

The Conversion Of Saul

TEXT : **Acts 22: 3-16** - cf - **9: 1-19**

INTRODUCTION :

- A. The first mention of Saul is as a persecutor of the church.
 - 1. **Acts 7: 58** ...He was supervising the stoning of Steven.
 - 2. **Acts 8: 1** ... Saul was “giving hearty approval.”
- B. After Steven, Saul wanted to kill more Christians.
 - 1. “*Let’s wipe out these infidels.*”
 - 2. **Acts 9: 1-2** ... When the Christians scattered, he went for them.
- C. **Gal. 1** ... When Saul met Jesus, his whole life changed.
- D. All of us want that life changing experience, i.e., to have the kind of relationship which Saul developed with Christ.

TRANSITION :

Let us compare the two accounts of Saul’s conversion to see how his life was changed by God. Seeing what God did for Saul we can see what God will do for us.

I. Jesus appeared to Saul face-to-face.

- A. **Read ... Acts 9: 3-6**
- B. Even after seeing Jesus face to face, Saul still had his sins.
 - 1. He heard Jesus speak to him.
 - 2. Saul actually spoke directly to Jesus.
 - 3. It is very obvious that Saul believed in Jesus, but he still had his sins.

Compare : **Acts 22: 16-** ‘Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.’

- C. Jesus has the power to forgive sins and He always has, even while on the earth.
 - 1. **Mark 2:10-11** “But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—He said to the paralytic, **11-** “I say to you, get up, pick up your pallet and go home.”

2. But, Jesus did not forgive Saul.

Acts 9:6 ... Jesus told Saul “ ... it shall be told you what you must do.”

3. When the preacher came, Saul still had his sins - Acts.22: 16

- a. NOTICE : Ananias did not tell Saul that his faith had saved him.
- b. He was told that he needed to have his sins washed away.

* **Remember** : **Salvation is from sin ... Rom. 6:23**

Those who have sin are lost.

Therefore : **Saul was a believer who was still lost.**

4. True illustration :

- a. Driver saw Jesus in the road. He stopped ... avoided wreck.
- b. Driver was convinced that he was saved because he saw Jesus.
- c. Many today think they are saved because they saw a vision.

If seeing a vision could save a person, surely Saul would have been saved. He saw and spoke with Jesus face-to-face.

II. Saul experienced two miracles, but still had his sins.

A. **Acts 9: 7-9** ... He was blinded by a super-natural light. (obeyed instructions)

B. **Acts 9: 17-18** ... Saul had his sight restored.

C. After seeing Jesus and experiencing two miracles, Saul still had his sins.

Remember: **Acts 22: 16-** ‘Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.’

If experiencing a miracle could save a person, surely Saul would have been saved. He spoke with the Lord, obeyed and experienced two miracles.

III. After seeing Jesus, Saul prayed and fasted for three days. Acts 9: 9-12

A. **Acts 9: 11** ... Saul had been praying for three days. (**Jesus heard him.**)

1. Though blind, Saul saw a vision while he was praying and fasting. Vs. **12**
2. He remained blind so there were no distractions to his concentration.

B. **Acts 9: 9** ... Saul had been fasting for three days.

1. He had plenty of time to regret the stoning of Steven.
2. He had time to remember the cries of those he dragged off for death or prison.

C. He had obviously repented.

1. His prayer and fasting was in response to having seen Jesus.
2. Having seen Jesus, Saul was completely convinced that Jesus is the risen Christ.

D. Saul believed and was repentant of his sins, but was STILL lost ... in sins.

1. **Remember: Acts 22: 16-** 'Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.'
2. **If there was ever a person who could have prayed his way through, it was Saul of Tarsus.**
 - a. **Faith ?** He had first hand knowledge of the deity of Christ.
 - b. **Repentance ?** He had prayed and fasted for three days.
 - c. **Confession ?** He obeyed what Jesus told him to do. (**No obedience = not faith**)
 - d. **Face-to face with Jesus** Saul acknowledged that he has seen Jesus.
 - b. **Received two miracles** He was made blind and cured of blindness.
 - c. **Received a vision from God** A preacher named Ananias would come to him.

