

**WHEN GOD CHOOSES...
YOUR LEAST
FAVORITE PERSON!!**

Elder: Chadwick Sadaphal

Date: 06-07-2026



We are 1st introduced to Saul in the book of Acts
towards the end of chapter 7

The Bible calls him a "young man"
An important detail as to what comes next

Acts chapter 8 details the fury and zeal that Saul carried out his rampage against the church

He arrested men and women

He started his campaign of violence on the very day that Stephen was executed

Galatians 1:13-14

For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

Phillipians 3:4-6

Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

**THESE CAN BE THE CHARACTERISTICS
OF A "YOUNG MAN"
HOTHEADED, IMPULSIVE,
QUICK TO VIOLENCE**

THIS IS THE BACKDROP OF OUR STORY

Acts 9:1-2

And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

Saul helped to have Stephen killed, and now he continues his rampage of destruction

He seeks to arrest and imprison believers, not just in Jerusalem, but in foreign cities such as Damascus dead or alive, it makes no difference to him

The words breathing out in Greek are really meant as breathing in

Saul was completely consumed by the evil he had in his heart for destroying Christ and all his disciples
Remember, he volunteers in going to the high priest/religious leaders, requesting authority to carry out this plan

**HOW TERRIBLE AND CORRUPT WERE THESE
CHURCH LEADERS
TO GO ALONG WITH A PLAN SUCH AS THIS?**

Acts 9:3-4

And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

**FOR ANYONE TO BE SAVED,
HAS TO SHINE
A LIGHT IN THEIR HEART!!!**

2 Cor 4:6

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 9:2

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

This was supernatural light from heaven.

Unexpected, out of nowhere

It was brighter than the sun in the sky

(Acts 26:13)

**GOD ASKED SOUL A QUESTION HE
WAS NOT READY FOR**

**THE REPETITION OF HIS NAME
SHOWS GOD'S MERCY AND
WARNING AT THE SAME TIME**

Acts 9:5-6

And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

**Saul's question shows he knows he was in the
midst of a heavenly being**

He confesses it he confesses it is God, but Saul
doesn't know him

**WOULD YOU KNOW THE VOICE OF GOD IF YOU
HEARD IT?**

**This is Saul being confronted with his
rebellion against God face to face**

Romans 2:3

And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?

Hebrews 2:3

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

Hebrews 12:25

See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:

The phrase “it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.” refers to someone fighting against their own consciousness

Stubbornness and deliberately refusing God's word/truth in their lives

Choosing a hard way of life, no peace with God

Acts 2:37

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

Ezra 9:6

And said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens.

Job 9:20

If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall
condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall
also prove me perverse.

**THE BIBLE SAYS SAUL WAS
TREMBLING AND ASTONISHED
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE GREAT**

PERSECUTOR?

WHERE WAS HIS ZEAL NOW?

HIS LUST FOR VIOLENCE?

**WAS THIS YOU?
DOES THIS SOUND FAMILIAR?**

**THIS IS THE MOMENT OF
SAUL'S CONVERSION**

He sees now how vile of a sinner he truly is

His only choice left is to obey God

He asks God, what wilt thou have me do?

PAY ATTENTION TO GOD'S RESPONSE HERE

**HE TELLS SAUL TO GO INTO THE CITY....
AND THEN HE'LL TELL HIM WHAT TO DO**

**GOD WANTS TO SEE IF YOU CAN FOLLOW
HIS INSTRUCTIONS!!!**

Acts 9:7-9

And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

The Bible makes it clear that men with Saul heard a voice, but saw no one

They were not worthy enough to witness what truly happened

They represent the worldly who don't open their hearts and minds to God

John 8:43

Why do ye not understand my speech? even
because ye cannot hear my word.

2 Cor 3:14

But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ.

2 Cor 4:4

In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

We learn here that Saul's eyes have been closed during his whole experience

His eyes now would now be blinded for 3 days
He is forced to contemplate all the changes in his life now

**WHY WOULD GOD CHOOSE HIM?
WHY NOT KILL HIM?
WHAT WAS JESUS GOING TO TELL
HIM TO DO?**

**LET'S GIVE CREDIT HERE TO THE UNNAMED,
UNSUNG HEROES OF THIS STORY**

**THE MEN WITH SAUL, WHO LED
HIM BY THE HAND TO DAMASCUS!!**

**NOW LET US MEET THE OTHER
HERO OF OUR STORY**

Acts 9:10-12

And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

Acts 22:12 calls Ananias "a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there"

He was not a pastor, a preacher, or a church leader.

Ananias was sensitive to God's call.

**WORLDLY TITLES DON'T MEAN
ANYTHING WHEN GOD CALLS YOU
FOR A JOB!!**

**SO WHY DO YOU COME
TO CHURCH SEEKING ONE?**

2 Tim 2:2

And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

1 Peter 5:5-6

Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

Acts 9:13-14

Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.

**We see Ananias' apprehension about what
God has just told him**

of course he knew all about Saul's
murderous ways

WHY WOULD GOD CHOOSE SAUL?

**THE ISRAELITES LEAST FAVORITE PERSON?
WHAT COULD ANANIAS DO FOR THIS MAN?**

WHY HIM?

WHY ME?

WHY YOU?

HOW DOES GOD RESPOND?

Acts 9:15-16

But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

God tells Ananias Saul is a chosen vessel unto me

handpicked to spread the word of God
throughout the earth

John 15:16

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

**He also tells Ananias, Saul will suffer for
God's namesake**

**All the suffering that Saul has inflicted
upon the population will now be
returned unto him**

**GOD'S PROMOTION WILL TEST
YOUR DEVOTION!!!
DID YOU THINK IT WOULD GET EASIER?**

Not only is this true for Saul, but for Ananias as well

Think about the societal impact initially for Ananias when people heard he helped Saul

Did he lose friends?

Did he lose family members?

**HAS DOING GOD'S WORK
COST TO RELATIONSHIPS??**

**WHAT THESE VERSES TELL US IS THAT....
ANANIAS WAS NOT AFRAID OF
DIFFICULT ASSIGNMENTS!!!**

Acts 9:17-18

And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

Very important details here

Ananias calls Saul “brother”

He tells him he has been sent by God to confirm

Saul’s earlier experience

**Ananias's healing ministry simply by touch,
physically cured Saul of his affliction**

Gal 6:2

**Bear ye one another's burdens,
and so fulfil the law of Christ.**

2 Cor 9:10

Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;)

**WHEN GOD CHOOSES....YOUR
LEAST FAVORITE PERSON!!!!**

HOW WILL YOU REACT?

**ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU KNOW
ALL ABOUT THEIR EVIL PAST??**

**THE DAMASCUS ROAD
CONVERSION ISN'T ONLY
ABOUT SAUL BEING GOD'S
CHOSEN VESSEL**

**GOD CHOSE ANANIAS TO
MINISTER TO HIM FIRST!**

**DO YOU ACCEPT THAT
RESPONSIBILITY?**

**TO TAKE ON GOD'S
DIFFICULT ASSIGNMENTS?**

**LET ANANIAS BE AN EXAMPLE
TO US ALL TODAY!!!!**

**OUR REWARDS WILL BE WORTH
IT FOR DOING THE LORD'S HARD
ASSIGNMENTS!!!**

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