

The Conversion of Saul

- 1 Tim. 1:12-17 – Paul, the “chief of sinners”
- 3 accounts of Saul’s conversion – Acts 9:1-19; 22:3-21; 26:4-20
- Paul’s background
 - 22:3 – training/education
 - 7:58, 8:1-3, 26:9-11 – persecution of church
 - Saul likely believed they had destroyed the church at Jerusalem; now heard Christians were active in Damascus (150 miles away)
 - Devout; strictest sect of Pharisees; zealous toward God... but WRONG
 - What could change Saul? Unlikely for a “preacher” to convince him of anything
- Jesus appears to Saul (26:13)
 - Bright light from heaven, blinded him, spoke to him
 - Saul had no choice but to listen – “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting!”
 - What a revelation! He thought anyone who believed Jesus should be executed!
 - Reaction: I’m wrong—what do you want me to do?
 - What Jesus does/doesn’t say...
 - Just believe?
 - Personal relationship?
 - Be sincere in your belief?
 - Told him he was saved?
 - No—go to the city and be told what to do.
 - 26:16-18 – Jesus directly appeared to Saul to qualify him as an apostle/witness
- If one is seeking truth and praying, would God give any other answer than what Paul was given?
 - “Go to Damascus with Saul and find out!”
- Did Saul believe yet?
 - 26:19 – Yes, why else would he follow the Lord’s command?
 - 2 Tim. 1:12 – “I know whom I have believed.”
 - He saw, heard, and believed—but still had to hear more from Ananias
- Had Saul repented?
 - 9:9 – What did he do for 3 days?
 - Repent for Stephen and others he had imprisoned/killed
 - 9:11 – Praying; guilt & agony for 3 days, fasting; not rejoicing (yet)
 - Rom. 5:1-2 – Justified by faith, have peace with God
 - Saul had faith and repented, but he was clearly NOT at peace
- Ananias – one of Saul’s intended targets meets with him
 - Restores sight
 - 22:16 – Why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized
 - “Calling on the name of the Lord” associated with act of baptism
- “Conversion”
 - Not enough to be merely religious/sincere/devout
 - Not enough to have a supernatural experience
 - Not enough to simply believe
 - Why do you wait?