

TRUTH & RIGHT

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AWARE OF GOD'S PRESENCE

“Therefore they said to Him, ‘What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do?’” (John 6:30).

SOMETIMES WE ADOPT AN ALMOST DEMANDING ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD, INSISTING THAT HE

DECLARE HIMSELF TO US MORE OPENLY. The problem, however, is not that God has not shown enough of Himself to us, but that we’ve not opened our eyes to the wonders He HAS shown. We need to learn to be

more open and attentive to God’s marvelous work in at least three areas. **CREATION.**

Promising deliverance to the people of Judah, God spoke of His creative power: “I will open rivers in desolate heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. I

will plant in the wilderness the cedar and the acacia tree, the myrtle and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the cypress tree and the pine and the box tree together, that they may see and know, and consider and understand together, that the hand of the Lord has done this, and the Holy One of Israel has created it” (Isaiah 41:18-20).

We too need to “see and know” what God’s hand has done.

REDEMPTION. What we see of our Creator’s work ought to make us **EAGER** to see His greater work as our Savior.

“Remember me, O Lord, with the favor You have toward Your people; Oh, visit me with Your salvation, that I may see the benefit of Your chosen ones, that I may rejoice in the gladness of Your nation, that I may glory with Your inheritance” (Psalm 106:4,5).

REVELATION. Nowhere,

except in the very person of His Son, has God shown His glory any more than in His word. But

we study the Scriptures drowsily and much of the wonder of God's word is lost on us. We need to wake up and pay attention! "Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law" (Psalm 119:18). Our fervent prayer ought to be for help in taking in what God has delivered to us. Our shrunken vessels are too small to hold a worthy portion of His glory.

"Grant us, we pray thee, a heart wide open to all this joy and beauty, and save our souls from being so steeped in care, or so darkened by passion, that we pass heedless and unseeing when even the thornbush by the wayside is aflame with the glory of God" (Walter

Rauschenbusch). "Only that day dawns to which we are awake" (Henry David Thoreau).

The Power to Change

By Kent Heaton

Nothing is more remarkable than the change that took place over three days in the Syrian city of Damascus nearly two-thousand years ago. Saul had come to the city to bring "any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem" (Acts 9:2). His intensity of threats and murder against the disciples (Acts 9:1)

had put him at the point of the Jewish spear to root out and destroy the followers of Christ. He confessed later to Agrippa that he thought he must do many "things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. This I also did in Jerusalem 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 26:9-11). The aged Apostle would reflect to his young protégé Timothy that he was a "blasphemer, a persecutor and an insolent man" (1Tim. 1:13) and the chief of sinners (1Tim. 1:15).

But then came his mission to Damascus. No one would have foreseen the change that would take place in the life of this Benjamite; this Hebrew of Hebrews and Pharisee. Saul of Tarsus met Jesus of Nazareth and Saul's life would forever be altered. He "heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?' and he said, 'Who are You, Lord.' Then the Lord said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you kick against the goads.' So he, trembling and

astonished, said, 'Lord, what do You want me to do?' Then the Lord said to him, 'Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.'" (Acts 9:4-6) Blinded, Saul arose and entered the city and "he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank" (Acts 9:9).

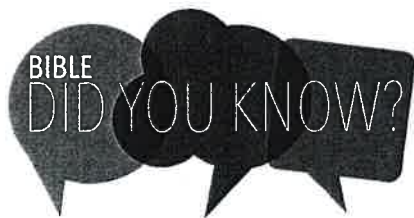
Ananias would come and show Saul the work the Lord had for him to do. His sight returned, "he arose and was baptized" (Acts 9:18) and "spent some days with the disciples at Damascus" (Acts 9:19). For the rest of his life, Saul would be known as Paul the apostle and always live for Christ, the one he earlier sought to destroy. How could such a change take place in a man?

While Paul characterized himself as the persecutor and those things he carried out were done "in all good conscience" (Acts 23:1) he had one focus that remained constant in his life. Saul of Tarsus loved the Almighty Jehovah God. What he did against the "Way" was because in his mind they stood against his God. His passion for God was intense, though misguided, and he never offered an excuse for what he did. His actions were in ignorance according to unbelief (1Tim. 1:13). That unbelief became intense belief in Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God when

when he learned the truth.

Saul did not fancy himself with the pride of men nor with the religious motives of selfishness. When he saw that he was wrong, he made immediate change and "took no prisoners" (literally and figuratively). His change took place in the words of the Lord, "not as I will, but as thou will" (Matt. 26:39). It was total; it was complete; it was his dying devotion to God that led him to serve the Son of God.

If Saul of Tarsus can be a faithful disciple of Christ, why is it so hard for you and me to change? What do we have in our lives that are more difficult to overcome than what Saul gave up immediately? The power to change is left to the will of man. We change what we want to change. To serve the Lord, our change must be total.



"I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul will make its boast in the Lord; the humble will hear it and rejoice."

Ps. 34:1-2

People, Places, and Things of the **BIBLE**



Ancient King Figure Found

An enigmatic sculpture of a king's head dating back nearly 3,000 years has set off a modern-day mystery caper as scholars try to figure out whose face it depicts. The 2-inch sculpture is an exceedingly rare example of figurative art from the Holy Land during the 9th century B.C. — a period associated with biblical kings. Exquisitely preserved but for a bit of missing beard, nothing quite like it has been found before. While scholars are certain the stern bearded figure donning a golden crown represents royalty, they are less sure which king it symbolizes, or which kingdom he may have ruled. Archaeologists unearthed the diminutive figurine in 2017 during excavations at a site called Abel Beth Maacah, located just south of Israel's border with Lebanon, near the modern-day town of Metula. Nineteenth-century archaeologists identified the site, then home to a village called Abil al-Qamh, with the similarly named city mentioned in the Book of Kings. During the 9th century B.C., the ancient town was situated in a liminal zone between three regional powers: the Aramean kingdom based in Damascus to the east, the Phoenician city of Tyre to the west, and the Israelite kingdom, with its capital in Samaria to the south. Kings 1 15:20 mentions Abel Beth Maacah in a list of cities attacked by the Aramean King Ben Hadad in a campaign against the Israelite kingdom.

"This location is very important because it suggests That the site may have shifted hands between these Polities, more likely between Aram-Damascus and Israel," said Hebrew University archaeologist Naama Yahalom-Mack, who has headed the joint dig with

California's Azusa Pacific University since 2013. Yahalom-Mack's team was digging through the floor of a massive Iron Age structure in the summer of 2017 when a volunteer who arrived for the day struck pay dirt. The layer where the head was found dates to the 9th century B.C., the epoch associated with the rival biblical kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The royal figurine is made of faience, a glass-like material that was popular in ancient Egypt and the Near East.

