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Discovery

Scripture & Science for Kids



SAUL

THE ENEMY OF CHRIST

KYLE BUTT

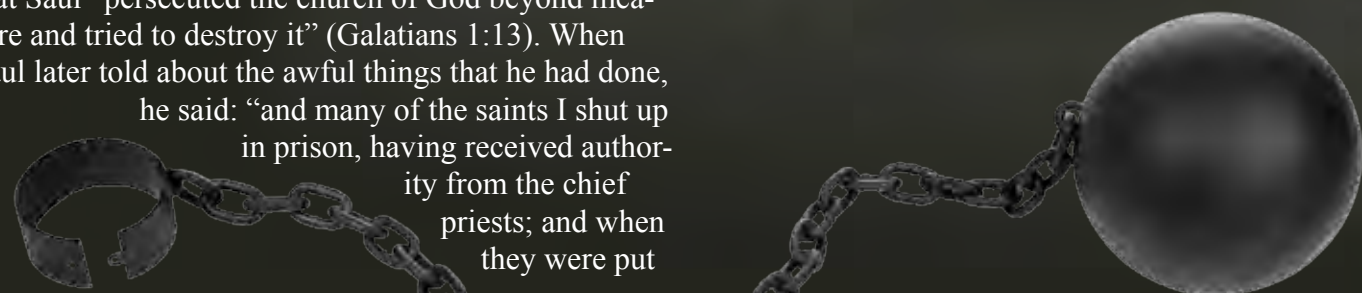
Saul hated Jesus Christ. He hated Christians. He wanted them all dead. He was a very religious Jew who tried to serve God. But he thought that the Christians were taking people away from God and away from doing right. In fact, Saul thought that He was helping God by trying to kill Christians.

In Acts 7, after Stephen preached a powerful sermon about Jesus, the Jews wanted to kill him. They threw him out of the city and began to stone him. During this horrible murder, the Bible says that the Jews laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul (Acts 7:58). This shows us that Saul helped the evil Jews kill Stephen. In Acts 8:1 we read that Saul was “consenting” to the death of Stephen.

But Saul wasn't content to help kill just Stephen. He wanted to imprison and kill as many Christians as possible. He obtained permission and special letters from the high priest to go to the city of Damascus and persecute the Christians there. In fact, the Bible says that Saul “persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it” (Galatians 1:13). When Saul later told about the awful things that he had done, he said: “and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put

to death, I cast my vote against them. And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities” (Acts 26:10-11). The Bible also says that Saul imprisoned and beat those who believed on Jesus (Acts 22:19).

Saul's reputation as a persecutor of the church was well-known. Those in the church had heard about the terrible way he treated Christians, and they were scared of him. Ananias, a Christian who lived in Damascus, said: “I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done...” (Acts 9:13). Saul hated Christians, he fought against Jesus Christ, and he wanted to destroy the church of Christ. But something happened to Saul on the road to Damascus that changed his life forever.



PAUL

THE FRIEND OF JESUS

KYLE BUTT

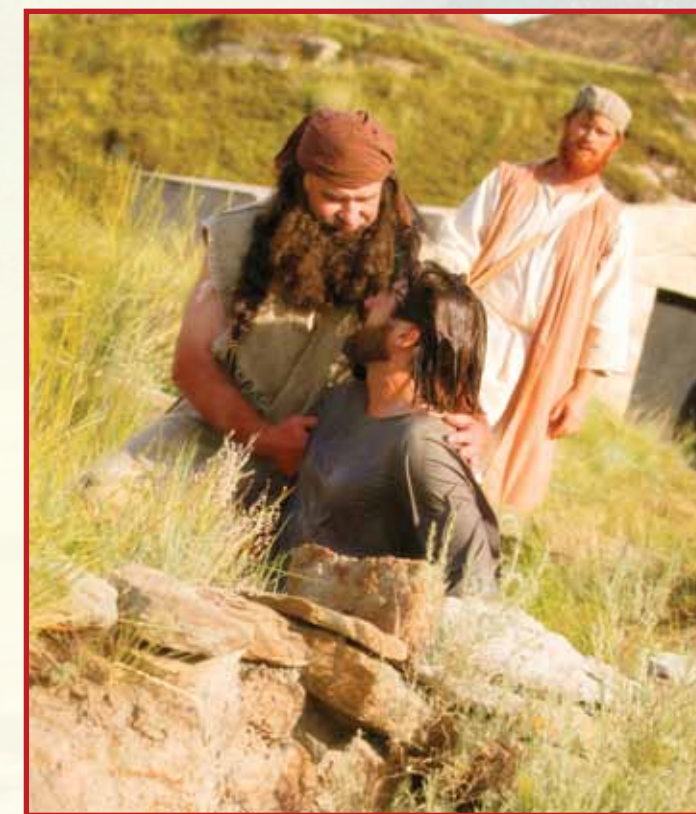
Saul and his companions traveled on the road to Damascus, intending to persecute the Christians. But suddenly a light appeared out of heaven and shone on Saul. Then a voice came out of heaven and said to him: “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” Saul was confused. He did not know who was talking. He asked, “Who are you?” The voice from heaven had come from Jesus. Jesus replied to Paul, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting” (read Acts 9:1-9).

