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The Two Sauls

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Two outstanding men in the Bible...

Same country, Israel; same tribe, Benjamin; 1st had a Good beginning but a bad ending; but the 2nd had a bad beginning but a Good ending! What is the name? SAUL.

No one has any choice in the circumstances of their birth, but regardless of our start in life, when we give our lives to Jesus, He can change a bad beginning into a good ending!

The first Saul is introduced to us in 1 Samuel 9:2

A choice young man, and goodly, there was not a goodlier person than he in all Israel (pick of the bunch); and he also had a remarkable physique... he stood "head and shoulders" taller than any other man in Israel! (Note: American company uses that phrase from the Bible to sell a shampoo called 'Head & Shoulders!')

What a flying start in life... talk about being 'born with a silver spoon in one's mouth'!

On top of all this God tells the prophet Samuel that this same young man would come seeking him one day, and that Samuel was to anoint him to be the *first ever King in the history of the nation of Israel*. What an exclusive honor.

But even after all this, Saul slowly, slowly, slowly, backslid ☹

When a person backslides, they know it best.

Simple litmus test to check our own hearts...

Do we get bored when the Minister has an 'altar call' for lost souls to come to Christ at the end of the service? Are we anxiously waiting to be dismissed so we can go out to enjoy our lunch? If so, then we are quite backslidden! Remember, the Bible says that for every sinner that repents, *the angels rejoice in heaven!*

God through Samuel the prophet, tells Saul that they will defeat the Amalekites in battle, but they are to destroy ALL men, women, children, cattle, sheep, etc. Leave nothing alive. Why? It seems so harsh. You see, in the Bible there are many 'types and shadows'. Egypt stands for the *world*. Just as God brought His people out of Egypt into the Promised Land, He brings us out of this world into His Kingdom! Amalek represents the *flesh*. Scripture says that *to be carnally (fleshly) minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life!* Here, even though they had a great victory over the Amalekites, they spared the Amalekite *King*, Agag, and the choicest sheep and cattle!



Samuel arrives and Saul greets him in the name of the Lord (1 Samuel 15), but in the next breath lies by saying he has done *everything* God commanded him to do! Equivalent today would be to say to your pastor, "Praise the Lord" and in the next breath tell them a bare-faced lie! Samuel challenges Saul by asking *what the bleating of the sheep and lowing of the oxen meant?* Immediately Saul plays the "blame game". He shifts responsibility for his disobedience from himself to the people. Consider the word OBE-DIE-NCE. The three middle letters spell DIE. The demonstrate obedience to God in our lives, we must die to self first! And Agag? Saul has spared the King of the Flesh! Many a time we boast that we have conquered smoking, or bad language, etc. but there is a secret sin... a *king* of the flesh that we still nurture and harbor ☹ Maybe it is pornography, a secret affair, or something else! You know what it is. Samuel calls for Agag, and then personally flays him to death. What is the lesson for us to learn here? We must utterly destroy the flesh! The Bible says, "*Give no place to the devil.*"

Further, Saul tells Samuel, "*the people spared the best of the sheep and oxen to sacrifice unto the Lord YOUR God.*" Whoa! Whose God? He ought to have said "our" God, but he has backslidden so far that he now worships a god formed in his own image. The use of the pronoun "your" implicitly implies they now worship different gods!

Young David slays Goliath, and performs many other exploits in battle. The people sing: "*Saul has slain his thousands, but David his ten thousands!*" This infuriates Saul, and he becomes consumed with jealousy! One day when David is playing the harp, Saul throws a javelin at him. David evades it and flees for his life. Saul then hunts David down like a dog. One night as Saul slept in a cave, and his bodyguards were asleep, too, David and his 2nd-in-command were able to sneak in. David's aide encouraged him to kill Saul so that the Kingdom could then be his, but David said, "*I will not touch the Lord's anointed.*" Amazing! I am not perfect, and neither is your pastor. Yet sadly, many believers criticize their pastors – the Lord's anointed! Beware. Share your heart with them, and pray for them instead. Do not go out for a Sunday lunch of Roast Pasta (pastor) ☺

The next morning, David shouts out to Saul from a hilltop and tells him what happened the previous night and how he spared the King's life. Saul is ashamed and makes a stunning threefold confession. He says in 1 Samuel 26:21:

1. I have sinned 2. I have played the fool 3. I have erred exceedingly!

What a tragic three fold confession for one to make – one who had such a wonderful start in life. Do not be envious of people who seem to have it all, or 'have it all together'!

