

# Saul Of Tarsus: A Pharisee By Conviction, A Christian By Grace

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- [ 0 : 00 ] Thank you for tuning into this message by David Entry. Every true revival is a product of the strong preaching of God's word. May you receive a word from this message that will spark a revival in you.
- ! Acts chapter 9. I'm reading from verse 1 to verse 9. 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 in this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.
- And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus, and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven, and he fell to the earth and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?
- And he said, who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, it is I, Jesus, whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.
- And he trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what will thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, arise and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.
- [ 1 : 35 ] And the man which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. And Saul arose from the earth, and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man, but they led him by the hand and brought him unto Damascus.
- And he was there three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink. Here ends the reading of God's word. Please let's pray.
- Father, we thank you for the privilege of bringing us together, so you impact yourself and input yourself into us through the teaching of your word.
- We pray that as your word is taught, help us to seek Jesus. Give us an understanding heart. Give us circumcised ears.
- And give us sanctified hearts, so we'll be able to receive your word. We pray, reveal Jesus to us. As your word is taught, convict sin.
- [ 2 : 38 ] Convict sin. Deliver the captives. Save the lost. Let the voice of your calling be made so clear in the ears of those you are calling.
- I pray in Jesus' name that as your word is taught, let healings happen. Let miracles happen. Let deliverance happen. Let blessings be released to the glory of your name.
- And let Jesus be seen. We thank you in Jesus' name. Amen. Hallelujah. Please be seated. So, the scripture said, Jesus said to his disciples that you shall receive power after the Holy Ghost has come upon you.
- and that's after that one verse eight, Acts 1, eight, it said, you shall receive power after the Holy Ghost has come upon you and you shall be with mercy unto me. Then he tells them where, says in Jerusalem, in Judea, in Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the world.

That is so important. So we saw how the word of God was spreading in Jerusalem from Acts chapter two. Thousands go born again and in Acts chapter three, many more, there was a move in the temple and Acts chapter four tells us many more thousands go born again or came to know the Lord and God was adding to the church daily and in Acts, all in Jerusalem, in Acts chapter six, Bible says that their number was multiplied as the number multiplied in verse one and then verse seven, they increased greatly, they multiplied greatly daily.

[ 4 : 25 ]     God was adding to the church. So the increase of the church was so radical that you couldn't deny it and then all that was happening in Jerusalem.

Then in Acts chapter six, there emerged Stephen from verse eight and it was about Stephen. He was doing miracles in Jerusalem.

Attention came on him and they managed, those people of the synagogue of the Libertines, they managed to get rid of him. So Acts chapter seven was primarily about Stephen and his execution in Jerusalem.

And Acts chapter eight, as we saw in recent teachings, the word of God spread and made a cross over to Samaria.

And there was a great move of God in Samaria and it didn't stop there. And as we had last week, in spite of the move and the crowds that were being changed, God sends the first missionary, Philip, to go and meet one person, Ethiopian eunuch, for the purposes of the message going outside of Samaria.

[ 5 : 39 ]     All right. And so that's the first time the message gets to a Gentile person or somebody from Gentile territory. Now after that, Bible talks about how the spirit of God took Philip after the baptism in Acts chapter eight from verse 38 there.

After he was baptized, the spirit took him and he was caught away by the spirit and he found himself somewhere called Azotus. And yeah, he found himself somewhere else.

Then look at the next verse. The next verse says, then Saul. Now this is not the first time Saul was introduced. In Acts chapter seven, Saul was introduced just before the execution of 58.

Acts chapter seven, verse 58, we see, and they cast him out of the city and stoned him and the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

That was the first mention of this gentleman in the New Testament. And so that's the first time Saul was mentioned. Then he was introduced in Acts chapter seven and in Acts chapter eight, even though it was primarily about Philip, Saul was mentioned again in Acts chapter eight, verse three, that it says that as for Saul, this guy, as for him, oh, it looks like he was having fun.

[ 7 : 10 ]     The best time, as for Saul, he made havoc of the church. As I told you, it was like a bull let loose in the fields and destroying crops.

That's the word havoc there. Entering into every house and dragging men. So Saul was introduced there again. And the Bible focuses on Philip.

So Saul seems, watch this, this is very important. He seemed to be instrumental in the execution of Stephen because he was overseen by all the soul.

where was he keeping the clothes of the witnesses? He was the one overseeing it. But what gave him that audacity and that power, that influence?

We'll find out in a minute. Then, Stephen dies. Then Philip, through this havoc, this young man soul, young man, it's good to do the work of God when you are young.

[ 8 : 15 ]     don't wait to be old. I don't understand why people wait until retirement when no company wants to work with them. You say, okay, God, take me like that.

So just in case you have plans to serve God fully and get involved more with God's will after retirement, I think you might be running late. God likes you in your prime.

