

Interview With Paul The Apostle

Acts and Paul's Letters

September 8, 2019

Interviewer: Welcome to today's show on BNN, the Bible News Network. We've got a very special guest with us this morning, Paul the Apostle. Hey, are you related to that guy a few years ago? Wasn't he Joe the Apostle?

Paul: No, I think he was Joe the Plumber. No relation.

Interviewer: Oh, right. Okay, so you're Paul the Apostle. Welcome to the show, Paul.

Paul: Hi everyone! Glad to be here. Nice to meet you.

Interviewer: So, Paul, let's get started. It says here that Paul isn't your real name. What are you hiding?

Paul: I'm not hiding anything! I was originally known as Saul of Tarsus. I was born a Hebrew of Hebrews, of the tribe of Benjamin, of the people of Israel, circumcised on the eighth day... Philippians 3:5

Interviewer: Circumcised! Paul, this is a family show! We don't want to hear about that. File that under too much information. Sorry. Please try not to ...

Paul: No, no, I was just saying I fulfilled the traditions of my people from the time of our ancestor Abraham. I had it all going on. But to get back to your question, my name comes from the most famous person in my tribe, the first king of Israel, King Saul. Genesis 17; Exodus 20; 1 Samuel 10;

Interviewer: King Saul? Wasn't he a few lambs short of a flock? 1 Samuel 18 Are you admitting you come from a family of crazy people?

Paul: Not my immediate family, no. Saul did have issues, yes, but he was still the first king of Israel. We're very proud of him.

Interviewer: So why did you change names?

Paul: I have to work with a lot of Romans now, and the Jewish name was getting in the way. Besides, I had a big change in my life, dividing it into two parts. I took the name Paul to signify the big change. It's actually Latin for small, because I'm the least of the apostles, and I'm kinda small.

Interviewer: (Looks at Paul skeptically) Riiiiight. Now I hear you had quite a juvi record. (Wagging finger) You were a naughty young man, Paul! It says here you were involved in a number of incidents of persecution when you were younger. You started out just holding coats for others when they threw rocks at Christians, but later you went on to rounding up Christians yourself. Acts 7:58; Acts 9

Paul: I'm sorry to say that's all true. I was so zealous for the Law and the traditions of my ancestors that I couldn't see that God was doing something new. I even went on a road trip to Damascus to hunt down Christians there. I thought they were perverting everything that was good and holy. A crucified Messiah was no Messiah at all, as far as I was concerned.

Interviewer: I don't have any record of your persecuting Christians in Damascus. Is that part of a cover-up, Paul?

Paul: No, no, not at all. You see, something happened on the way.

Interviewer: Really? Something good? What happened? Did you meet a Christian girl, fall in love, change your ways? Dish!

Paul: No, nothing like that. I was on my way to Damascus and suddenly a bright light flashed around me and I fell to the ground and I heard a voice saying to me, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” So I said, “Who are you?” And the voice said, “I’m Jesus!” And I’m like, “Say whaaat?” And then he told me to go into the city to meet a man named Ananias and he would tell me what to do, and I had to be led there by the hand because the bright light had blinded me. ^{Acts 9}

Interviewer: (Skeptically) So when you fell, did you hit your head? Because I’ve heard a hard blow to the head can do that to you.

Paul: No, no. I didn’t know what to think at first, but then I met this Ananias guy and he prayed over me and the scales fell from my eyes and I could see again. I had to be blinded before I could see clearly, but after Ananias prayed over me, and told me the stories of Jesus’ resurrection, then I knew that I had met the Lord on the road.

Interviewer: So you saw the light!

Paul: I saw the light. Well, I was blinded by the light, then I saw the light, then I saw that Jesus was the light of the world.

Interviewer: You certainly use a lot of clichés, Paul!

Paul: Well, they weren’t clichés when they first happened to me! They just became clichés later.

Interviewer: Okay, great story, let’s move on. My researchers tell me that you like to get stoned a lot.

Paul: That’s fake news. I was only stoned once, and I didn’t like it at all. I nearly died. ^{2 Corinthians 11:25ff}

Interviewer: Bad trip? And you probably didn’t inhale, right?

Paul: What? No, ... anyway, I’ve also been whipped five times and beaten with rods three times.

