

# The Conversion Of Saul

I Tim. 1:13-15



# The Remarkable Conversion Of Saul...

- Recorded Three Times:
  - Luke's historical record. (Acts 9)
  - Paul before the Jews in Jerusalem. (Acts 22)
  - Paul before Agrippa and Festus (Acts 26)
  - Referenced in his letters: (I Cor. 15; Gal. 1; Phil. 3, etc.)
- A pivotal point in the history of the church: The mad persecutor of the church becomes the devoted and persecuted preacher of the gospel.

# The Remarkable Conversion Of Saul...

- Surpassed only by the resurrection of Jesus as a testimony to the verity of the scriptures, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- In 1747 George Lyttelton published his book, *Observations of the Conversion of St. Paul*, in which he argued for the truth of the Christian system. Lyttelton concluded:
  - The apostle was not an imposter who deliberately advocated that which he knew to be false; indeed, why would he suffer so much persecution for what he knew to be a lie?
  - He was not an enthusiast who was given to “an overheated imagination”; he was a disciplined logical scholar of the first magnitude.
  - He was not deceived by the fraud of others for he claimed his revelation to be independent of the other apostles. Even his critics acknowledged his rugged independence.
  - And so, as McClintock & Strong suggested, this argument itself constitutes “a demonstration sufficient to prove Christianity to be a divine revelation” (1969, 592). Thus, for honest people, the apostle Paul stands as an imperishable monument to the inherent power of the good news regarding Christ.

# The Remarkable Conversion Of Saul...

- An incredible, radical conversion – stands as a pattern for us today:
  - Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, **for a pattern** to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. (I Tim. 1:16)
  - Pattern: example.
    - For those who have not yet become Christians.
    - For those who are Christians as it shows the comprehensive nature of the change that takes place when one becomes a Christian.

# Brief Look At Saul's Life...

- A Jew of the dispersion – born in Tarsus of Cilicia. (Acts 22:1)
- Educated from a youth at the feet of the renowned Rabbi Gamaliel. (Acts 22:1)
- Excelled as a Pharisee in the religion of the Jews. (Phil. 3:5-6)
- Intensely devoted to God. (Acts 22:3)
- Morally pure in the righteousness of the law. (Phil. 3:6)
- Risen to a position of prominence among the Jews. (Acts 22:5; Gal. 1:14)
- Lives with a sincere conscience. (Acts 23:1; 26:9)
- Introduced to Saul In Acts 7 at the stoning of Stephen, then see him persecuting the church in Jerusalem in Acts 8.

# Brief Look At Saul's Life...

- Obsessed and aggressive in carrying out his purpose to destroy the church:
  - “yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord” (Acts 9:1)
  - “I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women” (Acts 22:4)
  - and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished. (Acts 22:5)
  - many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. (Acts 26:10)
  - I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities. (Acts 26:11)
  - beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: (Gal. 1:13)
  - Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. (I Tim. 1:15)

# Paul On The Road To Damascus

- Letters from the High Priest to persecute Christians in Damascus to bind and bring to Jerusalem.
- At midday nearing the city, sees a light brighter than the sun falls to the earth
- Hears a voice: “Saul, Saul why persecutest thou me?”
- Paul responds, “Who art thou, Lord?”
- The voice: “I am Jesus of Nazareth, who thou persecutest.”
- Paul: “What shall I do, Lord?”
- The voice: “Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.”
- Blinded, he is led into the city, where in his sightless condition, he neither eats nor drinks for three days. He is praying.
- A disciple named Ananias is sent by God to him, to tell him why he has been chosen, and what he must do.

# A Pivotal Moment In The Life Of Saul...

- What are the implications of what he has come to know as the truth – in contrast to what he has always sincerely believed?
  - The end of his present career path.
  - What will others think if he makes this radical change?
  - What he will have to face as being true about his past actions and those whom he has persecuted?
  - What about his family, associates...how will they view him?
  - What will he have to admit about his knowledge of God and his will up to this point?



# Saul Was Lost –

- Even though he possessed qualities thought sufficient for salvation by many even today:
  - Saul was intensely religious. (Gal. 1:14)
  - Saul was moral. (Phil. 3:6)
  - Saul had a clear conscience. (Acts 23:1)
  - Saul felt that what he was doing was what he ought to do. (Acts 26:9)
- He came to see himself as he really was:
  - 13 Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. 14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. 15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

# *Some Things That Did Not Save Saul From His Sins...*

- The remarkable experience –the light, the voice, witnessing the resurrected Jesus -- that he had on the road to Damascus.
- Faith alone in Jesus.
- Three days of fasting.
- Prayer.
- Faith, Repentance were necessary but not enough.
- Saul was commanded to be baptized in order to have his sins washed away.
  - Acts 22:16 → And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. (cf. 9:18; Col. 2:12; Rom. 6:3-4; Rev. 1:5)



# Conclusion

- The Light That Saul Saw On The Road To Damascus:
  - Was a revealing light – Jesus the Son of God.
  - Was a commanding light – go, do, obey.
  - Was a blinding light – to the things of this world.
  - Was a reflecting light – into the image of the Lord.
  - Was a testing light – He obeyed.
- God's word is our light today. (Ps. 110:105; II Cor. 4:3-4)