

# Amazing Grace

Bible Study Fellowship

## Why Paul?

### Part 1 of 2



J. Michael Schroeder

Amazing Grace Bible Study Fellowship is a non-denominational church fellowship dedicated to the publishing of the Gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16), and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery of Romans 16:25 and Ephesians 3:3. Our goal is to study the Bible in accordance with 2 Timothy 2:15, in order to become established in the truth of it according to Romans 1:11; to the end that we might come into conformity with the will of God for our lives according to Romans 12:3.

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## Part 1 of 2

In the seventh chapter of the book of Acts, the persecution of the fledgling Christian church had reached a climax with the stoning to death of Stephen. At the end of that chapter and the beginning of chapter eight, we see a new figure arise on the scene, Saul, who “was consenting unto his (Stephen’s) death” (verse 1), and had apparently taken the lead in the persecution of the church. In chapter nine, while on the way with orders to arrest some of these Christians in Damascus, Saul has his famous meeting with the Lord:

“And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him,

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Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.” (Acts 9:3-8 )

Saul is taken into Damascus to the house of a disciple named Ananias, regains his sight, is told that he will bear the Lord’s name “before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel...and straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God” (verse 20).

This confounded the Jews there in Damascus, and they sought to kill him. Some of the disciples helped him to escape to Jerusalem where he is shunned by all but a disciple named Barnabas, who gets him accepted by the leadership (Peter, James and John – see Gal. 2:9).

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For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man so making peace...” (Eph. 2:13-15)  
Contrary to what the Christian establishment teaches, Paul was not raised up to take the gospel of the kingdom to the Gentiles, nor to establish a new religion with a litany of new religious practices, but according to what it says in the above passage, to abolish religious observance altogether, and to usher in a new dispensation with a new message: Christ died for our sins...was buried... and raised again the third day...for our justification. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved... sealed, and bound for glory in heaven. The “our” in these verses is you, my friend. No matter who you are, where you are, what you’ve done or failed to do; you can be saved eternally by simply trusting Christ and what he did on your behalf at Calvary. If you’ve never done this, why not now?

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## Part 2 of 2

First of all, Peter charges Israel with the crime of crucifying Jesus Christ, their Messiah. Paul charges those Jews and Gentiles he’s preaching to in Antioch with no such crime. Second, Peter’s remedy for this specific crime (sin) is to repent and get baptized (with/in water). This means, admit you did it, and repent (show Godly sorrow for what you did); then, to consummate the contract, get baptized. (Notice that this is the very same prescription John the Baptist preached to Israel in Matthew 3 and Mark 1. ) For those who did this the payoff is the gift of the Holy Ghost, which empowers them to produce the signs that “shall follow them that believe” (Mark 16:17), and to “endure unto the end to be saved” (Matt. 10:22 ).  
Since Paul charges no one in the Antiochan audience with a crime, he therefore calls for no one to repent (or to be baptized – see 1 Cor. 1:17),

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but rather establishes the fact that their sins are forgiven, and, furthermore, anyone—Jew or Gentile—who is willing to believe this will be “justified from all things.” Whereas, Peter is speaking of a temporary remission, which will only be in force so long as the believer continues (endures) in faith (Acts 2:42-46), Paul is offering his hearers a permanent pardon with no strings attached. He confirms this, in the doctrine of justification by faith, in Romans 3,4 and 5:

“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God”. (3:19-23)

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