

032 - Is Saul Among the Prophets? - Acts 9:17-22
GRBC 2012-08-05

Scripture Reading: 1 Samuel 10:6-12
Sermon: "Is Saul Among the Prophets?" Acts 9:17-22
Benediction: 2 Corinthians 5:17

Long ago, in the time of the prophet Samuel, when Saul was made King over Israel, the Holy Spirit came upon King Saul, and made him prophesy, speaking the Word of God in praise of God. Later, when King Saul was jealous of David, he went to kill David, but the Holy Spirit again came upon King Saul, and made him prophesy instead of murdering. So it became a saying in Israel. When someone would be bent on one purpose, with one character, and God would so change his character that he pursued the opposite purpose, the people would say of him, "Is Saul among the prophets?"

A thousand years pass, and now a new Saul has arisen. He is bent on murdering all the followers of the Son of David, Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, The Anointed One of God. The Holy Spirit comes upon the new Saul, and so changes him that Saul leaves off persecuting Jesus, and takes up preaching him! Again the people are amazed at the power of the Spirit of God. And in their amazement they take up the old question again.

See The People's Question About Saul (21)
All who heard about Saul were amazed
Is this not the man who was the church's chief persecutor?

See Why They Asked This; See The Amazing Changes the Lord Had Made in Saul's Life
He had been struck blind; now his sight has been restored (18a)
The Pharisees were considered the most enlightened, and Saul one of the most enlightened among them
When Jesus of Nazareth came, He called them "the blind leading the blind"
He called them blind, foolish hypocrites, who cannot see that their religion is false
He had told them that if they admitted their blindness, they would be forgiven, but since they pridefully insisted that they could see, their sin remained with them (John 9:40-41)
This proud Pharisee, Saul, had been such a one as insisted he could see, and it was the disciples of Jesus who were blind to the truth
Now, he had been struck blind suddenly; but after three days, his sight had been restored, accompanied by something falling from his eyes, like scales; in this, he was convinced that he had been spiritually blind as well, blind to the truth of Jesus Christ; now he can see clearly that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God, the anointed Savior
He had been self-righteous; now he has been baptized (18b)
-This Pharisee's relationship to the law and sin has been that he saw himself as alive already, because he knew the law and kept it
-The Pharisees had been told to repent of their sin and be baptized, fleeing the wrath to come, but they did not see themselves as being in need of this
-Now, though, this Pharisee has had the law, in its true spiritual meaning, preached to him by none other than Jesus Himself, with the Holy Spirit applying the law to his heart
-For three dark days, the law has had its effect on the soul of Saul; Jesus had preached the sixth commandment to him; the commandment, which Saul knew

so well, as to the words, says, "You shall not murder." When Saul participated in the murders of Jesus' disciples, he did not see anything wrong with his conduct. But then Jesus preached the law to him, saying, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"

-On the third day, Ananias came to Saul, and in the name of Jesus Christ said, "Get up, be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

-And so, Saul, previously a self-righteous Pharisee, has called on the name of the Lord for forgiveness of sins, and has shown it by receiving baptism, as do all the disciples of Jesus Christ.

He had fasted three days; now he is eating again (19a)

-Saul has been in a great spiritual crisis; he has been mourning over his sin; he has been humbled before the Lord; in his poverty of spirit he has had nothing to eat or drink

-But now Saul has been lifted up by the Lord, in the person of His servant Ananias; he has been assured of forgiveness of his crimes against Christ's church

-He must make use of all means at his disposal to be strong in the Lord; he must eat and drink for the health of the body; he must pray; he must study the scriptures

He had come to destroy the disciples of Jesus; now he is meeting with them (19b)

-There is much to be amazed at on this point

-We are amazed at the forgiveness shown Saul by the church; He had been their chief persecutor; now they welcome him into their fellowship; they are able to forgive all his evil done against them because Jesus Christ in love has forgiven them; they have been forgiven much---they can forgive Saul, also

-We are amazed at the desire Saul has to be in the fellowship of the church. He previously moved in the highest social and religious circles of the Jews; now he is happy to be among the social outcasts and religious outlaws

He had come to stamp out the name of Jesus Christ; now he is bearing witness to Him

-(20) in the very synagogues where Saul had planned to arrest the followers of Jesus, he is now preaching that Jesus is the Son of God

-(22) as Saul proclaimed that Jesus is the Son of God, many of the Jews did not believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ; the Holy Spirit gave Saul the strength to use his great learning in the scriptures to prove from the scriptures that Jesus indeed is the Messiah, the Christ

So, What Is the Answer to Their Question?

-Is this the one who was the enemy of Jesus, who is now His friend?

-Yes! By the grace and power of God, Christ's enemy has become His friend!

-And is that true of you? You, who were born the enemy of Jesus Christ because of your sin, have you, by God's loving grace, by the transforming power of His Spirit, have you been made the servant, friend, and brother of Jesus Christ?

-If you can say, "No, I have never been God's enemy. I am good enough in myself for God to be pleased with me. I can see the things of religion clearly enough on my own. I do not need to be changed by God's Holy Spirit. I do not need Jesus Christ as a substitute for me, taking my guilt on Himself. I am not blind, and do not need Jesus Christ to help me see." If you can say this, then your sin remains with you. You truly are wretched, poor, blind, pitiful, naked, lost, and under a curse. See what a sinner you are in the light of God's perfect law. Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord! Call on the Name of Jesus Christ for forgiveness from your sin.

-And to all who have called on the Lord Jesus Christ, do as Ananias commanded Saul, and as Saul obeyed---be baptized! This will show all know of it that you are one who believes that the old man you were has died with Jesus Christ, and as Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, so you have been raised to live a new life in Him. Saul had not taken food or drink for three days, yet when he was commanded to be baptized, he did so immediately, and only afterward did he eat and drink. What, then, is stopping you from seeking baptism?

-And to all who are so baptized, do again as Saul did---take your food in thankfulness, for the strengthening of your body for the Lord's service. And make use of all other means that He has given to strengthen yourself for service to Jesus Christ. The things of this world are not meant to be used for your indulgence. Yes, you have the blessing of God upon you, that you may enjoy the pleasurable things of this world. But our role as stewards, rather than owners, of the things of this world demands that we use food, drink, and every other created thing under our dominion for the work of Christ.

-And to all who are seeking so to strengthen yourselves, spend some days with the disciples. Be often in the company of God's saints in His church---in the formal meetings such as this, and in many other times in between. Walk no longer in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful. But walk, stand, and sit in the fellowship of God's church, among those who delight in the law of the Lord.

-And to all who spend your days with the disciples of Jesus Christ, be about the business of proclaiming and proving that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Saul was specially, uniquely appointed to that task as his life work, and few of us are so appointed. But within the scope of your own life's work---whether at home, and school, at work---always be ready to give the reason for the great change in your life. Jesus of Nazareth is the anointed One of God---He is the very Son of God, and I have been forgiven my sins and promised eternal life in Him.

-this was to symbolize what had happened in Him

-this is the nature of the work of Christ (Ephesians 5:8)

1Co 2:14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

You have been changed---you need not live as you used to live!