**Truth Sowers Life Group**

February 3, 2013

**Who Was the Apostle Paul?**

**Paul Begins His Ministry**

**Introduction:**

In our last lesson, we saw Jesus Christ confront Saul on the road to Damascus. As Christ appeared to Saul, he fell to the ground and was blinded for three days until Ananias came and prayed for him.

Our key scripture for this study is:

**1 Thess 5:12, 13**

*12And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, 13and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. Be at peace among yourselves.*

**Acts 9:17-31**

*17And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” 18Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized. 19So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus. 20Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. 21Then all who heard were amazed, and said, “Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?” 22But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ. 23Now after many days were past, the Jews plotted to kill him. 24But their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates day and night, to kill him. 25Then the disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall in a large basket. 26And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple. 27But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. And he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. 28So he was with them at Jerusalem, coming in and going out. 29And he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the Hellenists, but they attempted to kill him. 30When the brethren found out, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him out to Tarsus. 31Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.*

1. Ananias arrived at Judah’s house and found Paul just as the Lord had told him.
   1. God sent Ananias for two reasons.
      1. That Saul would receive his sight.
      2. That Saul would be filled with the Holy Spirit.
2. Something like scales fell off Saul’s eyes and his sight was healed.
3. Then Saul was baptized in water.
   1. 3 types of baptism.
      1. Baptism into the body of Christ. (This happened to Saul on the road to Damascus).
      2. Baptism in water. (Of course, we see this happen after Saul was saved.)
      3. Baptism in the Holy Spirit. (This happened when Ananias prayed for him.)
4. Some Christian denominations still believe in Holy Spirit baptism, some don’t.
   1. Either way, it was around in Paul’s day.
   2. Paul teaches the church about Holy Spirit baptism.
   3. **Illustration of Pitcher full of water with empty glass.**
   4. The initial evidence of Holy Spirit baptism is speaking in unknown tongues. **Acts 8:18**
      1. There are two uses for tongues according to Paul’s teachings:
         1. In your personal prayer life – when you don’t know how to pray for something, your spirit, the real you, does know how to pray.

**Romans 8:26**

*In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.*

* + - 1. In an assembly and it should always be followed by an interpretation.

**1 Corinthians 14:13**

*Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret.*

* + 1. Many people get this mixed up and throw the gift of tongues out altogether.
    2. It is fruitless to speak in tongues to a group if there is no interpretation.
    3. You can pray for the interpretation of your own prayer language.
    4. As you study 1 Cor. Chapters 12 -14 you have to rightly divide when Paul is speaking of personal prayer language or of the gift of tongues in an assembly.

1. Saul broke his fast and stayed a few days with the disciples (believers) in Damascus and immediately began to preach in the synagogues in Damascus.
   1. He probably learned a lot about Jesus in those first three days that he was blind and in the following days that he stayed with the disciples.
   2. He probably learned how the Old Testament scriptures about the Messiah were about Jesus.
2. Saul confounded the Jews in Damascus with his preaching.
   1. All the people that heard him were amazed that he was the one that had delivered Christians to the authorities.
   2. They were unlike the people we meet later in Berea **Acts 17:11**
   3. The Bereans went home every night and searched the scriptures.
   4. Unfortunately, we never see a Christian church founded in Damascus.
3. This happens about 34a.d. and Now Paul leaves and goes to Arabia for 3 years. **Acts 9:23**

**Galatians 1:17**

*nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus*

* 1. I think Paul didn’t want to be swayed by anyone else’s beliefs.
  2. I think he wanted to sit at the feet of God and learn.

1. We aren’t sure what Saul was doing in Arabia but I am sure he was learning more about Christ. Probably began receiving the Pauline Revelation.
   1. We have no record of him preaching in Arabia.
2. After 3 years, in 37a.d. he goes back to Damascus and we find, rather quickly that the Jews put out a plot to kill Saul.
   1. **2 Cor. 11: 32, 33**

*In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me; 33but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.*

* + 1. We need to always trust God for our protection.
    2. We always need to use common sense too.
    3. There are times that we need to act to protect ourselves.

**Luke 22:36**

*Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.*

1. **v. 26** Saul goes to Jerusalem.
   1. The disciples were afraid of Saul.
   2. Baranabus introduced Saul to them.
      1. Told them how Saul had been converted.
      2. How he had preached Christ boldly.
   3. The Hellenists (Grecians or Greek speaking Jews) plotted to kill Saul.
   4. The brethren sent him to **Caesarea** and then on to **Tarsus** for his safety.
   5. Saul isn’t seen again until Acts 11:25 (**7 Years 46 a.d. Saul’s Age approx 40**).
      1. We don’t hear anything from Saul during this time at all.
      2. He probably went back to making tents.
      3. He probably sought God out more and probably questioned if he would ever be in ministry again.
2. One day, an old familiar friend, Barnabus, knocks on his door and his life changes forever.

**Conclusion:** Many times when we think of the people in the Bible, I think it is easy for us to think that they were different from us. We may think they never suffered like we do. We may think they followed the Lord without question or without trials. This is sure not the case in Paul’s life. We see, almost from the time he becomes a Christian, his life is threatened. Then he steps out of the ministry for three years. When he comes back and starts back into the ministry, his life is threatened again. Once again, he leaves the ministry, this time for seven long years. Paul may have resigned himself to making tents for the rest of his life when his old friend knocked on his door. From that moment on, Paul’s life never slowed down.