Saul was shocked. He had thought that Jesus was a sinner who was leading the Jewish people away from God. On the road to Damascus, he realized that he had been wrong. He realized that Jesus was exactly who He had claimed to be—the Son of God. Saul realized that he had been fighting against the Son of God. Saul fell to the ground. He was scared and trembling. He wanted to know how he could make things right with God and Jesus. He asked Jesus, “Lord, what do you want me to do?” Jesus told Saul to go into Damascus and there he would be told what to do. When Saul arose to go to Damascus, he realized that the light had blinded him.

For three days, Saul fasted and prayed to God. He wanted to be right with God, so he waited patiently for someone to tell him what he must do to be forgiven of his sins. On the third day, a Christian named Ananias visited him. Ananias told Saul that Jesus had sent him to heal Saul of his blindness and tell him what he needed to do to be saved. As Ananias was talking to Saul, things like scales fell from Saul's eyes and he could

see again. Ananias then said to him, “And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). Saul had not been saved when he saw Jesus on the road to Damascus, and he was not saved when he prayed and fasted for three days. He was saved and his sins were forgiven only when he obeyed Jesus by being baptized for the forgiveness of his sins.

Soon after his conversion, Saul's name was changed to Paul. He spent the rest of his life preaching about Jesus and converting others to Christianity. History tells us that Paul died as a martyr for his faith in Jesus Christ. The life of Paul shows us how powerful Jesus' love is. The love of Jesus turned the dangerous murderer Saul into the kind and brave apostle Paul.



PAUL'S

PERSISTENT PREACHING



What are you going to do with the rest of your life once you become a Christian? Or, if you are a Christian, what are you doing now that sets your life apart from the lives of non-Christians? Consider what Paul did after his baptism.

Once Paul became a Christian, he devoted the rest of his life to preaching the Gospel. He did other things as well, including making a living as a tentmaker (Acts 18:3). But his main purpose in life, which should also be our main goal, was to please God and save sinners by teaching people about Jesus.

Some of Paul's hearers found this hard to believe because of his former persecution of Christians (Acts 9:21). Paul, however, had changed. He was now living and preaching the very faith in Jesus that he once tried to destroy.

Unlike many of the early apostles and evangelists, Paul was set apart by God as "an apostle to the Gentiles" (Romans 11:13). God did not intend for Paul to remain preaching in Jerusalem and Judea the rest of his life. Nor did He want Paul preaching only in Jewish synagogues. God told Paul: "Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles" (Acts 22:21).

The book of Acts tells how Paul fulfilled God's commands to preach to the Gentiles. In chapters 13-21, we learn of Paul going far from home on three different missionary journeys. The first one is recorded in Acts 13-14.

After fasting and praying with the church in Antioch of Syria, Paul and Barnabas sailed to the island of Cyprus. There they encountered a wicked sorcerer and false prophet named Elymas, whom Paul struck blind. They also taught the Roman governor (or proconsul) of Cyprus, who "believed, when he saw what had been done [to Elymas], being astonished at the teaching of the Lord" (Acts 13:12). Paul and Barnabas then left Cyprus, traveled to Perga, and on to Antioch of Pisidia, where they were expelled for preaching the Gospel. Afterward, they journeyed to Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. In Lystra, the multitudes "stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead" (14:19). But he rose up and continued his first missionary journey. He and Barnabas traveled back through most of the cities where they previously had taught the Gospel, and "appointed elders in every church" (14:23).

