

# WESTERN WISDOM BIBLE STUDY

*Corinne Heline*

## *Saul of Tarsus*

*(Continued)*

As the master prepared and then consecrated the original Twelve for their ministry as messengers of the Piscean phase of the new Christian religion, so also did He prepare and dedicate Saul of Tarsus. Initiation awakens latent forces which manifest variously in different persons, according to previous development and individual characteristics. The extraordinary ability of Paul focused in the power of the spoken and written word. Throngs were to follow him whenever he discoursed upon the mysteries of Spirit. Multitudes would enter through prison gates to hear him. His Epistles were destined to be the glory of the Christian world.

The Mount of Sinai is a focusing point for forces active throughout the whole of that region anciently designated as Arabian: from the borders of Syria, including Damascus and Mesopotamia, to Palestine and Egypt, a region constituting another of Earth's areas highly charged with spiritual potencies.

It is not clear from the New Testament account whether or not Saul journeyed to Sinai when he "went to Arabia," but the esotericist believes he did spend some time there during his three years of preparation in the desert. From the day that Moses looked upon the face of God in Sinai and received the ten Divine laws, Sinai had been the retreat for prophets of Israel, who retired thither periodically to renew their powers. It is natural to assume that Saul sought the Divine Face on Sinai, in accordance with ancient esoteric practice.

A poet has well described Mt. Sinai in the lines:

*"Where all around, on mountain, sand  
and sky,  
God's chariot wheels had left distinctest  
trace."*

It was here that Saul learned the full significance of that condition described as "surrounded by a cloud of witnesses." He was now able to commune at will with hosts of inner plane Beings. During this period Saul was truly a novice in God's school, studying the great Book of God's Remembrance located in the ethers — that Book wherein is recorded the formula of Initiation as symbolized in Christ Jesus' death, burial, Resurrection and Ascension. Saul was also permitted to view therein the coming events of his own life.

When illumination pertaining to his First Initiation was finished, Saul returned to Damascus where, in the fervor of new-found light and the inspiration of higher spiritual contacts, the great Apostle soon attracted a throng of earnest and consecrated disciples. This was the beginning of a new life for Saul — a life which was replete with agony and humiliation on the outer but so embellished with gifts of the spirit and so rich in celestial companionships that Saul joyously discounted all physical hardships and deprivation in the light of spiritual compensations. "All they that take the sword shall perish by the sword" is the Law. Saul, the former proud, arrogant, cruel persecutor of the Christians, bore humbly such punishments as he had inflicted upon his helpless victims.

Saul's disciples rallied to his defense in Damascus when his life was threatened by enemies, and they saved him by an ingenious device. Houses along the high city walls were built with overhanging windows. Saul was placed in a large basket and during the night it was lowered over the ramparts from one of the windows, allowing him to make his escape. Saul began the journey to Damascus as the arch persecutor of the disciples of Christ Jesus. Saul left Damascus as foremost among the persecuted because foremost among Christian disciples.

### *Saul at Jerusalem*

The course of the New Apostle led him to Jerusalem. His paramount desire at this time, so he states, was to "view Cephas." St. Chrysostom observes that the "return journey of Saul to his former home in Jerusalem now takes on the guise of a pious pilgrimage."

For fifteen days Saul resided in the home of Peter. Surely the celestial Hierarchies rejoiced in the communion of these two illumined souls as Angels and Archangels took part in their deliberations.

### *Saul Returns to Tarsus*

For further preparatory work before beginning his great mission, Saul was sent to the environment of his childhood and early youth, his home city of Tarsus. It was among these familiar associations that Saul came to know and to live the impersonal life. Here he developed that inner strength and fortitude which enabled him to say of problems later to assail him, "None of these things move me."

Saul's father, sternest of the Pharisees, was orthodox and fanatical. He and his kinsmen and friends held high hopes that the brilliant young Saul might bring honor and glory upon the family and their native city by achieving to an exalted position such as that of the revered Rabbin Gamaliel. But to their chagrin and bitter disappointment, Tarsus' distinguished son returned an outcast with a

price upon his head. In the eyes of his father's world, Saul had renounced all things. None realized that he had, instead, received all things. As far as his family and former associates were concerned, one who had made the great Renunciation was a failure, a fool and a madman, fit only for severest punishment and exile.

This is a bitter trial which must be faced at some point by every aspirant.

The blessed Master Jesus met this test when repudiated by family and friends in Nazareth, where He could perform few works because of the lack of faith. It was contrition for this lack of faith which, after the Master's Resurrection, blossomed into wholehearted dedication by His kinsmen, James, Simon and Jude.

Saul also remained steadfast. Abandoned by relatives and friends, he devoted himself exclusively to the study and dissemination of Christian Mysteries in the province of Syria-Cilicia for a period of approximately nine years. During this time he received at least two further Initiations, of which he makes mention in the twelfth chapter, second to fourth verses of Second Corinthians. In the final stage of his preparation for a great ministry, he tells us he was caught up into the Third Heaven and there witnessed that which it is unlawful to reveal (to the mundane or uninitiated).

After his first illumination on the road to Damascus, Saul spent three years in the desert of Arabia. This was followed by a period of intense activity as a co-worker of Barnabas in the church of Antioch which lasted for about two years. Thus, the interval of preparation for his greatest work covered a period approximating the mystic fourteen-year cycle: seven years for the steps or degrees from Preparation to Illumination; seven years from Illumination to Mastership. It was as a Master that Saul of Tarsus set out upon his mission — to bring the light of the Christian Mysteries to the Western World.

---

*Everything that lives is Holy.*

— William Blake