

I. THE MADMAN

A. Meeting the man named Saul (vs. 1-2)

1. Meaning of the name

- a. Saul – means “the desired one”
- b. Paul – means “the little or humble one”
- c. Irony which became better known
- d. As Saul:
 - i. A mighty man for Satan against God
 - ii. Breathing out threatenings
 - iii. Seeking the slaughter of the disciples of the Lord
- e. As Paul:
 - i. A mighty man for God against Satan
 - ii. Encouraging and strengthening the brethren
 - iii. Winning souls and starting churches
- f. Threatenings (if they were not frightened) then SLAUGHTER

2. He was a man with the best education and best prospects

- a. 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, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.”
 - i. Gamaliel was a well-respected member of the Sanhedrin
 - ii. So much so that his word held a lot of sway
 - iii. ACTS 5:34 – “Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space;”
- b. He was the chosen “enforcer” for the council
 - i. Young, smart, politically motivated, religious zealot
 - ii. He was the kind of lawyer you didn’t want to be around
 - iii. While by his testimony religiously earnest, also self-serving
 - iv. ACTS 26:9 – “I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.”

3. Saul was the one who watched Stephen die ACTS 7:58

- a. At the time, perhaps callously – but later with CONVICTION
 - i. When they stoned Stephen, it was because of Jesus
 - ii. He preached the Word of God, and they were convicted
 - iii. They ran upon him, stopping their ears against the Gospel
- b. So murderous in intent that they had to take off their cloaks

- i. And they put Saul in charge of watching them
 - ii. Chief priests didn't want to let anyone else in on the fun
 - iii. So, Paul apparently didn't throw a stone himself
 - iv. But he was CONSENTING unto Stephen's death
 - c. ACTS 22:20 – “And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.”
- B. Saul the Pharisee became Saul the Persecutor
 - 1. He hated the Lord and His People
 - 2. Listen to Saul's own testimony: ACTS 26:9-11 – “I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. (10) 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; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.”
 - 3. He became wickedly inspired at the death of Stephen ACTS 8:1-3
- C. He became a MADMAN
 - 1. This MADMAN will soon meet the MASTER
 - 2. He will become a MEMBER because God had for him a MISSION
 - 3. His mind was changed and from that point on, He only had one MESSAGE

II. THE MASTER

- A. The Meeting happened on the road to Damascus
 - 1. Damascus was around 136 miles from Jerusalem
 - a. That is at least a six-day journey on foot
 - b. It was the capital of Syria (and still is)
 - c. Mentioned several times in Scripture
 - i. Abraham's senior servant Eliezer was from Damascus
 - ii. Damascus often warred against King David
 - iii. Naaman the leprous Syrian commander lived in Damascus
 - iv. Isaiah prophesied the RUIN of Damascus
 - v. Finally, Saul journeyed there to persecute the Christians
 - 2. It was a center of commerce and agriculture
 - 3. Apparently, many escaped there, after the persecution in Chapter 7
 - 4. ACTS 8:4 – “Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.”
- B. God knew exactly where Saul was
 - 1. The Lord VISITS Saul on the road
 - a. Saul SEES a shining light from heaven (vs. 3)
 - b. Saul HEARS a voice from heaven (vs. 4)
 - c. Saul FALLS to the ground in great conviction (vs. 4-5)

2. Saul COMPLETELY surrenders to Jesus (vs. 6)
 - a. Saul calls Jesus LORD after Jesus identified Himself
 - b. That is a GREAT contrast from vs. 1!
 - c. He met the Lord and now things are different!
 3. Saul was Saved! Saul was obedient!
 4. 2 COR. 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.”
- C. His was a BRIGHT and GLORIOUS conversion
1. I think Saul had been RUNNING to Damascus
 - a. Trying to evade and hide from God (like Jonah)
 - b. We don’t believe God “makes” anyone get Saved
 - c. I think the death of Stephen was weighing HEAVILY on him
 2. Salvation is a miracle work done by God
 - a. Salvation removes the penalty of sin but not the presence of it
 - b. Saved people still have problems
 - c. But even problems that seemed hopeless before can be SOLVED by the touch of the Master!
 3. Not everyone has an experience like Saul
 - a. But everyone who is Saved has the same Salvation
 - b. JUDE 1:3 – “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”
 - c. I know after I got saved, the sun shone brighter, the birds sang sweeter, and my life rang joyfully!

III. THE MISSION

- A. God sends Ananias to Saul (vs. 10-11)
 1. This would have to be a difficult mission to receive (he had heard of Saul)
 2. This was the ENEMY of churches and SAVED people everywhere
 3. The idea would have been LAUGHABLE if anyone else told him to do it
- B. Ananias wants to clarify the mission God has sent him (vs. 13-14)
 1. Some commentaries say Ananias “offered excuses” to God
 2. I don’t see that – I think he was genuinely confused
 3. Ananias hadn’t read the book of Acts like we have – he didn’t know!
 4. Requesting more information is different from REQUIRING more
- C. Ananias went on his way – He was obedient to God’s will in his life
 1. Even though it was confusing, when he heard the Word of God, he acted!
 2. He called Saul “brother” – more evidence that Saul got Saved
 3. And the scales fell off Saul’s eyes.
 4. The enemy from before was now WELCOMED WARMLY into fellowship

IV. THE MEMBER

- A. We see Saul following the correct order for all Saved people
 - 1. He was called brother first (recognized as Saved)
 - 2. Then he was baptized by WATER into church membership
 - 3. Water does not and CANNOT save, it is not by WORKS but by Grace
 - 4. What can wash away my sins? Nothing but the Blood of Jesus
- B. This is God's consistent order throughout the New Testament
 - 1. Salvation is the doorway to the Kingdom of God
 - 2. Baptism is the doorway to Church Membership
 - 3. ACTS 2:41 – "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."
 - 4. ACTS 18:8 – "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized."
- C. He now fellowships with the church at Damascus
 - 1. The very people he had meant to destroy! They even remarked (vs. 21)
 - 2. They loved and trusted him
 - a. Not for the man he had been
 - b. But the man Christ had made him into!
 - 3. They PROTECTED him now; he was one of their own! (vs. 23-25)

V. THE MESSAGE

- A. Saul (later Paul) preached.
 - 1. And this was his message: Jesus Christ is Lord and God (vs. 22)
 - 2. The Jews were confounded by his preaching
 - 3. The people were amazed at his change
 - 4. He is a NEW CREATURE
- B. You can have NEW LIFE today too!
 - 1. Saul saw a bright light, Saul heard a voice, Saul surrendered to God
 - 2. You can do the same, not on the road to Damascus but at this old altar
 - a. Jesus is the LIGHT
 - b. You can hear the voice of God through His Word
 - c. And you can turn to Him
 - 3. And let me tell you from personal experience: EVERYTHING will CHANGE
- C. Be Saved Today!