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## Saul ... and Saint Paul

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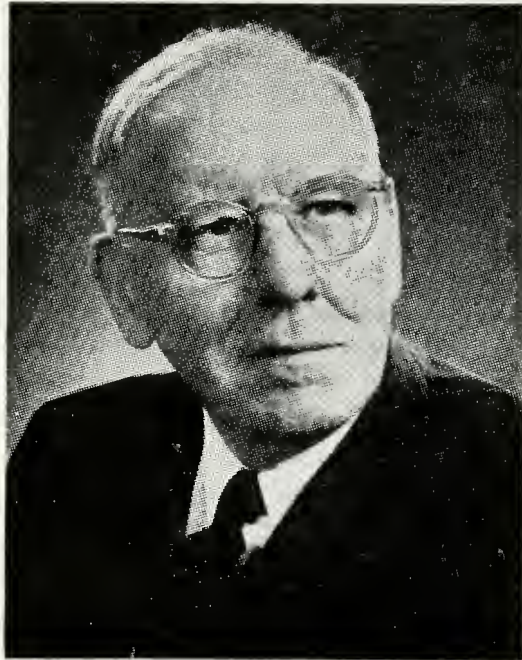
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**Abstract:** This article discusses the conversion and transformation of Saul of Tarsus to Paul the Apostle.

# SAUL . . . and SAINT PAUL



by **ELDER GEORGE Q. MORRIS**  
*of the*  
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*Elder Morris has a record of lifelong activity in the Church. He filled a mission to Great Britain, 1899-1902, and has since served in the capacities of a bishop, a member of the YMMIA general board, YMMIA general superintendent, President of the Eastern States Mission, and Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles. He was ordained a member of the Council of the Twelve in April, 1954.*

**T**HESSE names represent two diverse personalities, two lives entirely contradictory, yet belong to the same individual. Saul was a Jew of Tarsas, a "free born" Roman citizen sent to Jerusalem to be educated at the feet of Gamaliel, a Jewish scholar of renown. He had a brilliant intellect, keen and penetrating mind; he was devoutly religious and as he himself stated to Agrippa, "after the most straightest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee." He no doubt was a man of rectitude and integrity, observing the high standards of life of a believer in the Jewish scriptures. It must be remembered that the Jews of this time had been about 400 years without prophets. They had rejected them and the Lord had given

## **COVER . . .**

*In this model of the Aaronic Priesthood memorial, to be erected on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, and to be dedicated May 15, 1957, the Resurrected John the Baptist is represented in the act of ordaining the youthful Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery to the Aaronic Priesthood, May 15, 1829.*

*The completed group of three heroic figures in bronze will be approximately ten feet high, mounted on a four foot granite base—a total overall height of fourteen feet.*

*Dr. Avarad Fairbanks is the sculptor and, as attested in the model has caught the moving spirit of this great event in the world's history.*

no more, thus they were left to themselves so far as religious belief was concerned. Being without prophets, they depended upon their scholars and their Elders for their religious training. During this period they had their scriptures, their Temple and their hierarchy and there was among them great zeal for their religion. Their scripture had the prophecies of their former-day prophets who promised them that their King and Messiah would come to them. The promises of the prophets were sufficiently definite that when the wise men came at His birth they were able to tell them where to find Him. Notwithstanding all this, when He came they rejected Him and crucified Him. It was not because they were irreligious that they did this, it was not because they were not zealous in their beliefs, it was because their religion was based upon the scholarship of uninspired men who could not properly interpret their scriptures and who did not have faith enough to fully believe them. Saul was a product of this system and time. He was a determined and persistent persecutor of the followers of Jesus Christ, consistent with the sentiment of his people who disowned and destroyed Him.

While Saul was following this course of bringing followers of the Lord Jesus Christ to Jerusalem to be stoned, he was stricken down by the power of God. As he lay blind and helpless on the ground he heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" In his helpless misery and astonishment he replied, "Who art thou, Lord?" Then came the word that pierced his heart. "I am Jesus Christ whom thou persecutest."

