

Paul, Super Story

Saul (Paul) was an exceptional person. Raised in the City of Tarsus and trained from a young age by one of the greatest teachers in the world, Gamaliel, he became truly one of the great minds knowledgeable of the old testament scriptures.

Saul knew that the Messiah would one day come to lead the people of Israel and save them from persecution by their enemies. He, like most Pharisees and Sadducees expected a king like David to lead the people. They all thought of a warrior king who had great skill with a sword and would ride a great stallion in front of a powerful army.

The idea of a humble man who was the son of a carpenter from Nazareth was not what they thought the Messiah would look like. The fact that Jesus, who acted like a prophet, was crucified on the cross did not help Jews like Saul to believe he was the Messiah. Why would the promised one sent from God allow himself to be killed?

They did not understand the whole purpose. Jesus, the Son of God, died as the sacrifice for the sins of all mankind. He humbled himself to the point of giving his life for all of us. He then did not control us to be his servant, but he became our sin offering. We then can choose to follow him and be a voluntary servant to the work of the Lord.

Saul did not realize this, at first. He actually persecuted those who followed Jesus teaching and the teachings of the Apostles. Those were the people that were part of the movement called, "The Way". Saul oversaw the stoning and death of Stephen. He was so angry about the followers of Jesus that he asked the Pharisees to give him a letter to take to Damascus and allow him to put the followers of "The Way" in chains and bring them to Jerusalem and put them in prison.

On the way, Jesus called out to him and asked, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" When Saul heard this voice from heaven and he asked who it was. Jesus told him who he was and told him to go to the city do as he was told. Saul did so and Ananias came to him and guided him to the truth.

The rest of the story is one about Saul changing his name to Paul and taking three missionary journeys and then a final journey to Rome where he was eventually crucified for his belief in Jesus as the Christ. He was beaten, stoned, put in prison, starved, chased out of cities and eventually killed for his steadfast faith in Jesus. He wrote some of the most compelling letters of encouragement and rebuke to those followers who became known as Christians.

Paul knew his responsibility and was dedicated to serve the Lord. We need to be equally dedicated to serve the Lord. Being a servant for the Lord is all about being humble and putting others first. This is greater than the cry for any human desire.

Scripture: Matthew 23:12 For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

Matthew 28:18 – 20 ¹⁸Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Questions:

1. Was Saul a very smart man?
2. Who trained Saul?
3. Who was Saul expecting as the Messiah?
4. Why did Jesus allow himself to be crucified on the cross?
5. Where was Saul going when Jesus spoke to him about persecution?
6. Did Paul ever quit?

Next Steps:

Make a list of things you can do to show you are determined to follow Jesus. How can you be a servant for the Lord?