That's why he did not wait. All the disciples of Jesus, they were not old men. They were young people. So he got another young man with energy. To be young means you have a lot of energy.

Energy. It takes a lot of energy to accomplish some things. Old men don't lead revolutions. It's young men and usually most revolutions are started in universities.

Young people, young, young, in their late teens, early 20s. Yes. So if you want to do God's work, start from university days. I'll pray university like some of us.

[ 9 : 23 ] Start early. It gives you an advantage. So a young man called. So when you are young, you can do a lot for God.

You can do a lot for humanity when you start early. I started, when I tell people, I've been doing full time.

When I say full time, all I'm doing is the church work and God's work and nothing, no career, no job, nothing. full time since 1995.

Since 1995. I started very early. 1995. So you are waiting to your later years. Look, you are already 42. Even the department, you are not serving properly.

Some of you are leaders when you call me to you come. You, you don't realize that you've already wasted a lot of your youthful days chasing girls.

[ 10 : 22 ] chasing boys. Yes. No, don't think we are the same old. No, we are not the same. Some of us have got heavy youthful equity.

When you were in the nightclub, some of us didn't even know nightclub existed. I'm telling you, I'm not saying that's why God uses it. But it plays a major role. That's why God calls Saul a young man, young lady.

You don't have time because you came in a little late. After you have roamed all over the world, after you've done all kinds of things, and even if you didn't do anything, you didn't know Christ until you were over 30, over 40, over 50.

You died. And if God is going to reward us in heaven based on what you have done in his world, then you can tell you don't have much time. It's likely you won't receive much reward in heaven. Unless you are not thinking eschatologically.

the Christian life that is not lived in the light of his coming will be a very weak Christian life. I'll report it again. You can't live the Christian life effectively unless you live it in the light of his coming.

[ 11 : 33 ] Else you won't be able to do well. You won't be able to. That's why the early church kept emphasizing and putting emphasis, focusing on his coming. His coming. He said, I've fought a good fight.

I've finished my race and I've kept the faith. verse 8 and he said in 2 Timothy chapter 4. He says that, now there is left for me a crown of righteousness which the righteous judge shall give unto me and not only me, those who love his appearing.

They always spoke about the coming, the coming, the coming, the coming, the coming. It was the fuel for Christian life. So you can't threaten them with death because they tell you that for me to live is Christ, to die is gain.

they lived in anticipation of the second coming. They knew Christ was coming. They knew Christ was coming. You cannot live an effective Christian life if you don't focus on his coming.

Those who love his appearing. Those who love his appearing. Hebrews chapter 9 verse 28, he said he shall appear the second time. He shall appear the second time.

[ 12 : 39 ] He came the first time but he shall appear the second time. Titus chapter 2 verse 14. He says that the blessed hope is the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

That was their motive. That was what fueled all that they used to do. And every effective Christian is fueled by the second coming. Because material things on earth cannot be strong enough to fuel you unless those people who are trained to always be demon conscious.

demons, demons, demons, demons, demons, demons. So what you are doing, the motivation behind your work in the Lord is you're afraid of devils because of the way they destroy people in your father's background.

You don't want to be destroyed so you are trying just in case God. Please, that is not a good motivation. It's not a good motivation. Neither should the motivation be just maybe ask yourself, God, you'll get money on earth.

You'll get, your things will work for you. It's not bad, but really it's so, it's so low. It's so low. The greatest motivation is, it's all I want to see him.

[ 13 : 49 ] Look upon his face. Dare to sing forever of his saving grace. On the streets of glory, let me lift my voice. All my cares are past. Home at last. Ever to rejoice.

Those who love is appearing. I pray that God will help us all to love is appearing. So Saul was a young man who was very influential. And so you see in the chapter 8 verse 3 that he was very instrumental in the scattering of the church.

So because of him, Philip ended up in Samaria. So you see, he was like a trigger. Through him, through his influence, Stephen died and Stephen's death was necessary for the church.

And then through his causing havoc, Philip ended up in Samaria and Samaria got saved. As Jesus said. And then through that, after the salvation of Samaria, the Ethiopian eunuch, the uttermost part of the world.

So now the Bible says, God said, now let's focus on this gentleman, Saul. So Acts chapter 9 verse 1 starts with, then Saul.

[ 15 : 00 ] Whilst people were being saved in Azotus, this Saul, still, breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord.

His target was disciples. Yes. His target was the disciples of the Lord. If you are not a disciple, he doesn't have any business.

His target, he was almost like Haman the Agagite. His target was to eradicate the Jews. The Haman in the book of Esther.

The Agagite hated the Jews and he was so determined, he was so bent on you people, I will eradicate you. And that's what Saul was doing. His target was to put a stop to this thing called Christianity or this thing called the way.

I have to put a stop to it. So that was his life ambition at that time. And he was young and he was influential. It's good to know about Saul. His original name is Saul.

