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Galatians 1:22–23—Persecutor to Proclaimer

John Irving's 1989 novel *A Prayer for Owen Meany* traces the story of an odd and troubled boy who believes himself to be God's instrument and sets out to fulfill the role that God has determined for him. Although Owen is never hostile to Christian believers in the manner that the apostle Paul was initially, he does undergo a transformation that is surprising to many—and, in that sense, he might be likened to Paul.

In the novel, the story of Owen Meany is told by a man who had been Owen's childhood friend. He sums up his recollection of Owen's total life with reference to Galatians 1:22–23:

How can I *not* think of Owen—when I read Paul's letter to the Galatians, that part where Paul says, "And I was still not known by sight to the churches of Christ in Judea; they only heard it said, 'He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.' And they glorified God because of me."

How well I know that feeling! I trust in God because of Owen Meany.¹

1. John Irving, *A Prayer for Owen Meany* (1989; repr. New York: William Morrow, 2012), 87.