



Free Chapel
Alberton AGF



What Jesus Said?

JESUS SAID

**I AM the WAY,
the TRUTH,
and the LIFE.**

John 14:6



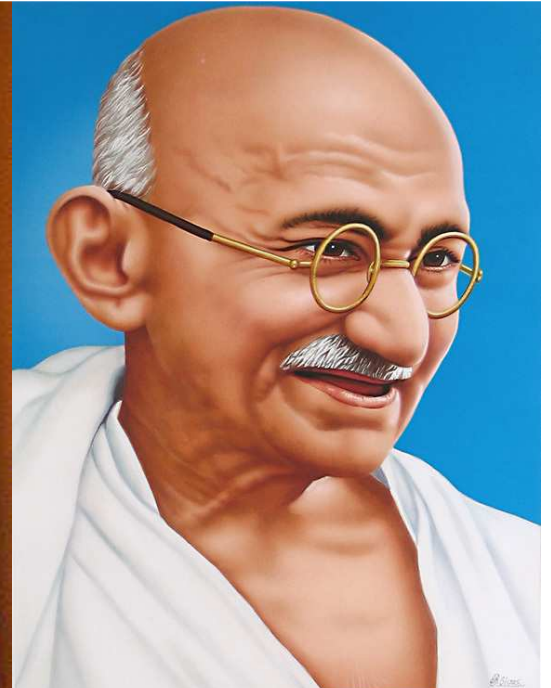
BC & AD

BC - Before Christ

and

AD – Anno Domini

The year of our Lord



Source: *Mid-Year Population Estimates, 2011*
<http://www.info.gov.za/aboutsa/people.htm>



Population group	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	% of total population	Number	% of total population	Number	% of total population
African	19 472 038	79,4	20 734 237	79,5	40 206 275	79,4
Coloured	2 188 782	8,9	2 351 008	9,0	4 539 790	9,0
Indian/Asian	626 690	2,6	648 177	2,5	1 274 867	2,5
White	2 227 526	9,1	2 338 299	9,0	4 565 825	9,0
Total	24 515 036	100,0	26 071 721	100,0	50 586 757	100,0

In the 2011 Census almost 80% of South Africans registered their religion as Christian.



Or if you have simply never read His story in the Bible, **please find out why so many people say Jesus has changed their lives – forever!**

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THE HARBINGER

THE ANCIENT MYSTERY THAT HOLDS THE SECRET
OF AMERICA'S FUTURE



What is Jesus saying to YOU!



Acts 9:1-19 (NIV)





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References

1. Bible Gateway - <http://www.biblegateway.com>

Audio (WMA) and text (PDF) ministry

FREE MINISTRY DOWNLOADS



AUTHOR: Des Burrows

- ❑ For more ministry downloads visit:
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What Jesus Said!

Jesus life is so significant; it divides our entire record of human history into two eras; before and after Christ.

Jesus spent three years as an itinerant country teacher before being executed in Jerusalem at age 33.

During those 3 years:

- He preached to the crowds in the open air;
- He trained his disciples
- He challenged the authority of the religious leaders, and confronted their hypocrisy
- He lived out the values he preached
- He performed amazing deeds and after his death his disciples believed he came back to life.

It is not too much to suggest that Jesus remains the single most influential figure in human history.

Today many millions around the world follow him and his teaching.

To name a few - Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu, Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jnr, Mother Teresa and Francis of Assisi were profoundly influenced by him.

And this is just some of the influential people in the world as we know it.

Many of Jesus' sayings, and events from his life, have become part of our every-day language.

For example;

- The Good Samaritan
- The Prodigal son,
- Go the extra mile
- No Greater love
- You are a Judas
- Doubting Thomas.

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In the 2011 Census almost 80% of South Africans registered their religion as Christian.

<http://www.info.gov.za/aboutsa/people.htm>

The principles derived from Jesus teaching underlie our society, institutions and culture. Our social service sector would collapse **without the massive contribution of Christian organizations and Christian people.**

YET – A large majority of the 80% of people in SA who believe that they are Christians vote for a corrupt, inept, incompetent, self-serving, nepotistic, buddy-employing government who mess up health-care, education, housing, sanitation services and service delivery and appoint incompetent friends as police commissioners, **but they will vote for that same crowd every year?!**

Gavin Sharples

Why? I because they have not considered the message of Jesus.

I am reading through a prophetic book “The Harbingers” which is about how America did not consider the prophetic the warnings of 9/11 as a warning from God – They were not listening.

And calamity follows!

I am preparing ministry on this topic – very interesting!

- But what was His message?
- What was He on about?

Today we have an opportunity to consider his message seriously for ourselves and then pass it on to others who need to consider the message for themselves.

- If your ideas of Jesus and His message are only based on stories remembered from your childhood, or other peoples' versions of what He said;
- If your view of Jesus has been spoiled by the failure of the Church or of some Christian leaders to practice what Jesus preached;
- Or if you have simply never read His story in the Bible, **please find out why so many people say Jesus has changed their lives – forever!**

Today, it is easy to study the actual words of Jesus translated into modern English, or in any other languages.