[ 16 : 08 ] Bible says in Philippians chapter 3 verse 4, he said he was a Hebrew though I might be verse 4, I might have confused verse 5, he said circumcised on the eighth day of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of, you remember there's another Benjamins called Saul, the one Saul in the Bible, the same line.

So I mean, to be a Benjamite, you are proper Jew, he said a Hebrew of the Hebrews. Because those days there were some other Jews who were not really celebrated, especially those who were born around Asia and those, you know, the Jews scattered everywhere.

So some of them were not celebrated by those in their motherland as authentic. But Saul said, me, I was a Hebrew of Hebrews. Concerning the law, I was not just obeying the law, I was a Pharisee.

Pharisee is the sect with the higher level of adherence to the law, to the standard they've added, if the law was 10, they have added about 30 more. So they were that, that's why Pharisees were hypocrites, because even the law in itself, it was difficult to keep it.

No human being could keep the law. That's why God told Moses, put it in the Ark of the Covenant, because it's not meant to be kept. Don't display it, hide it, just hide it. They must just know there's a law, but hide it.

[ 17 : 34 ] Yeah, in the Ark of the Covenant. You don't make laws and hide it in a box. You put it displayed so people can see. But the Pharisees have added their own.

So if the Bible says, do not work on a Sabbath day, they said, don't even work at all. Or don't work more than a certain distance. Yeah. They said, if the Bible says don't work, they said, okay, even if you get out from the bed, don't take your bed sheet.

It's working. So they've taken it far, which was not realistic. So Jesus told them that man was not made for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath was made for man.

Why are you making the Sabbath rule the life of man? Jesus healed somebody on the Sabbath, and they said that, why are you healing somebody on the Sabbath? I think in Luke, the woman with the issue of the one who had bowed down, Luke chapter 13.

And Jesus said, which of you having a sheep, which falls into the well on a Sabbath day, who says a Sabbath day, so I will leave my sheep. By the time you come, the next day is dead. Hypocrite.

[ 18 : 41 ] Does not each of you on the Sabbath lose your ox or donkey from the stall and lead it away to water it? The donkey doesn't know sir, but he has to eat.

But they were very, and Paul said, concerning the law, me, I was not just a legalist, I was a Pharisee. That's a serious one. So Saul was such a unique person.

Now let's explore, let's look a little bit into this character called Saul. In Acts chapter 9, it says that, and so, breathing out threatenings and slaughtered against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest.

Saul was a Jew by birth. He was a Pharisee by conviction. He was a Roman by citizenship. He was a Greek by education, and he was a Christian by grace.

He wore quite a few hats. He became a missionary, a theologian, an evangelist, a teacher, a preacher, a pastor, a leader, a thinker, an organizer, a statesman, a fighter, and a lover at the same time.

[ 19 : 54 ] Saul of Tarsus. This man was a unique person in scripture. God used him to influence the church in a way that no other person was.

Almost half of the New Testament, which is 27 books in the New Testament, almost half of it was penned by Paul. Paul was the secondary author.

God is always the primary author, but he always used human agents. Out of the 27, 14 was God used him. Can you imagine?

To the extent that he has had so much impact on Christianity, and anyone who is called a theologian, who are true Christian theologians, their influence has always come from Paul.

All true Christian. For instance, it is said by scholars that St. Augustine, one of the greatest theologians of Christianity, years ago, he was influenced, or he discovered his theological calling by reading the book of Romans chapter 3.

[ 21 : 02 ] He read the Romans chapter 3, and we were like, oh, there's so much I didn't. Romans is so heavy, written by Paul. It's a legal document. In Romans, that's when we get to find out about our judicial redemption.

Our redemption is not arbitrary. It's judicial. It's a legal issue. Our redemption is not maybe God felt, okay, arbitrary, or maybe whimsically, no.

He went through the process, and Paul is showing you that when you are redeemed, it is legitimate according to the law of God and the law of man. Paul, and then Martin Luther.

Some of you might be familiar of Martin Luther, the reformer, the one who started the reformation in the 17th, I think 17th century. Martin Luther also read Romans chapter 5.

What sparked that revelation in him was reading Romans chapter 5, and he realized, ah, and John Wesley, he read Romans chapter 8, and that's what changed his life around.

[ 22 : 07 ] So he was going to read something, keep reading Romans. There's a lot inside there. So, and this was penned by Paul. God used Paul so much to have such a great influence in the church.

Paul was a great man. Now, and when you look at Paul very carefully, as I said, he was a Jew in Acts chapter 21, verse 39, he said, I am a Jew.

Paul, he said to the centurion or the guard, he said, Paul said, I am a Jew from Tarsus.

Okay, Tarsus has been introduced here. Let's talk about Tarsus. Tarsus is in Cilicia, and he was a citizen of no small city. Tarsus had one of the finest universities in the days of Saul, and Tarsus sat in between at the northern border of Israel.

