

"The Conversion of Saul"

Part 3

Acts 9

Introduction: Last week in our study of Acts we were walking with Saul on the road to Damascus where he was met by Jesus Christ. When we left Saul last week he had ask a very important question as a new believer.

Notice Acts 9:6a

This was a wonderful way for Saul to begin his Christian life. He was seeking the guidance and the direction of God. Last week we looked at how Isaiah started the very same way.

Isaiah 6:5, 8

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.*

When a man or a woman place their faith in Jesus Christ it is only natural that there will be a desire to serve right away.

Ephesians 2:10

¹⁰ *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

This now brings us to where we are tonight.

I. God's Direction

Notice Acts 9:6b

God's plan for Saul was not revealed at this time because God would unfold it as time went on. Part of the Lord's plan would be revealed by a man named Ananias as we shall see shortly. Before we move on however there is a lesson in all of this for us.

Application:

In our lives God often works the very same way. He does not lay out for us to see each step of the path before us but instead it is revealed little by little. We must also keep in mind that just as here with Saul, God will often use other believers to point us in the direction which He desires for us to walk. This thought also reinforces the Truth that we **MUST** not neglect the gathering together of the saints. God uses other human instruments to guide us in His will as we pass through this world and therefore, we must have fellowship with God's people. Notice what the writer of Hebrews wrote concerning the need to submit to church leadership.

Hebrews 13:17

¹⁷ Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

There is yet one more thought I want to share from this verse.

Notice Acts 9:6 again.

The Lord told Saul, "It shall be told thee what thou must do." I see in this statement the responsibility of the believer. The Lord used the Word "MUST." Saul ministry was very important and there were things which he would be called to do that no one else could do.

Application:

Saul was unique and so are we. There are things which God has for us to do that others cannot do. There are people you have contact with that I don't and there are opportunities given to you that are not presented to anyone else. We all have a path and we **MUST** do what the Lord calls us to do. This is exactly what the Christian life is all about. It is not about me getting saved and then living my life the way that I desire. It is me getting saved and then seeking the Lord's will for my life. It is also me giving up my desires so that I can live for His. It is about allowing Jesus to be the Lord of my life.

Luke 14:25-27, 33-35

²⁵ And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them,

²⁶ If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

²⁷ And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

³³ So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

³⁴ Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?

³⁵ It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Notice Acts 9:7

The men who were with Saul heard the voice but they were not able to comprehend what was said. Let us notice Paul's testimony.

Acts 22:9

⁹ And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.

The idea is that the men with Saul heard a sound but did not hear the message as Saul did. Let us notice two other occasions and then we will consider an application.

John 12:27-29

²⁷ Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.

²⁸ Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

²⁹ The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.

Daniel 10:5-9

⁵ Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz:

⁶ His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.

⁷ And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision: but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.

⁸ *Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.*

⁹ *Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground.*

In Acts 9 only Saul distinguished the message. In John, the crowds could not distinguish the message. In Daniel only Daniel saw the vision.

Application:

In this we can see how God works differently in the lives of His people. On Sunday mornings sometimes there are 200 people here and in the service the Holy Spirit applies the message to each heart as He sees fit. You may get one thing from a message or a passage of Scripture and the person next to you will gather something completely different. The Holy Spirit knows the will of God for our lives and He knows where we currently are in our lives, therefore, He will take the Word of God and He will apply it differently with you than what He will with me. Let us be reminded that we are only here for a short window of time but we have a purpose.

Esther 4:14

¹⁴ *For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?*

Notice Acts 9:7-8

We are not told of what happened to these men after this event on the road to Damascus but one thing we do know is that they would have a powerful testimony after this. They could testify that something supernatural happened that changed Saul from a terrorist to a Christian. The man who had his focus set on destroying the followers of Jesus Christ became a follower himself and had to be led by the hand to Damascus. They could testify that what happened was not something that Saul imagined in his mind, but they saw the light and they heard the sounds and it completely changed Saul.

Application:

When we consider different evidences of the resurrection of Jesus Christ we look at the empty tomb, and the sightings of Jesus after the resurrection. But the greatest evidence of the resurrection of our Lord is the changed lives recorded in the Bible and even throughout the ages into our day today. All we need to do is look at the lives of the

Apostles and we see infallible evidence. For those who would question the resurrection I would ask them to look at the Apostles and have them consider their life changes and the fact that they were willing to die for what they believed. Who would die for a dead man?

Notice Acts 9:9

Saul was blind for three days and he fasted for three days. I can only imagine how he searched his soul in these days. Thinking back to what he had done and how he had put people to death. No doubt the image of Stephen's was burned in his mind. It was certainly in this time that Saul came to realize several Truths.

Romans 7:18a

¹⁸ For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing:

Philippians 3:3-7

³ For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

⁴ Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:

⁵ Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

⁶ Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

⁷ But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

Notice Acts 9:9 again.

It is very important that we notice that Saul was blind and without food for three days. Let us several other passages which mention three days.

Joshua 3:1-3

And Joshua rose early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over.

² And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the host;

Israel sat facing the Jordan River three days before they crossed.

Jonah 1:17

¹⁷ Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Jonah was three days in the belly of the fish.

There are more references which we could see but we can see the lesson from these. After each of these three day events we see the mighty power of God. In Paul's life as he becomes the greatest missionary. At the Jordan we see the power of God as the flood waters are held back and Israel crosses and conquers Jericho. Then in Jonah's life we see the power of God as the message goes out to Nineveh and brings repentance. So what does all of this mean to us?

This is a picture of THIRD DAY power or resurrection power. This is all for us to see that if we are going to be effective for the Lord we cannot serve in the power of the flesh but we must serve in the power of the Spirit which is the same power that brought Jesus up out of the grave.

Ephesians 3:20-21

²⁰ Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

²¹ Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

2 Corinthians 4:6-7

⁶ For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

⁷ But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

Conclusion:

So we are here for such a time as this, we are given the power of God to make a difference, therefore, let us active and alert for opportunities to serve Him.