

Paul – A Saved Instrument

Text : **Acts 22: 1-16** (cf. **9: 1-19**)

- A. Saul of Tarsus was a remarkable person even before he became a Christian.** S#1. S#2.
1. He described himself as Jew among Jews. (*Not just average*)
Phil. 3: 4b-5 If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more:
⁵ circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee;
 - a. “**Circumcised the eighth day**” references the faithfulness of his parents.
 - b. The “**tribe of Benjamin**” was one of the two pure faithful tribes of Judah.
 - c. Being a “**Hebrew of Hebrews**” had two meanings :
 - 1) He was a pure Jew, i.e., there was no gentile blood in his genealogy.
 - 2) He was able to speak the Hebrew language. (cf. – **Acts 22: 2**)
 2. He was acknowledged as well educated in the Jewish traditions and law. S#3.
Acts 22: 3 – I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God just as you all are today. (cf. – **Acts 5: 34**)
 3. Saul was recognized by the secular authorities as being an educated man. S#4.
Acts 26: 24 – While Paul was saying this in his defense, Festus said in a loud voice, “Paul, you are out of your mind! Your great learning is driving you mad.”
 4. Saul was no hypocrite, he was one who truly lived his faith in his daily life. S#5.
Acts 26: 5 – Since they have known about me for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that I lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion.
 5. Because of His zeal, Saul achieved success that few his age had attained. S#6.
Gal. 1: 14 – I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.
 6. The greatest of his achievements was that he was possibly in the Sanhedrin. S#7.
Acts. 26: 10 – And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them.
- B. Saul was one of the greatest enemies of the church.** (*Led 1st persecution*) S#8.
1. **Acts 26: 9-11** So then, I thought to myself that I had to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰ And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them. ¹¹ And as I punished them often in all the synagogues, I tried to force them to blaspheme; and being furiously enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities.

2. As Saul acted upon his convictions he thought he was serving God. **S#9.**
Gal. 1: 14 – I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.
3. Therefore, Saul did not feel guilty about killing Christians.
Acts 23: 1 – Paul, looking intently at the Council, said, “Brethren, I have lived my life with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day.”

While Saul sought to destroy “the Way”, God showed the way. It was a **S#10.** life-changing experience. With this lesson we’ll observe Saul’s repurposing.

* (*We read **Acts 22** ... now we will compare **Acts 9***)

I. Jesus appeared to Saul as he was traveling along the road. **S#11.**

- A. Saul talked face-to-face with the risen Christ. (*Jesus was present, not vision*) **S#12.**
Acts 9: 3-6 As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; **4** and 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?” And He said, “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. **6** but get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what **you must do.**”

S#13.

B. Even after talking with Jesus, Saul was still lost; he needed salvation from sin.

1. At this point Saul was a believer, but **He was still not saved !** **S#14.**
 - a. He still had NOT had his sins forgiven.
Acts 22: 16 – ‘Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.’ (**Rom. 10:13**)
 - b. Jesus could have forgiven him of his sins, but He did not.
Mark 2:10-11 – “But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—He said to the paralytic, **11** “I say to you, get up, pick up your pallet and go home.”
 - c. Jesus told Saul that he needed instruction on how to be saved. **S#15.**
Acts 9: 6 – get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do.”
2. Today some religions teach that belief alone is all that’s required for salvation
 - a. **Rom. 1: 16** – For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
 - b. **Acts 16: 31** – They said, “ Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.”
 - c. **Rom. 10: 13** – Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.
3. **Saul was a believer** **S#16.**
He had seen a vision from God,
BUT he remained lost in his sin. He needed to be told what to do to be saved.

II. Saul experienced two miracles, but remained lost in sin.**S#17.****A. He was blinded by a supernatural light. (*Lady in Denison, Tx saw angel*)** **S#18.**

Act 9: 8-9 Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus.
9 And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank

1. He was given instructions by Jesus and obeyed them.
2. He fasted and prayed (Vs. **11**) for three days which is associated with repentance.

B. He had his sight miraculously restored.**S#19.**

Acts 9: 17-18 So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”
18 And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized;

C. After having seen Jesus and having experiencing two miracles he remained lost.

1. Remember, it is sin that causes one to be lost.

S#20.

- a. **Rom. 6: 23** – For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- b. **Matt. 1: 21** – She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.
- c. **I Tim. 1: 15** – It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I

2. After Saul’s sight was restored the preachers told Saul he needed his sins removed.

Acts 22: 13 –(Ananias) came to me, and standing near said to me, ' Brother Saul, receive your sight!' And at that very time I looked up at him.

S#21.

16 – ‘Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.’

- a. Saul was NOT told to receive Jesus as his personal savior.
- b. Saul was NOT told to say the sinners’ prayer.
- c. *He was told to call on the Lord by being baptized and that would remove sin.*

III. After talking face-to-face with Jesus Saul prayed and fasted for three days.**S#22.****A. Saul was praying while waiting for the preacher from Jesus to come.****S#23.**

Acts 9: 11 – And the Lord said to him, “Get up and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying.”

1. The text clearly states that Jesus/God heard Saul's prayers. "*for he is praying*"
2. Though Saul was blind, God sent a vision to him. (*acknowledgement of prayer*)
Acts 9: 12 – He (Saul) has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight.