* **BUT ...** after all this ... **He still needed to have his sins washed away. Thus, he was still LOST.**

IV. Jesus instructed a preacher to tell Saul how to be saved.**A. Vs. 15 ... Jesus personally called Saul "a chosen instrument of Mine."**

1. Though chosen by Jesus, he was still **lost**.
2. His sins had not yet been forgiven. **22:16**

B. Vs. 15 ... Jesus personally sent a preacher to instruct Saul and to heal him.

1. The preacher did not tell him his faith had saved him.
2. After the preacher healed Saul, he did not tell Saul that he was saved.
3. After all that, **the preacher told Saul .. "You need to get rid of your sins."**
Acts 22: 16- 'Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.'
- a. He could not wash away sins that were not there.
- b. He could not have been saved while he still had his sins.

C. How was Saul going to get rid of his sins ?

1. He had to have them washed away by being baptized while calling on God's name.

2. **WAIT !!** We know water can't take away sins ! (**We don't bath when we sin.**)
 - a. THEREFORE, baptism is more than just being dipped in water. (**bathing**)
 - b. Cleanliness is next to Godliness, but water won't wash away sin.
3. Therefore, how did water baptism cleanse Saul from his sins.
 - a. **Remember :** He was to be "**calling on the name of the Lord**" while being baptized.
 - b. **I Pet. 3:21-** Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but **an appeal to God for a good conscience—** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, (**Conscience ... Resurrection**)
 - c. **Heb. 9:14-** How much more will the **blood of Christ**, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, **cleanse your conscience** from dead works to serve the living God? , (**Conscience ... Blood ... Spirit**)
 - d. **Rev. 1:5-** And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto Him that loved us, and **washed us from our sins in his own blood**, (KJV)

Compare : Acts. 22: 16 ... be baptized, and wash away your sins,
 - e. **Acts 2:38-** Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you **be baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ **for the forgiveness of your sins**; ...
 - f. **Eph. 1:7-** In Him we have **redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses**, according to the riches of His grace

* **THUS :** It is in baptism as a faith response that one contacts the blood of Christ which washes, cleanses, removes, his sins ; thereby giving him a cleanse conscience.

Compare : **Read ...** **Romans 6: 15-18** (Compare: Vs **15** & Vs **1** = same context)
Romans 6: 1-7 (What form of teaching ? Baptism.)

D. Thus, Saul was forgiven by the blood of Jesus when he obey that form of teaching about the gospel by being baptized.

CONCLUSION :

What have we learned ?

- A. We have seen that one cannot be saved by :**
1. Experiencing a miracle
 2. Seeing a vision and obeying it
 3. By believing the Jesus is the risen Christ
 4. By prayer and fasting
 5. By repentance

6. By being handpicked by Jesus

* **After having done all this, Paul still had his sins.**

Rom. 6: 23 ... Wages of sin is death

**Eph. 1: 7 ... We have redemption through His blood,
the forgiveness of our trespasses, (Redemption IS forgiveness.)**

B. How does one acquire salvation ? (Can't choose part – must obey all)

1. Salvation is only by grace through faith. **Eph. 2: 8-9**

a. Therefore, there is no salvation without faith.

b. Jesus said :

Mark 16: 16-17 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. **17** He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned."

2. One can't be a disciple of the world (**self**) and a disciple of Christ at the same time.

a. Peter required that his audience on Pentecost :

Acts 2: 38- Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

b. Peter preached repentance as prerequisite to forgiveness.

Acts 3: 19- Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;

3. One cannot be a secret believer; he must publicly confess his faith in Jesus.

a. **Rom. 10: 9-10** ... if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;
10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

b. Compare : **Matt. 12: 32-39** (Paul taught what Jesus taught)

4. Paul was commanded to call on Jesus by being baptized.

a. **Acts 22: 16** ... **be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.'**

b. **Romans 6** taught us that baptism is the transition point from lost to saved.

c. Paul taught that baptism was the point at which one entered Christ.

Gal. 3: 26-27 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. **27** For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

INVITATION :

If God will forgive Saul, surely He will for give you in the same way.

Have you consummated your relationship with Christ ?

Become His bride today. Commit yourself to Him this very hour.