

Great Stories of the Bible - 07/10/22

Paul's Conversion

TEXT- Acts 9:1-18 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter

INTRO – The conversion of Paul is the great turning-point in God's dealings with Israel. We must keep in mind that Peter and Paul in the Book of Acts represent two different ministries. Note these contrasts:

Peter	Paul
1. One of the twelve apostles	1. Called apart from the Twelve
2. Centered in Jerusalem	2. Centered in Antioch
3. Ministered mainly to Israel	3. Ministered to the Gentiles
4. Called on earth by Christ	4. Called by Christ from heaven
5. Saw Christ's glory on earth	5. Saw Christ's glory in heaven

I. Saul's Conversion Acts 9:1-9

- Paul's conversion was all of grace; God suddenly interrupted him on his mission and by grace transformed him into a new person.
- He was God's choice servant Acts 9:15 to announce the message of the church, this "mystery" that God had kept secret from ages past.

Ephesians 5:32 *This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

His conversion experience can be summarized in these statements:

(1) He saw a light; (2) He heard a voice; (3) He obeyed a call.

Every sinner is in the dark until the light of the Gospel shines on him. Paul heard the voice of the Lord through the Word of God, although Paul heard Christ speak audibly.

Saul persecuted the church and immediately became part of the church.

Two evidences are given of Paul's conversion: **he prayed (Acts 9:11)** and **he preached (Acts 9:20)**. Talking to God for men and to men for God are good proofs of conversion. Paul started where he was and preached what he knew, another good policy for new Christians to follow.

- **Christ and the church are inseparable**

Acts 9:4 *And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?*

Saul was taught by Gamaliel and reached the highest degree of education.

His conversion is the most dramatic recorded in Scripture

Saul's name changed to Paul – He was a special appointed Apostle.

Saul's name is changed to Paul. (His Roman name)

Philippians 3:4-7 *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.

We have a new name when saved.

*I was once a sinner, but I came
Pardon to receive from my Lord.
This was freely given, and I found
That He always kept His word.*

Chorus:

*There's a new name Written down in glory,
And it's mine,
oh yes, it's mine!*

*And the white-robed Angels sing the story,
"A sinner has come home."*

*For there's a new name written down in glory,
And it's mine,*

oh yes, it's mine!

*With my sins forgiven I am bound for heaven,
Nevermore to roam.*

Luke 10:20 *Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.*

II. Paul's Special Ministry

A. To the gentiles

Acts 22:21 *And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.*

B. To all men.

Acts 22:12-15 *And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, 13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. 14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. 15 For thou shalt be his witness **unto all men** of what thou hast seen and heard.*

C. Preparation

- **Several days in Damascus**
- **Three years in Arabia**

Galatians 1:15-18 *But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, 16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with*

*flesh and blood: 17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. 18 Then after **three years** I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.*

- **Four years in Tarsus**
- **One year in Antioch**

Acts 11:26 *And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that **a whole year** they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.*

God was preparing Paul for at least 8 years prior to his missionary journey's and perhaps as long as 12 years.

We cannot avoid the necessity of training.

A call to serve is a call to prepare!

III. Paul Finished His Course

2 Timothy 4:7-8 *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*

CONCL-

- **True conversion need not be as dramatic as Paul's but it must be life changing.**
- **We should begin to serve the Lord immediately upon conversion.**
- **We must allow God to teach us and get the training we need to serve Him.**