So, after the northern border of Israel, it sat in between Asia minor in those days and Syria. In these modern days, Syria and Jordan. So, Tarsus is there.

[ 23 : 18 ] It was an old city, and it was a metropolitan bazin city, and it had one of the finest universities. Saul was born there and was schooled there.

So, when it comes to his education, he had the Greek mindset. He was well educated, seriously educated, but you know what his parents did? His father, being a Pharisee, made sure that he wouldn't only have a Greek education.

He sent him to Jerusalem, so he spent some of his upbringing days in Jerusalem. And Saul was born in Tarsus, a Roman city, okay, or is a Roman colony.

So, if you are born there, you are automatically a Roman citizen. So, Saul was a Roman citizen. And to be a Roman citizen in those days, you had so many privileges, because it was the greatest nation in that time.

So, to be a Roman citizen, it was very, you don't need visa to travel anywhere, you just go anywhere you want. And you cannot be arrested easily. If they arrest you, they must be, and they can't turn you into prison.

[ 24 : 25 ] That's why Paul, in Acts chapter 16, around from verse 33 there, he said, we being Romans, you beat us without a charge. Paul said to them, they have beaten us openly and condemned us, condemned Romans, and have thrown us into prison, and now they want us to come out secretly.

He said, no, go and tell them to come and bring us out. Because they shouldn't have condemned us. We are Romans. And then the officers told the words to the magistrate, and they were afraid when they heard that the guys were Romans.

We couldn't treat Romans like that. So for you to be a Roman in those days is better than even Americans or British in this issue. It was a powerful thing. So anyway, so he was a Roman, grew up, or was born in Tarsus.

That's why it's called Paul of Tarsus. And Tarsus was in Cilicia. That's why he was always fellowshiping and worshipping with the synagogue of the Cilicians. Tarsus. And so Saul was born in Tarsus.

Sent to Jerusalem because in those days, there was this great, the best rabbi ever. They used to have the familiar name for Rabban.

[ 25 : 38 ] Rabban. What was his name? Gamaliel. Gamaliel was the best. In fact, if you study under Gamaliel, everybody knows that you have been well taught and you are an authority.

Gamaliel was so well revered and respected, they used to call him the beauty of the law. In other words, the law in his mouth, the law of Moses, when he begins to break it down, it's like, wow, this is so beautiful.

The guy was a unique lecturer, unique teacher, and he had a school in Jerusalem and he was the one who advised the Sahindrin in Acts chapter 5 from verse 34 that we have to be careful, else we find ourselves fighting against God.

And because he was so respected as he spoke, everybody listened. And Paul in Acts chapter 22 verse 3, he said, I am indeed a Jew born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this, talking about Jerusalem, in this city at the feet of Gamaliel.

I was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel and taught according to the strictness of our father's law and was zealous towards God as you are all, as you are all today.

[ 26 : 52 ] I was zealous. That's what Paul's credentials. That's what Gamaliel taught me. And when anyone hears Gamaliel taught you. Now, theologians believe that Saul of Tarsus was born in Tarsus and he was raised because we saw here in Acts chapter 22 verse 3, look at it again.

He said, brought up in this city. So he was brought up in Jerusalem. But it's believed that he was sent back after he finished his education. He was sent back because if he had stayed in Jerusalem, he would have been potentially maybe the next to the high priest or some of those powerful people because of who taught him, because of his education.

But it's believed that he was sent back. Some theologians believe he was sent back. Others also believe that it's possible while Jesus was there in those days, he was aware of Jesus. He must have probably heard about Jesus before his conversion or before the preaching of the apostles.

So it's believed that Saul of Tarsus is like familiar with all those territories but it's believed he didn't grow up. So he grew up there but he left and went back to Tarsus to go and practice his religion and do his own things until he came to Jerusalem and when Stephen, Stephen had the discourse with them, he noticed something about Stephen and when he oversaw the education of Stephen, he chose to stay around to eradicate this thing called the way of the church.

So he decided to stay, he won't go and he was creating problems and causing problems. Now, guess what happened? From the text we just read, the Bible says that he went, verse 1 again, and so, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord.

[ 28 : 48 ] Permit me to comment on this. You see, that phrase, breathing out, okay, breathing out, originally it should actually sound like breathing in. Breathing out is like when a wild bull is angry, a dragon, something like that, you know.

But when he said breathing in, it's like his breath. It's like his breath, still drawing his breath. Did you see that? Okay.

Meanwhile, Saul still drawing his breath hard from threatening. That's how he lived. It became his lifestyle. His oxygen was to fight the church.

So he was, he drew his breath from that. So if he didn't fight the church, he felt like he was dying. Yeah, yeah. That's how serious the guy was. So his life ambition and the purpose for his life was to make sure this thing called church is closed down.