Paul's second missionary journey began in the same place as the first one—Antioch of Syria. This time, however, Paul chose Silas as his partner. While Barnabas took John Mark and returned to Cyprus, Paul and Silas traveled by land to some of the churches Paul had established on his first journey. After picking up Timothy when he came through Lystra and Derbe, "a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us'" (16:9). They soon set sail for Macedonia, and preached the Gospel in some of the country's best known cities, including Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. Paul then traveled down to Athens, where he preached on Mars Hill. After that, he went to Corinth and "continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them" (18:11). Once he left Corinth, Paul sailed to Ephesus and then eventually back to Antioch (18:22).

The very next verse (18:23) says that after Paul "spent some time" in Antioch, he began his third journey. (Can you imagine how tired of traveling Paul must have been?) He journeyed through the regions of Galatia and Phrygia and then on to the city of Ephesus, where he lived and taught for more than two years. He then departed for Macedonia and Greece, before sailing to Troas. Paul never made

it back to Antioch. At the close of his third journey, Paul was arrested in the temple in Jerusalem (21:26). The book of Acts closes with Paul still in custody years later, waiting to plead his case before Caesar (28:30).

Next to Jesus, Paul was probably the greatest missionary ever to live. He is a wonderful example for every Christian to follow. We may not all leave our homes to do foreign mission work, but we **all** need to spend a lot of time teaching people about Jesus and His glorious church. What could be more important?



ACTIVITY PAGES



FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. PAUL WAS SET APART BY GOD AS "AN APOSTLE TO THE _____" (ROMANS 11:13).
2. "AND NOW WHY ARE YOU WAITING? ARISE AND BE _____, AND WASH AWAY YOUR _____, CALLING ON THE NAME OF THE LORD" (ACTS 22:16).
3. _____ WAS A WICKED SORCERER AND FALSE PROPHET WHOM PAUL STRUCK BLIND.
4. PAUL AND BARNABAS "APPOINTED _____ IN EVERY CHURCH" (ACTS 14:23).

MATCHING



1. _____ SAUL CONSENTED TO THE DEATH OF THIS MAN
2. _____ TOLD SAUL WHAT TO DO TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN
3. _____ SAUL'S NAME WAS CHANGED TO
4. _____ OCCUPATION OF PAUL
5. _____ PAUL BEGAN EACH MISSIONARY JOURNEY FROM THIS CITY
6. _____ COMPANION OF PAUL ON HIS FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY
7. _____ THE ISLAND PAUL VISITED ON HIS FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY
8. _____ CHRISTIANS IN THIS CITY RECEIVED THE LETTER FROM PAUL THAT WE CALL COLOSSIANS
9. _____ COMPANION OF PAUL ON HIS SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY
10. _____ APPEARED TO SAUL ON THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS

- | | |
|--------------|---------------------|
| A. PAUL | G. ANTIOCH IN SYRIA |
| B. JESUS | H. BARNABAS |
| C. TENTMAKER | I. ANANIAS |
| D. SILAS | J. STEPHEN |
| E. COLOSSE | |
| F. CYPRUS | |

Dear Digger Doug,

How do you know that we are learning about the real God?
—Chelsea, New Port Richey, FL



Dear Chelsea,

Thank you for such a thoughtful question! I always love hearing from the faithful readers of *Discovery*. We know God exists because we can see His work in nature. In fact, the apostle Paul wrote that there is no excuse for disbelieving in God, because the evidence for God is all around us (Romans 1:20-21).

But your question goes deeper than that. Once we realize that there is a Creator, how do we know that we are learning about the real God? After all, people have believed in lots of different gods in the past. The answer is in the fact that the Bible is from God (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The Bible has proven itself to be trustworthy, so we know that whatever it says about God is the truth. At www.apologeticspress.org, you can learn a lot about the evidence that proves that the Bible is from God.

Because we can know for sure that the Bible is from God, we can rest assured that we are learning about the real God. We should treasure every opportunity to study the Bible.



TRUE OR FALSE

1. _____ SAUL'S REPUTATION AS A PERSECUTOR OF THE CHURCH WAS WELL-KNOWN.
2. _____ SAUL BECAME A CHRISTIAN WHILE ON THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS.
3. _____ PAUL WROTE VERY LITTLE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.
4. _____ THERE ARE 28 BOOKS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.
5. _____ BEFORE SAUL BECAME A CHRISTIAN, HE WANTED ALL CHRISTIANS DEAD.
6. _____ FIRST AND SECOND CORINTHIANS WERE WRITTEN TO THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS.
7. _____ EPISTLES ARE LETTERS.
8. _____ PAUL WROTE SOME OF HIS LETTERS WHILE IN PRISON.
9. _____ PAUL SPENT 18 MONTHS IN CORINTH.
10. _____ PAUL WAS ARRESTED AT THE CLOSE OF HIS THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY.