Then there is a final battle against the arch-enemies of Israel, the Philistines. There is no word from God for Saul. In desperation, he goes to consult a witch ☹ Someone who worshiped Satan! How are the mighty fallen! How far had Saul backslidden. In one day in battle, Saul's three sons (including Jonathan) are slain, and he loses the battle. Not wanting to be shamed and taunted as a prisoner, he asks his armor-bearer to kill him. The armor-bearer refuses to do so. So Saul falls on his own sword, committing suicide.

Shortly after, an enemy soldier comes and cuts off Saul's head and they display it in their heathen idol temple as a trophy and in mockery. Contrast this with when young David defeated Goliath, then cut off Goliath's head and made a mockery of the enemy as all the Philistines fled before Israel!



By the way, when David killed Goliath with that stone from his slingshot...

“Such a thing had never entered Goliath’s head before!” And “to the Israelite soldiers, Goliath was too big to hit; but to young David, Goliath was too big to miss!”

What a wonderful start in life, but what a sad, tragic, awful ending! ☹

Now let us look at the second Saul... he is introduced to us in Acts 7:58 where he is *consenting to the death of the first ever New Testament martyr, Stephen*. Even though he had been casting Christians into prison, something happened to Saul when he saw a Christian die! It had to have ‘rocked his boat’. He then obtained letters from the Priests and authorities to go to Damascus to apprehend and cast Believers there also into prison. But, on the road to Damascus, Saul (of Tarsus) was struck down by the power of God. He then asks a crucial question... “*Who art Thou Lord?*” Keep in mind, the only “God” that Saul knew and worshiped was Yahweh or Jehovah. Yet the answer he hears is: “*I am JESUS, whom you persecute.*” (Share that with any Jehovah’s Witnesses you might come across!) The same Yahweh, is our Emmanuel, Jesus Christ, God with us! Now Saul (Paul) receives true spiritual sight, but he gets up physically blind.

About Stephen... Acts 6:15 says *his face shone like the face of an angel!* I believe God put some ‘Shekinah’ on his face as he testified to the plan of Salvation through faith in Jesus Christ! And Stephen said...*I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.* Twice Stephen makes this statement... that he sees Jesus standing! Why? In Scripture we read that the Lord Jesus, after He finished His propitiatory work on Calvary, said, “*It is finished*” and He is now seated at the right hand of His Father. Why then does Stephen see Him standing? I believe He chose to stand up to receive and embrace Stephen as he entered into the portals of heaven! “*Well done thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!*” And ever since then, can you imagine how many times the Lord Jesus has stood to receive the many thousands of martyrs who have laid down their lives for the Gospel sake, and the testimony of the Lord Jesus?!

Remember, Saul of Tarsus received his learning at the feet of the learned and respected scholar Gamaliel, but he received his *Salvation* with his face in the dust at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ! No wonder he said, *I count it all* (his education and intelligence) *but dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of the Lord Jesus!* Saul arose blind. Jesus told him to “*go to Damascus to the house of a man named Simon, who lived in a street called “Straight”.* And hear this – from that day forward, he kept going Straight☺ As Joshua 1:7 says, “*Turn neither to the right nor to the left, but keep straight on.*” Our problem is that all too often, we start off straight but then slip and slide and veer off in the flesh. It is time we stopped our backslidings and return to the Lord!