We have to stop it. So he managed to fight them in Jerusalem and news got to him that they were in Damascus. Many of them, because Damascus was another bazar city and a lot of Jews, in those days, many Jews used to live there.

[ 30 : 06 ] And Damascus is a very old, very old city, older than Abraham. Yeah, Damascus was there before the days of Abraham.

So it was a very old city. And today we still have a Damascus. Jerusalem, the Jews were living there. And so when they were being threatened, Philip, are you here with me?

Philip found himself in Samaria, but Jews really don't like the Samaritans. So Philip's own, it was really an inspiration. So many of them would not settle in Samaria because the Samaritans also didn't like the Jews.

So they won't settle because you won't find good Samaritans there. So many of them went, their destination became Damascus. And so he said he went for letters from the high priest.

Why the high priest? Because the high priest was the highest authority in the land at that time under the Roman rule. So the Roman authorities have given the high priest powers to rule.

[ 31 : 08 ] So to, amongst the Jews, the high priest, what the high priest said counted. So if you get letters from the high priest, it's like Caesar has given you a letter. So all Saul needed to be able to travel around, to go and do that in the synagogue was authorization from the high priest.

So he went to the high priest. He went, look, look at the text again. And Saul, yet bringing out threatens and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went on to the high priest and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues.

Not synagogues. There were many synagogues. He said, I'm going to every one of them. And I'm sure he went with temple police and officers because to go and do this kind of thing, you need some officers with you.

So he went to get the letter and then he was also given the permission to go. So the Bible says that, and he's had let us go to Damascus into the synagogue.

Somebody say synagogue. In Luke chapter 12 verse 11 and Luke chapter 21 verse 12. Luke chapter 12 verse 11. The Bible says that, now when they bring you to the synagogue, this is Jesus talking, and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how or what you would answer and what you should.

[ 32 : 23 ] Jesus knew that they was going to come. And look at chapter 21 verse 12. Luke chapter 21 verse 12. It says that, but before all these things, this is Jesus talking to his disciples, they will lay hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, you will be brought before kings and rulers for my name.

Matthew chapter 10 verse 17. There's that. But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you where? At the place of worship is where they will be beating you.

Paul himself, you know, Paul himself in his testimony, he said in Acts chapter 22 verse 19, he said that he went, so this Paul talking, I said, Lord, they know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat.

This old guy, he was telling God. Many years after his conversion, God was telling him, leave the city. They want to kill you. He said, Paul, he told God, they know my record already.



God told him, leave the city. But he didn't want to leave because he thought, God, the people know I was a wild guy and now I've changed. Yeah.

- [ 33 : 45 ] He's saying that make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly for they will not receive your testimony concerning me. Then the verse 19, he started advising God and he says that, so I said, Lord, they know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believe in you.

In Acts chapter 26, verse 11, Paul was also making mention, he said, 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.

That was his life. He was breathing it. He persecuted them to foreign cities. He said, that's why I lived my life doing it. And this guy was a young man with a lot of passion, great education.

He spoke Hebrew, he spoke Greek, and Greek education and Pharisaic education. He was top notch. He was top notch. And so he was so confident in himself.

And he said, these guys, I don't like the things they are preaching, I'll get rid of them. And so he went from synagogue to synagogue and he got the letters to go into the synagogue so he can, whoever he found in the way, somebody say the way.

- [ 34 : 57 ] Say it again, say the way. In those days, the Christianity was called the way. Jesus said, I'm the way, the truth. It's the way of life. It's the way of God.

It's the way to know God. It's the way to enjoy life. That's Christianity. If you want to know God, it takes Christ. And in Acts chapter 18, verse 24 and 25, there was a guy called Apollos.

Apollos. Now, a certain Jew named Apollos, born in Alexandria, another great city, Alexandria, and an eloquent man and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

Verse 25, this man had been instructed in the way of the Lord and been fervent in spirit. He spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John.

Now, the next verse, so he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

- [ 36 : 00 ] The way, Christianity was the way. In Acts chapter 19, verse 9, the Bible says that they spoke against the way, talking about the teachings and Christianity. But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of their way, before the multitude.

So Jesus is the way and the church was called the way as well. Look at the verse 23. Acts chapter 19, verse 23, it says that, and about that time, there arose great commotion about what?

The way. Great commotion about what? The way. The way was, Christianity was a source and a cause of a lot of tension because they hated the Christians.

Acts chapter 22, verse 4, tells you the way. Acts chapter 22 says that, I persecuted this way to the death. That's Saul. Saul said, I persecuted this way.

I persecuted the church. I persecuted this way to the death. Binding and delivering into prison both men and women.

- [ 37 : 04 ] In Acts chapter 24, let me just give you these two last scriptures. Acts chapter 24, verse 14, verse 14, it said, but this I confess to you that according to, okay, let's already other, let's go.