Trembling and astonished he asked the Lord what he would have him do. We are all familiar with what happened. He was directed to a faithful servant of the Lord who laid his hands upon him and healed him of his blindness, had him baptized and united with the Church. Thus Saul, the persecutor, became St. Paul, the great Apostle to the Gentiles, a faithful member of the Church which he had so cruelly persecuted.

In St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, he clearly described to them their condition. In so doing he describes what his own condition had been, why his people had rejected the Saviour and why he had persecuted Him. He says:

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

(Romans 10: 1-4).

During the centuries the Jews had been without inspired teachers, covenants had been broken, doctrines and rituals and practices had been developed which were contrary to the teachings of the prophets, and when the Saviour came, except for some few individuals who had continued faithful, He found the Jewish people under a hierarchy in spiritual darkness. While many of the humble and the



honest and sincere accepted of His teachings, the ruling powers and the great majority of the people had developed "their own righteousness" contrary to "the righteousness of God." We are connected with a parallel to this in religious trends and developments now prevailing. From about A.D. 250 the people of the world in whose midst the Church of Christ had been established, proved disobedient and unworthy, and the prophets and apostles who were the foundation of the Church of Jesus Christ, were taken from them. During perhaps 1600 years, the Church of Jesus Christ was not upon the earth. Neither the humble nor the meek, the great or the wise, knew what constituted the Church of Jesus Christ. They did not have the power to interpret the scriptures, because the scriptures must be interpreted by the same spirit and power by which they are written. There were no authorised teachers among them to teach the gospel nor to administer its ordinances. Even the meekest and humblest had no means of knowing the fullness of the gospel and no way of having membership in the true and living Church of Christ. Fortunately, after many centuries they had the scriptures that we now have and those who were earnest and prayerful, could live honourable and upright lives and worship God in some such way as they might devise among themselves. But the prophets and apostles who were the foundation of the Church, were gone long since.

Returning to Paul's explanation of the condition of the Jews of his time, after pointing out that they were in darkness because they were following their own ways instead

of God's, he, pleading with them to come into the Church, said:

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

And how shall they preach, except they be sent?

(Romans 10: 13, 14, 15).

In these instructions he gives to them the key to the whole situation, and that key applies to all today who sincerely desire to belong to the true and living Church of Christ, which as the Bible foretold, has again been set upon the earth through the instrumentality of the Prophet Joseph Smith. They must receive the teachings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ from men who have the authority to teach them and to administer in its ordinances. Unfortunately the world has lost sight of the principle that the Church of Christ was built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets. Jesus called them, set them apart and instructed them, that when the Holy Ghost should come, they should go forth and preach the gospel to all the world, saying that those who would accept it and be baptized would be saved and those who would not would be damned. Men may not take this authority upon themselves, they must be called of God and given authority and appointed to preach the gospel and administer in its affairs. As St. Paul puts it: "How shall they preach except they be sent."

Another thing that seems also

to have been lost sight of is the need to know and obey the true doctrine that the Lord taught, and that through the correct principles and doctrines only, can salvation come to those who believe and practice them. The practice is common to ignore or change the doctrine of the Gospel and to pay little or no attention to its ordinances. Even the divinity of Christ is denied by many professed followers. The Apostle John writes:

Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is an antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father; (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.

(John 2: 22, 23)

Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:

(John 2: 9, 10)

Without teachers sent of God, conflicting sects and denominations have been created without end. And in such confusion and division there cannot be the power of

God unto salvation. One Lord, one Faith and one Baptism, is what the apostles preached to the people and the Lord declared that if they were not one they were not His. He saw the day when this confusion would exist and speaks of it thus:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

(Matt. 7: 21-23)

What Saul the Jew did, must in some degree or other be done by all who desire to enter into the true and living Church of Jesus Christ now again upon the earth. No matter how sincere they may be, nor how satisfied with the precepts and doctrine of unauthorised teachers, they must accept the teachings of those who are sent of God. It is they only who are able to teach what the will of the Father is, the doing of which alone will bring entrance "into the Kingdom of Heaven."

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## *True Education*

. . . Oh the vainness, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men! When they are learned they think they are wise, and they hearken not unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they know of themselves, wherefore, their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not. And they shall perish.

But to be learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God.

*2 Nephi 9:28, 29.*