

Series: The Unstoppable Church

Title: A Rude Dude in a Foul Mood Meets Jesus

Text: (Acts 9:1-11)

Review the Pivotal Moments in Christianity.

Creation, Fall, Cain/Abel, Noah/Flood, Abraham
Migration to Egypt, Exodus, Law/Mt Sinai
Conquest of Canaan, Rule of Solomon/Temple
Dispersion, Birth of Christ, Founding of the Church,
Crucifixion/Resurrection, Ascension, Pentecost,
Stephen,

In all of Christianity, The Greatest Moment was the
Resurrection!

The 2nd Greatest Moment, conversion of Saul of
Tarsus to the Apostle Paul.

This event was a Game changer for the Christ's
Unstoppable Church.

*(Acts 9:1-2) And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings
and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went
unto the high priest, 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.*

What is this guys deal?

We Met Saul of Tarsus Earlier

*(Acts 6:9) Then there arose certain of the synagogue,
which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and*

*Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of **Cilicia**
and of Asia, disputing with Stephen.*

*(Phil 3:5-6) **Circumcised the eighth day,***

As directed by the Law.

of the stock of Israel,

A natural born a Jew-not a proselyte/convert.

of the tribe of Benjamin, A Badge of Honor, 1 of only
2 tribes that remained faithful to God in OT history
an Hebrew of the Hebrews; Both Parents were Jews.

A claim many in his day could not make.

**as touching the law, a Pharisee; 6 Concerning zeal,
persecuting the church; touching the righteousness
which is in the law, blameless.**

He speaks from the Pharisaic Jewish perspective.

He kept the minutia of the law, including the endless
embellishments & details imposed by the rabbis.

In the eyes of the Rabbis, he was faultless.

He was rapidly advancing as one of the Jewish elite.

Few Jews in the world had greater credentials than he.

Saul was from Tarsus, A city of Cilicia:

On the Syrian Turkey border.

River town with great ports and docks for commerce.

1 of the top 3 Universities. Athens, Alexandria.

He was a Hellenistic Jew, who spoke Greek.

They were Jews from outside Jerusalem.

Every Jewish boy has to learn a trade.

Saul was a Tentmaker.

Spun & Wove Black Goats hair into strips of cloth.

Saul was the Son of a Pharisee: (Acts 23:6)
So No Surprise, Saul was a Pharisee:
As a Pharisee, Saul would have had a large portion of
the OT Committed to Memory.

Trained as a Pharisee under Gamaliel:
(Acts 22:3) *I am verily a man which am a Jew, born
in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city
at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the
perfect manner of the law of the fathers,*

Gamaliel was Big Noise in Jerusalem.
He was called “*The Beauty of the Law*”
The Law was never more beautiful than when
expounded by Gamaliel.

Illus: *Like winning The Apprentice!*
& Interning for Billy Graham!
He was Hebrew by birth, by religion, by education,
and by custom.

With this Pedigree, Saul would have been
A leader at the Synagogue in Tarsus.
A leader at the Synagogue in Jerusalem.
Being groomed for national leadership.

***So Imagine his heartburn when Stephen was
making Converts to the “WAY” at Saul’s Synagogue.***
(Acts 6:10-11) They couldn’t Refute him.

Stephen was not Thwarting the OT.
Stephen was casting a light on things Saul had not
seen, and was not ready to see.

Not Everyone is Ready to SEE/Receive Truth.
Illus: *JW, Their eyes twitch, DOES NOT COMPUTE.*
Strongholds areas of the mind, hardened to truth
They must be pulled down in Prayer & with Difficulty

Is their Strongholds in your heart?
Areas where you are just not prepared to receive truth

Saul, the Hotshot Pharisee. The Torah answer man!
Multiple generations of his family were pharisees.
Interned for the Big Dog Gamaliel.

***Imagine Saul’s Embarrassment when he couldn’t
refute him.***
(Acts 7:54-60) *58 Saul was in the crowd,
Probably instigated it. (Maybe even sold rocks)

***Just cause you’re not the guy throwing Rocks,
doesn’t mean you’re innocent of the damage caused***

Illus: *At Home, you are not the one openly opposing.
But you are not being a peace maker either.*

YOU BAPTIST, UGH!
*Just cause a baptist hurt you, don’t mean I will.
Just cause the last church hurt you don’t mean we will*

Saul was consenting - Probably Instigating!
(Acts 8:1) *And Saul was consenting unto his death.
And at that time there was a great persecution against*

the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.

