

## **The Power of God in Conversion**

### **Acts 26:9–20**

9 "Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. 11 And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities

12 "While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, 13 at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me. 14 And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' 15 So I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. 16 But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. 17 I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, 18 to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.'

19 "Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, 20 but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance. NKJV

The conversion of the Apostle Paul is one of the greatest testimonies to the truthfulness of Christianity that there is. It is not possible to explain the transformation of Saul into Paul except by the divine power of God in regeneration.

As Paul's testimony here given tells of the great change that he underwent when he was confronted with the living Jesus Christ.

Although your or my conversion might night have such a powerful story behind it, it still took the same power of God to bring our spiritually dead soul to life.

And our conversion is just as real as Paul's. It must be for when God changes a person' life it is complete. Listen to Jesus.

Matt 7: 16 "You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17 "Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 "Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

So let us look at Paul's conversion.

I. Paul had arrested, persecuted and put to death various Christians. V-9-11

- II. Then he encountered the living Christ.
  - A. His story is very powerful
    - 1. A great light shines from heaven, brighter than the sun.
    - 2. He falls to the ground and cannot see.
    - 3. He hears the voice of Jesus speaking to him directly.
  - B. Paul responds to the heavenly vision.
    - 1. He repents, turns around.
      - a. His life is forever changed.
      - b. He will never go back.
    - 2. He expresses the faith that he now has by calling Jesus Lord.
      - a. He doesn't understand everything yet.
      - b. But he is willing to learn.
      - c. He has a desire to grow.
    - 3. He unhesitatingly obeys.
      - a. He says, "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision"
      - b. He does not bargain with God.
      - c. He does not hold things in reserve that will hinder his usefulness to God and His kingdom.
    - 4. He confessed openly Jesus Christ.
      - a. He declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles.
      - b. He never missed an opportunity to tell his story and he had a great story.
      - c. Even though we do not have a great of a story as Paul we all have a story, if God has changed us.
      - d. Each of us needs to develop our story so we can tell others.
      - e. 1Pe 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;
  - C. His life is forever changed.
    - 1. As a result of the work of the Holy Spirit. (Born again, as Jesus said)

- a. That is God's part.
  - b. We cannot bring spiritual life to ourselves, we are dead in sins. Eph 2:1
2. But Paul was converted, what we call conversion.
- a. That is man's part.
  - b. It takes in the changes that take place in our lives.
  - c. 2Co 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.
  - d. Eph 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.
  - e. Ro 6:4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

III. Then he becomes the messenger.

A. Notice his commission.

- 1. I now send you, 18 to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.
- 2. Notice what his message would do.
  - a. Open blinded eyes.
  - b. People will turn from darkness to light.
  - c. They will move from being under the control of Satan to being under God's control.
  - d. They will receive forgiveness of sin.
  - e. They will receive an inheritance among the saints
  - f. All of this because they believe the message Paul will bring to them.

B. Notice how he fulfilled that commission.

- 1. I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, 20 but declared first to those

in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.

2. Paul was able to see the Jews and Gentiles repent by the thousands.
  - a. Just as he himself had done.
  - b. Just as we all must do, surrendering our will to the will of God.
3. And they too were converted, changed completely.
  - a. That they did works suitable of the faith they professed.
  - b. This brings us full circle to what we said at the beginning, quoting Jesus.
  - c. Matt 7: 16 "You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17 "Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 "Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

What are your fruits in the Christian life?

How has your life changed?

How are you different from those who do not know Jesus?