

The Conversion of Saul of Tarsus

Sometimes we see people in our day to day work and think that there is no way someone like that would desire the gospel message. Saul of Tarsus was such a man (cf. Acts 9:10ff). Saul was a Pharisee who persecuted the church of Christ (cf. I Cor. 15:9; Acts 22:3-5). Saul was like many today who claim faith in Jesus Christ yet in practice they deny his name. Saul certainly loved God; however, his passion was misdirected (cf. Phil. 3:4-8). Let us examine Saul's conversion and learn that if we are bold to teach there are those who will listen and learn no matter how far gone we may judge them to be.

I. Saul Travels to Damascus with a Purpose:

- A. Equipped with letters of approval from the Jerusalem elders, Saul travels to Damascus to persecute Christians (Acts 9:1-2). Paul's objective was to "*bind all that call upon thy (the Lord's) name*" (Acts 9:14). Paul's persecution was done with passion (cf. Acts 22:3-5; 26:10-11).
- B. Later, while giving a defense to King Agrippa, Paul explains why he felt it so necessary to persecute the church of Christ (Acts 26:9). Let us all behave ourselves according to truth rather than our own fleshly wisdom (cf. II Cor. 1:12).

II. Saul is introduced to Jesus and told what to do to be saved from the Consequences of his Sins:

- A. Jesus appears to Saul (Acts 9:3-9).
- B. Saul meets Ananias and he tells Saul what he must do to be saved (Acts 9:6, 10-16; 22:12-16).
 - 1. Preachers and teachers are needed today as they were in the days of Saul (cf. Acts 8:30-31; Rom. 10:13-15).
 - 2. Jesus said, "*The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest*" (Matt. 9:37-38).
- C. Ananias explains to Saul that he needs to be baptized that his sins may be washed away (cf. Acts 22:16).

III. Saul after conversion:

- A. Saul was ashamed of his past (cf. Eph. 3:7-8); however, he was not ashamed of the gospel (Acts 9:19-22; Rom. 1:16).
- B. Saul came to be known as the apostle Paul and labored vigorously so that others may benefit from the cross of Christ (cf. I Cor. 15:9-11).

Conclusion:

We may know of people who have a passion for error; however, let us not prejudge them as unworthy of the gospel message. Many are persuaded, through fleshly wisdom, that their lives are right with God when nothing could be further from the truth. Let us expose, with love, their error and help them become true Christians.