



## **Out of blindness**

Imagine being on a reckless journey. Your orders were to catch as many of the enemy as you can. Throughout the countryside you go searching and detaining all the enemy you find. Then a flash of lightning hits too close on the road you're on. A booming voice says "why do you destroy what I have built."

To be fair, that is not exactly what happened to a man named Saul of tarsus. Yet, it's very close. This man was a Jew. He was commissioned to find the people of the way. The way? These were the Jesus followers. Their sect was growing and that alarmed the Jews. Saul became the henchman for the Jews. One fateful day on the road to Damascus, God started a path. Saul was blinded and chastised by Jesus for attacking the people of the way (Christians).

Some believe that this Saul may have witnessed the crucifixion of Jesus. There is no proof of that. He was there at the stoning of the martyr Stephen. Saul was becoming strong and powerful within the Jewish realm. Yet, God had other plans. This part is amazing. God sent him to see a Christian in Damascus named Ananias. At the same time God appeared to Ananias and told him to receive Saul.

This is a path of intrigue. To Ananias, Saul was a treacherous villain. To Saul, being helped by Christians must have been humiliating. In both cases dangerous. Yet, a dangerous path set by God. This God led Moses to be trapped by the Red Sea. He put Joseph in Jail. Placed Noah in a torrential rain storm. David at the mercy of a King and his own son Absalom. I could go on. It's God's way. I think he gets a kick out of leaving us in peril. Why? So that we must rely on him. I also think it's to show his mighty power.

In many ways this path is our path. Saul understood Jewish history. He was able to see the connections between Jesus and the prophets. He understood the laws of God. Most of our Christian traditions and thinking comes from Saul. Some pivotal points in God's history has a name change. In those instances, there was a path correction too. We see that with Abram to Abraham. From Jacob to Israel; Simon to Peter; and Saul to Paul. Here we have Saul becoming Paul the Apostle of Jesus the Christ. Sometimes a path is just a correction. I believe the name change means were changing course.

Genesis 17:5 "What's more, I am changing your name. It will no longer be Abram. Instead, you will be called Abraham, for you will be the father of many nations."

Genesis 38:28 "Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome."

Acts 13:9 "Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit."

Matthew 16:18 "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it."