But this I confess to you that according to the way which they call a set, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the, according to the way, they call the way set, but that's how I'm serving the God of our fathers.

And the verse 22, Acts 24, 22, but when Felix heard these things, having more accurate knowledge of, he was familiar for Felix, was the governor, he was familiar of the way.

So, Christianity was called the way, the way to God, the way of life, the way of living a godly life, the way to live your life. So, it was called the way. back here, it says that, and desired letters that if he found any of this way, let's look at the Duke in James, please, and ask letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

The way, say, Christianity is the way. Say, Christianity is the way. The church is the way. Hallelujah. So, he said, he went for, and how would he know?

[ 38 : 32 ] He would go from synagogue to synagogue. How would he know they were Christians? But the way, not by the way they dress, because Christianity doesn't come with a dress code.

Christianity, you can't even wear hijab. You can't wear hijab, you can't remove, it doesn't matter. You can't, you know, when I say dress code, you know what I mean? Yeah.

Some of you think I'm talking about summer clothing. But that's why I can wear any normal clothes to church and preach.

Please, those of you think you have to wear something special before your worship can be special. No, it's not Christian. You can wear what is normal, whatever is normal that you didn't fit to go into public.

And you can wear it. That's why a lot of modern day pastors don't wear clerica. They don't wear regalia. They don't wear, if I somewhere just normal t-shirt.

[ 39 : 29 ] Yeah, that's not my style, but there's nothing wrong. Because Christianity doesn't come with a dress code. So if you go into a train, you will know who is a Christian. But many other religions, you can easily spot them out.

because it all has to do with external, the stereo, how you do it. In Christianity, you can be anywhere and be praying. You can be on the plane and be praying. You can be on the executive chamber of release, that's washroom, and be praying.

You can be in your kitchen and be praying. Yeah, you can be in your bed and be praying. You can pray anywhere.

But some other religious, prayer, is not prayer until it fits into a setting mode. You have to face some place, you have to kneel, or you have to sit, you have to cross your legs. No, Christianity doesn't demand any of that.

You don't have to walk and pray. You don't even have to close your eyes to pray. Christianity doesn't come with restrictions. It doesn't come with restrictions. That's very interesting. So when we go to prayer meeting, people are like, no, it is not necessary, but it doesn't spoil anything.

[ 40 : 38 ] Whatever makes you take, just do it. If walking, because some of you, if you don't walk, you will sleep. You, watch this, you don't need to go to Jerusalem before your Christian life can be solid.

Years ago, a gentleman told me, I want to be baptized in the Jordan. It doesn't make any difference whether you're baptized in the Jordan or this one, Thames, Thames, or wherever.

It doesn't matter. Look, I know why you're saying you've never been to Israel. That's why you're saying that. Yes, I've never been to Israel, but I think I'm producing more results than some of people who have gone to Israel.

For God. I'm not saying going to Israel is nothing, but it's a nice tourist place to go. It's nice to go.

Christianity is the religion that is not based on externals. Your haircut doesn't matter. What you wear doesn't matter. Where you sit doesn't matter.

[ 41 : 50 ] Where you live doesn't matter. What you eat doesn't matter. You can eat pork even if you want. You can eat snake. You can eat snake. Oh, yes. So, okay, the point I'm making here is that, so how would you identify the Christians?

Since there's nothing exterior, I stand out to identify them. Bible says that in Acts chapter 9 verse 14, when Ananias was telling God that, no, let's go back to, from God appeared, the Lord said, Ananias said, yeah, when God said go, he told God I've heard by many, this guy is, and he has come, verse 14 I think, so, he's come to the, he has authority from the chief priest to bind all who, that's how you identify them.

He looks for their calling. When they meet, you hear Lord Jesus, Lord Jesus, in their meetings, he will say, ah, they are there. That's how you identify, because you can't identify them externally, exterior, that's not exterior.

And so, he was going, he went into the synagogue in Damascus to go and hunt them down so he can bring them. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus and suddenly, and suddenly there shined around about him a light from heaven.

And he fell to the earth and had a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecuted thou me? Yes, suddenly, suddenly, from nowhere, he saw a light.

[ 43 : 16 ] According to Acts chapter 26, the light was brighter than the sun, no day sun, and it was at midday. Now, it is believed by scholars that because of the temperature in those areas, usually it's not the best to travel at midday.

People travel early morning or late. Yeah, people travel early morning or late. So when you go to some of those desert territories, typically, at midday, people don't do much because it's too hot.

So why the agency? This guy couldn't wait. He would travel at midday. This guy wait, at least you wait for sun to set. Saul said, no, I hate these people so much.

But he said, I hated them passionately. That's why he said himself in Acts 26. I just read it. I think verse 11 again. Look at Acts 26 verse 11. Acts 26 verse 11.

