

## A Change of Plan

Acts 9:19-20 ... **Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.**  
**<sup>20</sup>And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.**

We are told in our verse that Saul has become a preacher of Christ. This is a thing unforeseen by this promising young Jew. It is an outcome not anticipated by him at all and certainly not on this day!

We are not told a lot about this fledgling convert, but we do have *some* critical information: He is one of Israel's brightest up-and-comers! We know this because, as a student, he sat at the feet of one of his nation's greatest teachers. The Jews are a people of genius. These seats did not go to just anyone – only the best and brightest!

As he and his entourage approached the gates of Damascus one has to know that Saul had a plan. In the absence of a laptop, I see him as a Daily Planner guy. Upon passing through the city portals, he would go right to work. He had names and addresses! He had permission from the authorities! He possessed the paperwork! He would pull the Christians from their homes and assemble them in the town square by noon. He would not spare the women and children nor would their crying provoke his pity. He would march them down to Jerusalem and pop them in the slammer! A few days should take care of the whole thing. He would persecute them to their deaths if they would not deny Christ. He had been at this work for a while. There had not been a lot of recantations!

He is unaware, as he goes about his work, that another's eyes follow him with both disapproval and compassion. It is the Lord and He has a Daily Planner of His own. Both persons have expectations for the day. They are in opposition! There will have to be some adjustments! The events that follow will be extraordinary. But then, the Lord is hunting some pretty big game.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd. The believers of Damascus are the sheep of His flock. He will not have them harmed. He also has some special plans for Saul. How merciful and efficient is our Lord! In a single stroke he concurrently preserves his beloved sheep, puts Saul out of commission, saves his undeserving soul, adjusts his malignant attitude and creates a pretty good preacher / evangelist / theologian. As an old Chrysler commercial was wont to exclaim: "This changes everything!"

Saul has some adjustments to make: His name will be changed to Paul. He will preach concerning this One that he formerly hated to every ear that will grant audience. His own people will come to have a special hatred for him – eventually having him turned over to the Romans for trial and execution. His apostolic ministry will be primarily among the Gentiles. He will never be rich. He will be beaten, robbed, maligned and imprisoned. He will count it all joy! Later, he will assess the life that he abandoned that

day before the gates of Damascus as having been dung. He will anticipate his own death and judge it as being "gain".

Our minds are beguiled by many questions, but our desire to know will, for now, remain unsatisfied. Among them: What would Paul's little Jewish mama think of all this?

The Lord's handling of Paul is just one example of the "all things" concerning which he will write to the Romans. The events of the day and afterward were unplanned by young Saul. The outcomes that flowed from them were also unimagined. His life was consumed thereafter in sowing good. The world continues to harvest that seed down to this day!

In the Kingdom there will be time for extended talks with Paul. It is a "good" thing that eternity is long! There will be a line!

What are your plans for the day?

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