

The
KINGDOM
Chronicles

A Man Called Paul



by Steven G. Kennard

The Kingdom Chronicles

Short Stories of Life and Love
In the Kingdom

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A Man Called Paul

Place: City of Ephesus in Asia Minor

Date: Approximately A.D. 55

Time: Just prior to the Feast of Pentecost¹

¹ 1 Cor. 16:8

There was a man chosen of God whose name was

Paul



It was close to evening and the sun was almost down and the narrow streets were already lined with torches for the night, when a man draped in a hooded robe and accompanied by two friends entered the house. The room was full of Jew and Gentile alike that had come to hear him speak. For this was no ordinary man, this was the Apostle Paul.

After a time of rest and a meal, the group settled down for the evening. The owner of the house stood and then turned towards his guest and said to him, “Paul, I welcome you to our city and to my house. We who are gathered here have heard much about you, and now we are eager to hear from you about what God has shown to you. Please speak to us now, that we may hear your teaching for ourselves.”

So the man of God stood to his feet and for a moment turned in all directions to see who it was that had come to hear what God had to say through him. Then being full of the Spirit of God Paul began to speak.

PAUL'S TESTIMONY

“I am Paul an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, but I tell you I was not always so. I am an Israelite of the seed of Abraham and of the tribe of Benjamin.² I was born a Roman³ in the city of Tarsus, but was raised in the city of Jerusalem. I sat at the feet of Gamaliel and was taught according to the manner of the law of our fathers,⁴ and as to the law, I am a Pharisee as was my father before me. So it was with great zeal that I sought out and persecuted to the death those of The Way.”⁵

At these words many in the room turned to one another with looks of unease of this man being in their midst. Paul stopped his message to assure the men, to hear him out and to know what great work God had done in him. With some hesitation the men settled back down and quieted themselves so Paul could continue.

“It is with great sorrow that I say to you that many I persecuted, binding them and delivering them into prisons both men and women⁶ and when the blood of the martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consented to his death.”⁷

Again the room was filled with concern, for Stephen was greatly loved. Paul raised his hands for calm as he continued. “I thank God in heaven that the account I have just given to you was of the man I used to be, named Saul, and not of this new man that now stands before you. For while I was on my way to the city of

² Rom. 11:1

³ Acts 22:25-28

⁴ Acts 5:34-39

⁵ Jn. 14:6

⁶ Acts 22:4

⁷ Acts 22:20

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Damascus, there suddenly shone around about me a light from heaven.⁸ I was blinded and fell to the earth unable to see. Then I heard a voice from heaven say to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?’ I answered back, who are you, Lord? And the Lord said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you persecute.’

I could only ask, ‘Lord, what do you want me to do?’

And the Lord said to me, ‘Arise and go into the city and you will be told what you must do.’⁹

I was then taken into Jerusalem where my sight was eventually restored and I began to preach of Christ in all the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.¹⁰ This is my testimony unto you that I am called to be an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ and so it is with this calling that I come to you tonight.”

PAUL’S MESSAGE



After much prayer the Spirit of God has led me to share with you what I have written to your brothers in Corinth. First, listen to my words of warning to you, that there is coming a great shaking and a time of testing for us all. When you are tested remember not to return hate for hate, evil for evil, for this the world does.

Brothers, I stand here tonight to say, let it be different with you. You have shown the world your faith that it is strong, but there are times that in your deepest of trials **faith can also fail**. You have shown the world acts of kindness and spoken of the **hope that is in you, but**

⁸ Acts 9:3, 22:6

⁹ Acts 9:4-6, 22:7-8

¹⁰ Acts 9:20

these too can fail. I tell you my brethren that love will never fail. It is that one thing that you can receive here and you give it away to those the Spirit directs, but it also is that one thing you take with you into glory.

Love then becomes the greatest thing in the world for you. Do as your Father in Heaven does and love, for in this thing you show how you are different from the world.”

Then the small group began to talk between themselves of what Paul said. “This man would have us to believe that love is greater than faith? Ever since Moses, who had great faith, no one has spoken these words.”

Then the leader of the group looked back to Paul saying, “We know that you teach that it is impossible to please God without faith.¹¹ But you say faith fails and we ought to love, so what say you now?”

“It is true that I have said that it is impossible to please God without faith and so it is. I will tell you even a greater truth that though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but if I cannot love, I am nothing.”¹²

Again the group of men broke out in private talk and gesturing over what they are being told. Being Jews some of these things were hard to hear, for their ancestors suffered hard in Egyptian bondage and now the Romans are no better. Paul being full of God’s Spirit perceived their questioning between each other, and then he began to speak again even as they were still talking among themselves.

¹¹ Heb.11:6

¹² I Cor. 13:2

“Brethren, listen to me one last time, love is that one thing that a man not only possess on earth, but that he can take with him to heaven. The degree to which a man loves reflects the degree to which he knows God.

Now I speak to you of a deeper truth, that if you love,¹³ you will unconsciously fulfill the whole law.”

This angered one of the men in the room who, being deeply religious, loved God with all his heart, He jumped to his feet, “But Paul, you speak of the law of Moses. How can only one thing fulfill all the law given to us by God, I tell you this is impossible?”

“Brothers, I understand your questioning for these are things each man must declare for himself. If a man truly loved he would not have to be told to honor his mother and father. If you truly love, there would be no need to teach you that you should not murder, steal, or bear false witness against your neighbor. For how could you do these things to those you claim to love? Love would not covet what a neighbor has, but rather be glad for your neighbor that God has blessed him. I tell you that love is the one virtue that fulfills the law. This is the rule for fulfilling all the rules, the new commandment for keeping all the old commandments. It is Christ’s one secret for those who believe. I tell you brethren it is what makes you different than the world around you.”

The room had grown quiet as everyone was now focused on Paul’s words to them.

¹³ “Agape,” more than an emotion. Heart-felt genuine love which becomes the defining principle by which one deliberately lives their lives.

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“My brothers and sisters, I will end this teaching with these words given to me by God. ‘Love suffers long and is kind. Love is not jealous; it does not brag and is not arrogant. Love does not act unbecoming and does not seek its own. It is not easily provoked **nor takes into account a wrong suffered**. Love does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth.’

These are my final words to you tonight, that love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things and endures all things. Now abides faith, hope and love, but I tell you that the greatest of these is love.”¹⁴



Historical Note: In his lifetime the Apostle Paul is attributed with at least thirteen epistles of the New Testament before his death in Rome as a martyr. The New Testament book of Acts 26 tells of Paul standing trial before the Roman Procurators Felix and then Festus. This information is used to suggest a date of about 59 AD. In Acts we are told that Paul was sent to Rome and that he arrived in chains. This was likely in about 60 AD. Early Church Fathers, like Eusebius, pass down a tradition that Paul was martyred in Rome, although there is no reference to Paul's martyrdom in the New Testament.

¹⁴ 1 Cor.13

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In 64 AD Rome suffered a horrific fire that burnt much of the city. Nero, the Caesar, responded by blaming Christians and ended up persecuting them for a short period of time. Many scholars have suggested that it was during Nero's persecution of the Christians that Paul was killed. Well-known tradition is that Paul was beheaded in Rome about the mid-60s A.D.