdom of God].

So there you go, a vicious and violent and determined man, zealous! He showed no mercy, because he knew he was right and those bad believers were evil cucarachas**. As Jesus so rightly said, 'for the time will come that he who kills you will think that he does God's service.' Saul's brain was virtually 'fried' at the time.

John 16 These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.

² They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

³ And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.

And so that pattern has continued across thousands of years and (probably) in all lands of A.D. human history.

But even in this vile creature God saw something very useful! What was it? Well, to be truthful we are all vile, so let's not be too righteous, well, God saw a tool or vessel who would be willing, once convinced of the Truth, to bring the Gospel to the whole known world and not only that, but inspire others to do it, and lead the way by willingly suffering great pains and enduring tremendous hardships and persecution himself.

Yes, not such a common quality among many people today. But first God and Jesus had to fix the problem that was 'Saul'. God and Jesus saw the potential and we will come to a few specific verses about that in a minute.

The Damascus Road Business.

Jesus has decided to intervene. Many 'Christians' must have been praying about all these deaths, which seems to have begun in earnest the same



day the Martyr Stephen was killed.

Saul has decided to make a trip to Damascus, knowing there may be more believers to kill. I encourage you to read the whole chapter yourself, as it has so many details and lessons, I am going to pick out a few things from this great story.

Jesus calls Saul to serve Him. *My comments in italics.*

Acts 9: 9 And Saul, yet breathing out

threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, *(a bloodthirsty man, as mentioned)*

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:

I notice God sometimes loves to do some things 'suddenly', and this is one of them!

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. *(Who was Saul persecuting when he was jailing and killing Christians? It was Jesus Himself, according to Jesus here! Jesus also told him, that he would find it too hard to kick against the pricks. (Link below)*

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. *(This clearly infers Saul actually saw Jesus and he mentions this in an epistle. His entourage only heard a voice).*

⁸ And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. *He had become blind.*

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

(end of section)

Now have you ever been three days without food or water? It does something to you, which I mentioned recently. I highly recommend it, at least the food part. But we see here, a vital point, that when something so earth-quaking happens in your life, some great unexpected shock, you need to fast, you need to stop all or most of your regular activities and daily habits. You have to have a complete metanoia (change in one's way of life resulting from [penitence](#) or spiritual conversion.)

The Damascus business, was not only the amazing revelation of Jesus to Saul personally, but it also shows that people must or should have some time in their life, when they will fast and pray and leave all else behind in order to truly focus on God and nothing else, and find out what He wants them to do, and be. When you have had 'spots' for so long, you can't change your spiritual blemishes or spots without radical action, and that takes time. Here is a prime example of it.

So Jesus chose Saul and called him in this extreme manner. Again, please read the rest of the chapter to see



how his sight was restored, how he immediately began preaching about Jesus right there in Damascus. Not everyone is called so dramatically by Jesus Christ, but whenever and however you were called; it should have been a significant event or series of events and impressions that brought you to God.

Jesus said; **John 6:44** No man can come to me, **except the Father** which hath sent me **draw him:** and I will raise **him** up at **the** last day.

There, I thought I was going to cover the 'calling' of at least three people in this edition, but I could only make it with the Apostle Paul. We'll have to continue another time.

Let me close with these great confirming verses about Paul in other parts of the Bible:

Galatians 1 1. Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) and

¹¹ But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

¹² For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

¹³ For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:

¹⁴ And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

¹⁵ But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,

¹⁶ To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

¹⁷ Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and

returned again unto Damascus.

¹⁸ Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

¹⁹ But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

²⁰ Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.

²¹ Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;

²² And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ:

²³ But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.

²⁴ And they glorified God in me.

Galatians 2 Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.

² And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles,

2 Corinthians 6:4 But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,

2 Corinthians 11 ²³ Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.

²⁴ Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.

²⁵ Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

²⁶ In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

²⁷ In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

²⁸ Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

Ask God, if you have not already to show you the clear calling(s) he has for you, so that you complete this mission on earth in His Will. Do you have any testimonies of how God or Jesus called you? Please send them in!

Let's pray for each other for that. Amen.

Until next week.

Love Jerry and the WCF Team

++ zealous: showing great energy or [enthusiasm](#) in pursuit of a cause or objective.

** cockroaches

[kick against the pricks meaning - Google Search](#)

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