

## GOD CHOOSES UNLIKELY CANDIDATES TO BE HIS MESSENGERS

If you saw her backstage you never would have imagined what fame was soon to come her way. She walked out on the stage in a frumpy dress. Slightly mussed up hair. Bushy eyebrows. Seemingly a bit old and odd for the competition. But the moment she began to sing on Britain's Got Talent she took the world by storm. By the final note she was receiving a standing ovation from the crowd and a broad smile from Simon Cowell. The video of her performance immediately hit YouTube and within a week had been viewed 66 million times.

She eventually won second place in the competition but that did not stop her. An album was released in November of 2009 and by the end of the year she had the top selling record world wide of any releases, selling a total of 8.3 million copies.

You probably would never have picked him either. One first century writing describes him this way: "Bald-headed, bowlegged, strongly built, a man small in size, with meeting eyebrows, and a rather large nose."<sup>1</sup>

Appearances aside, he had been spending his days with a singular purpose: persecuting Christians. Pulling them from their houses. Throwing them in prison. Even having some killed.

And yet God chose him to take his story to the Gentiles. Jesus arranged a face-to-face meeting with Saul while he was on his way to Damascus to persecute his followers (Acts 9). Jesus slammed on the stadium lights and Saul began to see the light. And by the end of the encounter his name is changed from Saul to Paul as he is given a new purpose and a new lease on life.

The rest is history. Paul, a Jew, took the gospel message to the Gentiles. Paul, the "chief of sinners" spoke as a gracious firsthand recipient of God's mercy. Paul, the well-schooled expert on the Law, became the most outspoken voice for the principle of grace.

And aren't you glad he did? Most of us would not know Christ had Paul not traveled the world telling others about him. And most of us would not know Christ if some modern-day "Paul" not walked across the cul-de-sac or the cubicle or the classroom to introduce him to us.

Susan's look changed. So did Paul's. The description of Paul ends by saying he was "... full of grace, for sometimes he looked like a man and sometimes he had the face of an angel."

An "angel." The word means "messenger." God wants to use you to take his message to your world. Your street. Your workplace. Your school. You might not think he'd choose you either. But you might just need to think again, no matter your appearance.

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<sup>1</sup> The Acts of Paul and Thecla, written in the 2nd century