

Once Upon a Saul

Acts 9:3-6, 10-12, 15

Pastor Johanan Justin

Saul was the epitome of being far from Christ and having a hardened heart against God. His hatred for Christians and extreme zeal made him an exterminator of Christians (Acts 9:1-2). Yet on Saul's journey to Damascus, He had met Jesus in a bright light (Acts 9:17b, 27). This encounter had transformed his life drastically.

4 things that Saul's Encounter Illuminates about God

Revelation 1: God's power in Evangelism

We can see God's power when we consider the timing of Saul's encounter with Jesus. It was at the height of Saul's rebellion that God intervened, and we see Saul coming to faith. This happened at the most unlikely of times, yet our God is mighty to save! The way in which God evangelises to Saul demonstrates to us that no one is out of God's reach. Yet God's power in evangelism highlights two mysteries:

Mystery 1: God's Choosing in Evangelism

If God is mighty to save, why did He only choose to save Saul and not the rest that were with him (Acts 22:9)? God has only chosen some to know the secrets of heaven, and this can be seen also in Jesus' earthly ministry (Matt. 13:11, 13). While we may not know why God chooses who to save (though not on the basis of future usefulness or one's goodness (Acts 9:13, 15)), God still chooses. This is why we pray and ask God to bring faith into people's hearts. At the

right time, He plucks up those on the road of eternal destruction. God still chooses to save, even today.

Mystery 2: God's partnership in Evangelism

Ananias's role was to find Saul, lay hands on him, and convey Jesus' words to him (Acts 9:11-12). While God has the ability and power to do everything Himself, we do not know why He still chooses to involve people in evangelism. Yet Ananias's partnership with God made him more like Jesus, and Ananias's involvement beautifully healed, restored, and saved Saul. God's partnership with us in evangelism is a powerful way in which we overcome the fears and prejudices we have, and become more like Jesus. Our role is simply to obey and share the gospel (Ro. 10:13-14). God's role is to save.

4. Revelation 2: God's Heart for Evangelism

Jesus reveals Himself to Saul with the meekest introduction possible (Acts 9:4b, 5b). This evoked an unexpected sense of lowliness and a disarming sense of humanity that melted the heart. God's heart for evangelism is not for more power, influence or control - but for people. God loves people and in Christ, He was willing to make Himself as lowly as a servant so that sinful people can be raised with new life. God did this through Jesus at the cross, with Saul, and whenever we share the gospel. God's heart is soft for the world - that they

might be saved (Acts 9:15)! Is God's heart shaping yours?

Every one of our salvation stories are dramatic and miraculous. Just like Saul, we too were once God's enemies who rejected Him (Ro. 5:6, 8, 10a). Yet just as God had shone upon Saul at Damascus, He shines the same love, attention, gentleness, and power upon our hearts (2 Cor. 4:6). God's heart is for us and people. Let us partner with God in the mighty work of evangelism!