

AMAZING DISCOVERY- 7

STORY of PAUL the PERSECUTOR of CHRISTIANS

Introduction

Here is a story worth telling. There was a man called Saul (in Jewish) or Paul (in Greek) lived in Jerusalem during and immediately after the time of Jesus. He was a Jew, a Pharisee. Listen to him as he makes his defense before King Agrippa.

- **Paul's Defense before Agrippa (Acts 26:1-32 *New King James Bible*)**

¹ Then Agrippa said to Paul, "**You are permitted to speak for yourself.**"

So, Paul stretched out his hand and answered for himself: ²"I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because today I shall answer for myself before you concerning all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, ³especially because you are expert in all customs and questions which have to do with the Jews. Therefore, I beg you to hear me patiently.

- **His Early Life**

⁴"My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know. ⁵They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. ⁶And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers. ⁷To this promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. For this hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews. ⁸Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?

⁹"Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. ¹¹And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.

- **His Encounter with Jesus and his Conversion**

¹²"While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, ¹³at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me. ¹⁴And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads." ¹⁵So I said, "Who are You, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ¹⁶But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. ¹⁷I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, ¹⁸to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me."

- **His Post-Conversion Life**

¹⁹"Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not

Disobedient to the heavenly vision, ²⁰but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance. ²¹For these reasons the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. ²²Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come-- ²³that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles."

- **Agrippa's Conclusion**

(30-32), ³⁰"When he had said these things, the king stood up, as well as the governor and Bernice and those who sat with them; ³¹and when they had gone aside, they talked among themselves, saying, "This man is doing nothing deserving of death or chains."

³²"Then Agrippa said to Festus, "This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."

- **Paul Shares his Testimony with the Church of Philippi (Philippians 3:7-11)**

⁷"But all these things that I once thought very worthwhile—now I've thrown them all away so that I can put my trust and hope in Christ alone. ⁸Yes, everything else is worthless when compared to the priceless gain of knowing Christ Jesus my lord. I have put aside all else, counting it worth less than nothing, **in order that I can have Christ**, ⁹and become one with him. No longer counting on being saved by being good enough or by obeying God's laws, but

by trusting Christ to save me; for God's way of making us right with Him is **by faith—counting on Christ alone.** ¹⁰Now I have given up everything else—I have found it to be the only way to really know Christ and to experience the mighty power that brought Him back to life again, and to find out what it means to suffer and die with Him. ¹¹So, whatever it takes, I will, be one who lives in the fresh newness of life of those who are alive from the dead. "

¹⁵⁻¹⁶"I hope all of you who are mature will see eye to eye with me on these things, if you disagree on some point, I believe that God will make it plain to you – if you fully obey the truth you have."

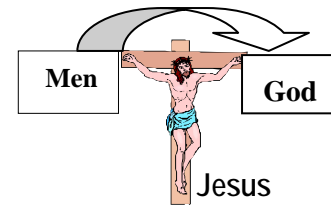
He shares his testimony to Timothy, His disciple (1 Timothy 1:15-17), ¹⁵"How true it is, and how I long that everyone should know it, that Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners—and **I was the greatest of them all.** ¹⁶But God had mercy on me so that Christ Jesus could use me as **an example to show how patient he is with even the worst sinners,** so that others will realize that they too, can have everlasting life. ¹⁷Glory and honour to God forever and ever. He is the king of the ages, the unseen one who never dies; he alone is God, and full of wisdom, Amen."

• **What about you, dear friend?**

You just read the testimony of Paul the skeptic. Remember, Jesus did not come to destroy us. But He came to die in our place to save us from our sins and give us eternal life. John 15:13 say, **"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends"**. Again in I John 3:16, **"By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us"**. His love for us

motivated Him to die in our place.

1 Timothy 2:4-7 say, ⁴."God desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵For



there is **one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,** ⁶who gave Himself a ransom for all, to

be testified in due time."

In John 14:6 Jesus said, " I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the father but through Me".

Again in Revelation 3:20 He said, **"Behold I stand at there door and knock. If any one hears my voice and opens the door I will come into him."**

He wants to come into our lives, to transform us into His own likeness before taking us to heaven. Jesus is waiting for your permission to come into your life as your Saviour and Lord. He will not enter your life without your permission. If you are sincerely interested to receive Jesus as your Lord and Saviour, **here is a suggested prayer of faith:**

"Lord Jesus, I need You. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Saviour and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life and make me the kind of person You want me to be." Amen.

If this prayer expresses the desire of your heart, pray this prayer right now and Jesus will come into your life just as He promised. God's promise is our authority. God does

not lie. After receiving Christ, thank Him that He is inside you. **By thanking God, you demonstrate your faith.**

If you have received Jesus Christ today, many things happened including the following:

- **Jesus came into your life** (Rev 3:20).
- **All your sins were forgiven** (Colossians 1:14).
- **You became a child of God** (John 1:12).
- **You received eternal life** (John 5:24).

You invite Him into your life only once in your lifetime, because He said in Hebrews 13:5, *"I will not leave you nor forsake you"*.

First step after receiving Christ is, to **tell a friend about it.** Because, Romans 10:10 says, "For with the heart one believes to righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation". This also shows your sincerity because Jesus said in Like 9:26, "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His glory."

For further Spiritual growth, please attend a small Bible study group near your home, and worship the Lord in a near by church regularly.

Other articles in this series are available free of charge.

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