

"The Conversion of Saul"

Part 2

Acts 9

Introduction: Tonight we are coming back to Acts 9 and as we do there are several verses that come to mind.

Job 42:2a

² *I know that thou canst do every thing...*

Jeremiah 32:17, 27

¹⁷ *Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:*

²⁷ *Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?*

Luke 1:37

³⁷ *For with God nothing shall be impossible.*

Philippians 3:21

²¹ *Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

These verses all speak of God's power over all of creation. In Acts 9 we see the mighty power of God in the life of Saul. Saul was a man who was determined to exterminate Christianity and he was on a mission to do just that. In Acts 9 he had received legal documents from the high priest to travel 150 miles to Damascus. God stopped him and saved him. He had heard that Christianity was spreading through the synagogues and therefore he went breathing out threatenings and slaughter.

Notice Acts 9:1-2

It was Saul's desire to have those that were "OF THIS WAY" to be put to death.

Acts 26:10-11

¹⁰ *Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them.*

¹¹ And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.

Saul was consumed with destroying the followers of Jesus Christ. We are told he "breathed" out the threatenings and slaughter. Breathing is something that we do constantly and so we can know that persecution was constantly on Saul's mind. In all of this Saul believed he was doing the will of God.

Acts 22:3

*³ I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, **and was zealous toward God**, as ye all are this day.*

Saul sincerely believed that he was doing what God desired of him to do when he persecuted the believers.

Application:

I want to just pause here and remind us of something. I have heard people over the years say, "As long as you are sincere about what you believe God will accept you." Let me just say that you can be as sincere as you desire but if your theology is wrong then you are sincerely wrong and it does matter. God will ONLY accept those who have faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. Any other belief concerning salvation is false and no matter how sincere someone is they will go to hell if they die in their sins. There are many people who sincerely believe that baptism is the way of salvation, others believe that good works are the way of salvation and they are as sincere as you can be. But they are wrong, and they are lost.

Why was Saul so set against Christianity? It was all new and it was contrary to what he was taught under the Law. He believed the temple was the place to worship and Christianity now taught that the believer is the temple. He believed that sacrifices were to be offered at the temple and now Christianity said there was no longer a need for animal sacrifices. There are just a few of the reasons. But we can better understand why he was set against Christianity.

I. The Meeting

Part 2

Notice Acts 9:4

We looked at this verse last week and we talked about what Saul learned here. The lesson was that when the body is hurt the head feels the pain. Saul was focused upon those who

were believers in Jesus Christ, and he inflicted pain upon them but here he discovered that Jesus Himself felt the pain and the persecution.

We also see in this verse that the Lord uses Saul's name twice. This is very interesting. There are several situations in the Bible where the Lord repeated the name of the individual twice and most of the time it marked a significant event.

Genesis 22:10-11

¹⁰ And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

¹¹ And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I.

Genesis 46:2-3

² And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I.

³ And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation:

Exodus 3:4-5

⁴ And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.

⁵ And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.

1 Samuel 3:10-11

¹⁰ And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.

¹¹ And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle.

Luke 10:41-42

⁴¹ And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

⁴² *But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.*

Luke 22:31

³¹ *And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:*

The double use of Saul's name is the last time it is done in the Bible.

Notice Acts 9:5

How shocked Saul must have been when Jesus revealed Himself to him. Saul knew Jesus had died and there were a lot of questions about where His body was but now, He meets the very Jesus whom he heard Steven and other Christians preach about. The word "pricks" here is a reference to a "goad" which was used to move cattle. The goads were long, wooden rods with a sharp point used to prod oxen while plowing. Shamgar killed 600 Philistines with an ox goad.

Judges 3:31

³¹ *And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox goad: and he also delivered Israel.*

The point we need to see in Saul at this time was that while he was still breathing out threatenings and slaughter he was at the same time under conviction.

Application:

We can gather from this thought much encouragement for ourselves. How many times have we shared the Gospel with people, but we see no reaction. What we often do not know is that the Holy Spirit is using our witness and the person we long to see saved is under conviction. We do not know what they think about when they lay their head on the pillow at night. We do not know what the Spirit is doing with the Truth we have shared. But many times we can be sure that the Holy Spirit is using what they heard to bring conviction. This is needed for a person to get saved. So let us not grow weary in being a witness for our Lord.

Notice Acts 9:6

Saul was terrified and may have expected to die as he met the Lord. It is in this verse that Saul is saved. It is here that Saul exercises his free will and places his faith in Jesus Christ. Saul had heard all about Jesus from the believers whom he persecuted and he was under conviction. Now as the lord confronts him he believes in the resurrected Lord and he

believes He is the Son of God. This is how a person is saved. Not by meeting the Lord and being blinded by His glory but by grace through FAITH.

Ephesians 2:8-9

⁸ For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Now let us notice how Saul started his new life in Christ.

Notice Acts 9:6 again.

The first thing Saul wants to know is what the Lord would have him to do. This was not because he was trying to earn his salvation because no man can do that. This was wanting to serve because he was now saved. Saul thought of himself as a slave of the Lord out of love. He begins as a slave of the Lord, and he will end the very same way.

2 Timothy 4:6-7

⁶ For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

⁷ I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

The word "offered" here speaks of the pouring out of blood as a sacrifice. Paul was a living sacrifice and he was willing to die as a sacrifice.

Romans 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

² *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

Paul lived the sacrificial life before he taught the sacrificial life.

Application:

This TRUTH is very important to grasp. If we are going to teach others we must first of all live what we are going to teach otherwise we are hypocrites.

Acts 1:1

The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

Here in this verse we see that Jesus practiced what He taught. If we are going to teach our children or our grandchildren we **MUST** first of all live the example in front of them. Otherwise your words have no validity.

Let us go back again to Saul's beginning. He asked the Lord what He would have him do. Isaiah was also a man that began the same way, with a desire to serve.

Isaiah 6:1-5, 8

In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

² *Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.*

³ *And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.*

⁴ *And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.*

⁵ *Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.*

⁸ *Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.*

Conclusion/application:

When a person is truly saved they are set apart by the Spirit for service so it only makes sense that there is a desire to serve in some capacity. The first thought of a new convert is, "How can I serve the Lord?"

Isaiah 40:8

⁸ **I delight to do thy will**, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.

Let us be careful about growing cold spiritually and allowing this desire to get pushed aside.