His words are amazingly down-to-earth, and up-to-date.

SOME JESUS "SAYINGS"

- I am the Way the Truth and the Life.
- I am the Door.
- I am the Bread of Life
- If you come to me you will thirst no more.

- But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you....”
- Judge not, that you be not judged.

And many others.....

What I want to concentrate on today is what Jesus said to Saul before he became Paul, **AND**

What is Jesus saying to YOU!

Let us **READ. Acts 9 (NIV1984)**

Acts 9 (Message)

¹⁻² All this time Saul was breathing down the necks of the Master's disciples, out for the kill. He went to the Chief Priest and got arrest warrants to take to the meeting places in Damascus so that if he found anyone there belonging to the Way, whether men or women, he could arrest them and bring them to Jerusalem.

³⁻⁴ He set off. When he got to the outskirts of Damascus, he was suddenly dazed by a blinding flash of light. As he fell to the ground, he heard a voice: "**Saul, Saul, why are you out to get me?**"

⁵⁻⁶ He said, "**Who are you, Master?**"

"I am Jesus, the One you're hunting down. I want you to get up and enter the city. In the city you'll be told what to do next."

⁷⁻⁹ His companions stood there dumbstruck—they could **hear the sound, but couldn't see anyone**—while Saul, picking himself up off the ground, he found himself stone-blind. They had to take him by the hand and lead him into Damascus. He continued blind for three days. He ate nothing, drank nothing.

¹⁰ There was a disciple in Damascus by the name of **Ananias. The Master spoke to him in a vision**: "Ananias."

"Yes, Master?" he answered.

¹¹⁻¹² "Get up and go over to Straight Avenue. Ask at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus. His name is Saul. He's there praying. He has just had a dream in which he saw a man named Ananias enter the house and lay hands on him so he could see again."

¹³⁻¹⁴ **Ananias protested**, "Master, you can't be serious. Everybody's talking about this man and the terrible things he's been doing, his reign of terror against your people in Jerusalem! And now he's shown up here with papers from the Chief Priest that give him license to do the same to us."

¹⁵⁻¹⁶ But the Master said, "**Don't argue. Go!** I have picked him as my personal representative to non-Jews and kings and Jews. And now I'm about to show him what he's in for—**the hard suffering that goes with this job.**"

¹⁷⁻¹⁹ So Ananias went and found the house, placed his hands on blind Saul, and said, "**Brother Saul, the Master sent me, the same Jesus you saw on your way here. He sent me so you could see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.**" No sooner were the words out of his mouth than something like scales fell from Saul's eyes—he could see again! He got to his feet, was baptized, and sat down with them to a hearty meal.

In our text: Saul appears not to have known much, if anything, about Jesus, other than He was against the rule of the day and He was dead.

Yet he ***'breathed threats and murder'*** against the unknown voice, through persecuting Christ's followers.

Today, atheists, and others, who claim not to believe in God, spend a surprising amount of time and energy in speaking against that which (so they say) is not merely

unknown; but does not actually exist.

Saul was no atheist. He had devoted his life to achieving the highest levels within the Hebrew religion: and there were spiritual needs all around him; that he could have helped to meet.

Despite such opportunities: he, too, seems to have spent a surprising amount of time and energy in speaking and acting against Christianity, which, so it seems, he believed had no right to exist.

Saul was too much of a **dyed-in-the-wool (Thorough)** Hebrew, to be changed in any way: **other** than through the life-changing 'drama' that, then, came upon him.

What about us?

Have we ever been so '**dyed-in-the-wool**', in defense of some aspect of faith that suited us, or in defense of particular religious practices; that it took a bit of 'drama' to change us?

From a very 'set', toes-dug-in position: Saul underwent radical, positive and life-altering change.

Through revelation: He found out that he was not called to defend the Hebrew religion; **but to become the dedicated servant of Jesus; and to promote the Gospel wherever the Lord sent him.**

The history of the Church shows that, down through the centuries: thousands of Christians **did not follow Saul's** excellent example.

They appear not to have asked: ***'Who are you, Lord?'*** and ***'What is it that you require of us?'*** Instead: **they got on with what they wanted to do.**

Regardless of biblical revelations about God's requirements in the matter of the Church, and its life and functions: they went ahead with schisms, splits and splinter groups, that cut against, and destroyed some part of the unity and peace that Jesus had lived for, and died for.

And because of this cults were born – the work of the devil began.

Have we ever felt the need to ask God: ***'Who are you, Lord?'*** And: ***'What do you really require of me?'***

If so did we respond to that need, and actually ask the question?

Many Christians admit that: when given such opportunities; they failed to call upon God in that particular way: because they were afraid that they might receive a **‘Damascus Road’ type of reply?**

None of us want to be told, or are too afraid to ask just in case God sets us a difficult mission.

But because Saul cried out to God, in anguish: he could not afford to be ‘choosy’ as to the sort of answer he might get.

However: it must have been a big surprise, at the least: when the answer was not given in Old Testament terms: saying: ***‘I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel; and this is what I command of you’.***

Such an approach would, probably, have done no more than to confirm Saul’s existing standpoints, and to justify; in his mind, at least; his attempts to stamp out what he believed to be a heresy.

