



Acts: The Conversion of Saul

March 22

INTRODUCTION: Acts: Jesus' work, through the Apostles and disciples, by the Holy Spirit, to fulfil Acts 1:8. The Church has now reached Judea and Samaria (Acts 1:8). It may seem odd that Luke pauses here to recount, arguably, the most famous conversion in Church History. Yet Saul and Cornelius' conversions both pave the way for wider missions.

KEY POINT: opponents, conversion, calling

A.M. SERMON RECAP (TBS Student, Jacob, Ps 107)

- What is the LORD's "steadfast love" (e.g. His covenant or loyal love)?
- Why should the Redeemed of the LORD say so?
- Things that were helpful in understanding this passage...
- Key points/takeaways...

P.M. SERMON RECAP (Peter and Paul)

- Who were Peter and Paul?
- Why does Luke focus on one and then the other?
- What important roles did they fulfil?
- What can we learn from their ministries?

READ: Acts 9:1–19

QUESTIONS:

Saul is the Hebrew version of the name whereas Paul is the Greek. He continued to go by Saul until Acts 13:9.

Saul's Pre-Conversion State, vv. 1–2

1. *This story is so significant it is told in Acts 3 times! As such it has much to teach us about conversion.*
2. Up until this point Christians have been called: believers, disciples and now followers of the Way (road, way of life). What does "the Way" mean? (e.g. Acts 16:17; 18:25–26)
3. **Read Ps 80:13. How is Saul's character likened to a beast? What does this say of his heart, mind and will?**

4. **What is our natural state apart from Christ? (Ro 3:10–18)**
5. *Point illustrated. When dispersion meant Christians had escaped his grasp he became a self-appointed inquisitor to pursue those who had escaped to nearby Damascus, where there was a large Jewish population. Discuss.*
6. *What is very clear is that salvation is by the sovereign grace of God. Saul did not find Christ, Christ found Him.*

Saul's Conversion, vv. 3–9

7. *Def. Conversion is the change from something into another, the change from unbelief to belief, etc.*
8. **What was typical and a-typical about Saul's conversion (e.g. what was unique to him and what is universal?).**
9. *The typical aspects' of his conversion are a useful case study. What do we learn for our own benefit and that of others by studying this? (E.g. why does Luke share this for us?)*
10. *The conversion was sudden, but God had been preparing Saul (26:14–"kick against the goads" [pointy sticks]). What goads had there been as the Holy Spirit worked on Saul? (A meeting with Jesus?; the synagogue debate?; Stephen's defence and martyrdom; his fanaticism compensating for his doubts?; his conscience [Gal 3:6]; his covetousness [Ro 7:7]).*
11. **How are "Damascus Road Experiences" both beautiful but also potentially belittling? How ought we to understand the conversion experience of a child raised in a Christian home (c.f. 1 Ti 1:5) through a typical conversion experience?**
12. *While at noon (22:6) what was brighter than the sun in the desert (26:13)? (1 Cor 9:1, 15:8). Who had met Paul?*
13. **V. 4a-What effect has did this have to the proud persecutor?²**
 - a. **Similarly, what irony is there between v. 1b and 8?**
14. *V. 4- "persecuting me" shows Christ's connection to His body.*
15. *Perhaps like Zechariah (Lk 1), the three days was intended as a time of reflection.*

¹ C.f. Acts 2:38. A personal encounter. Surrender to His Lordship (belief), repentance and faith, obedience, baptism.

² "Prostrate at the feet of his conqueror"—Walker.

16. *While conversion is of the Lord that does not the believer does not make a real choice. Saul asked real questions (v. 5), responded in obedience (v. 6), was praying (v. 11). Once regenerated Paul was free to choose Christ.*

17. **Read Gal 1:15–16, Phil 3:12. How did Paul understand this event, of him or of Christ? (c.f. point 6). What language do we use?**

Saul's Reception into the Church, vv. 10–19.

18. *Ananias—a forgotten hero. His response, “Here I am” is similar to Abraham (Gen 22:1), Jacob (Gen 31:1), Moses (Ex 3:11), Samuel (1 Sam 3:4–8) and Isaiah (Isa 6:8).*

19. **Why did he hesitate to follow up on Saul's conversion? How can we see faithful obedience in his life?**

20. Who might we be hesitant to acknowledge today? What opportunity might we miss?

21. V. 15- What do we learn of God's plans for Saul? (9:27; 1 Cor 15:8)

22. V. 11b- What do you think Saul was praying about?

23. *V.17—Laying on of hands is often, though not always, associated with conversion or commissioning.*

24. *Vv. 17–18- Whether Saul savingly trusted in Christ on the Road or as he prayed, he now receives the Holy Spirit and is baptized. It is difficult to know for certain if “be filled” meant receive the Holy Spirit or was in relation to his healing or his Commissioning.*

25. **Vv. 3, 8, 12, 17- What do you think Saul's blindness spiritually represented?**

26. **The effect of Saul's conversion is evident. How does he have a new relationship with God, the Church and the unbelieving world?**

27. **If Jesus could save Saul is there anyone that He cannot?**

NEXT: March 29- Dorcas, Acts 9:32–43