B. Saul was fasting for the whole three days while waiting for the preacher. S#24.
Acts 9: 9 – And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

1. Prayer and fasting are linked to repentance.
 - a. Having seen the resurrected Christ, Saul knew he had been wrong about Jesus.
 - b. Saul knew his guilt so he had every reason to fear what would become of him.
2. Blind with no distractions Saul had plenty of time to remember his crimes.
 - a. Having endorsed the stoning of Steven
 - b. Having voted to kill men and women
 - c. Having gone to foreign cities to persecute Christians (*Why persecuting ME?*)

C. After three days of fasting and prayer, God's messenger told Saul to be baptized to wash away his sins. S#25.

Acts 22: 16 – 'Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.'

1. Saul still had his sin, one cannot wash away sins that are not there.
2. He was not saved; one is saved **FROM** sin, BUT cannot be saved **IN** his sins.
3. If a person could be saved by prayer Saul would be a perfect candidate. S#26.

- a. He spoke to Christ face-to-face after His resurrection.
 - He had knowledge of Jesus' deity
- b. He was truly sorrowful for the sins he had committed.
 - Fasting is associated with repentance.
- c. He submitted himself to the Lordship of Jesus.
 - He called him Lord and obeyed Jesus' commands.
- d. He had miraculous experiences
 - Though blind, Saul saw a vision
 - He experienced two miracles

After all that, Saul still needed to have his sins washed away.

IV. The preacher was instructed by Jesus to tell Saul HOW to be saved. S#27.

A. The Lord himself referred to Saul as His "chosen instrument." S#28.

Acts 9: 15 – But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine.

1. Though personally chosen by Jesus, Saul remain separated from Him by his sins.
2. His sins had NOT been forgiven. **Acts 22: 16**

B. Jesus personally sent a preacher to instruct and to heal Saul. Vs. 11-16

1. Jesus **did not save** Saul when He appeared to him.
2. The preacher did not tell Saul his faith had saved him.
3. The preacher told Saul, “***This is what you need to do to get rid of your sins.***”
Acts 22: 16 – ‘Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized,
and wash away your sins, calling on His name.’

C. Believers retain their sins until they have been baptized in water. (*lost*) S#29.

1. **Wait a minute !** Cleanliness may be next to godliness,
but water won’t wash away sin.
2. In baptism it is not the water that washes away the sins; it’s the blood of Christ.
Rev. 1: 5 – from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead,
and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and
washed us from our sins in His own blood. (NKJV)
 - a. Baptism is more than just a dipping in water.
 - b. It is the way one calls on the name of the Lord, **it’s** an expression of one’s faith.
3. Baptism is relevant to spiritual cleansing, NOT physical cleansing. S#30.
I Pet. 3: 21 – Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you — not the removal of dirt
from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience — through
the resurrection of Jesus Christ,
 - a. Baptism is the expression of faith that connects one to the resurrection of Christ.
 - b. Baptism is the way one appeals to God for a clear conscience. (*removal of guilt*)
 - c. It is only the blood of Christ that can give one a clear conscience.
Heb. 9: 14 – How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit
offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience
from dead works to serve the living God?
4. Baptism is the point at which one has his sins forgiven. S#31.
Acts 2: 38 – Peter said to them, “**Repent,** and each of you be baptized in the name
of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive
the gift of the Holy Spirit.
 - a. One may be a repentant believer, but he will not be saved until he is baptized.
 - b. Again, one is not forgiven on the basis of water, but by the blood of Christ.
Eph 1:7 – In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of
our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.

**** Things equal to the same thing are equal to each other :**

S#32.

Baptism

Blood of Jesus

Acts 2: 38 ... Forgiveness of Sins ... **Eph. 1: 7**
Acts 22: 16 ... Wash away sins ... **Rev. 1: 5**
I Pet. 3: 21 ... Cleanses Conscience ... **Heb. 9: 14**

Therefore, baptism is the point of contact with the blood of Jesus.

D. Baptism is a faith response to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. S#33.

1. Calls on the name of the Lord in baptism, establishes a relationship with Him
Gal. 3: 26-27 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. **27** For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.
2. The baptism of a believer is a demonstration of his faith in the gospel. **S#34.**
Rom. 6: 3-7 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? **4** Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. **5** For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection. **6** knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; **7** for he who has died is freed from sin
3. Expressing faith though the burial in baptism frees on from sin and gives new life.
Rom. 6: 17-18 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you **S#35.** became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, **18** and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

CONCLUSION :

- A. It is when our belief motivates us to act (to obey) that it becomes faith. **S#36.**
- B. Salvation is by grace through faith (**Eph. 2: 8-9**) but it is when faith is express in baptism that grace is applied.

INVITATION :

S#37.

II Thes. 1: 7-9 ... Those who do not know God and obey not the gospel are lost.

S#38. ... Communion slide

Lesson Text :**Acts 22: 3-16** (cf. 9: 1-19)

3 “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God just as you all are today. **4** I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and putting both men and women into prisons, **5** as also the high priest and all the Council of the elders can testify. From them I also received letters to the brethren, and started off for Damascus in order to bring even those who were there to Jerusalem as prisoners to be punished.

6 “But it happened that as I was on my way, approaching Damascus about noontime, a very bright light suddenly flashed from heaven all around me, **7** and I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’ **8** “And I answered, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said to me, ‘I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you are persecuting.’ **9** And those who were with me saw the light, to be sure, but did not understand the voice of the One who was speaking to me. **10** And I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ And the Lord said to me, ‘Get up and go on into Damascus, and there you will be told of all that has been appointed for you to do.’ **11** But since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me and came into Damascus.

12 “A certain Ananias, a man who was devout by the standard of the Law, *and* well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, **13** came to me, and standing near said to me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ And at that very time I looked up at him. **14** “And he said, ‘The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will and to see the Righteous One and to hear an utterance from His mouth. **15** For you will be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard. **16** Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.’