Instead, the answer was given in up-to-the-moment modern terms.

It went against Saul's previous experience, against his set way of life, and against his belief that Christianity was heretical: for the voice said: ***'I am*** (present tense) ***Jesus***, (Christ's earthly name) with **the powerful implication:**

Paul thought that Jesus was dead – crucified, BUT

Now He is Not dead: but very much alive.

The first surprise, was followed by another: ***'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting*** : with the equally powerful implication, **that hurt done to any of Christ's followers, was hurt done to Christ himself.**

A warning to those who seek to split churches and speak against God's called who have answered God's call on their lives.

Jesus bypassed Saul's highly trained mind: and went straight to the depths of his humanity, at heart level – and got a positive response.

Today, there are a sense in which ‘high and mighty and holy’ talk about God, challenge the minds of some, but their rhetoric tends to pass most people by.

It seems that, with us, too, appeals to the depths of our humanity, at heart level – produce our most positive and fulfilling responses.

What challenges the mind: will, at best, remain theoretical, and abstract, until it is made concrete through ‘hands-on’ application and experience.

What challenges the heart: opens us more directly to opportunities for experiencing God’s activity; as He offers new aspects of spiritual life; a deeper faith, and a desire to be caught up in loving service and outreach.

The impact of the challenge that came upon Saul, in his **‘Damascus Road’ experience**; touches and influences us, today.

His formal training at Tarsus (one of the great university colleges of its day) together with him asking for, and receiving, letters from the authorities, made him ‘official’, and someone to be reckoned with.

Just the same as those who come with their **BIG degrees** and **Doctorates** and the their influence through networking with people in power and then they try to influence us by using their assumed authority to teach to the mind (which is normally RUBBISH)

But Saul's question ***'Who are you, Lord?'*** also proved that he had deeper needs: that his **'official standing'** could not reach, let alone deal with.

What about us? We have 'standing' as citizens, taxpayers, employers, or employees, as Christians, with formal membership, as leaders, stewards, and in many other ways.

But no matter how our 'standing' may be useful to us, and helpful to others: we remain people of spiritual needs, who; like Saul, in his need; **must call out to the only one who can truly meet and fulfill them.**

Paul's blindness may be taken as a symbol of ***'none so blind as those who will not see'***; and the restoration of his outward sight, as a symbol of a new, inner 'sight' being given, and received; that made him both willing and able to serve the Lord.

We read that, on the Damascus Road: the men travelling with Saul: ***'heard the sounds'***, but ***'did not see anyone'***.

Today, as then, people can go about their 'religious' business; read the right books: listen to talks by Christian motivational speakers, sermons, sing hymns, say prayers, repost quotes on Facebook etc, and ***'hear the sounds'***, without actually 'seeing' God and as a result there is **NO heart change**.

They can share in a church service and, without having received a spiritual challenge; can walk out as unchanged as when they walked in.

All true faith is given: at first hand, by God. Therefore, we must ensure that we never risk preventing Christ imparting his: ***'I am Jesus'*** love and care; at the time and place, and in the manner, that he chooses.

Largely, the Old Testament Jews believed that God confined his activities within the boundaries of 'The Promised Land'.

Our New Testament text in Acts: began to change that; through revealing **divine activity** being undertaken **outside the borders of Israel - at Damascus, in Syria.**

Along with all Christians: we must be prayerfully alert against thinking that God always works within the **boundaries of our understanding.**

For, such **set-in-our-ways thinking**; puts us at risk of not receiving new, life-changing, faith-deepening revelations.

God, who does not force things upon us: will not remove the boundaries that we create.

Therefore, the Lord's gracious activity, going on beyond whatever limits that we may have set; cannot change and bless our lives, until we remove the said boundaries.

In our text, we find that **Ananias was afraid**; and had established a mental barrier between himself and Saul. However, **God's commands through revelation**, overrode Ananias' reservations: enabling him to remove the barrier: so much so, as to lay hands upon the needy Saul, and call him 'brother'.

Not only that: for he went on to say: ***‘The Lord has sent me, so that you may see again, and be filled with the Holy Spirit’.***

Can we say that we have never prevented the close approach of someone who; as Ananias was, to Saul; may have been God-sent, to us, in order that ***‘we may see, and be filled with the Holy Spirit?’*** Can we be that sure?

Saul’s need; was far greater than his reluctance to ask for help.

The received revelation made a new man of him; and, under his new name, Paul: his example, and teaching, became, and remains, of very great value to the Church; and to us, today.

What about our situations?

Could it be that, somewhere along the line: reluctance on our part; to receive challenge; and to undergo change, created a barrier that has not yet been fully removed?

If we feel that there is still, something of a barrier, that stands in the way of our ongoing spiritual growth and development: would we dare to ask that very definite question of God...

Lord, what is it that you require of me?

If we do ask; and the Lord replies: how prepared are we to gladly accept what the Lord offers: even if it is a Damascus Road' type of answer?

<http://www.sermonsforyou.co.uk/?q=node/36>