

Wednesday, June 14, 2023
SHAKEN:
THE AUTHENTIC CHURCH
PART 8: FROM PERSECUTOR TO APOSTLE

The title of this series is “Shaken,” and is a study through the book of Acts. Tonight, we look at another shaking – this time a shaking of the kingdom of darkness.

[Acts 9:1-19 \(NKJV\)](#)

Another great shaking occurs first in the kingdom of darkness. Saul, the man who, as scripture told us was creating havoc in the church – who is on his way to Damascus to continue the mission, is dramatically saved! Notice also that when you are persecuted, Jesus equates that to His own persecution. The expression “kicking against the prick or goads” is interesting. Not all manuscripts contain this sentence so it may be notated in your Bible. Yet, the apostle Paul, when recounting his salvation experience, does say that Jesus said these words to him:

[Acts 26:9-18 \(NKJV\)](#)

“Kicking against the goads or pricks” is an interesting phrase. It is a Greek proverb. A highly educated man from Tarsus in Cilicia like Paul would be familiar with it.

The word translated "pricks" here κέντρον kentron means properly "any sharp point which will pierce or perforate," as the sting of a bee, etc. But it commonly means an ox-goad, a sharp piece of iron stuck into the end of a stick, with which the ox is urged on. These goads among the Hebrews were made very large. Thus, Shamgar killed 600 men with one of them, [Judges 3:31](#). Compare [1 Samuel 13:21](#). The expression "to kick against the prick" is derived from the action of a stubborn and unyielding ox kicking against the goad. And as the ox would injure no one by it but himself; as he would gain nothing. [Barnes Notes on the Bible](#)

Fighting against a superior authority such as the Lord is fruitless and painful. Notice what Paul says about his life prior to knowing Jesus:

[1 Corinthians 15:9 \(NKJV\)](#)
[1 Timothy 1:15 \(NKJV\)](#)

The words of the Lord are so precious in this instance: “He is a chosen vessel.” The Lord had a plan for Saul – has a plan for you and has a plan for those for whom you are praying. Don’t give up!

Acts 9:20-31 (NKJV)

Saul/Paul was growing in spiritual strength. He was a learned man who upon salvation, had the Holy Spirit to enlighten what he knew. The Bible says that he “proved that Jesus is the Christ.”

And confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus; confuted them, and put them to silence, so that they had nothing to say for themselves, or against the truth: proving that this is very Christ; by joining and knitting passages of Scripture in the Old Testament together, by producing and citing express testimonies from thence, and by comparing the prophecies and the characters of the Messiah in them, with Jesus of Nazareth, he proved to a demonstration that he must be the Messiah. *Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible*

The Jewish leaders/people knew him. They were the source of his education in the Law. He used what they had taught him to prove – without a shadow of a doubt – that Jesus was the Messiah. In Damascus, they tried to kill him. He went to Jerusalem. The disciples were initially afraid of him. It took an introduction by Barnabas to convince them. He preached boldly in Jerusalem in the name of Jesus. The same Hellenists that plotted against Stephen plotted against Saul. God had so much for Saul to do. At the rate he was going, he would be dead before he accomplished it. So, for his own good, the apostles took him to Caesarea, put him on a boat and sent him home.

The Lord used this time to give the churches an opportunity to grow in peace and be edified. Soon, Saul will burst upon the scene again. But for now, he is learning and growing in peace at home.

Today’s Scriptures:

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- 1 Corinthians 15:9 (NKJV)
- 1 Timothy 1:15 (NKJV)
- Acts 9:20-31 (NKJV)