

## WHEN SAUL BECAME PAUL

Text: Galatians 1:3-5, 20-24

As we continue our verse-by-verse study of the book of Galatians, we celebrate this year the five hundredth anniversary of the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. Martin Luther was navigating the flagship. The focal point goes back to October 31, 1517, when he nailed his Ninety-five Theses (complaints against the Catholic Church) to the door at the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. We believe the Baptist church or a church that may not call itself by any denominational designation has been in existence since the Lord declared, "...I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18b). The Reformation was deliverance from a time when the world was steeped in darkness, described as a time of demographic, cultural, economic and more importantly spiritual deterioration. It was a time when many members of the Body of Christ went underground. The Reformation was a time when many in the organized church, which had gone for the most part apostate, found Christ through the ministry of the rediscovered and recovered Word of God and could not be a part of this "form of godliness" that denied "the power thereof" (II Timothy 3:5). Therefore they protested and became known as Protestants. This, in turn, gave the opportunity for people who had already been worshipping the Lord in spirit and truth (John 4:24), to have greater freedom to preach and propagate the only true Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Martin Luther was finally called before the Diet of Worms and was ordered to recant his biblical teachings, which centered around the free Gospel of our Savior. His life was literally now in peril as he bravely answered, "I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. I cannot do otherwise, here I stand, may God help me, Amen."

It was through the teachings of Galatians that Martin Luther saw the light that it is not by man, his works or religion, "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith" (Galatians 3:11). Luther wrote, "The epistle to the Galatians is my epistle, to it I am as in wedlock. Galatians is my Katherine (Katherine von Bora, "Katy," wife of Luther)."

We gave the introduction to the book of Galatians last Wednesday evening. We discussed Paul's (1) Credentials; Galatians 1:1, 11-17 (2) Calling; Galatians 1:2-5; I Peter 2:9 (3) Correction; Galatians 1:6-9; 3:1, 3; 4:9; 5:1. There is no other Gospel. We examined the difference in the Greek words for "another": "allos," which

means another of the same kind, and “heteros,” another of a different kind. There is no other close truth. The Gospel is the exclusive way to salvation. Jesus made it clear in John 10:1, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.” (4) Concord; Galatians 1:18, 19; II Peter 3:11-18. We see that Peter and Paul were operating in perfect unity. Peter in his second epistle declares Paul’s writings were able to deliver us from the effects of the “unlearned” and “unstable” and become our spiritual stimuli of growth in grace.

Today I would like to major on Paul’s (5) Conversion; Galatians 1:3-5; 20-24. Paul was inserting his personal testimony to the power of the Gospel when he wrote, “Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world...” (Galatians 1:4a). “...That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which he once destroyed” (Galatians 1:23b). Let’s get a closer look Paul’s first person conversion testimony as guided by the Holy Spirit.

## I. A MISGUIDED ZEAL

Acts 22:1-5; Romans 10:1, 2

### A. The Influence of Our Home

Acts 22:1-3; “I am...a Jew, born in Tarsus...” (Acts 1:3a).

### B. The Influence of Our Education

Acts 22:3b: “...at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers...” II Timothy 3:15 teaches that early childhood godly education can be beneficial to the child (Proverbs 22:6).

### C. The Influence of Our Actions

Acts 22:4a, 5b: “And I persecuted this way unto death, binding and delivering... bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.”

I Kings 16:31; Ecclesiastes 8:11

## II. A MAGNIFICENT SALVATION

Acts 22:6-10

### A. God Takes the Initiative

Acts 22:6, 7; John 6:44

Acts 26:14 and Acts 9:5 point out conviction has preceded his conversion. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." The pricks are ox goads to prod and stir an ox to go forward. This is comparative to the conviction of the Lord on our hearts. The wording our Lord uses, i.e., "...why persecutest thou Me?" coincides with Matthew 25:40: "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

#### B. We Accept Jesus and Lord and Savior

Acts 22:8: "...Who art thou, Lord? And He said unto me, "I am Jesus of Nazareth...." Acts 22:10 points out that Paul is under submission to the Lord. We see that Paul never lost sight of the authority of Christ over him. He said in I Corinthians 11:3a, "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ...."

#### C. It Is a Step Into the Light

Acts 22:6c, "...a great light..."

It is personal. Acts 22:9: "And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me."

### III. A MEEK SERVANT

Acts 22:11-16

#### A. A Willingness to Be Led

Acts 22:11b: "...being led by the hand..."

#### B. A Miracle With a Message

Acts 22:12, 13b: "...Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him."

#### C. A Chosen Vessel

Acts 22:14, 15

Acts 9:15, "But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel."

John 15:16

D. A Complete Change

Acts 22:15, 16

II Corinthians 5:17

I Corinthians 6:11: “And such were some of you: but ye are washed....”

Paul considered himself a slave of Jesus Christ. Romans 1:1: “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God.”

If you are a slave of the world, you are in bondage; if you become a slave to Jesus Christ, you become free.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.