Interviewer: Whatever floats your boat, Paul.

Paul: Actually, the problem was the boats didn’t float. I was shipwrecked three times and once I spent a night and a day in the open sea. I’ve known hunger and thirst and danger. I’ve been cold and naked ^{2 Corinthians 9}

Interviewer: Paul, I’ve already warned you, this is a family show. No more nakedness, please.

Paul: Sorry, I thought this was cable.

Interviewer: Now, the tabloids have been full of a story about how you were caught lying on top of a young boy in the street. In this day and age, that seems mighty suspicious.

Paul: Well, he was dead at the time.

Interviewer: Paul, I don’t think that’s helping.

Paul: No, no, let me explain. You’re referring to what happened at Troas. I was saying good bye to the people there, as I was leaving the next day. I was preaching about Jesus and his resurrection – I love to preach about Jesus and his resurrection -- and I got going and I didn’t notice that it was past

midnight. We were meeting in an upstairs room and a young man named Eutychus was sitting in a window and he fell asleep as I talked on and on and on and on and on an (looking at watch), well, you understand.

Eutychus, God bless him, down he went to the street, with a terrible thud. We all rushed outside and saw that he was dead! I threw myself on him and put my arms around him, and prayed and God gave him back to us. His life was spared. It was a great night! Nothing suspicious there, just a wonderful miracle from the Lord Jesus. Acts 20:7

Interviewer: Thanks for clearing that up, Paul. I understand that you are just one of the Apostles, that there are others. Let me just read for you something that your friend and biographer Luke wrote in his book, the Acts of the Apostles:

“All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions were their own, but they shared everything they had. ... There were no needy persons among them because from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.” Acts 4:32-35

That sounds like socialism to me, Paul! Are you palling around with socialists? Are you a socialist, Paul?

Paul: I don’t know anything about socialism, but I do know that we take care of each other in the church. We love each other, we share with each other, we follow our Lord Jesus who said it was better to give than to receive, who said that whatever we did for the least person, we were doing for him. I wouldn’t call myself a socialist, whatever that is. Just a Christian. Acts 20:35; Matthew 25:45

Interviewer: You’re being remarkably candid, Paul. It’s quite refreshing.

Paul: Well, you know what Jesus said: you will know the truth and the truth will set you free. John 8:32

Interviewer: You talk a lot about this Jesus person. Is he important to you?

Paul: He’s the most important person in the whole world! He was God in human flesh, God having taken on human likeness, acting like a servant, humble, obedient to his heavenly Father even to death on a cross.

Jesus! Wow. Jesus. God has exalted Jesus, and given him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 3:6-11

Interviewer: Whoa! Calm down, Paul. You’re going to give yourself a heart attack.

Paul: I just get so excited talking about Jesus. I’m just not ashamed of the gospel, because it’s the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes. I know Jesus made my heart right before God so I’m not worried about a heart attack, if that’s what you mean. Romans 1:16

Interviewer: You talk a lot about salvation and being saved. What do people have to do to be saved, Paul?

Paul: Well, for a start, they can confess with their mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in their hearts that God raised him from the dead. The Holy Spirit helps us here, sometimes interceding for us with groans too deep for words. Romans 10:9; Romans 8: 26 Jesus is risen from the dead and if you put

your faith in him, you too find salvation, because God wants all people everywhere to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. ^{1Timothy2:3}

Interviewer: Paul, you're out of your mind. Your great learning has driven you mad. What kind of wackadoodle are you? Do you think in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian? ^{Acts 26:24; Acts 26:28}

Paul: Short or long, I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am! ^{Acts 26:29}

Interviewer: Paul, on a recent trip through Europe, some people treated you like a god. Do you have a Messiah complex yourself? Are you "the One?"

Paul: Heavens, no! Jesus is "the One!" I think you're referring to what happened in Lystra. My colleague Barnabas and I met a man who had been lame from birth and had never walked. I saw that he had faith to be healed, and I called out to him, "Stand up! Get on your feet." At my words, the Lord healed him and he stood up. The people saw it and thought that Barnabas was the god Zeus and that I was the god Hermes. Because they were speaking Lycaonian, we didn't understand what they were saying at first, but when we figured it out, we tore our clothes and rushed into the crowd and straightened things out. Just a misunderstanding, that's all. ^{Acts 14:8-18}

Interviewer: More torn clothes! I thought I warned you about that, Paul! Anyway, it caused a riot. That's more than a misunderstanding. And it's not the only riot you ever caused, is it Paul? You stir up trouble wherever you go, don't you. You're a kind of community dis-organizer, aren't you?