Saul would have been pretty bent up about “The Way” corrupting his beloved Judaism.

(Acts 8:3) As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

“*havock*”~ Like a wild boar that tears up a garden.

Listen to Saul’s Testimony to the Mob @ Jerusalem.

(Acts 22:4-5) And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.

Listen to Saul’s Testimony to King Agrippa.

(Acts 26:10-11) Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. 11 And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme;

He would beat them until they bled out or denied Christ!

What a piece a work!

Saul was willing to go to any length for his man made religion.

WE HAVE THE TRUTH!

The Bible is TRUTH! Jesus Said So! (Jn 17:17)
The Bible TRUTH sets us FREE!

Are we willing to do as much for the Truth as the Cults do for a lie?

Mormons & JW go door to door taking their False Gospel, of a False Salvation in a False Christ!

What are we willing to do for the True Gospel, of a True Salvation in the True Christ?

Saul wasn’t ***Casual*** about His Judaism.

Saul wasn’t dependent upon ***Convenience***.

Saul was a ***Consumer*** in that it was all about HIM:

Fame, Prestige, & Influence he could get out of it.

But Why was he going to Damascus?

(Acts 8:4) Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

Here is where we pickup our story today:

This is a big deal!

In Christianity, this is 2nd Greatest Moment.
2nd only to the Resurrection.

This event was a Game changer for the Christ's
Unstoppable Church as we will see in the rest of Acts.

Saul was a Rude Dude in a Foul Mood.

(Acts 9:1-2) *And Saul, yet **breathing out threatenings and slaughter** against the disciples of the Lord,*

Like a War Horse, when it gets the sent of battle

Like an Adrenalin Junkie.

Its all he thought about.

It Consumed him.

Illus: We get all Bent out of shape over stupid stuff!

We argue over the brand of cars, clothes, tools, sports.

None of you are right with God, Bears,

That's why there is No roof on Soldier Field.

(Acts 9:1-2) *And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went*

unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to

Damascus to the synagogues,

This was Saul's Idea, The Council didn't put him up to it.

(Acts 26:11b) *and being **exceedingly mad against***

them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.

Saul's own guilt/shame drove him to greater atrocities

Desperate to prove he was right at any cost.

*that **if he found any of this way**, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.*

The Way: 1st name given to Christianity.

Its Not a ONE TIME crisis moment decision, but a change of WHO & WHAT you are (2 Cor 5:17)

This is why persecution can't change it.

This is why they would rather die than recant!

Are you willing to die for the Testimony of Christ!

Stephen was Stoned rather than recant.

James was beheaded by sword than recant.

Cassie Burnall, asked, do you believe, said yes.

& was Shot in the head @ school.

ISIS beheads our brethren & no body cares.

"Foxe Book of Martyrs" >55Mil joyfully gave the full measure of Devotion for the Testimony of Jesus.

Are You Saved? When, Where, How?

The Bible Proof of Salvation: (Rom 10:11b)

Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Christian:

The devil doesn't have a sword at your throat, or gun to your head, rather..

We sellout Jesus for a couple hours of sleep.

We sellout Jesus to binge watch Netflix.

Persecution never kills a church, just spreads it.

(Acts 9:3) *&as he journeyed he came near Damascus*
Damascus is the Capitol of Syria.
160 Miles NE of Jerusalem.

One of the oldest, continuously inhabited city on earth
The city was in Existence before Abraham.
Travel time averaged 6-8 days depending upon animal

They had been traveling in that Middle - Easter heat.
Camping out at night.
At risk of Robbers and wild Animals.

They were committed. Why?

I believe that Saul and his compatriots were stirred by
the conviction of the Christian Martyrs.
Saul's own guilt/shame drove him to greater atrocities
Desperate to prove he was right at any cost.

He made it to the outskirts of the city.

(Acts 9:3) *an suddenly there shined round about him
a light from heaven.*

(Acts 22:6) *And it came to pass, that, as I made my
journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about
noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light
round about me.*

(Acts 26:13) *At Midday; O King, I saw in the way a
light from heaven **above the brightness of the sun,**
shining round about me them which journey with me.*
The Glory of Heaven is the Glory of Jesus Christ!

(Rev 21:23) *And the city had no need of the sun,
neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of
God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.*

I don't know what that's like, but it will be brighter
than our sun!

Saul Sees Jesus for the 1st time Ever!