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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Paul the Letter Writer

CALEB COLLEY

Twenty-two of the 27 New Testament books are letters. Paul—formerly Saul—is the most famous New Testament letter writer. The young Jewish scholar named Saul was determined to extinguish the growing flame of Christianity in the first century. After he became a Christian, however, Paul was of great service to the Kingdom.

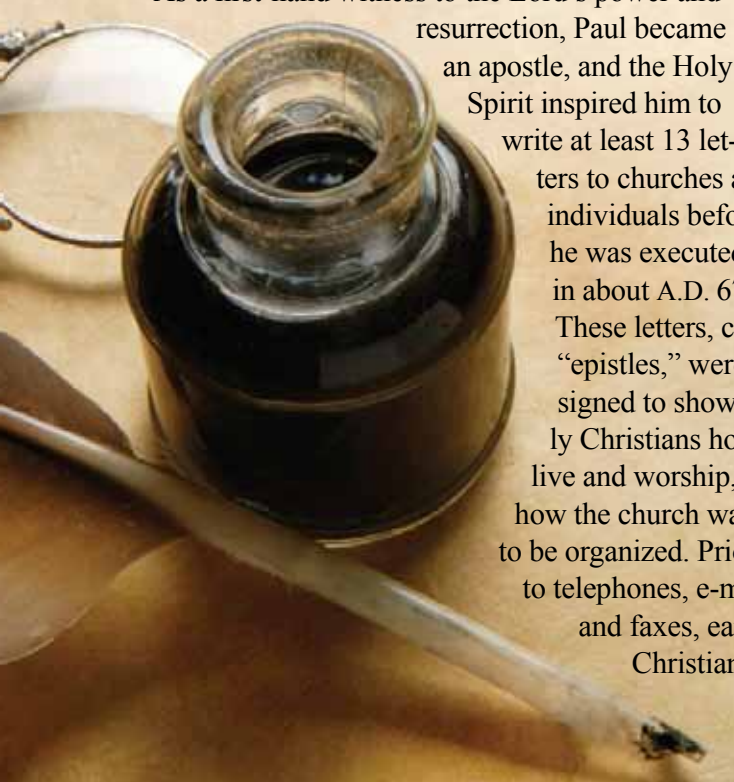
As a first-hand witness to the Lord's power and resurrection, Paul became an apostle, and the Holy Spirit inspired him to write at least 13 letters to churches and individuals before he was executed in about A.D. 67. These letters, called "epistles," were designed to show early Christians how to live and worship, and how the church was to be organized. Prior to telephones, e-mail, and faxes, early Christians

needed a way to communicate at a great distance, and the letter provided the perfect solution.

The epistles also contain encouragement for those who were struggling with their new faith, strong rebukes against false teachers, and answers to important questions related to Christianity. Often, Paul wrote to churches he already had visited during his missionary journeys. For example, Paul first visited Corinth in about A.D. 52, on his second missionary journey (see Acts 18). About five years later, while Paul was preaching in Ephesus, he wrote two letters to the church at Corinth (we call these letters "First and Second Corinthians").

Because Paul was so outspoken for the Lord, and because many people opposed Christianity, Paul spent a lot of time in prison. On these occasions, Paul wrote letters to the churches at Philippi, Colosse, and Ephesus, as well as a brief epistle to his friend Philemon. We know these four books as the "Prison Epistles." The final three "Pauline" letters (letters Paul wrote) were First and Second Timothy (letters to the young preacher Timothy) and Titus (a letter to another young preacher named Titus). These special books may be called a "minister's manual," because they contain so much instruction for preachers.

You and I may write important letters, but we will never write anything as important as the letters the apostle Paul wrote almost 2,000 years ago.



ANSWERS

FILL IN THE BLANKS: 1. Gentiles; 2. baptized; 3. Elders; 4. elders; MATCHING: 1. J (Stephen); 2. I (Ananias); 3. A (Paul); 4. C (tent-maker); 5. G (Antioch in Syria); 6. H (Barnabas); 7. F (Cyprus); 8. E (Colosse); 9. D (Silas); 10. B (Jesus). TRUE OR FALSE: 1-T; 2-F; 3-F; 4-F; 5-T; 6-F; 7-T; 8-T; 9-T; 10-T

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