

Title: **The Danger of Partisan Blindness**
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In the days of Jesus there existed a sect of the Jews known as the Pharisees. They were considered by the common people as representing the epitome of holiness, being extremely strict and meticulous in the observance of their interpretations of the Law of Moses. The Pharisees were easily recognized by their phylacteries, distinctive robes and arrogant attitude. They were absolutely certain that they were righteous in the sight of God (Matthew 23; Luke 18:9-14).

One Pharisee of note in the New Testament was Saul of Tarsus. He described himself as “being more exceedingly zealous (than his peers -asd) for the traditions of my fathers” (Galatians 1:14). He occupied a prominent position among the Pharisees of Jerusalem, having been given authority by the chief priests to travel to Damascus and persecute Christians (Galatians 1:14; Acts 26:10-12). Saul was also an educated man. He had been a student of Gamaliel, a highly respected rabbi (Acts 22:3), and thus was certainly knowledgeable of the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah. Like most Jews, his hope was to witness the coming of the Messiah, God's anointed, who was going to deliver God's people from oppression.

And yet Saul persecuted the disciples of Jesus the Christ (“Christ” and “Messiah” are synonyms, both meaning “anointed one”). He described his attitude to king Agrippa, “Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth” (Acts 26:9). How could one who was so familiar with the predictions about the Messiah fail to recognize the very One for whom he was waiting? Immediately after his conversion, this same man (later known as the apostle Paul) began to preach from the Old Testament prophecies that Jesus was the Son of God (Acts 9:20)! Why couldn't he “see” the truth when he was persecuting Christians?

Saul was blind. He was not literally blind, but unable to clearly see the truth about Jesus because of his partisanship. He was a Pharisee and Pharisees were right! The title of this article may have brought the subject of politics to the minds of many readers, but it is also possible to be blinded by partisanship in the area of religion. We can become so confident that we are right that we are unwilling to even consider the possibility that we might be in error. The truth of God is right there in the pages of the Scriptures, but we cannot “see” it because we are blinded by our attachment to some religious group or whatever doctrine that group teaches.

The Christians were unable to convince Saul of his error because he would not listen to them. His was an “us and them” attitude. We must be careful that we do not reject truth because of who speaks it. Arrogant confidence or allegiance to some religious group will blind us to the truth, causing us to be very religious people, but religiously wrong!