

“Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus,<sup>1</sup> ...He who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace;<sup>2</sup> ...he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me,<sup>3</sup> was pleased to reveal his Son to me that I might preach him among the Gentiles,<sup>4</sup> for I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.<sup>5</sup>

"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia,<sup>6</sup> circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin,<sup>7</sup> but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day.<sup>8</sup>

"My manner of life from my youth, spent from the beginning among my own nation and in Jerusalem, is known by all the Jews. They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest party of our religion I have lived as a Pharisee.<sup>9</sup> And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers:<sup>10</sup> a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee;<sup>11</sup> as to righteousness under the law, blameless;<sup>12</sup> as to zeal, a persecutor of the church.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:1

<sup>2</sup> Galatians 1:15

<sup>3</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:5-8

<sup>4</sup> Galatians 1:16

<sup>5</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:9

<sup>6</sup> Acts 22:3a

<sup>7</sup> Philippians 3:5a

<sup>8</sup> Acts 22:3b-4

<sup>9</sup> Acts 26:4-5

<sup>10</sup> Galatians 1:14

“For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it.<sup>14</sup> And when the blood of Stephen [Jesus’] witness was being shed, I myself was standing by and approving and watching over the garments of those who killed him.<sup>15</sup> I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And I did so in Jerusalem. I not only locked up many of the saints in prison after receiving authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them. And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme, and in raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities.<sup>16</sup> I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness.<sup>17</sup>

“But [I], still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if [I] found any belonging to the Way, men or women, [I] might bring them bound to Jerusalem.<sup>18</sup> In this connection I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests.<sup>19</sup> As [I] was on [my] way, at midday...(suddenly) I saw on the way a (great) light from heaven, (which flashed around me) brighter than the sun, that shone around me and those who journeyed with me.<sup>20</sup> And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul,

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<sup>11</sup> Philippians 3:5b

<sup>12</sup> Philippians 3:6b

<sup>13</sup> Philippians 3:6a

<sup>14</sup> Galatians 1:13

<sup>15</sup> Acts 22:20

<sup>16</sup> Acts 26:9-11

<sup>17</sup> Acts 22:4-5a

<sup>18</sup> Acts 9:1-2

<sup>19</sup> Acts 26:12

<sup>20</sup> Acts 26:13; parenthesis are from Acts 9:3 and Acts 22:6

why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’<sup>21</sup> The men who were traveling with [me] stood speechless...those who were with me saw the light but did not understand the voice of the one who was speaking to me, hearing the voice but seeing no one.<sup>22</sup> And I answered, 'Who are you, Lord?' And he said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.'<sup>23</sup> But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.<sup>24</sup> And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do.'<sup>25</sup>

“[I] rose from the ground, and although [my] eyes were opened<sup>26</sup>... I could not see because of the brightness of that light; I was led by the hand by those who were with me, and came into Damascus.<sup>27</sup> And for three days [I] was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

“Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias,<sup>28</sup> a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there....<sup>29</sup> The Lord said to him in a vision, ‘Ananias.’ And he said, ‘Here I am, Lord.’ And the Lord said to him, ‘Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a

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<sup>21</sup> Acts 26:14

<sup>22</sup> Acts 9:7, Acts 22:9

<sup>23</sup> Acts 22:8

<sup>24</sup> Acts 26:15-18

<sup>25</sup> Acts 22:10

<sup>26</sup> Acts 9:8a

<sup>27</sup> Acts 22:11

<sup>28</sup> Acts 9:9-10a

<sup>29</sup> Acts 22:12

man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.’ But Ananias answered, ‘Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.’ But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.’<sup>30</sup>

“So Ananias departed and entered the house,<sup>31</sup> came to me, and standing by me,<sup>32</sup> laying his hands on [me], he said,<sup>33</sup> ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight,’<sup>34</sup> ...the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.’ And immediately something like scales fell from [my] eyes, and [I] regained [my] sight.<sup>35</sup> And he said, ‘The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth; for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard. And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.’<sup>36</sup> Then [I] rose and was baptized; and taking food, [I] was strengthened. For some days [I] was with the disciples at Damascus.<sup>37</sup>

“And immediately [I] proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, ‘He is the Son of God.’ And all who heard [me] were amazed and said, ‘Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name? And has he not

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<sup>30</sup> Acts 9:10b-16

<sup>31</sup> Acts 9:17a

<sup>32</sup> Acts 22:13a

<sup>33</sup> Acts 9:17b

<sup>34</sup> Acts 22:13b

<sup>35</sup> Acts 9:17c-18a

<sup>36</sup> Acts 22:14-16

<sup>37</sup> Acts 9:18b-19

come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests?’ But [I] increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ.<sup>38</sup>

“I did not immediately consult with anyone; nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.<sup>39</sup> When many days had passed, the Jews plotted to kill [me], but their plot became known to [me]. They were watching the gates day and night in order to kill [me].<sup>40</sup>

“At Damascus, the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city of Damascus in order to seize me, but [my] disciples took [me] by night and I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped his hands.<sup>41</sup>

“Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother. In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!<sup>42</sup> And when [I] had come to Jerusalem, [I] attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of [me], for they did not believe that [I] was a disciple. But Barnabas took [me] and brought [me] to the apostles and declared to them how on the road [I] had seen the Lord, who spoke to [me], and how at Damascus [I] had preached boldly in the name of Jesus.<sup>43</sup> So [I] went in and out among them at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord.<sup>44</sup>

"When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance and saw him saying to me, 'Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly,

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<sup>38</sup> Acts 9:20-22

<sup>39</sup> Galatians 1:6b-17

<sup>40</sup> Acts 9:23-24

<sup>41</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 11:32-33 and Acts 9:25

<sup>42</sup> Galatians 1:18-20

<sup>43</sup> Acts 9:26-27

<sup>44</sup> Acts 9:28

because they will not accept your testimony about me.' And I said, 'Lord, they themselves know that in one synagogue after another I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you. And when the blood of Stephen your witness was being shed, I myself was standing by and approving and watching over the garments of those who killed him.' And he said to me, 'Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'<sup>45</sup>

“And [I] spoke and disputed against the Hellenists. But they were seeking to kill [me]. And when the brothers learned this, they brought [me] down to Caesarea and sent [me] off to Tarsus. So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.<sup>46</sup>

“I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.”<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Acts 22:17-21

<sup>46</sup> Acts 9:29-31

<sup>47</sup> 1Timothy 1:12-17