Synagogue! And being exceedingly enraged against them. That's how serious his hatred was for the Christians. He hated them passionately.

[ 44 : 23 ] And so he was going the noonday and the Bible says according to Acts 26. You see, the story of Saul's conversion is so powerful in scripture that it was repeated three times in one book.

In Acts. It was said in Acts chapter 9 what we are studying. And the same story, maybe next week I'll read through that one. Even though we get there, I'll just read through it. It was the same story.

Acts chapter 22 from verse 1 to 20. It was about Saul's call. This same story. In Acts chapter 26, it was repeated there from verse 8 to 19. It was repeated there from verse 8.

And Paul himself spoke directly about his conversion experience five times. He himself referred to it five times and he implied it a dozen times.

Said it different times about. That tells you how essential this chapter is. It's so important to Saul's conversion because Saul's conversion marked the journey of the new day of the church.

[ 45 : 25 ] So he went to seek authority or to go and look for them. And the Bible says that he saw a light at noonday. Let's look at chapter 26 version. It says that at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven brighter than the sun.

It's almost like an atomic bomb. Nothing brighter than a star in those days. And he saw a light. Midday, the sun is brightest. And he said, I saw another light from heaven.

So that tells you the natural light is not the brightest thing on earth. There's another light, ghost light. He saw a light in heaven, brighter than the sun.

It is in your Bible. Brighter than the sun. And shining around me and those who journey with me. If you are partaker of somebody fighting the church, you are also culpable.

Those who journey with me. And I fell from my horse. So he wasn't alone. He was going with a convoy of officers. And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard the voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?

[ 46 : 40 ] Why are you persecuting me? Acts chapter 9 again. It says that, and he said, I fell to the earth and heard a voice saying, Saul, Saul, why persecutors die of me?

Why? Who is this me? The Bible tells us that he was breathing threats against the disciples. Verse 1. So it's the disciples he was dealing with. He didn't realize that there was somebody, a personality behind the disciples.

He wasn't only the head of the body, but he was also the body he was persecuting. So Jesus spoke to him and said, listen, you are persecuting me. He said, how can I persecut?

He said, it's me. When you touch the church, you have touched me. He says that whoever receives you, yeah, whoever receives you receives me.

He says that, and he who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives him who sent you. In Matthew 25, verse 40, again, he said, whatever you do to the least of these ones, talking about the Christians, anything you do for Christians, you have done it.

[ 47 : 49 ] And the king will answer and say to them, surely I say unto you, in as much as you did it to one of the least of my brethren, you did it to me. You slapped a Christian, you have slapped Jesus.

You attack a Christian, you have attacked Jesus. That's what he's saying. So he said, Lord, when were you hungry and we fed you? When were you appreciative?

He said, as long as you did it for one of these my brethren, you do it for me. So he appeared to Saul, he said, why are you persecuting me? Why are you persecuting me?

And Saul said, excuse me, who are you? Who are you? I don't know you. I can't persecute you. Yeah. Why are you persecuting me?

And then he said, who are you, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus. So in the first, watch this. He said, why are you persecuting me? He said, why are you persecuting Jesus?

[ 48 : 49 ] He said, Jesus is the church. So you are persecuting me. He said, okay, who is this me? He said, I am Jesus. Are you equal to the church? Yes, I am. He said, I am Jesus.

You are persecuting me. I am Jesus. You are persecuting the church. The church is Jesus. The way is Jesus. He said, I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.

And he said, let me end on this. It is hard for you to kick against the goats. Those days, if you are a shepherd and you have ox to keep them, or sometimes even horses to keep the beasts on a particular path, they install some things around the courage they are carrying, and it's like, with sharp edges, it's pricks.

So if you turn to where you are not supposed to, it pricks you and keeps you in check. But stubborn ones try to still kick the thing, and you can't because you are hurting yourself. And Jesus said, listen, why are you kicking against the people?

What did he mean by that? It looks like Saul potentially must have been familiar! with the story who was crucified, who was gotten rid of.

[ 50 : 04 ] He must have been familiar with that. Then the apostles came on the scene, and they were preaching everywhere, and he was enraging and infuriating him. Then Stephen brings everything to life.

So all along he was, listen, listen, I want to close on this. This is a guy, an intellectual, raised under Gamaliel, well educated, in the Jewish law and the rabbinic tradition.

Taught by the rabbin himself. And he believed everything. And those days, they mastered the Old Testament back to recite it, memorize it, and they could recite it.

They were authorities and some of them still do it. They recited back and forth. That's all their lives. And this guy was a master at it because he was taught by the master teacher himself.

Suddenly these guys come and are telling me that he must have known about Messiah and that Jesus is the Messiah and all the things you guys are doing really and Stephen was trying to even tell him that every time God moved he moved outside of Jerusalem or outside of Palestine region when he was coming to call Abraham Abraham was not there when he wasn't in the promised land he was somewhere!

