

*Easter

Encountering the Risen Jesus

*Acts 9:1-9

Paul: From Enemy to Ambassador

Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, ² and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

³As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; ⁴and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"

⁵And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And He *said*, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, ⁶but get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do."

⁷The men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one.

⁸Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus.

⁹And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

(Acts 9:1-9)

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1. The Apologetic

- the conversion of an ardent opponent of Christianity – from a great enemy to the greatest ambassador!
- Paul's lifelong, central message, for which he would be martyred, was the resurrection of Jesus from the dead



Lord George Lyttelton
(1709-1773)

*"Observations on the Conversion
and Apostleship of St. Paul"*
(-1747)

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2. The Impact

- the rest of Paul's life was lived with a singular devotion to Jesus (*"for to me to live is Christ"*)
- Paul's life, including his many sufferings, was inexplicable apart his belief in the resurrection of Jesus

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"If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied."

— Paul; 1 Cor. 15:19

Q: Is your life explicable apart from your belief in the resurrection of Jesus?

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3. The Example

- Paul's conversion by the risen Jesus is an example of God's abundant mercy and patience to the 'chief of sinners'

¹² I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service, ¹³ even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; ¹⁴ and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are *found* in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost *of all*. ¹⁶ Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.

(1 Timothy 1:12-16)



John Newton's Tombstone