Paul: Things do seem to happen when I preach about Jesus, that's for sure. But it's not my fault. At Ephesus, for example, it was Demetrius the Silversmith ...

Interviewer: Demetrius the Silversmith! What's with you guys? ... Joe the Plumber! Paul the Apostle! Who's next? Kate the TV Interviewer? Allan the Preacher? Sheesh!

Paul: Anyway, as I was saying, it was Demetrius the Silversmith who stirred up trouble. He made little silver idols for the tourists at the great Temple of Artemis, and when people started coming to Christ there, he started losing business. He stirred up the whole city, and it was only the city clerk who stopped the whole thing from getting us all in big trouble with the Romans. ^{Acts 19:23ff}

Interviewer: And at Thessalonica? There the story was, "The men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here!" They were talking about you, weren't they, Paul? Another riot, right?

Paul: Yes, they were talking about me and my companion, Silas. And, yes, there was another near riot. We had to flee Thessalonica and we went to Berea after that.

Interviewer: And how did it go in Berea? Any better?

Paul: It was great! The Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, and they searched the Scriptures diligently to see if what I said was true. I loved Berea, and they loved me! Great university there, too. ^{Acts 17: 10-14}

Interviewer: So I've heard. So how come you left? Were you just doing interim ministry there or something?

Paul: No, some people came to Berea from Thessalonica and we thought it was better to go than risk yet another riot.

Interviewer: Paul, you lived in the time of slavery, yet you said nothing against it. In fact, you once even sent a runaway slave, Onesimus, back to his master. How do you explain yourself? Are you a racist, Paul?

Paul: Slavery then wasn't about race at all. It was mostly about losing in war, and then you and your kids were slaves. It was awful. Didn't respect the full humanity of people at all.

But here's the thing. We all expected Jesus would be coming back very soon. We were working to get the message of his death and resurrection out, and we assumed that the message would change the way people behaved. You referred to my friend, the runaway slave Onesimus a minute ago. Yes, I sent him back to his master, that's true, but with a letter, a letter that changed everything. Onesimus ended up becoming the bishop of Ephesus, you know. Runaway slave to bishop! And you say I did nothing about slavery! Posh! ^{Philemon}

Interviewer: You've also been criticized for your attitude towards women. You once wrote, and I quote, "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord." Kind of medieval, isn't it?

Paul: Actually, medieval was after me. But that verse is one a lot of men love, I know. But it's not all I said. I said a wife should submit to her husband as the church submits to Christ, true, but I also said that husbands should love their wives as Christ loved the church. Christ came to serve, not be served. Christ washed the feet of the church. Christ gave his life for the church. A husband should serve and not be served. A husband should wash his wife's feet. A husband should give his life for his wife, as Christ gave his life for the church. I also said that in Christ, there is no male or female, but all are one. When I explain it like that, a lot of men like it a lot less. ^{Ephesians 5:22-33; Galatians 3:28}

Interviewer: Oddly, I like it a lot more. Thanks for clearing that up. Is there anything else you want to tell our viewers?

Paul: Only what I told the Corinthians: that what I received I passed on to them as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins, just as the Scripture foretold, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day, that he appeared to Peter and then to the Twelve, and then to five hundred other brothers and sisters in the faith, and then to James and then to all the apostles, and last of all to me. Believe in him and live. Pass on what you have received as well. ^{1 Corinthians 15:3-8}

Interviewer: Still trying to convert us all, Paul?

Paul: I would if I could! I'm sorry, but the time has come for me to go. I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. ^{2Timothy 4:6-7}

Interviewer: Well, I'm sorry that you have to go. It's been great having you here and I'm sure that we'll hear more from you in the future. We've been talking with Paul the Apostle. Thanks for tuning in to BNN, the Bible News Network, for this special report, an interview with Paul the Apostle. Coming up next: Potlucks! Harmless social meals, or gateway to gluttony? Our panel will help you decide. Bye, bye, everyone!