

# It Is Written

*A weekly publication of the  
Junction Highway church of Christ in Kerrville, TX.*

*Vol. 3*

*January 17, 2020*

*No. 3*

## **Why Saul And Not Me?**

*By Bill Hall*

When one studies the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, he is immediately impressed with one unique feature. Saul saw the Lord (Acts 8:1-18; Acts 22:3-16; Acts 26:4-20--Observe: one must study three chapters in the book of Acts to get a full picture of Saul's conversion). In all other accounts of conversion after Pentecost, the Lord appeared to no one. He did not appear to this writer when he was converted. Further, there is strong evidence that He did not appear to the reader. Why, then did He appear to Saul?

Some have thought that He appeared to Saul to save him. If so, the Lord didn't know it, for when Saul asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Jesus replied, "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts 9:6). If so, Ananias didn't know it, for when Ananias was sent to Saul, he told him, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Saul was still in his sins when Ananias came to him and would still be in his sins until he obeyed Ananias' instructions.

Why did the Lord appear to Saul? We should let the Lord Himself tell us: "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness...Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto who I send thee" (Acts 26:16,17). The word "apostle" means "one sent," especially one who is sent of God. Saul, in being sent by the Lord to the Gentiles, would become the apostle Paul, the specially commissioned apostle to the Gentiles. The Lord appeared to him on the road to Damascus, not to save him, but to qualify him for that great work.

The Lord's appearance to Saul did not take away Saul's options. The Lord does not force anyone to serve Him, and He did not force Saul to do so. Saul faced obstacles that might have hindered others: His teacher, Gamaliel, would be disappointed in him; so would his parents; so would his fellow-Jews generally. Too, Saul knew that severe persecution would be his as a Christian. None of these proved to be a hindrance to Saul, however. He laid aside the obstacles. He was "not disobedient unto the heavenly vision" (Acts 26:19).

The lost person of this generation does not need to see the Lord to be saved. He should not wait, hoping for some heavenly vision. If he will do what Saul did, he, too, will be saved. The Lord did not appear to me because I was not to be an apostle. But the Lord did save me, and He will save the reader. Why not obey?

## **Musings about Death**

*By Jere E. Frost*

Death does not seem as stark and harsh to me as it did in the days of my youth. There are several reasons for this, but two of them tower above all the others.

The first and foremost is that the righteous will dwell in a better place and be clothed with a better body. Hence, it is only a doorway, a change of worlds. We know little about the place to which we go, or the body that we shall have. But we do know that (a) there will be joys forevermore and the former woes of death, disease and disappointment will be no more (Psalm 16:11; Rev. 21:4), and that (2) our bodies will be like His (I John 3:2).

The second is that so many who were near and who still are dear to me have passed on. What form recognition will take, I do not know, but that there is such is inherent in the idea of being acknowledged and confessed by Jesus (Matthew 10:32; Luke 12:8). Even the angels have their individual identities, such as Gabriel and Michael. Abraham and Lazarus had their identities beyond death in the scene Jesus gave us (Luke 16:19f). The idea of being an anonymity among the anonymous is foreign to the very idea of intelligent beings who are but a little lower than the angels. In a single word, I fully expect to see and know dear ones from the past as well

as the great and good of other ages. Why should I not want to be there?

It is the passage - death - the thought of which is so painful. To some, it is altogether sad and forbidding. It is a passing into the unknown. It is a leaving behind of the earthly body and all earthly possessions and ties. Therefore, the last steps of this passage are likened to a walking through a valley of shadows (Psalm 23). "We are going down the valley one by one." This last mile must be haunting and bleak to those who must travel it truly alone, who have no fellowship with and therefore no sustaining comfort from the Lord at all. But the comfort the psalmist felt is common to all who trust in His person and promises; "I will fear no evil, for thou art with me."

So, let be for us that "to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:23). Let us live until we die, and may we hold this life dear until the end. And then, as those embarking on a great voyage and waving to well-wishers on the shore, whose ship that will carry them on the same journey is even now to be seen approaching on the horizon, let us say, "Until we meet again."

"Farewell, mortality, Jesus is mine! Welcome, eternity, Jesus is mine. Welcome, O loved and blest, Welcome, sweet scenes of rest, Welcome, my Savior's breast, Jesus is mine!" (Catharine J. Bonar)

## LOVE IS KIND

*By Steve Klein*

Simple descriptions of deep things are usually the best. And that is surely the case in the beautiful description of love given by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 13. Here we are told that, among other things, "love is kind" (13:4). Love is kind in many ways.

**LOVE SHOWS MERCY.** Mercy is what allows us to refrain from being harsh toward others, even toward our enemies. Mercy enables us to help the poor - perhaps not charging the full price for something they need or even giving it to them outright (see Proverbs 14:21, 31). Jesus said, "But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. {36} Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful" (Luke 6:35-36).

**LOVE FORGIVES.** How unkind it is to refuse to forgive. In Ephesians 4:32 we are instructed to "be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you." If God found it in His heart to forgive you and me, surely, we can be kind enough to forgive others, no matter what they have done to us.

**LOVE DOES GOOD DEEDS FOR OTHERS.** When Paul and his company shipwrecked on the island of Malta, Acts 28:2 says that, "the natives showed us unusual kindness; for they kindled a fire and made us all welcome, because of the rain that was falling and because of the cold." This was a simple act of loving-kindness, performed by people who were not even Christians. There are so many little acts of kindness we can do. Out of love, let us look for these opportunities.

**LOVE REBUKES.** Although we would not automatically think of rebuke as a kindness, it often is. People who love us want us to be the best we can be. From such motives a parent might rebuke a child, a friend might rebuke a friend, and a Christian might rebuke another Christian. Yes, "Let the righteous strike me; It shall be a kindness. And let him rebuke me; It shall be as excellent oil; Let my head not refuse it" (Psalms 141:5).

Proverbs 22:19 says that "what is desired in a man is kindness." Today, my challenge to me is to look for opportunities to be kind. This is what God desires. This is the behavior of love.

## We Don't Just Go To Church...

*By Bill Crews*

A young couple who had not been to church services for a number of years asked, "What have we done wrong besides not going to church?" They had robbed God of thousands of dollars (1 Corinthians 16:1,2); they had forsaken the Lord's own memorial supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-26); for years their voices were unheard in the praises of the saints; their petitions and thanksgivings absent from the prayers of the saints; and their knowledge of God's word stifled and fading, while their spiritual growth was completed neglected--to say nothing of the bad example set and the wrong influence exerted upon others around them. Indeed, their souls had become dead to God, and yet they ask: "What have we done wrong besides not going to church?" May God help us to see ourselves as He sees us.