Three days of blindness and introspection, and God sends Ananias to lay hands on Saul (now Paul the Apostle). The scales fall off his eyes. Watch the life of Paul now... his bad beginning keeps on turning into a better and better ending ☺He can see. He was changed from a raging lion into a meek lamb! Now, wherever he went, he let the chips fly, he invited trouble, brought revival, preached the Word, was stoned, jailed, bitten by a snake, put in stocks, lashed, shipwrecked, but through it all he



said, *"I glory in tribulation!"* What a changed man. He was basically saying to the Devil, "Bring it on. Do your worst, for... *"For me to live is Christ, to die is gain!"*

Paul's last instructions to his young protégé, Timothy were: *"preach the Word, be instant in season and out of season, redeem the time, make full proof of your ministry, let no man despise your youth!"*

History tells us that the mighty Apostle Paul was beheaded for his faith at the guillotine by decree of the cruel Roman Emperor. He writes 13 epistles in all (excluding Hebrews, author unknown). His last epistle is 2nd Timothy, and last chapter is Chapter 4. In 2nd Timothy 4:6 Paul says, *"I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand."* Then, in verse 7, Paul makes an astounding three-fold confession, at the very end of his earthly pilgrimage. He says:

1. I have fought a good fight 2. I have finished my course I have kept the faith.

Why does he say this? Remember, the first Saul made a terrible three fold confession shortly before he died? Look at the stark contrast between the two men. Paul says *I have finished my course*. It is not the one who starts the race, but he who finishes the race that wins the prize! And why *"I have kept the faith?"* Because the first Saul did not... he descended to the point of visiting a witch!

Then the Apostle Paul adds a powerful Post Script as it were... he follows up in verse 8 by saying... *"Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge will give me at that day, and not to me only, but to all those who love His appearing!"* And why does he say this? Because the first Saul lost his crown... a perishable, corruptible, golden crown... but the second Saul gained an imperishable, incorruptible crown of righteousness! And that crown is promised to every one of us who has received Christ as Savior and Lord.

Scripture talks about five different crowns... one that I hope I may not have to receive is a "martyr's crown", but if God so wills it, then I shall lay my life down for Him. But as a young man, I often questions and wondered why I should receive any crown at all. Jesus is the *"King of kings, and Lord of lords"* Revelation 19:16. He is the One who should wear the crowns, not me? But then one day the Holy Spirit ministered this to me. He said, Son, take the crowns that are given to you, because one day you shall bow the knee as per Philippians 2:9-11... *"That at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."* Yes, on that day, when you kneel before Him to worship Him, then you can remove the crowns from your head, and lay them at His feet! Hallelujah and Amen!

P.P.S. Very recently I read that in those days, when the Master came in from out, the slave / servant bent down and removed the Master's sandals from his feet. That was the function of the slave. However, the ultimate example of humility (on a human scale) is demonstrated by John the Baptist who says, *"There is One who comes after me who is preferred before me; I am not worthy to untie his shoelaces."* John recognizes the absolute Lordship of Jesus, and places himself lower than a slave. Amazing!



USEFUL RESOURCES



Watch our online Sunday Church service live stream every Sunday at 10:30am (Indian Time, GMT+5:30). Spirit filled, anointed worship, Word and ministry for healing, miracles, and deliverance.

YOUTUBE: <https://youtube.com/allpeopleschurchbangalore>

WEBSITE: <https://apcwo.org/live>

Our other websites and free resources:

CHURCH: <https://apcwo.org>

FREE SERMONS: <https://apcwo.org/resources/sermons>

FREE BOOKS: <https://apcwo.org/books/english>

DAILY DEVOTIONALS: <https://apcwo.org/resources/daily-devotional>

JESUS CHRIST: <https://examiningjesus.com>

BIBLE COLLEGE: <https://apcbiblecollege.org>

E-LEARNING: <https://apcbiblecollege.org/elearn>

WEEKEND SCHOOLS: <https://apcwo.org/ministries/weekend-schools>

COUNSELING: <https://chrysalislife.org>

MUSIC: <https://apcmusic.org>

MINISTERS FELLOWSHIP: <https://pamfi.org>

CHURCH APP: <https://apcwo.org/app>

CHURCHES: <https://apcwo.org/ministries/churches>

WORLD MISSIONS: <https://apcworldmissions.org>