[ 51 : 17 ] He began! to show them from Stephen's teaching and you know what is ironic is Saul of Tarsus God waited for him to be away from Jerusalem he was out of the promised land he was near Damascus outside of the region God met him to let you know that God doesn't only work in the promised land he works other places as well that's why he came near to the!

Damascus! And so he met Stephen and the way he saw Stephen's teaching rubbished everything he knew and he didn't want to accept it how many of you know sometimes people get very angry or you can get very angry when you know what the person is saying is as I'm treating it but you don't want to accept it it makes you more angry yeah when people are speaking the truth to your face and you don't want to accept it it's human to react with anger when you don't want to accept it that's why sometimes Christianity and the preaching of the gospel is treated the way it's treated in our generation they know it's the truth we don't have hatred and we are not bigots neither are we maggots so breathing out threats against them and he didn't want to accept what Stephen was teaching no no so he was rejecting it listen salvation doesn't just happen at once two things I want you to know

Paul's conversion was a very unique one because no one ever in scripture was recorded to have met Jesus or been converted like that the rest of the conversion God has committed to us to preach the people he was the only one who's conversion God himself had to come down there's no other person in scripture like that because God doesn't take charge he's the master but in Saul's situation God himself said I'm coming down I'm coming down and he met Jesus so Saul was unique Saul was unique in that sense because of the assignment God had for his life and so he met Jesus on his way to Damascus Jesus what I said conversion is not at once most of the time do you know why because it wasn't just the appearing of Jesus Christ on that day he's been working on him some of you maybe your conversion one day you had a dream or something happened and you said oh I'll save Jesus no it didn't start from that day

God must have been working on you for a long time God works on us for a long time before your boyfriend eventually broke your heart when he broke!

God has been working on him and he's kicking against the ghost he's kicking I don't want to I won't accept it I won't accept it I won't and so out of anger he was just going to kill them because he knows there was untreated it but he was kicking against the ghost he was kicking again Jesus said listen stop it it is hard to kick against the ghost!

[ 54 : 37 ] Saul Jesus the text doesn't necessarily say physically Jesus but we can tell from inferences when Ananias went to see Saul in Acts chapter 9 verse 17 he said Jesus Christ who appeared to you on your way coming to Damascus so laying on the Lord Jesus Christ who appeared to you so Saul actually saw Jesus because you cannot those days to be part of the apostle you must have been somebody who saw Jesus after the resurrection and so he saw look at verse 27 Saul saw Jesus look at verse 27 Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how he had seen the Lord so he saw Jesus Saul saw in fact I like this one he himself after the resurrection he said Jesus Christ 1st Corinthians chapter 15 verse 2 he said I submit to you of first importance first of all he said

I submit to you I preach to you he says that I deliver to you first of all that which I also received and then he began to sink his teeth into the resurrection the death burial and resurrection and he focused on the resurrection the rest of the chapter because the resurrection is the key stuff he focused on the resurrection and he told them that Jesus Christ was erected on the third day and he was seen by over 500 people he was seen he said that after that he was seen let's go to the verse 5 let's start from verse 5 and he was seen by Cephas and then by the twelve then verse six after that he was seen by over 500 people at once of whom the greater parts remain to the present but some are fallen asleep the next verse after that he was seen by James then by all the apostles now look at this one then last of all he was seen by me also as by one born out of I came in the wrong time when he had gone to heaven already

I was born at the wrong time when he was on earth after the resurrection when he was showing himself to people I wasn't there I wasn't on the scene I came late after he ascended to heaven but I saw him too I saw him too I saw him too I saw him too he said arise for I have appeared to you for this purpose that I might reveal myself through you I might do some amazing things through you God appeared after the six verse!

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 you will yet reveal to you he appeared to him so Saul saw Jesus and he met he saw a gentleman who was dying and when the man was about to die he said I see Jesus I see Jesus Saul was standing there and all the he saw someone the way the guy died no one has ever died like that this guy died with excitement they were stoning by die with joy because he has seen something better than anything that's why I told you there's no way you can live the Christian life effectively without focusing on meeting Jesus the reason why you are full of complaints and every time any little thing tips you over any little to down grace your commitment is because you are not eschatological in your approach and your pursuit of

Christ in other words you are not serving him expecting to see him because when we see him it will all make sense it will all make sense our suffering our pain our sacrifice it will all make sense it will make sense Saul of Tarsus was a unique figure in the scripture brothers and sisters I present to you Saul of Tarsus hallelujah hallelujah thank you for listening to this message by David Entry we pray you have been revived towards God you can connect with David Entry on all relevant social media platforms including Instagram and LinkedIn you can also hear more messages from David Entry on all relevant streaming platforms and the Carish Church app don't forget to like and share the message be blessed voy