

Paul and His New Life

Texts: II Corinthians 5:17: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

II Corinthians 4:6: “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

Acts 26:16-18

I John 5:7: “For there are Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these Three are One.”

I. PAUL HAS A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

A. Paul Was Chosen

Acts 9:15b: “...for he is a chosen vessel unto me....” John 15:16: “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.”

B. Paul Was Commissioned

Acts 9:15c: “...to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.” Philippians 2:9-11: “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Acts 4:12: “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

C. Paul Was Committed

Acts 9:16: “For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.” II Timothy 1:12: “For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.” I Corinthians 15:32, 58.

II. PAUL HAS A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FATHER

Everything changes when we observe that Paul is addressed by Ananias as: “...Brother Saul...” (Acts 9:17b; Acts 22:13b).

A. Paul Has Been Birthed into God's Family

Acts 9:11: “And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth.” Ananias was told that when he finds Paul (Saul), he would be praying. Paul, being the strict Pharisee that he had been for all of his adult life and knowing the Scriptures, no doubt kept repeating to himself the *Shema*, which is the

central affirmation of Judaism. The prayer expresses belief in the singularity of God, that is, God's oneness and incomparability. Even now it is repeated twice a day by devoted Jews and often it will be the last words they repeat before dying: *Sh'ma Yisrael Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Ehad* ("Hear, O Israel: the LORD is our God, the LORD is One"). The entire *Shema* is: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."

This is an overwhelming, if not catastrophic, upheaval in the life of Paul. The one thing the devout Jews avoided was worship ascribed to anyone or anything else other than Jehovah, the One True and Living God. Our Lord has introduced Himself to Paul as Jesus of Nazareth. Paul is now working through the meaning of this. Perhaps he is remembering Isaiah 9:6: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Paul no doubt realizes now that He has Jehovah as His Father and that Jesus and Jehovah are One and the Same!

B. Paul Has a New Set of Siblings

Acts 22:12: "And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there," Paul's first introduction to Christianity is comradery with Ananias, who was described as a man who walked a holy life in accordance with God's Word. Psalm 1:1, 2 teach us, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." We notice that Ananias has a great testimony with all the Jews, some saved, but most lost. The Bible says the requirement of a minister is, "Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil" (I Timothy 3:7). God's first step in seeing that Paul was discipled was to put him in contact with a godly man. Ananias was a great example of being in, but not of, the world (John 17:14, 15; I John 2:15). With whom we associate makes a big difference. I Corinthians 15:33: "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners." Proverbs 13:20: "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed."

III. PAUL HAS A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

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." Later Paul wrote in Romans 8:9, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." Paul understood that at the point of salvation a person has the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, but we need to go beyond the indwelling to the infilling of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). Galatians 5:16: "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."

IV. PAUL RISES TO WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE

Acts 9:18, 19

Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Romans 6:3,4: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

Paul understood very clearly that he was now a changed man. Romans 1:1: "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ..." Titus 1:1: "Paul, a servant of God..." The word we translate "servant," is taken from the Greek word: "δοῦλος" (doulos) which literally means "slave." For Paul to declare himself a slave repeatedly and knowing the Old Testament as well as he did, he was placing himself in the category of the slave referred to in Exodus 21:1-6. Romans 6:17: "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you." I John 4:19: "We love him, because he first loved us."

CONCLUSION:

The strongest witness of Christianity is the changed life of the believer. Paul's first contact after meeting Christ on the Road to Damascus was Ananias. Ananias was at first reluctant to go to Paul (Saul), but this dedicated servant surrendered to the revealed will of the Lord and in turn becomes the man God uses to introduce to the church and ultimately the world, the great Apostle Paul. Let us all learn that we, too, may be instruments used of God to bring other Apostle Pauls into the life of phenomenal service to our Lord.