

Seen In a New Light

Message Magazine's Online Devotional for Thursday, February 19, 2015

Based Upon Acts 21

Paul's encounter with Christ turned him and everything else around.

Yes, it's true! The same wretched Saul of Tarsus, who became the devoted apostle of Christ, Paul, has come full circle. He, who once imprisoned believers, has himself become a prisoner in honor of that same Jesus who set him free.

Paul's story reads like a wonderfully written novel, except it's all true. Here's a man who was as zealous for his cause as a man could be. He was convinced beyond doubt that Jews who defected from Jewry and embraced the message of Christ must be punished, and that it was his job to make sure they understood the dire ramifications of such heresy. After all, they were bringing the honor of Moses into question. But now, after having a startling encounter with Christ, he realizes that it was Christ's honor that Moses defended. He recognized that it was Christ who spoke to father Abraham on Mount Moriah, to spare his promised son, Isaac. It was Christ who spoke from the burning bush at the beginning of Moses' ministry. It was Christ on Mount Sinai who wrote the Ten Commandment Law on those sapphire tablets. Christ was the Pillar of Cloud by day, and Flame of Fire by night, leading the children of Israel out of Egyptian captivity. He was their Rock and Water in the desert. Therefore, it was in His honor that the now transformed Paul would be bound, imprisoned, and possibly killed as Agabus prophesied. His loved ones would weep at the prospect of this horrible fate, but he would rejoice for the privilege of living, or dying, for his Lord.

As he was violently dragged from the Jewish temple by religious zealots to be murdered, the town was in such an uproar that the authorities were called in to see what was going on. They even had to carry him away from the mob while things got sorted out. Then he asked for permission to address the crowd of murderers, zealots, and oblivious onlookers. What does a man, who is about to die for Christ's sake, say in the moments before his execution? We will examine this question tomorrow as we highlight Acts chapter 22. Whatever he says, you better believe it will be life changing.