(Acts 26:16) *But rise, and stand upon thy feet: **for I
have appeared unto thee** for this purpose, to make
thee a minister and a witness both of these things
which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which
I will appear unto thee;*

(Acts 9:17) *And Ananias went his way, and entered
into the house; and putting his hands on him said,
Brother Saul, **the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared
unto thee in the way as thou camest,** hath sent me,
that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with
the Holy Ghost.*

The Apostle Paul, makes no mention of having met
Jesus during his earthly ministry.

I can't imagine he would not have mentioned it
somewhere in his writings.

Saul must have been home in Tarsus during the time
of Christ, and probably came for Pentecost.
I Imagine this is why he doesn't recognize Jesus.

(Acts 9:4) *And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?*

Saul is crushed in front of his conqueror.

For What Cause do you Persecute ME Saul?

Saul is Broken because of His Sin!

(Acts 9:5) *And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, **I am Jesus whom thou persecutest:***

Saul had never met Jesus until Today.

Saul was not mocking Jesus, or spitting on Jesus.

Saul would have been had he been in Jerusalem.

But Saul was not one of those that struck Jesus.

Saul was not in the crowd, shouting Crucify.

Yet Saul had been persecuting Jesus.

WE are inseparable with Jesus. (Matt 25:41-45)

TO persecute a Christian is to persecute Jesus.

That is why we need to be very careful How we treat each other.

That person is linked to Jesus.

I cannot guarantee your safety if you do.

If you have been gossiping/backbiting/ subverting

God will Judge you, & I can't stop it!

Be very careful how you treat a Brother or a Sister in Christ. God takes it Very Personally!

(Acts 9:5) *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.***

Pricks: Pointy Stick, (i.e an Ox Gode)

Ref to the Holy Ghost Conviction of our sin!

I don't think Saul ever got over Stephen's testimony.

(Acts 6:15b) *saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.*

(Acts 7:54-60)

Vs 56) *He Saw Jesus!*

Vs 59) *Jesus receive my spirit.* (like an offering)

Vs 60) *Lay not this sin to their charge!*

**many of the saints did I shut up in prison,*

**when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. 11 And I punished them oft in every*

*synagogue, and **compelled them to blaspheme;***

(Acts 9:6) *And he trembling and astonished said,*

Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?

Saul is Crushed/Broken/Sorrowful over his sin.

"How can I atone for my sins?"

"What can I possibly offer you for so great sin?"

(Acts 9:6b) *& the Lord said unto him, Arise, & go into the city, & it shall be told thee what thou must do.*

(Acts 9:7-8) Blinded by Light.

Like looking into the sun.

(Acts 26:13) *At midday, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun,*

(Acts 22:11) *And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.*

It took Saul 3 days to get right with God!

(Acts 9:9) *And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.*

(Acts 9:11b) *Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,*
Fasting and Prayer!

He is Repenting, Praying, Confessing, Affirming!

3 DAYS of PRAYER & FASTING!

That's what it took for Saul to get clean!

How long would it take YOU & I?

If We Would Get REAL with Jesus.

HEY! HE Already knows your sin!

That's what Saul figured out.

That's why the Light, the Voice, the Blindness!

Otherwise, WHY Bother to intervene?

Jesus could have just killed him and sent him to Hell!

Saul realized God knew WHO he was.

Saul realized God knew WHAT he was.

But Jesus Came to him Anyway & offered him Salvation!

(Rev 3:20) *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, & will sup with him, & he with me.*

Saul took the witness stand against his own soul!
Saul is Praying, Repenting, Confessing, & Affirming!

How Long would it take US to Get CLEAN?

If WE would really get CLEAN?

I stay relatively clean all the time. **Really?**

What would your wife say about that?

What would your kids say about that?

In the last 7 days...

Have you lied? - *Thou shalt not Bear False Witness*

Have you taken something, no matter how small?

Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not Covet.

Snack out of the fridge at work?

Have you gotten angry or frustrated?

Jesus said you have committed murder in your heart.

Thou Shalt not Commit Murder!

Have you had a lustful thought?

Jesus said you have committed Adultery in your heart.

Thou shalt not Commit Adultery!

So lets Re-cap:

You are a lying, Thieving, Murdering, Adulterer.

How many days do you think it will take you get clean?

Jesus asks why are you persecuting Him?

Jesus asks why are you kicking against the Holy Ghost Conviction? Let's Get Clean!